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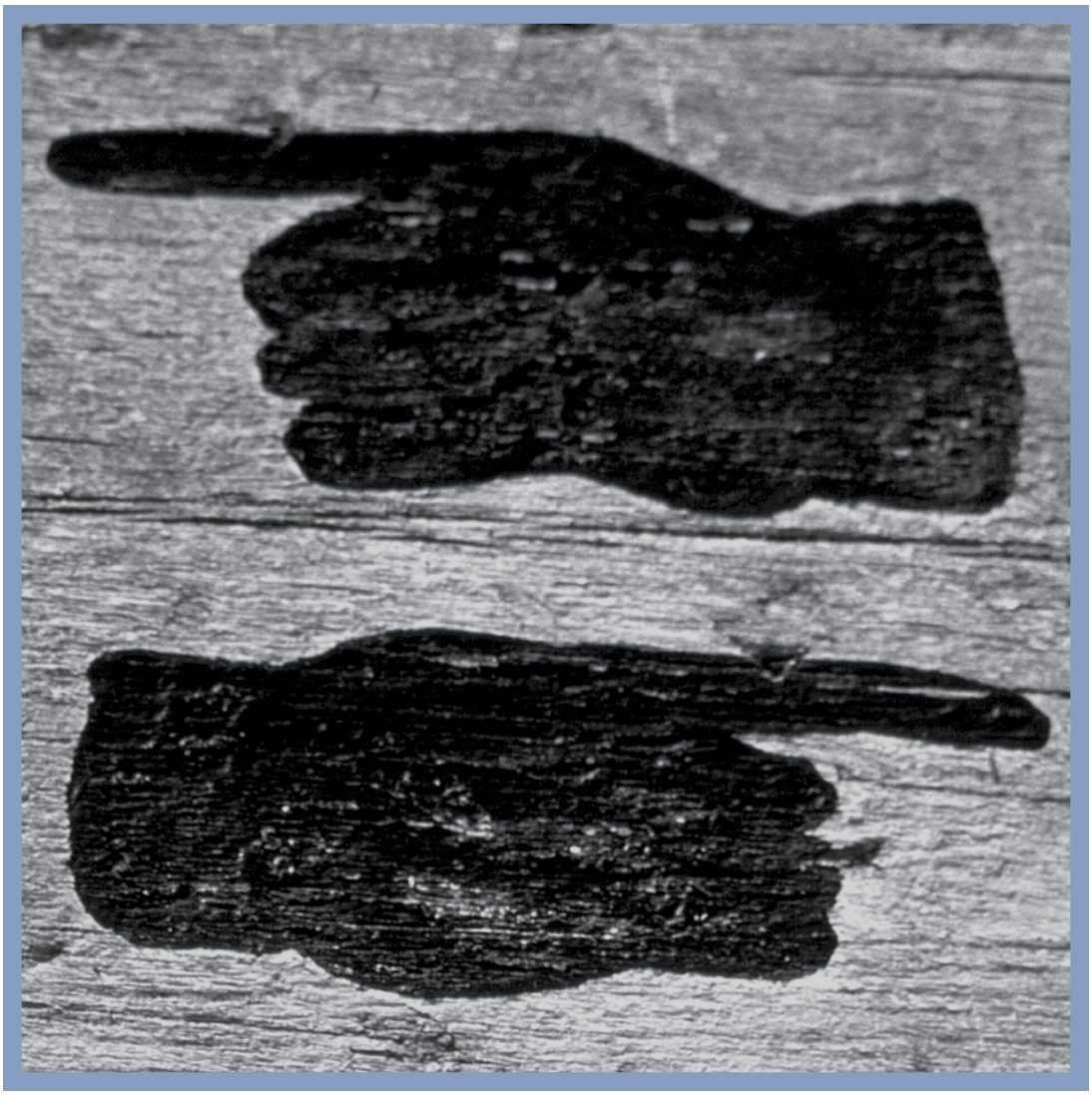

WINTER 2011

Dear Alumni and Friends —

We open the WInter 2011 issue of *Criterion* with Robert M. Franklin's 2010 Alumnus of the Year Lecture, "Nurturing Citizens through Liberal Arts Education: Reflections on Dr. King's Unpublished Papers," presented at Swift Hall on April 29, 2010. In his talk, Franklin, the tenth president of Morehouse College, contemplates the ties between leading figures at Morehouse College and the University of Chicago, the educational philosophies underpinning both institutions, and the current challenges facing liberal education.

Next is "Scriptural Conflict, Scriptural Community: Judaism, Christianity, Islam," by David Nirenberg, the Divinity School's John Nuveen Lecturer for 2009. His public address discusses the interpretative strategies employed by Christian, Jewish, and Islamic communities, and reminds us that scriptural traditions invite and generate variant readings, and that "the people have the power" to reshape meaning.

This issue concludes with Rev. Elizabeth Palmer's sermon "God Laughs," delivered in Bond Chapel on January 27, 2010. The sermon compares Woody Allen's tragi-comic treatment of God's laughter with Anne Sexton's ambivalent celebration of the same and encourages us to see promise in the unfathomable. This sermon was part of a quarter-long series at Bond Chapel, "Preaching on non-Biblical Texts."

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

I hope you enjoy this issue,

Terren Ilana Wein, *Editor*

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Robert M. Franklin is the President of Morehouse College and the Divinity School's Alumnus of the Year for 2010.

Elizabeth Palmer is a Ph.D. student in Theology at the Divinity School and serves as Lutheran Campus Pastor for the University of Chicago.

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ROBERT M. FRANKLIN

Nurturing Citizens through Liberal Arts Education

Reflections on Dr. King's Unpublished Papers

This hour in history needs a dedicated circle of transformed nonconformists. The saving of our world from pending doom will come, not from a conforming majority, but from the creative maladjustment of a transformed minority.

— Martin Luther King Jr., *Transformed Nonconformists*

I am pleased to receive this very significant honor on behalf of Morehouse College.[1] It is humbling to stand in this unbroken line of distinction that includes some of the great luminaries of American religious thought and leadership, including many with whom I studied or learned much, such as James Luther Adams, James Gustafson, Schubert Ogden, Robert Handy, Sidney Mead, Huston Smith, Charles Long, Jaroslav Pelikan, Jim Wall, Peter Paris, Rebecca Chopp, Jay Dolan, John Cobb, Larry Greenfield, and Emilie Townes. I must also acknowledge several teachers and conversation partners who helped me here including Don Browning, Martin Marty, Chris Gamwell, David Tracy, Peter Homans, Joseph Kitagawa, and Jerry Brauer.

Benjamin E. Mays, the sixth president of Morehouse College was honored by this great university back in 1949, only the third recipient of this distinction, in the ninth year of his presidency. So Morehouse expresses its abundant appreciation for the honor of now two presidents who have been recognized for their exceeding good judgment in attending first the University of Chicago before daring to lead Morehouse. When I arrived at Chicago over three decades ago, I had no way of imagining this day. Despite how intimidating Chicago was, Swift Hall was my home. This strange but welcoming building felt like a gothic castle and refuge from the frigid plains. Its inhabitants were men and women who had taken vows to sacrifice comfort and joy on the altar of higher learning and methodological transcendence. Why on earth did we agree to endure this place? Was it perhaps because we were all seduced by the Chicago value proposition? The idea that a harsh winter climate and dispassionate search for ultimate truth could purify our souls. Asia has its annual monsoons, and Africa its scorching deserts and droughts, but Chicago hunkered down for its annual and interminable blizzard season. Each year the weather declared war on us. And,

Robert M. Franklin delivered the 2010 Alumnus of the Year Lecture, on April 29, 2010 in Swift Hall.

"I pray that no such graduate students are in the audience today."

like new soldiers huddled in a foxhole on foreign soil, we drew closer to one another. Anthropologist Victor Turner helped us to describe it as *communitas,* a temporary refuge from the threat of *liminality.* We ate lunch in the Swift Kick coffee shop downstairs, took naps in obscure corners of this building, we looked forward to Wednesday lunches when faculty members and offbeat alumni and anxious local pastors marched before the firing line to present their novel conceptions of being, nonbeing and the sacred. We listened politely, ate our spaghetti and imbibed obscure but affordable libations, and asked our often obtuse and occasionally irreverent questions. Irreverent and impertinent perhaps because we lived in a state of perpetual pre-examination terror and ABD neurosis, a syndrome that compromises the human's ability to calibrate how she or he is relating to strangers. But, some of us actually believed that the more ruthless our interrogations of a speaker, especially an outsider, the more the speaker should be gratified that she or he was being paid the highest possible Swift Hall compliment, that of being taken seriously enough to arouse a serious interrogation of their methodology, warrants and claims. I pray that no such graduate students are in the audience today.

But, in reminiscing about this great hall of inquiry during one wintry season of the soul, I found myself in an unsettled mood. I had recently read Dr. Mays's autobiography, *Born to Rebel*. In it he reflected:

> In 1932, I finally returned to the University of Chicago to complete course work, write a thesis, and seek to pass all the examinations. Regardless of one's previous academic record, he takes a risk when he announces his intention to earn a Ph.D., especially at an institution like the University of Chicago. It was the prevailing opinion that the university made it difficult for those who sought the degree, and it was rumored that approximately half of those who started out in the department in which I was enrolled failed to accomplish their goal. I knew a few persons who had failed their Ph.D. work at the University of Chicago, and it seemed to me that they were never quite the same thereafter. A man who seeks a doctorate and fails to earn it seems to go through life either apologizing for his shortcoming or overcompensating for the failure.[2]

That is quite enough to turn an ordinary day into a very bad one.

But I will always cherish the day that I walked out of a Wednesday lunch and noticed a wall plaque that gave me the impetus to complete my work here. Since I was not a history student, I did not make a special effort to read random plaques hanging from the walls of historic buildings. On a day when I was feeling the burdens of life and study at Chicago and just on the brink of depression and self doubt about whether I should be at Chicago, I walked past the plaque that contained the list of Alumni of the Year and found Dr. Mays's name there as the third recipient in 1949. Somehow that was the confirmation that I needed. Suddenly I was no longer alone at Chicago. My college president had been here and, "*veni vedi vici*"; in the words of Julius Caesar, he came, he saw, he conquered.

Benjamin Elijah Mays was a remarkable man. He lived from 1894 to 1984, ninety years. Born in rural Epworth (Ninety Six), South Carolina, one year before the death of Frederick Douglas and a year before the national rise of Booker T. Washington (Atlanta Cotton Exposition speech) as America's most powerful black leader. He attended South Carolina State College in Orangeburg and graduated as valedictorian in 1916, one year after the death of Booker T. Washington. He pursued his undergraduate education at Bates College anxious to compete intellectually with white students and other ethnic groups. Imagine the shock of transplanting from the rural south to small town Maine in the early twentieth century. He was a prize-winning debater at Bates; attended the University of Chicago Divinity School earning a Ph.D. in 1935; went on to become Dean of the Howard University School of Religion (under President Mordecai Wyatt Johnson); and was president of Morehouse College from 1940 to 1967. After retiring from Morehouse, he became president of the Atlanta Board of Education. I have always mused that his was a very distinguished career of steady downward mobility from the graduate theological seminary to an undergraduate men's college to the public school system.

"The quality and kind of education of the leaders who will inherit the most powerful positions in society really matters."

He went to Morehouse with a Chicago point of view, promoting the value of the classics, conversation, attention to method and the structure of an argument, and critical thinking versus memorizing facts. He transformed Morehouse into a remarkable school. One could say that he was the Robert Maynard Hutchins of Morehouse or that Hutchins was the Benjamin Mays of Chicago — a compliment that both men deserve.

During his years at Morehouse, some of the twentieth century's most influential thought leaders, change agents, and impatient activists studied at Morehouse and received the benefits of Mays's leadership. Among his students were Martin Luther King Jr., NAACP Chairman Julian Bond, Surgeon General David Satcher, *Ebony Magazine* Senior Editor Lerone Bennett, Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson, Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis Sullivan, and National Science Foundation president and Morehouse president Walter Massey. Other luminaries, including Spike Lee, Samuel L. Jackson, Olympic Gold medalist Edwin Moses, and CNN commentator Jamal Simmons, were attracted to Morehouse for the Mays legacy but missed him.

My purpose is to offer a perspective on how we can prepare the next generation of leaders who will sustain and strengthen American democracy. The quality and kind of education of the leaders who will inherit the most powerful positions in society really matters. If they are selfish and myopic, we all will suffer. If they seek only to make money, get elected, horde material goods, and enjoy fame and pleasure while manipulating working people into voting against their own best interest and scapegoating other groups for economic troubles beyond their actual control, then society will sink to depths that will make it reasonable to exhibit hostility toward poor people, nonconformists who defy conventions, ethnic minorities, immigrants, etc. I will illustrate the kind of educated mind we need through reference to Dr. King's lesser-known work, including many unpublished papers. Part of the reason for this source set is to highlight the fact that Morehouse owns and is custodian of the 10,000 piece King collection. But another reason is to utilize the life and mind of one of the world's most admired leaders to make a case for education that places moral purposes at the center.

To restate my thesis, I believe that universities that provide broad liberal arts education can shape good citizens and social leaders through a subtle but profound process of moral re-centering in critical dialogue with professional and scientific specialization. And I think that Dr. King's unpublished papers and less well known writings offer thought-provoking examples of what one school, Morehouse College, nurtured in King and his peers, a model evident in many other institutions, especially the University of Chicago.

My talk is divided into three parts beginning with reflections on the University of Chicago during the Mays years. Mays observed Robert Maynard Hutchins leading change in the academy for the public good. It was a model of being an activist college president that deeply impressed him. Then, we turn briefly to Morehouse during the King years which, in fact, were the Mays years. During that period, Mays created Morehouse in the image of Chicago, not Harvard. The Morehouse emphasis on broad liberal learning prior to specialization along with a strong emphasis on leadership development, public service and social justice made Morehouse stand apart from many other liberal arts peers. This was Mays and his faculty leading change in the academy for the public good. Mays constantly looked at liberal arts education through the lens of society's greatest problems and opportunities. Since racism, imperialism, gender oppression, and class exploitation were the chief social challenges of the day, he sought to calibrate the education at Morehouse to be both universally relevant but also immediately socially impactful.

Finally, I will offer some reflections on the challenges of liberal learning and moral re-centering now in the Obama years, a period of enormous opportunity that is daily besieged by hyper-partisanship, the narrowing of the American mind, and a retreat from social justice and the common good.

"Harper's appetite for work was legendary."

Chicago During the Mays Years

The University of Chicago began in 1891 with a $600,000 gift from John D. Rockefeller and the boundless energy and vision of its president William Rainey Harper. Harper grew up in New Concord, Ohio, in a Scotch Covenanter family and community that valued education. He learned to read when he was three, entered college at ten, received a Bachelor of Arts degree at fourteen and a Ph.D. at eighteen. He also loved music, played the piano with the college president's daughter, and led the New Concord Silver Cornet Band. In college, having mastered the usual Latin and Greek, he began learning Hebrew with a small class and continued studying privately for three years while working in his father's store. In 1872, his family sent him to Yale for advanced study.

In 1861, Yale became the first American school to grant the Ph.D. degree and had conferred only thirty-five before Harper graduated in 1875. Lacking the background of his older classmates, he nonetheless caught up with them and successfully completed his dissertation titled "A Comparative Study of the Prepositions in Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, and Gothic." When the American Baptist Education Society formed two years later to plan a new Baptist university in the Midwest, Harper was invited to join a committee of nine to plan the institution. John D. Rockefeller had met him in 1886 and was impressed with his energy and ideas. Rockefeller supported the Baptists' plans, although initially only for an undergraduate college, and offered an initial $600,000 for endowment if they could raise another $400,000 from other sources. A board of trustees was formed in 1890, and one of their first actions was to nominate Harper as president.

Harper envisioned a university, not a college, and would not accept the presidency until he was promised a free hand in developing the institution along the broad lines he wanted. Additional funds would be needed to support Harper's scheme, and Rockefeller pledged another million. Harper officially accepted the presidency in April 1891 and took office on July 1.

John D. Rockefeller and William Rainey Harper

Under Harper's plan, the University of Chicago would include an undergraduate college, but senior professors would be freed from heavy teaching loads in order to pursue research. In addition, Harper projected extension work and a university press as key elements of the University. The adult education programs he had developed as an adjunct to his teaching would be given full status within the university's curriculum.

While these plans were being developed, Harper had to recruit a complete faculty (amounting to 120 appointments by the time the university opened); oversee selection of a student body (over 3000 students applied for admission, and 520 showed up on opening day); supervise the construction and equipping of university buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and housing for faculty and students; and raise money, for the original funds given by Rockefeller and the ABES were quickly seen as inadequate. Harper's appetite for work was legendary. And both his ability to plan large endeavors in broad strokes, and his concern for details, such as the planning of the academic ceremonies that he loved, won him praise.

"Our idea there was to *start a big argument about higher education and keep it alive*."

After the University opened, Harper continued to develop new departments, and in subsequent years added professional schools for medicine, education, and law; primary and secondary institutions which merged to form the Laboratory Schools; and museums for paleontology, anthropology, and oriental studies. Pressing the urgency of needs for more facilities at the spring convocation in 1899, Harper said, "Patience sometimes ceases to be a virtue... Some of us who ambitiously claimed to be young men when the University opened its doors must now acknowledge that old age is creeping rapidly on. We cannot afford to wait for time."[3]

Perhaps echoing the sentiment and ambition of Harper, current president Robert J. Zimmer observed in his Address delivered at the University's 500th Convocation on October 9, 2009, "The establishment of the University of Chicago was in fact a transformative moment for higher education in this country. The approach and attitude of the University at its founding have not only resonated through our own history, but had a powerful influence on the evolution of research universities throughout the nation."[4]

The earliest African-American undergraduate alumni of Chicago were Cora B. Jackson (1896), Spencer Cornelius Dickerson (1897), Richard Robert Wright Jr. (1901), Monroe Nathan Work (1902), John Wesley Hubert (1903), James Garfield Lemon (1904), Cecilia Johnson (1906), Dudley Weldon Woodard (1906), George Franklin Thompson (1908), Garfield Allen Curry (1910), Earl Edward Finch (1910), and Georgiana Simpson (1911). The first African-American graduate alumni were Work (1903), Wright (1904), Charles H. Turner (1907), Woodard (1907), Carter G. Woodson (1908), and Ernest Everett Just (1916). Woodson, you will recall, was the founder of Negro History Week (later, Black History Month) in 1926.[5] By 1943, at least forty-five African Americans had earned Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago, more than from any other university in the country.[6]

Mays initially began his work at Chicago in 1921 but left at the invitation of Morehouse President John Hope to teach mathematics, psychology, and religious studies. He then returned to study during the summers and earned two degrees from Chicago, a master's degree in 1924 and a Ph.D. in 1935. In his compelling autobiography, *Born to Rebel*, Mays said that the University of Chicago he encountered early in the 1920s was quite different from the romanticized vision painted for him by his high school teacher, Mr. Nix.

When Mays returned to pursue his doctoral work, the president was the inimitable Robert Maynard Hutchins, who led Chicago from 1929 to 1951. The other well known black college president of this era was Morehouse man and Howard University president Mordecai Wyatt Johnson, who served Howard from 1926 to 1961. Although William Rainey Harper helped to found the University of Chicago "giving it form and life and mission" (History of the Office website), Hutchins is still regarded as the intellectual mastermind of the modern great university. He said of his years at Chicago, "Our idea there was to *start a big argument about higher education and keep it alive*."

Hutchins was the son and grandson of Presbyterian ministers. He attended Oberlin College for two years then went to Yale where he completed B.A. and law degrees. In 1929, he moved to Chicago to become the president of the University of Chicago. He was thirty years old. Through his contact with Mortimer Adler, he became convinced that the solution to the philosophical problems facing the university lay in Aristotelianism and Thomism. In the 1930s, Hutchins attempted to reform the curriculum of the university along Aristotelian lines, only to have the faculty reject his proposed reforms three times.[7] He believed that "the Great Books are the most promising avenue to liberal education if only because they are teacher-proof."[8] He served as Editor-in-Chief of *Encyclopedia Brittanica*'s series *Great Books of the Western World* and was less interested in practical or applied knowledge than in theory and the philosophical underpinnings of knowledge. Hutchins noted that: "When young people are asked, 'What are you interested in?' They answer that they are interested in justice; they want justice for the Negro, they want justice for

"...he quickly became a sober realist about the color line in Chicago and at the university."

the Third World. If you say, 'Well, what is justice?' they haven't any idea."[9] Hutchins said, "A university should not discriminate by race," and "a university cannot talk about the limitations of social tolerance. A university is supposed to lead, not to follow. A university is supposed to do what is right, and damn the consequences. As long as we are a university and not a club, we cannot invoke racial distinctions as a basis for the selection of our students."[10]

Mays had always wanted to attend Chicago, especially after a local teacher instilled in him a desire to study there. Despite his early romanticizing about Chicago, thinking it would be at least as open and liberal as Bates College in Maine had been, he quickly became a sober realist about the color line in Chicago and at the university. In *Born to Rebel*, Mays reflected:

> "…there were still areas of prejudice and discrimination that I kept bumping into at the university and it was not my nature to leave them alone. Negro friends advised me not to tamper with these problems. One man tried to convince me that I would never get an advanced degree if I protested discrimination, but I found it hard to believe that the professors in my department would penalize me for fighting injustice in a great university, especially when I was not asking them to get involved.[11]

But Mays had confidence in Hutchins and believed he would respond to outright examples of discriminatory behavior.

At the Divinity School, Mays did most of his work with Professor Edwin Aubrey, a nationally known theologian who taught here from 1933–45.

> My major professor was Edwin Aubrey, professor of Christian Theology and Ethics (1933–45). My courses in that department were about equally divided between Edwin E. Aubrey and Henry Nelson Wieman. My philosophy courses and philosophy of religion courses were taken with Wieman. Aubrey was hard and his former students advised me to avoid him. Shailer Matthews advised me to take Aubrey's courses and I took them. When I got an 'A' in Aubrey's first course, I was delighted and I continued to make 'A's in other courses.[12]

Mays also notes that Dean Shirley Jackson Case's concentration was early Christianity. His books on the historicity of Jesus, which deemphasized the divinity of Jesus, did not endear him to conservative Christians of the day who carefully examined his books, nor win friends for Mays in this segment of the church. Mays' master's thesis was written in the Early Christianity department and Case was his advisor. The thesis was titled, "The Survival of Pagan Religion in Early Christianity," a topic that created problems for Mays among the Fundamentalists when he was nominated to become president of Morehouse. Mays was another Chicago heretic, they alleged.

> It was in connection with my thesis that I learned that Dean Case was kind. After completing writing my master's thesis, I left the manuscript with Dr. Case to read. When he had finished the reading, he sent for me and he made a few minor suggestions. And, I was afraid that he would not accept it as final. When I defended my thesis for the Ph.D. degree I was sitting among six professors in the Divinity School. Dean Case was among them. I defended the thesis with no difficulty.[13]

Mays pursued his studies at Chicago and wrote a dissertation titled, "The Idea of God in Contemporary Negro Literature," making this one of the first dissertations outside the field of sociology to focus specifically on African-American studies. One professor did not think he could write a dissertation on the topic but later recanted when Mays proved him wrong.

Mays took a summer course with Professor Sullivan on "The Authority and Prestige of the Catholic Church." All the students in the course were required to submit a paper, and Sullivan announced that the best paper in the class of twenty was written by Benjamin Mays. That same evening, oddly, Mays received a late night visit from a classmate who began by admitting his prejudice towards blacks. He said that he wanted to see a paper written by a Negro that Professor Sullivan said was the best in class. Mays recounts:

> I handed him the paper and after reading it, he said, 'It's a pretty good paper.' I replied, 'Professor Sullivan thought it was excellent.' I asked him what he had made. He replied, 'I got a 'B.' I replied, 'Good.' He said he had never known an intelligent Negro before. 'There were a few in my town, but I never knew them.' This incident is one of my personal experiences that can document how divisive and cruel segregation was at that time.[14]

Mays also studied with J. Edgar Goodspeed and J. Dewitt Burton. Mays called Burton one of his ablest teachers. When he called on Mays in class, Mays was scared and was surprised to receive an 'A'.

When he was acting president of the university, Dr. Burton lifted the ban on permitting blacks to use the recreational facilities in Reynolds Hall.

The next president, Hutchins, was a lawyer and, at 31, considered to be the youngest president in the history of great universities. He was deemed a radical in the field of higher education and was thought by many to be a genius. One manifestation of the title was the bold decision and experiment to permit high school students who could pass an entrance exam to be admitted directly into the Ph.D. program, perhaps reflecting Hutchins's desire to attract more faculty and administrators who were his age. Hutchins also abolished the football program. Years after Mays's retirement, he sat on the Morehouse board and opposed the vision of his successor, Dr. Gloster, of building a football stadium on the campus, no doubt, another Hutchins influence. Mays said that he loved the Hutchins family and considered them to be his friends.[15]

One reminder that Hutchins was a man of his time is the interesting relationship between Mordecai Wyatt Johnson and Hutchins who shared a correspondence. Johnson invited Hutchins on many occasions to speak at Howard but he never did, always making excuses about his wife's health. Speculation was that Hutchins never got over the fact that the African American preacher Vernon Johns defeated Hutchins at Oberlin in a Latin exam before the entire college. Dean Carter indicates that Hutchins had announced that no Negro could master Latin.[16]

Finally, Mays observed:

> The last seven quarters at the university, between 1932 and 1934,were hard but exciting years. My one disappointment was my inability to complete the thesis in time to receive the degree before I went to Howard University in the fall of 1934 to become dean of the School of Religion. …The doctorate was conferred in March of 1935."[17]

"Hutchins also abolished the football program."

Morehouse During the King Years

By the time of the founding of the University of Chicago in 1891, Morehouse College (founded in 1867) had already been a growing entity for a quarter of a century. By then, Morehouse had moved from Augusta, Georgia, to Atlanta and experienced the second of its four name changes (Augusta Seminary to Atlanta Baptist Seminary to Atlanta Baptist College to Morehouse).

As noted earlier, both Morehouse and Chicago owe their origins to the corporate titan and philanthropist, John D. Rockefeller. Morehouse, like its sister institution, Spelman College, emerged from the ashes of the Civil War and was established on land near downtown that Rockefeller donated. But unlike the Chicago case, no vast monetary endowment accompanied the founding of Morehouse. Although the land was certainly a valuable and much appreciated gift, Rockefeller knew that institutions could not easily thrive without the start-up capital to sustain multiple, high quality endeavors — from facilities to faculty to student scholarships to effective administrators.

Part of the answer to this apparent discrepancy lies in Rockefeller's approach to philanthropy. Commenting on the philanthropic method of Rockefeller, Ron Chernow wrote:

> While he had the option of distributing his educational largesse widely, such dispersed giving didn't

"When King entered Morehouse, he encountered a unique intellectual oasis..."

jibe with his philosophy. In religion and education no less than in business, Rockefeller thought it a mistake to prop up weak entities that might otherwise perish in the evolutionary race. "I think mistakes are made by organizing too many feeble institutions — rather consolidate and have good, strong working church organizations," he wrote in 1886 — a remark that could have applied to his educational views. In the long run, Rockefeller transposed to philanthropy the same principle of consolidation that had worked so well for him in business. Worn down by masses of people clamoring for his money, Rockefeller knew that he now needed a larger and more efficient method for disposing of his fortune.[18]

Chernow's observation about Rockefeller's penchant for consolidating weak, small enterprises into a larger, more efficient operation with high impact is suggestive for the current debate about the future of historically black colleges and universities. Many today insist that they have outlived their usefulness and represent nostalgic legacy institutions with little contemporary relevance. But others see HBCUs as part of the diversity of the American educational marketplace, a fact that has made America globally attractive. The 105 HBCUs provide students with an opportunity for quality education in an environment that supports their high achievement, affirms their personal identity and cultural wealth (Hilliard), promotes a strong culture of service, leadership and philanthropy, and challenges alumni to give back to their alma maters and communities. Perhaps the more relevant question is, 'Does America need all 105 HBCUs?' That may be a legitimate, if politically volatile, question to place on the public agenda.

Chernow continues and we learn something important about the ethos of Chicago and of Morehouse that continue to distinguish their research and educational missions. Instead of making isolated gifts, Rockefeller wanted to finance institutions whose research would have a pervasive influence. Of the University of Chicago, he later said, "Following the principle of trying to abolish evils by destroying them at the source, we felt that to aid colleges and universities whose graduates would spread their culture far and wide was the surest way to fight ignorance and promote the growth of useful knowledge." To Rockefeller, the least imaginative use of money was to give it to people outright instead of delving into the causes of human misery. "That has been our guiding principle, to benefit as many people as possible," he affirmed. "Instead of giving alms to beggars, if anything can be done to remove the causes which lead to the existence of beggars, then something deeper and broader and more worthwhile will have been accomplished."[19]

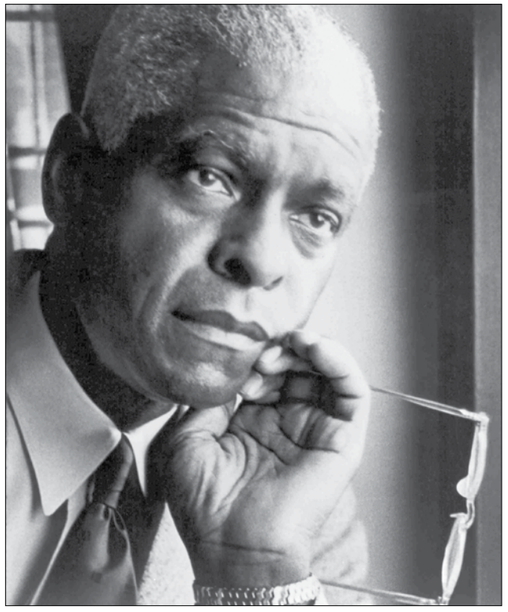
Both Morehouse and Chicago are also connected not only to the wealth and philanthropy of Rockefeller, but the vision and organizational ingenuity of the Reverend Henry Lyman Morehouse, who was a close advisor to Rockefeller and founder of the American Baptist Education Society 1887.[20] A respected benefactor, the College assumed Morehouse's name as its own in 1913.

This is a noteworthy point. Chicago and Morehouse enjoyed the same benefactor, but Morehouse received a comparatively modest investment during its infancy. Rockefeller donated land for Morehouse and Spelman to be planted. And he gave over a half million dollars to Chicago at the end of the 19th century.

When King arrived at Morehouse in the fall 1944, Mays was beginning his fifth year as president. Most of us are familiar with the rough outline of King's life. In 1944 at the age of fifteen, he entered Morehouse College as an early admissions student, following in the footsteps of his father and maternal grandfather. He did not graduate from Booker T. Washington High School as he would have in 1945. By this time, American involvement in World War II threatened college enrollments nationwide. As a college for men, Morehouse was particularly hit hard. The enrollment in the fall of 1945 was only 418 students. Seeking to compensate for the diminishing enrollment due to military induction, Mays initiated a policy whereby students would be admitted following the 11th grade in high school. Dean Carter believes that Mays borrowed the idea of early recruitment from Robert Maynard Hutchins.

When King entered Morehouse, he encountered a unique intellectual oasis — a place where young, black men were being encouraged to read widely and think deeply.

"...Mays held forth each week in the daily chapel services, compulsory for all students."



Benjamin E. Mays

Morehouse was now known for its high expectations, group mentoring approach to leadership formation, holistic developmental model, and use of inspirational leadership models to mobilize each student to find his own voice. While King's family provided a strong, supportive foundation, he found intellectual sustenance during his years at Morehouse College.

In 1944, when he entered the college, Swedish scholar Gunnar Myrdal published *An American Dilemma*, his landmark study of American race relations, noting inconsistencies in the country's democratic ideals and its practice. While African-American men were being called to serve their country abroad, paradoxically, they were unable to realize full citizenship rights at home. It was the intellectual wellspring of Morehouse College that would later prove so significant and so transformative that it became the bedrock for leadership development in men such as Martin Luther King Jr.

Like other students of his generation, Dr. King was largely influenced by Mays; his moral, intellectual, and spiritual presence towered over the Morehouse campus. While he did not teach any classes, Mays held forth each week in the daily chapel services, compulsory for all students. There, he shaped the social, political, and ethical thought of young men who were required to participate. Every Tuesday morning in historic Sale Hall, Dr. Mays would hold forth on a wide range of topics; few subjects were off limits. In fact, Dr. King commented that it was at Morehouse that he encountered a free atmosphere and where he first heard open and honest discussions about race. It was here, King states, "I realized that nobody was afraid."

Dr. Mays was a humanist and strong advocate of social justice. He was particularly outspoken about racial segregation and quick to underscore the injustice of it. He discouraged students from visiting local area theaters and other places that routinely discriminated against them. As a theologian, minister, scholar, and administrator, Dr. Mays used his position to affirm the dignity of his students and to uplift them on a consistent basis.[21] This is particularly important to acknowledge, considering the context of the times as African-American men and women were being demonized by pernicious racial-sexual stereotypes that were ubiquitous in virtually every aspect of American life. Dr. Mays did not instruct Morehouse students to accept segregation; he taught them how to transgress its boundaries, how to survive mentally and spiritually in a hostile world. Mays set a great example, himself, as someone having overcome tremendous odds to become one of this nation's truly great leaders.

In the course of daily chapel services, Morehouse students were exposed to a wide range of national and international speakers. During King's first year at the college, for example, he heard the national secretary of the NAACP, Walter White, speak on the challenging topic of "The Twilight of White Domination," and A. J. Muste, executive secretary of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, speak on pacifism and the shared nature of humanity. King's father, Reverend Martin Luther King Sr., the highly esteemed pastor of Atlanta's Ebenezer Baptist Church, also spoke in Chapel that year. Not all speakers

"For the first time, many began to ask who made the decisions about the canon..."

were men. During the course of King's matriculation at the college, notable women such as Mary McCleod Bethune appeared, as well as Eleanor Roosevelt.

Dr. Mays elevated the chapel experience to the distinction it continues to hold at the college today. Mays was an excellent debater and orator, himself, having presided over the Debating Council and Pan-Hellenic Club while at Bates. Upon assuming the presidency at Morehouse, he emphasized the importance of public speaking by providing various opportunities for students to address the chapel. Not only was President Mays a great influence on Dr. King and students of his generation, but the faculty was impressive as well. Dr. King entered Morehouse with plans to become a doctor but graduated, in 1948, with a major in Sociology. In between, he took classes with distinguished faculty such as George Kelsey in Religion and Philosophy and Walter Chivers in Sociology. Kelsey introduced young King to thinkers such as Thoreau and others. While he was not on the faculty during King's matriculation, the eminent theologian Howard Thurman, also a Morehouse man, left an indelible imprint on King's early theological development. It was during the Morehouse years that King experienced his first encounter with the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi through a chapel talk given by Dr. Thurman following his 1936 trip to India. We should note that Thurman was chaplain at Boston University when young King arrived there to pursue his Ph.D. in 1951. One still wonders why Mays didn't succeed in sending King to Chicago.

We should also note that the Chicago approach that Mays installed at Morehouse began to meet resistance as a new cultural revolution began to sweep across America in the late 1960s. Indeed, the Chicago approach also ceased to work well at Chicago during those years as students demanded that we re-examine our assumptions about the canon, as well as which theories and books deserved to be the universal, timeless classics. For the first time, many began to ask who made the decisions about the canon and who should enjoy authority in the academy. Mays observed:

> Since I retired from Morehouse College I have discovered a great deal in talking with many angry black students, on both white and black college campuses, hearing things I never heard or knew during my 27 years in the president's chair. At Morehouse I had tried to develop an academic community that was supra culture, supra race, supra religion, and supra nation. I tried to build this kind of college because I believed then, as I do now, that unless we succeed in building this same kind of world mankind's existence on earth is indeed precarious. I knew I could make little impact on the larger society, but I did what I could in the small area when I felt that black students generally shared this philosophy, but I have found since 1967 that this is far from being a universally accepted view among young black students.[22]

In the final analysis, Morehouse was Mays' laboratory for greatness. His students acquired learning that enabled them to change America. That pragmatic test was enough to validate his adaptation of the Chicago approach to the black experience. As for the value of Morehouse and the HBCUs, Mays's student, Martin Luther King Jr., was exhibit A to the world, demonstrating the value of a values-centered education.

A look at a few thought-provoking examples from Dr. King's lesser known and unpublished writings will provide a helpful context for better understanding what one school, Morehouse College, nurtured in King and others of his generation.

The Mission of Liberal Arts and Recentering the Moral Citizen in the Obama Years

The best liberal arts colleges prepare students with broad knowledge and help them discern the commonalities and differences among us. Today, liberal arts education is more relevant than ever as we traverse multiple disciplines and incorporate new and innovative epistemologies. Tackling the big questions of our times will necessitate an excellent liberal arts foundation anchored

"...a classic of and for the human spirit."

by a strong moral and ethical identity. This is tantamount to becoming a well-educated citizen. The college years offer the greatest opportunity for impactful action in this regard. Morehouse has historically prepared its students to think critically and independently. The countercultural process of recentering and despecialization begins early, from the moment a student enters the freshman class, and continues until he graduates.

Dr. King was well-read. He fully embraced what we would now characterize as multidisciplinarity, buttressing his sermons and speeches with references from literature, natural science, economics, sociology, psychology, history, and philosophical theology. His writings reveal him to be a practical theologian who respected social scientific data and analysis. For example, King could appreciate the historical and psychological work of Kenneth Clark and John Hope Franklin, whose scholarship in their respective fields helped to ground the argument for the 1954 Brown desegregation decision. In another instance, he was deeply appreciative of America's symbolic foundations as seen in the frequent use of biblical allusions and reference to founding documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. It was precisely this symbol set and mastery that enabled King to frame the civil rights struggle as a moral drama with universal appeal — indeed, a classic of and for the human spirit.

The Morehouse College King Collection contains over 10,000 *original* items belonging to Dr. King, including his seminal sermons, speeches, and other writings. Also within this collection is one of the most important, intact working libraries of the twentieth century, comprising over 1,000 books gathered from Dr. King's private Atlanta home. Heavy marginal annotations in Dr. King's own handwriting bear witness to his deep engagement and appreciation for a text. If King were particularly interested in a text, it is readily apparent through his detailed notes, questions and extensive underlining scattered throughout the margins. The diversity of these books sheds light on King's wide interests and provides strong evidence that Dr. King was, indeed, well-read, one mark of a successful liberal arts education.

Dr. King's intellectual breadth is best evidenced in the Nobel Prize Lecture delivered in Oslo, Norway, in December 1964, following his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize. Multiple outlines, notes, and drafts of this speech are included in the Morehouse King Collection, indicating that this might arguably "be King's most mature and deeply philosophical work."[23] The Nobel Lecture, which spans eight pages of text, reflects a "lifetime of keenly intelligent reading of Scripture, philosophy, theology as well as the humanities as expressed in eloquent references to literature and poetry." This lecture is "an exhortation to the world to end human suffering by embracing nonviolence." King writes, "In a real sense, nonviolence seeks to redeem the spiritual and moral lag as the chief dilemma of modern man. It seeks to secure moral ends through moral means. Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon." King goes on to contrast violence with creative, healing, and unifying principles of love upon which nonviolent philosophy is based. He quotes John Donne's Meditation XVII — *No man is an island* — which "he had previously scribbled down ten years earlier inside the folder containing his trial sermon to the people of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama."[24] The Nobel Prize lecture results from a great synthesis of King's ideas as reflected in multiple drafts, outlines, and evidence of work-in-progress contained in the Morehouse King Collection. Here, in early drafts, we observe nascent ideas and undeveloped arguments filled with potential; we observe his strenuous wordsmithing on each page and can imagine King's mind at work percolating thoughts and testing persuasive communication of them Something known to all of you who are writers, these literary 'fits and starts' suggest how much Dr. King relished clarity and precision as he expressed himself on paper.

Second, King had an appreciation for the transformative power of well-spoken language. While his rich, baritone voice, in itself, could magnetize an audience, Dr. King's arguments were always carefully and exquisitely crafted. From his liberal arts preparation, King mastered the classic art of rhetoric, having read Plato, Aristotle, and the other great thinkers. His speeches routinely and formulaically followed an appeal to the intellect, an appeal to the imagi-

"The eloquence, power, and inspiration of the 1963 speech...is unmatched in twentieth-century American rhetoric."

nation, and an appeal to the heart. The "I Have a Dream" speech has been widely considered a masterpiece of rhetoric. This is clearly apparent in his lesser known speeches that pre-date the iconic "Dream" speech, as well as those which followed, particularly the "Mountaintop" speech, delivered in Memphis on the eve of his death forty-two years ago this month (April 1968). Morehouse placed a strong emphasis on public speaking, as previously noted, and by the time students graduated, they were well-trained and confident in speaking before large audiences. By the time King reached his final year, he had experienced a variety of speakers and could deliver his own very memorable Senior Sermon in the Sale Hall Chapel, one that his classmate Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook regards as a tour de force on moral law.

King also developed a strong appreciation and great affinity for the spoken word through the rich African-American religious tradition in which he grew up. King followed in a long line of ministers: his father, Reverend Martin Luther King Sr., was a minister, as was his maternal grandfather, A. D. Williams. King came of age in the black Baptist church where he frequently heard all of the great African-American preachers. One significant influence was the outstanding preaching of Reverend William Holmes Borders, a family friend, who pastored the other large African-American congregation, Wheat Street Baptist, a few blocks away from King's home church, Ebenezer. To be sure, it was likely a confluence of factors that led Martin King to accept the call to the ministry during his senior year at Morehouse. Not the least of these factors was the leadership, counsel, and "enormous gift of speech" and "great communicative powers" of Dr. Mays.[25]

King's own oratory is perhaps one of his greatest gifts to the world. The eloquence, power, and inspiration of the 1963 speech at the March on Washington — commonly known as "I Have a Dream" but originally titled "Normalcy, Never Again" — is unmatched in twentieth-century American rhetoric. The leitmotif of the dream was not new to King; it was a culmination of years of reading and study of other sermons and speeches. While King, in his customary manner, carefully prepared the text for the Washington speech, remaining awake until the wee hours of the morning to revise and redraft, once at the podium, he relied on his "prodigious memory" and departed from the prepared text. What resulted was one of Dr. King's most eloquent orations and one of the greatest speeches in American history. Once again, it was his genius for framing the struggle of a particular people as a national drama that elicited the sympathy and participation of all rational people, just as a classic work of art does.

Third, Dr. King was a citizen of the world. Following the Montgomery Bus Boycott, he traveled extensively delivering sermons and speeches around the world. In 1957, he and his wife Coretta, traveled to Ghana where they joined scores of other world leaders in witnessing Ghana's independence from Great Britain. Two years later, the Kings traveled to India for a month-long visit at the invitation of India's president Nehru. While King would visit many foreign countries in his lifetime, the trip to India was particularly significant. It was here that his palpable witness to nonviolence led him to comment, "I left India more convinced than ever before that nonviolent resistance is the most potent weapon available to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom."

King was also well-traveled vicariously, exemplifying a great sense of history, especially America's place within the context of world events. On the eve of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955, for example, King could reflect on the anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles in Asia and Africa currently engaging the participants meeting at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia. Addressing the mass meeting at the Holt Street Baptist Church after the first successful day of the boycott, in a rare, unscripted moment, King eloquently articulated the global significance of the local African-American freedom struggle taking place in the South.

King possessed a great aesthetic sensibility. He was well-balanced and multifaceted. His sense of order, sense of humor, and sense of delight over the wonder of life and creation were noteworthy and winning attributes, particularly as one considers the last few months of his life. I especially enjoy his notes on the quality of food served in the many jails in which he was incarcerated, with Albany, Georgia, cited as the best because a soul food restaurant next door provided the food and coffee.

"He appreciated the interconnectedness and mutuality of existence."

He appreciated the interconnectedness and mutuality of existence. Not only do we see this eloquently expressed in King's iconic speeches but in his unpublished writing and partial expository fragments contained in the Morehouse King Collection. Consider, for example, a detailed draft outline for a sermon that King titled "Unity." He states, "One of the things that even the most casual observer to nature will notice is its unity, each part has its specific functions, yet the whole works harmoniously together; this is why we call it a universe, rather than a multiverse." "[Unity] is the principle inherent in the very nature of the universe. …To live in disunity is to live out of harmony with the structure of meaning," a profound ontological claim and one more familiar to Eastern religions and philosophy than to the West.

King notes three important final points in this brief outline: *Uniformity* is a narrow quest for sameness which drowns the richness of variety and the freshness of creativity. *Unity,* on the other hand, preserves variety and creativity while at the same time achieving an ultimate harmony. Finally, in a respectful and not so subtle plea for ecumenism and religious pluralism, often unpopular ideas in American culture, King writes: "we don't have to believe the same things; we don't have to go to the same church; we don't have to agree on all points. And yet, we can live in unity."[26]

Finally, King possessed the skill and art of criticism, both in giving and receiving it. Robert Hutchins said, "There is only one justification for universities, as distinguished from trade schools. They must be centers of criticism." And Derek Bok, former president of Harvard, observed in his powerful book, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More*, that "nationwide polls have found that more than 90 percent of faculty members in the United States consider the ability of students to think clearly and critically the most important purpose of undergraduate education."[27] He possessed an ability to be critical on many levels: social, institutional, and self. He also engaged in analysis that was critical, comparative, and constructive. We see this, for example, in his jeremiads against moribund American civil religion and in his scathing critiques of socially assimilated, and, hence, anemic black churches.[28] As an advocate of the Social Gospel, King argued that it was the responsibility of the church to improve conditions for all people. King had a prophetic understanding of the gospel that led him to challenge the church consistently in its responsibility to the people.

I now turn to consider how liberal arts education, properly understood, might help to re-open the American mind and thereby re-center America's moral compass. Although many observers have made a similar point, I find compelling Robert Bellah's observations about the social and moral responsibility of education. He writes, "in the broader perspective of liberal arts education, it is important to remember that science can produce information but not meaning. What characterizes the humanities, however, in at least partial contrast to the natural and social sciences, is the centrality of issues of meaning."[29]

> It is not just cognitive knowledge that we need, though we are woefully short on that. It is also moral insight, and here too, Americans are sharply limited. Our central tradition makes us think of justice only in terms of individual rights and, outside the Catholic community, we have little understanding of the common good at all. Human rights as a set of norms are accepted all over the world, but in most of the world, and in Catholic social teachings, human rights include many social rights: the right to a decent standard of living, a good job, health care, and so on.[30]

Steven Tipton of Emory University observes that King and Morehouse drew on a powerful narrative that assumed that churches and schools should participate in providing the kind of moral and civic education that would form citizens to understand their interdependence and give thick meaning to the notion of "the common good." When such a foundation is in place, a public moralist like King — or even today, President Obama — can call forth something deep within the American people that respects moral rhetoric and moves us to act for the common good. These traditions go back in time to the Progressive Era, especially in John Dewey and Jane Addams, but also to William Rainey Harper and the bold aspirations of the

University of Chicago. Indeed, by nurturing such moral citizens — people with the brains and the heart to understand the common good argument — universities like this one challenged the narrow instrumental agenda of the modern research university.

Of course, we can love the research universities for how they have enriched modern life, including lasers; FM radio; magnetic resonance imaging; global positioning systems; bar codes; transistors; improved weather forecasting; algorithms for Google searches; DNA fingerprinting; fetal monitoring; and scientific cattle breeding.[31] But we must be careful not to regard research and knowledge as an enterprise or, worse, an industry that exists to increase the comfort and satisfaction of people.

Many of society's greatest ills now result from smart people educated in great universities who allowed self-interest, the market, and an inordinate faith in science and technology to threaten our national soul and, in the case of nuclear weapons, human existence itself.[32] And closer to home, our national politics has been virtually paralyzed by narrow minds with loud megaphones who have polarized the nation, nurtured fear and anxiety, and thereby prevented moderate and progressive leaders from installing a new narrative about the nation's possibilities in the world.

This is the task of liberal arts education in the Obama years: to open the minds of citizens who are ready for a more hopeful future and to connect or reconnect people in ways that Dr. King thought possible based on their shared apprehension of the common good.

Harry Kalven Jr., the late University of Chicago law professor, wrote that by design and by effect, a university "is the institution which creates discontent with the existing social arrangement and proposes new ones."[33]

In conclusion, we have suggested that at its best, the University of Chicago has been an incubator for nurturing democracy's creative dissenters, even appointing people like young Hutchins as president. And we have suggested that at Morehouse, a virtual army of creative dissenters was nurtured by Dr. Mays to rehabilitate America. King was only the best known, and his papers illustrate some of the intricacy and beauty of that dissent in process. Now, the task is upon each of us: not to align with a political party or a particular leader, but to join our neighbors, now a global gathering, in directing the flow of history towards justice and the common good. The heavy lifting we must do as a society must come from a mature and well- educated cadre of people who will help to redirect this and all nations toward sanity. We give King the final word, indeed, the word with which we began from his sermon "Transformed Nonconformists:" *This hour in history needs a dedicated circle of transformed nonconformists. The saving of our world from pending doom will come, not from a conforming majority, but from the creative maladjustment of a transformed minority.*

May God bless each of you with "creative maladjustment." ✕

Endnotes

1. Special appreciation for assistance with this lecture is extended to Dr. Vicki Crawford, Co-Director of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection; Mr. Herman Skip Mason, Archivist of Morehouse College; Fran Phillips-Calhoun, Chief of Staff to the President; Dr. Lawrence E. Carter, Dean of the Martin Luther King, Jr. International Chapel at Morehouse College; Dr. Walter E. Fluker, Director of the Leadership Center at Morehouse College; and Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook, classmate of Dr. King in the class of 1948 and former president of Dillard University. Each of these beloved colleagues provided invaluable assistance to me in this effort.

2. Benjamin E. Mays, *Born to Rebel*, p. 134.

3. Ibid.

4. Robert J. Zimmer, University's 500th Convocation Address, October 9, 2009, p. 1.

5. In 1926, Woodson single-handedly pioneered the celebration of "Negro History Week", for the second week in February, to coincide with marking the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. The week was later extended to the full month of February and renamed Black History Month.

6. *Integrating the Life of the Mind: African Americans at the University of Chicago* website, http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/webexhibits/IntegratingTheLifeOfTheMind/BenjaminMays.html

7. Hutchins entry in Wikipedia, p. 2.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid, p. 3.

10. Dzuback, M.A. (1991), *Robert M. Hutchins*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

11. *Born To Rebel*, 135.

12. Benjamin E. Mays, *Lord, The People Have Driven Me On.*

13. *Lord*, pp. 45–46.

14. Ibid.

15. *Lord, the People Have Driven Me On*, pp. 42–48.

16. Conversation with Dean Lawrence Carter, April 28, 2010, 10:00 pm.

17. *Born to Rebel*, 137.

18. "Clash of the Titans," Ron Chernow in *The University of Chicago Magazine*, Volume 90, Number 5, June 1998.

19. Ibid.

20. Thomas Wakefield Goodspeed, *A History of the University of Chicago: The First Quarter-Century* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 3, 4.

21. *Benjamin E. Mays: His Life, Contributions, and Legacy*, edited by Samuel DuBois Cook (Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 2009).

22. *Born to Rebel*, 310.

23. Sotheby's catalog copy.

24. Ibid, pp. 36, 37.

25. Christine King Farris, *Through It All: Reflections on My Life, My Family and My Faith* (New York: Atria Books, 2009), p. 42.

26. Morehouse College MLK Collection, Series 2.

27. Derek Bok, *Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should Be Learning More* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 67, 68.

28. This author recalls the criticism directed towards King by prominent black Chicago pastors during his childhood.

29. "Education for Justice and the Common Good," in *The Robert Bellah Reader*, edited by Robert N. Bellah and Steven M. Tipton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 443.

30. Ibid., p. 449.

31. James Warren, "University of Chicago, a Bright Spot for the City" in *The New York Times* online, www.nytimes.com/2010/01/10/us/10cncwarren.html.

32. Regarding this issue, Bellah refers us to Max Weber's approving quote of Tolstoy: "Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question important for us: 'What shall we do and how shall we live?'" Bellah continues "But these are just the questions that higher education as liberal arts must face. If, in our desire to avoid indoctrination, we deprive our students of the knowledge of how the great traditions have answered these questions we are surely short-changing them. We are giving them no help with the questions that precede and follow scientific inquiry. We are avoiding the question, why should I study this in the first place, why should I study this instead of that? We are avoiding the question of what to do with scientific knowledge once it is attained. And above all we are giving them no help in trying to make sense of their lives." Bellah, p. 444.

33. Ibid.

DAVID NIRENBERG

Scriptural Conflict, Scriptural Community

Judaism, Christianity, Islam

My name is David Nirenberg, and I am a Medievalist. As you might predict about people who prefer the Dark Ages to Enlightenment, we medievalists often feel out of place in the world of present relevance. I, for example, started out in investment banking. When I left Wall Street I looked for the most irrelevant refuge possible, and found it in study of the Middle Ages, specifically of the large communities of Muslims and Jews that lived in Christian Spain until Ferdinand and Isabel expelled, conquered, and forcibly converted them circa 1492.

This seemed a safe enough hiding place. Who could possibly be interested in the history of extinct communities whose very names (*mozarabs*, *mudejars*, *moriscos*, *marranos*, to pick only some m's) are virtually unknown in the present?

It turns out I made a mistake in choosing a rock to hide under. Since 1989, that is, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the ways in which we think about the geopolitical importance of religion, and particularly of Islam, has been turned on its head. Let me just make the point briefly by quoting from a 1957 intelligence report by a high-level intelligence and security interagency group called the Operations Coordinating Board (think of it as the Homeland Security of the day): "Islam is important to the United States, *because it has compatible values*. The present division of the world into two camps is often represented as being along political lines, while the true division is between a society in which the individual is motivated by spiritual and ethical values and one in which he is the tool of a materialistic state. Islam and Christianity have a common spiritual base in the belief that a divine power governs and directs human life and aspirations while communism is purely atheistic materialism and is hostile to all revealed religion."

Throughout the Cold War such ideas played an important role in our geopolitics (think of Julia Robert's character

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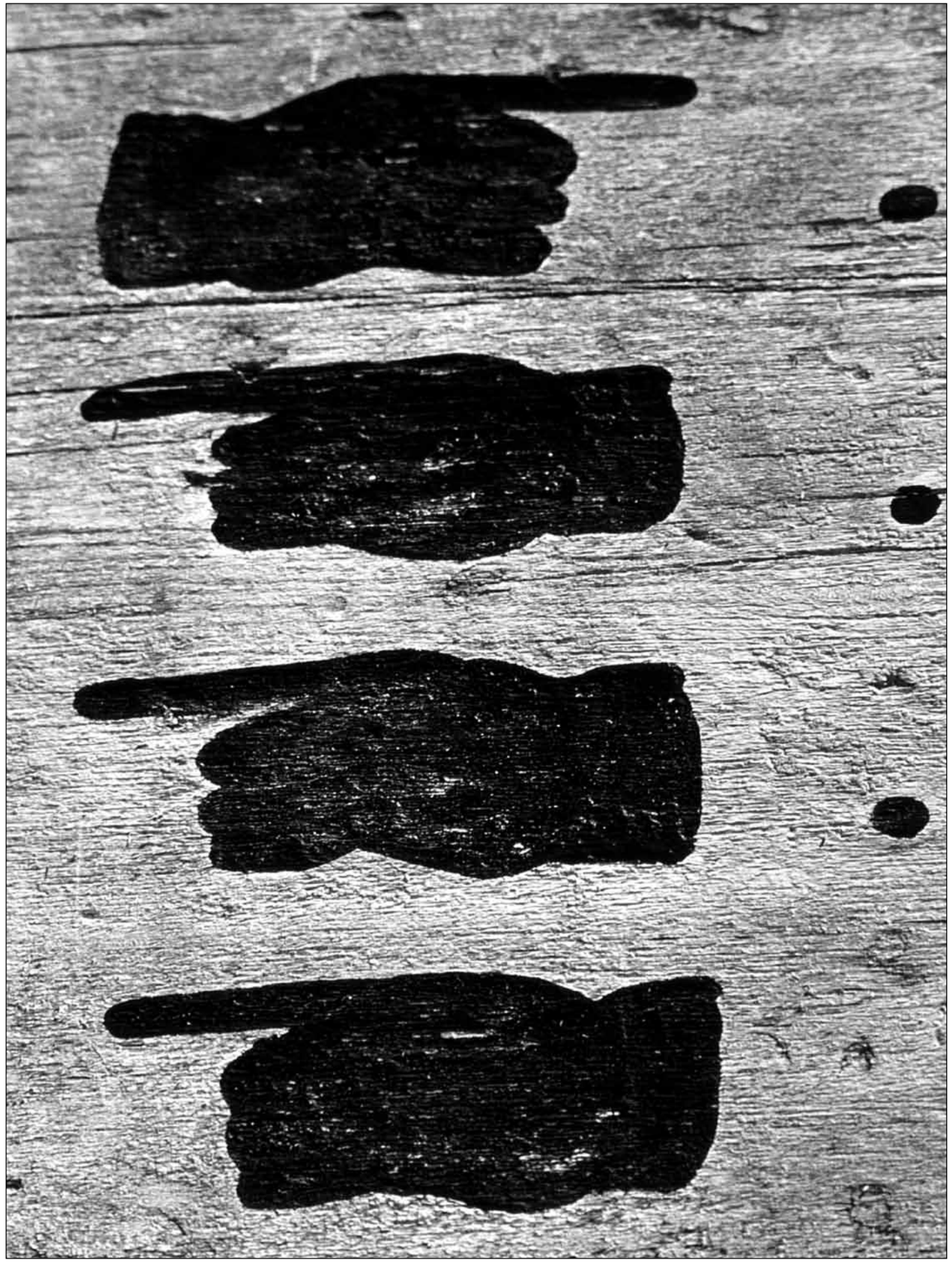
David Nirenberg delivered the 2009 John Nuveen Lecture on October 29, 2009 in Swift Hall.



"This has been a very bad turn of events for medievalists..."

in the recent movie about US support for the Taliban, *Charlie Wilson's War*). Can you imagine any intelligence assessment coming to the same conclusion today?

My point is not that intelligence assessments about Islam were more accurate in 1957 than they are today, or vice-versa. My point is only that we have dramatically changed our convictions about what the key ideological alignments and differences are between friends and enemies. A good example of the sharpness of that change is Samuel Huntington's essay and later book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, which argued that geopolitical conflict would now take place along the fault-lines between competing civilizational blocks, blocks whose cohesion was largely determined by a shared religious tradition and culture (Buddhist China, Western Civilization, and the Islamic World were his main categories). We don't have to agree with Huntington on the precise nature of these "Civilizations," the inevitability of their "Clash," or the reasons for the particular violence of the conflict with Islam ("Islam has bloody borders," as Huntington notoriously put it). But even if we don't, we can still admit that the world is now much more preoccupied with religious conflict, and particularly conflict between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, then it was when the Operations Coordinating Board made its predictions in 1957, or when I left graduate school in 1992.

This has been a very bad turn of events for medievalists, because it has suddenly made our subject relevant. Medieval history has become a battlefield in something of a proxy war over how we should think about our own time and place. There are literally hundreds of writers turning to the Middle Ages in order to make this or that argument about the relationship between Western and Islamic civilization. The topic has attracted some wonderful novelists, including Salman Rushdie (*The Moor's Last Sigh*), Amin Maalouf (*Leo the African*), A.B. Yehoshua (*Journey to the end of the Millennium*), Emile Habibi, and Juan Goytisolo. It has also attracted some less distinguished attention from historians, ranging from a recent book by David Levering Lewis (I confess I only read the review in *The New Yorker*) that suggests the world today would be a better and more tolerant place if the Arabs had defeated the Franks at the Battle of Poitiers and conquered all of Europe in the eighth century; to a French best-seller by Sylvain Gouguenheim on medieval translations of Aristotle, which argues that, contrary to common scholarly opinion, Islam contributed nothing to Western Europe's knowledge of Greek philosophy.

To the long list of books, we need to add countless media and policy projects, such as "Cities of Light," produced for PBS by Unity Productions; or the United States Department of State's program in preventative diplomacy. Many of these projects try to focus on moments in the past they represent as exemplary, moments in which, so to speak, "everyone got along": medieval Spain is most commonly cited.

Of these projects, the most curious one in which I've been involved was also the one at which I had the good fortune to meet our colleague here at the Divinity School, Michael Sells. A few years ago, at the suggestion of the Prime Minister of Spain (seconded by Turkey), the United Nations established a new "Secretariat for the Alliance of Civilizations" with the mandate (I am quoting from the Secretariat's concept paper) "to overcome prejudice, misconceptions, misperceptions, and polarization.... that foment violence." To quote that concept paper just a little bit further, the Secretariat was meant as "a call to all of those who believe in building rather than destroying, who embrace diversity as a means of progress rather than as a threat, and who believe in the dignity of humankind across religion, ethnicity, race, and culture." The Secretariat hosted a series of working groups, many of them focussed on medieval examples of multiculturalism and toleration, and then, for reasons that are unknown to me (but presumably not because its mission was accomplished), closed its doors less than a year after it opened them.

The one line I have quoted from the UN's concept paper suffices to make clear a contradiction at the Secretariat's very foundation: this "Alliance" of all who are for diversity and deplore polarization defines itself through a series of oppositions and exclusions. It is against those who would (apparently) rather destroy than build, strive to eliminate diversity rather than embrace it, and who do not believe in the dignity of mankind. We know, of course, whom the drafters of this constitution have in mind: all those who

"But he does not have a monopoly on the approach."

follow that rival paradigm, "The Clash of Civilizations." Such people are destroyers, eliminators, misanthropes: in short, barbarians. They are excluded from the "Alliance of Civilizations" because they are not civilized themselves. In this sense, the "Alliance" is itself also a "Clash," and the claim to toleration is already intolerant.

I want to stress this dynamic, because I think it is at the heart of many contemporary claims about the relative merits of the three Abrahamic monotheisms. It is particularly important that we be able to think critically about such claims, given the geopolitical importance of religion today. So let's take a closer look at a recent attempt to invoke the Middle Ages in defence of a particular monotheism's claims to tolerance, in order to see how it works.

In September of 2006, Pope Benedict XVI presented an address at the University of Regensburg entitled "Faith, Reason, and the University: Memories and Reflections." In it the learned pontiff asserted a long history of struggle between "rational" Christianity and "irrational" Islam, and used medieval Christian sources to characterize the violent intolerance of Muhammad and his followers. You may remember that the speech triggered protests, even violence, across large parts of the Muslim world. At the center of the storm were a few short but pregnant lines of the Pope's remarks, quoted from a "Dialogue" that the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus claimed to have had with a learned Muslim in the winter of 1391, when he was himself a soldier fighting in the armies of the Muslim Sultan.

> Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.... God is not pleased by blood.... Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and reason properly, without violence and threats.... To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death.

A commentator more attuned than the Pope to the ironies of history might have remembered that it was also in 1391 that Christendom undertook its most massive effort to convert the Jews of Spain, killing thousands and baptizing tens of thousands more. But this is an aside. In response to Muslim furor, the papal palace insisted that the line was incidental to the Pope's broader point, and that he was not endorsing the medieval emperor's views. But the Pope's broader point, although more complicated, was equally unfriendly to Islam. His claim was that Western European Catholicism represents salvific synthesis in humanity's dialectical struggle between faith and reason. Modern scientific culture had shattered that synthesis in an excess of reason. Protestantism, because of its rebellion against scholasticism and Greek philosophy, abandoned the Catholic synthesis in favor of an excess of faith. Judaism and Islam, on the other hand, represent an extreme subjection to God: pure faith, without reason. (This is why Islam is so violent and intolerant, according to the Pope: because it consists of blind faith.) Only Catholicism maintains the synthesis, remaining open both to God and to the world. Hence only Catholicism is capable of producing both truth and tolerance. Islam, the Pope is strongly suggesting, produces neither.

The Pope provides a good example of this strategy for using the medieval past in our present conflict: as evidence that one side is inherently rational and tolerant while the other is not. But he does not have a monopoly on the approach. In fact it is also a common Islamist strategy. Many Muslim thinkers and writers nowadays point to the fact that large communities of Christians and Jews lived under Islamic rule in the Middle Ages, at a time when Western Christendom was bent on converting, killing, or expelling whatever non-Catholics lived within its boundaries. Those of you who have read the Hamas Charter (1988) know that this is the explicit claim of article 31: "The Islamic Resistance Movement is a humanistic movement.... Under the wing of Islam it is possible for the followers of the three religions — Islam, Christianity, and Judaism — to coexist in peace and quiet with each other. Peace and quiet are not possible except under the wing of Islam. Past and present history are the best witness to that." Like Pope Benedict, the drafters of the Hamas Charter look back to the Middle Ages and seize on one

"...all three scriptural traditions are rich enough to generate a vast diversity of potential views..."

strand — albeit a very different strand — of its history in order to argue that Islam is the only religion capable of providing both Truth and tolerance.

Each of these claims that one religion is more tolerant than another is made in pursuit of claims to that religion's superiority, and to the inferiority or exclusion of the other. The Pope's claims about the threat posed by Islam to Europe's Christian roots was intended as an intervention in the European Union's debate about whether or not the large Muslim nation of Turkey should be admitted to its ranks. (Just before becoming Pope, Ratzinger had publically urged a "no" vote.) Likewise, Hamas' claims to peaceful toleration are part of its long war against Jewish and Christian political influence in the region. These claims to greater tolerance in the past are also claims to greater power in the present, which is why histories of civilization so often authorize histories of barbarism.

Please don't misunderstand me: in pointing to some commonalities between contemporary European and Islamist dialectics of faith, reason, and toleration, I am not trying to equate the Pope with Hamas, or Hamas with the Pope. But I am trying to suggest that when we turn to history — medieval or any other — in order to demonstrate the exemplary tolerance of a given religious culture or scriptural tradition in comparison with another, we are often reinscribing the dynamics we claim to be transcending. If today Catholic France and Spain give their religious minorities more latitude than Islamic Egypt or Saudi Arabia give theirs, this does not prove that Christianity and the New Testament are inherently more tolerant than Islam and the Qur'an, any more than the contrary is proven by the fact that Islam never produced a Holocaust, or that the Muslim world provided safe harbor to many of the religious minorities persecuted and expelled by Western Europe in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

This does not mean that history has nothing to offer us in our present need. I am not making a plea for renewed irrelevance. But what I would like to suggest is that, instead of producing exempla to feed competing fantasies of perfection, our practice might instead rediscover the multiple potentials that exist within all three religions and scriptural traditions. On questions of pluralism and tolerance, for example, all three scriptural traditions have the potential to legitimate attitudes toward the others which range from extensive toleration to total extermination, from (to choose only among the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke) "love your enemy" and "offer him your other cheek," [6.29] to "but as for my enemies, who deny my sovereignty, bring them here and slay them before me." [19.27] Which of these potentials becomes dominant in a given time and place has little to do with the essential tolerance or violence of a given scriptural tradition, and everything to do with the specific work that tradition is asked to do in the particular historical circumstances of that given time and place.

For approximately fifteen centuries, for example, Christian theologians worked very hard to explain why killing heretics, Muslims, or Aztecs during Crusade or conquest should be considered an "act of love." (Their explanations are the subject of a beautiful article by Jonathan Riley-Smith.) Today few would do so, not because the Scriptures themselves have changed, but because for historical reasons we read those scriptures in a different way. Conversely, under the pressure of colonialism, ideas about Jihad that would have seemed like heretical innovations to Sunni Muslims from the entire previous millennium of Islam came to seem normative, traditional, and conservative to many twentieth-century Muslims. (I'm thinking here, for example, of the modern dissemination and revalorization of the teachings of Ibn Taymiyya.)

The point isn't that one of these attitudes is true to the scriptural tradition and the other is false. Nor am I throwing up my hands in frustration and declaring that all interpretations of scripture are arbitrary (like the great twelfth-century theologian Allan of the Island, who once complained that "biblical citations have noses of wax: they can be twisted whatever way one wants"). My point is rather that all three scriptural traditions are rich enough to generate a vast diversity of potential views, not only on questions like toleration and the treatment of other scriptural communities, but on any given topic. Precisely what views are generated, and which ones come to seem orthodox to a given community, has a great deal to do with the historical context in which they are being read, that is, with the needs, the situation, the expectations of the communities doing the

"Don't let the car fool you: my treasure is stored in heaven."

reading. And all of these views — insofar as they are generated through and authorized by Scripture — can be understood by those who hold them as continuous with and true to the beliefs of imagined founding communities.

We don't, for example, need to subscribe to Weber's theories on the origins of capitalism in order to concede that although many modern Protestants think of themselves as recovering the teachings of the earliest Church, their understanding of New Testament passages on poverty or private property are very different from that of the first Christian communities. (A point made very nicely by a bumper sticker on a new Silverado pick-up truck I saw in the parking lot of Calvin College: "Don't let the car fool you: my treasure is stored in heaven.") Or on the question of violence and how to treat one's enemies, we might expect the early Christians, powerless and persecuted, to pay more attention to the passage about "turning the other cheek to be struck," whereas it would not be surprising if, as Peter Brown, Michael Gaddis, Tom Szigorich, and many other historians have shown, saints like Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and John Chrysostom, writing once the Emperor had become Christian and put his sword at the disposal of the Church, began to pay more notice to "slay them before me." Nor would it be surprising — and I add this as something of a footnote to Benedict's Regensburg address — if the early Islamic community, arising as it did in a context saturated by late antique Christian representations of holy war deployed by the Roman Empire in its long struggle with Persia, should have adopted some of those Christian representations as its own. (On this fascinating subject I refer you to the work of our own Fred Donner.)

It seems banal to point out that these processes continue: scripture continues to generate, not only new interpretations on specific points, but also new scriptural communities, and even new religions. Judaism nowadays includes Chassidic, orthodox, reform, conservative, egalitarian, reconstructionist, and even secularist Jewish movements (the last five all birthed in the past two hundred years, and the last three in the past twenty). Christianity encompasses vastly different ways of understanding its scriptures. Some have their roots in very ancient disputes over how to interpret Christian scripture (such as the Coptic, Syriac, Greek Orthodox, and Catholic Churches), others in early modern ones, such as the many different Protestant communities, and still others in the modern world (such as the Christian Scientists, the Mormons, or the many different Evangelical communities that have proliferated in the last forty years). Doubtless new forms of Christian belief will appear in the future. There will always be false teachers among you, Jesus told his apostles, in order that the truth might become clear. But precisely who are the false teachers and who are the true: this will not become clear until the end of time.

Similarly in Islam, there have been many different ways to interpret the Prophet's words and actions, resulting in many different scriptural communities. American politicians and newspaper readers have of late become much more aware of differences between Sunnis and the Shi'ites, but there are many more Islamic communities, all based on different understandings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. According to an early tradition, Muhammad himself predicted this process: "Those who were before you of the People of the Book became divided into 72 sects [milla], and this community will be divided into 73, 72 in Hell, and one in Paradise."

"The People of the Book became divided": Muhammad is teaching us something important here. The Book, that is to say, the scriptural and prophetic tradition from which Jews, Christians, and Muslims all trace their descent, simultaneously unites the adherents of all three religions into one people, and divides them all into many. This process is encoded in Scripture itself. For although the Qur'an often proclaims itself a "book wherein there is no doubt," it is also well aware that, when subjected—as it must be — to human interpretation, the language of scripture will generate conflict. In the words of Surah 3, verse 7: "He it is who revealed unto you the scripture wherein are clear revelations — they are the substance of the book — and others which are ambiguous. But those in whose hearts is doubt pursue that which is ambiguous, creating dissension by seeking to explain it. None knows its explanation save God, and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: we believe therein. The whole is from our Lord. But only men of understanding really heed." (Famously, the meaning of this passage changes completely depending on

"Much of the Hebrew Bible is a demonstration of how hard it is to get the reading right..."

how editorial authorities choose to punctuate this unpunctuated Qur'anic text. The scope given to human interpretation is quite different if we chose to punctuate: "None knows its explanation save God and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge. Say: we believe therein.")

This ambivalent promise to unite us in blessing and divide us in dissension seems to me a basic attribute of the scriptural tradition. As Deuteronomy tells the Israelites: read and observe my commandments correctly and you will be blessed; incorrectly and you will be cursed. Much of the Hebrew Bible is a demonstration of how hard it is to get the reading right, and a demonstration of what happens to those who don't. There are countless examples, but King David provides a nice one in Psalm 78:

> "Hear my teaching, my people. Turn your ears to the words of my mouth.
> I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old,
> Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us.
> We will not hide them from their children,...
> that the generation might...
> not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that didn't make their hearts loyal, whose spirit was not steadfast with God." (78.1–8)

In these first lines, we hear both the claim to unity and a shared tradition, handed down of old, and the claim to sectarianism and difference, in which one group reads past prophecy correctly, and the other does not. The Psalmist continues:

> "And they flattered him with their mouth, with their tongues they lied to him,
> while their heart was not straight with him,
> And they kept no faith with his covenant." (36–37)

It isn't that those who err deny the prophetic tradition, but that they knowingly interpret it falsely, and therefore separate themselves from the true Israel. It was because of this error, according to the Psalmist, that God "rejected the tent of Joseph, and didn't choose the tribe of Ephraim, But chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which he loved." (78.67–68)

To put it another way, the very same "book" that unites all "Peoples of the Book" also divides them in an eternal struggle over how it should be read. It is this struggle that produced the sectarian world of second-Temple Judaism, and it is this same struggle that produced the Jewish sect that became Christianity. We can see that struggle going on in all the early Christian texts, beginning with the letters of Paul (think of epistles like Galatians and Romans, which are, among other things, handbooks on how followers of Jesus should read the Hebrew scriptures). But my favorite example comes from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24. Two men are talking on the road to Emmaus. It is seven miles to their destination, but they are oppressed by disappointment, not by distance. A third figure, a stranger, appears on the road:

> "What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, downcast. Then one of them answered him: "you must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days…. All about Jesus of Nazareth, who showed himself a prophet powerful in action and in speech… and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free."

Contrary to their first impression, their new companion proves to be quite well informed. "'You foolish men! So slow to believe all that the prophets have said! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself." "About himself," the gospel says, because of course the stranger was the risen Jesus, although his two disciples did not recognize him until dinnertime and journey's end. [Luke 24:13–35] The Gospel is making an important point. If we read the

"But just like the letters of Paul or the Gospels, the Qur'an needs to defend its distinctive readings of those revelations."

prophecies one way, then Jesus, who was condemned, suffered, and died, cannot be the promised Messiah. But if we read them a different way, then in fact that is exactly what they promised. In order to become Christian you need to learn to read the old books in a new way, and one of the most important tasks of the new books is to teach you how.

The sectarian background of the New Testament is so well known that Monty Python can make a movie about it. Fewer people know that the Qur'an is the product of a similar environment, in which a new sectarian community forms out of the coming together of many existing traditions. The Qur'anic community included rabbinic Jews, Samaritans, Christians of many different stripes, as well as polytheists and followers of earlier prophets to the Arabs. Like the Gospels, the Qur'an sees itself as including and fulfilling all of the prophetic tradition that produced these earlier scriptural communities. Thus at the beginning of Sura 2, the Cow, God promises Adam that those who believe in his revelations shall neither fear nor grieve. It is only "those who disbelieve, and deny our revelations," who need fear. "Such are rightful owners of the fire." (2.39)

This would seem to welcome receivers of previous prophecies, especially the Jews and Christians (the "People of the Book") who accept God's prior revelations. But just like the letters of Paul or the Gospels, the Qur'an needs to defend its distinctive readings of those revelations. Thus Sura 2 continues: "O Children of Israel! Remember my favor... and fulfill your part of the covenant...! Believe that which I reveal, confirming that which you possess already (of the Scripture), and be not first to disbelieve therein, and part not with my revelations for a trifling price, and keep your duty unto me. Confound not truth with falsehood, nor knowingly conceal the truth." (2.40–42)

The Sura then revisits many of the episodes of Israelite disobedience to God related in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, ranging from their complaints about eating nothing but manna in the desert (2.61) to their attacks upon Jesus ("Is it ever so, that when there comes to you a messenger [from God] with that which you yourselves do not desire, you grow arrogant, and some you disbelieve and some you slay?" (2.87) These passages provide excellent examples of how deeply intertwined the Qur'anic community and its emerging scriptures were with communities and scriptures of Christians and Jews. The accusation that the Jews always persecute their prophets, frequent in the Qur'an (e.g. 2.61, 87, 91, and in many other Sūras) has obvious New Testament analogs. Think only of Acts of the Apostles (7.51–53): "You stubborn people… you are always resisting the Holy Spirit... Can you name a single prophet your ancestors never persecuted?" Today critical scholars of the Qur'an call these analogic moments "intertexts," and the study of these intertexts is one of the most rapidly expanding fields in Western Qur'anic studies. Many Qur'anic stories about earlier prophets — such as the repeated account of the infant Jesus making birds out of clay which then fly away — that were once thought to be eccentric, we now know came from the community's vast store of sacred lore long since lost to Christianity or marginalized as un-canonical — in this case the Infancy Gospel of Thomas.

Let me dwell for a moment on the well-known intertexts from just one Qur'anic verse, verse 93 of Sura 2, a passage that focuses on the moment of scriptural revelation itself:

> And remember When we took your promise and We raised above you Mount Sinai, saying: "Hold firmly to what we have given you, and obey:" They said: "we hear, and we disobey:" And they had to take into their hearts the worship of the Calf because they have no faith. (2:93)

"We raised above you Mount Sinai?" (cf. Sura 2.60, 4.153) You are right to suspect that such a line is not to be found in the five books of Moses or the Hebrew Bible. Yet even the geographic vocabulary of the phrase marks it as an "intertext," for the Qur'an names the mountain not in Arabic (jabal), but Aramaic: Ṭūr Sīnīn (compare Targum ṭūrā de-sīnai). In fact the Qur'an consistently refers (with one exception) to the site of revelation in Aramaic, not Arabic, as in the opening of Sura 52: "By the mount! (Ṭūr)/ By a Book inscribed on parchment unrolled!" And the passage does indeed turn out to be a citation, not from the written Torah but from the oral, the Talmud and Agada. For example, we find in the Babylonia Talmud, Tractate

"...however badly things have turned out, they could have turned out otherwise."

Shabbat, 88a, on Exodus 19.17, "And they stood beneath the mount": R. Abdimi b. Hama b. Hasa said: This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be he, overturned the mountain upon them like an inverted cask, and said to them "If you take upon yourselves the Law, good. If not, here you will find your grave." R. Aha b. Jacob observed: "This furnishes a strong protest against the Law."

Even the devastating line "we hear and we disobey" turns out to be an intertext of sorts. Recall the Israelites' response to Moses in Exodus (24.7) and Deuteronomy (5:24): "we hear, and obey." [Exodus: n'aseh v-nishma', Dt. v-shama'nu v-'asinu]. The Qur'an's transformation of that phrase is a multilingual pun, playing on the homophony between Hebrew shama'nu v-'asinu (we hear and obey) and Arabic sami'nā wa-'aṣaynā: (we hear and disobey). The play on words reveals the shared scriptural space of these communities at the same time that it shatters it.

I take the ambivalence of this gesture to be constitutive of the scriptural tradition we call Abrahamic. Much like the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus, the Qur'an is here declaring its continuity with previous scriptures, in this case by maintaining that these prophesied the coming of Muhammad, but that those prophecies were concealed through misreadings or falsifications of the scriptures by the communities that preserved them. As Sura 4.46 has it, "Some of those who are Jews change words from their contexts and say: "We hear and disobey..." distorting with their tongues and slandering religion." Our multilingual pun, in other words, underwrites the Islamic doctrine of "taḥrīf" — the charge of Jewish and Christian alteration and falsification of previous scriptures — that allows the Islamic community both to honor the previous scriptures (unlike, for example, the Marcionites and Gnostics in early Christianity), and to set them aside (unlike the Christianity that became orthodox).

If I've stressed these intertexts, it is in part because they are among the more self-consciously dialogic passages of Scripture, and can therefore tell us a great deal about the hermeneutic processes of identification and disidentification that produce and maintain sectarian communities within the Abrahamic tradition. And of course these intertexts also remind us of how "multi-culti" the early Qur'anic community — like the early Christian and the early rabbinic communities — could be, and thereby open a path toward a historicism that can relativize each tradition's claims to exclusive truth. Such reminders offer an attractive kind of relief in an age when Scriptural traditions seem poised in intractable opposition: the relief that, however badly things have turned out, they could have turned out otherwise. This is the relief that we nowadays call contingency, and unlike Nietzsche in his *Untimely Meditation on the Uses and Abuses of History*, I do not mock it. But it is not the relief that I am after today.

My goal today — and it is something I could not articulate in any other forum — is rather to suggest that we are not forced to choose between historicism and faith, or between an awareness of the constant transformation of the beliefs and practices of historical religious communities, and a belief in our adherence to revealed truths. The Scriptural tradition itself enjoins the ongoing struggle to read it correctly; legitimates the multiple readings that emerge from that struggle in different times and places (as the Qur'an puts it in Sura 55.29, "Every day he [reveals himself] in a fresh state"); emphasizes the inexhaustibility of those readings ("if every sea became ink for the words of my Lord, surely the sea would be exhausted before the words of my lord were exhausted" 18.109); and sometimes even reminds us that it is not given to any human in this world to determine which of those readings is definitive ("above every lord of knowledge there is one more knowing," Surat'l Yusuf 12.76).

Seen in this light, historicism can become one of the tools by which scripture generates its own critique, revealing new truths (both exoteric [zahir] and esoteric [batin], literal and allegorical) for new times, all of them understandable as implicit in scripture from its very origins in God. I take this to be the teaching — to stick with Islamic examples — of Mahmoud Muhammad Taha's "Second Message of Islam." Taha was opposed to the attempts of the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist parties to impose Sharī'a law in the Sudan. He drew a distinction between the teachings that the Prophet addressed to the needs and circumstances of his seventh-century followers, and the teachings he addressed to future stages in the

"The ways in which communities read their scriptures are not random..."

salvation history of humanity. (Jews might think here of the "Doctrine of Accommodation" Maimonides expressed by the lovely Arabic word talaṭṭuf, "shrewdness in the service of loving kindness." Christians might think of I Corinthians 3.1–2: "I fed you with milk and not solid food, for you were not able to take it.") According to Taha, the Sharī'a law that Islamic parties wanted to impose on the Sudan was a relic of the first message, whereas the prophet, through his life and example (Sunnah), had modeled different teachings for different futures, including modernity.

To pick a concrete example, on the question of Islamic politics toward non-Muslims, the Qur'an had taught the Sharī'a of Jihad to an infant Islam: "Slay the idolaters wherever you find them....But if they repent and observe prayer and pay Zajah, then leave their way free." (9.5) A more mature teaching came in Sura 3.159: "It is by the mercy of God that you are lenient with them. And if you had been rough and hard hearted they would surely have dispersed from you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them, and consult them, and when you are resolved, then put your trust in God." But the pinnacle of the Qur'an's teaching expressed a very different relationship between prophecy and politics, addressed to a more perfect Islam: "Then remind them, for you are only a reminder. You have no dominion over them." (88.21–22)

Mahmoud Muhammad Taha was executed by the Nimeiri regime in January of 1985. Sharī'a law was imposed in the Sudan, with genocidal consequences. But neither Taha's death, nor the defeat of his ideas at that particular moment in history, make his teachings less essentially "Islamic" than those of the victors. They remain a potential vision of Islam, one of the many contained in the inexhaustible sea of ink that is scripture.

For the sake of clarity, let me conclude by compressing this whirlwind tour of several thousand years and three scriptures into two reductively opposed "lessons":

The "negative" lesson: no scriptural tradition has "the answer." All are capable of generating violence, intolerance, exclusion. It is simply not true that the world would live in peace if Muslims and Jews turned to Pope Benedict's beloved logos from the Gospel of John, or if Jews and Christians were ruled by Hamas' Qur'an. Even if the entire world converted to one scripture, the very nature of the scriptural traditions means that their reading would continue to generate new sects and new conflicts.

The "positive" message: every scriptural tradition has "the answer," insofar as each is capable of generating tolerance, inclusion, equality, freedom, or whatever other values the societies reading them come to deem important. It is simply not true — to choose only one Western version of a widespread fallacy, that of Jean-Luc Nancy — that the teachings of Jesus are capable of generating their own critique, whereas those of Muhammad are not. We can learn to read each of the scriptural traditions in ways that expand the space for religious freedom — extending even to freedom from religion — if that is what we want to do.

This isn't exactly what the military calls "actionable intelligence." The ways in which communities read their scriptures are not random: they are the product of habit and custom, and changing them requires effort on the part of teachers and readers everywhere. But neither is the situation hopeless. As I tried to suggest earlier, all of our scriptural communities have changed their reading habits many times over the centuries. (The shift in Catholic teachings about Jews after WWII provides one notable example). As the thousands of reform movements in the contemporary Muslim, Jewish, and Christian worlds make clear, they are still doing so today. How can a medievalist best help the efforts of all these "peoples of the book?" Perhaps by reminding them that "the book" is not written in stone, and that the people have the power to reshape its meanings. ✕

REV. ELIZABETH PALMER

God Laughs

I've christened 1975 as the year of God's laughter. I don't say that because it was the year I was born (although I suspect there was relieved laughter on the part of my parents when I arrived unexpectedly, a month premature but healthy and safe). But 1975 was also the year in which two books were published: Woody Allen's *Without Feathers*[1] and Anne Sexton's *The Awful Rowing Toward God*.[2] Both of these books ask difficult questions about faith — Allen through comedy and Sexton through poetry — and both of them imagine what it means for God to laugh.

Most of us are probably familiar with Woody Allen, whose cynical agnosticism lies behind some of the most brilliantly neurotic characters in cinema. In his midrash on Genesis 22, Allen sets us up to contemplate the trickster God, God personified as the biggest practical joker of them all. "I jokingly suggest thou sacrifice Isaac and thou immediately runs out to do it. . . . No sense of humor. I can't believe it."[3] Woody Allen most likely didn't know that he was reading the binding of Isaac in the tradition of Martin Luther, who claimed in his sixteenth-century interpretation of Genesis 22 that God was only playing sport with Abraham, like a father who teasingly takes the apple away from his child but secretly intends to return it later. This God is a cosmic jester, and the joke is on us. After all of Abraham's obedience in leaving his homeland and giving up his ancestral religion; after Sarah's surprised laughter, part delight and part disbelief, at the unexpected annunciation of their son Isaac — after *all* of this, God decides to play one more joke on Abraham. And it seems like such a sadistic joke. Yet, for both Luther and Woody Allen, there's a bit of tenderness in God's behavior. In the end, just as Luther reminds us that the child receives the apple back from his sporting father, Isaac is spared and Abraham is told to get some sleep and God promises to check in on him in the morning.

Rev. Elizabeth Palmer delivered this sermon on January 27, 2010 in Bond Chapel.

"...no more accurate than the claim we make in the basement of Swift Hall about God drinking coffee."

Woody Allen would return to this story more than a decade later in his film *Crimes and Misdemeanors*. The philosophical hero of the film, Professor Levy, confidently exegetes the story of Abraham and Isaac, concluding that humans are unable to conceive of a loving God and all we can say is that the world is empty of meaning — except the meaning that we instill in it through acts of love for one another. It sounds nice in an existentialist sort of way, but Woody Allen knows better — and so a few minutes later in the film Professor Levy commits suicide. Agnostic humanism in this case doesn't work; once again, it seems, God has the last laugh.

We should, of course, remember that Woody Allen doesn't really believe in God. He was making a theological claim as well as a joke when he wrote in the *New Yorker*, "Not only is there no God, but try getting a plumber on weekends."[4] It's easy to imagine oneself the brunt of God's sadistic cosmic jokes (and to joke right back at that God) when one is ambivalent about whether such a God exists. It's harder to imagine such a thing for those of us who do believe in God.

I think most of us would hope that Woody Allen is wrong, that God is never a sadistic practical joker, and that instead our poet Anne Sexton is right to focus on the joyful dimensions of God's laughter, the triumphant redemption that God will bring at the end of days. The very last laugh, Sexton reminds us, is an abundantly joyful divine laughter. Even if God is hidden, God is, in the end, revealed as pure grace — like an island floating absurdly amidst the chaotic waters, waters that call to mind creation and baptism — and this grace is so pure and abundant that even the Absurd can respond with nothing less than laughter. Look! There's a wild card, so everyone wins! And the laughter rolls out of God's mouth and into ours, like a giant hoop, a triumphant rejoice-chorus that doubles over on itself. And in that laughter is redemption: redemption from the chaotic journey that leaves us scarred and battered, redemption from the view that God's grace is finite and there can only be one winner, redemption in the love and the joy that we will find, at last, in a God who laughs.

A theologian might remind us that to say that God laughs is no more accurate than the claim we make in the basement of Swift Hall about God drinking coffee. But the beauty of Anne Sexton and Woody Allen is that they push us to ask the question anyway: if there were such a thing as divine laughter, what would such laughter be? Would it be the cynical laughter of a Divine Joker whose tricks are supposed to teach us to survive in a painful and meaningless universe? Or would it be the joyful laughter of a playful God, one who lets everyone win in the end, one whose laughter like a hoop rolls out of his mouth and into ours? Or would it be both?

Martin Luther did believe in a God who is powerful enough to sport with us, smiling gently at our lack of understanding while we learn about survival the hard way. But Luther's God was also mighty enough to laugh at the power of death and the gates of hell, blissfully triumphing over the powers that threaten to devour us. In the end for Luther the final word was always joy, just as it was for Anne Sexton. God triumphs in the end. How can we help but love such a God, with his wild card and his untamable, eternal, gut-driven laughter?

Such an optimistic view did not come easily to Anne Sexton. The poems in *The Awful Rowing Toward God* are about war and madness and despair and cancer and martyrdom and child abuse and the Holocaust — and it's only in this particular poem, the book's final poem, that she can imagine herself reaching God's mercy. Anne Sexton was someone who suffered deeply in life, and it would be dishonest to preach about this poem without telling you the rest of the story, which is that she prepared this book for publication, revised the galleys one last time, and then went out to the garage and asphyxiated herself with carbon monoxide. The joyful image of God's laughter was not enough to mitigate the despair that Anne felt. Or perhaps the joyful image of God's laughter was enough to convince her that she couldn't wait any longer before reaching the Island.

I tell you this story not to undermine the blissful image of God's grace that Anne paints for us, because I believe that such grace is real. I tell you this story because there is great complexity in our perceptions of God — hidden and revealed, cosmic joker and joyful delight — and there is great complexity in our responses to God — doubt and

"But it is given to us to negotiate the waters of life..."

faith, comedy and despair. To some of us it is given to laugh cynically in the face of meaninglessness. To some of us it is given to struggle more than most. To all of us it is given to negotiate the waters of life and discern God's voice in the struggle. And this negotiation is not easy. It's beautiful and it's torturous, because in the end we don't know what kind of laughter God laughs any more than we know what kind of coffee God would drink. We don't know what's coming next. We can't be certain about who we will be, or about what God will be.

I was reminded of this uncertainty earlier in the week when I read the online journal of a member of our congregation whose two-year-old son Israel is in remission from brain cancer. Issy's father wrote in his journal: "Issy is more tired than usual and we don't know why. Please keep praying for him. Yes he is doing well, but I'm waiting for the punch line to smack me in the face."[5] The punch line. Here again life is absurd and God is the one controlling the joke. Theologically and pastorally, I don't know what to do with this. I've known Issy since he was a baby and I laugh at his flirtatious grins on Sunday mornings and I know the grim statistics for the type of cancer that he had. Does God write the punch line to this story, Issy's dad is asking, and what kind of punch line will it be? These are difficult questions. Our theological friends Woody Allen and Anne Sexton and Martin Luther can't help us answer them.

But it is given to us to negotiate the waters of life and discern God's voice in the struggle. And so a few weeks ago our congregation gathered around the font for a recognition of Issy's baptism. He had been baptized last year by a hospital chaplain during a panic-filled hospital emergency, but we wanted to celebrate in the midst of the assembly his baptism and the ways in which it has sustained him. And so on a Sunday morning at Augustana we gathered as Issy's congregation, rejoicing that right now he is cancer-free — and he laughed as I made the sign of the cross on his forehead and it was the most joyful I've seen that congregation in my two and a half years of ministry there, because somehow we knew that at that font God was laughing and rejoicing along with us even while also weeping with Issy's mother as she held him.

In the end, I think, perhaps Issy's most important punch line was in that moment, in that community gathered around the font rejoicing in his baptism and lamenting his illness. The punch line for Issy is that he doesn't have to row his boat alone the way Anne Sexton imagined the journey, he doesn't have to compete one-on-one with God in a game of poker, and he doesn't have to stand before God in solitary embarrassment the way Woody Allen imagines Abraham doing. The punch line is that there's a whole community with little Issy, facing the inexplicable and negotiating together those rough baptismal waters. It is given to us to do so.

It is given to us to be together. It is given to us to find beauty and even laughter in the awful rowing toward God. And it is given to us to trust that at the end we will not find a sadistic joker who we must disavow but instead we will encounter the one whose laughter rolls out like a hoop and doubles over us like a rejoice-chorus. Because we know that the punch line is a wild card. And that wild card is nothing but grace. Amen.

Endnotes

1. Allen, Woody, "The Scrolls" in *Without Feathers* (New York: Random House, 1975), pp. 23–24.

2. Sexton, Anne, "The Rowing Endeth" in *The Awful Rowing Toward God* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), pp. 85–86.

3. Allen, 24.

4. Allen, Woody, "My Philosophy," in *The New Yorker*, December 27, 1969.

5. Cited with permission from the author.

Alumni News

Robert E. Alvis, Ph.D. 2000, has been appointed Academic Dean at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. He is Associate Professor of Church History at Saint Meinrad.

Rev. Joan J. Bott, B.D. 1958, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of her ordination on March 27, 2010. Trinity Congregational Church in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, held a celebration on March 21.

Pamela D. Couture, Ph.D. 1990, has been named the inaugural Jane and Geoffrey Martin Chair in Church and Community at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in The University of Toronto. As chair, her teaching and research will be charged with the purpose of connecting theological interpretation to the formation of Christian leaders who can contribute to the renewal of the mainline church's ministry and mission. Couture joined Emmanuel College as the Jane and Geoffrey Martin Chair in Church and Community on July 1, 2010. As a pastoral theologian, Couture has been active in both community and church outreach, fostering new understandings of evangelism and mission, and in developing skills among students in areas associated with public theology and community leadership. She is currently working on a project documenting the peacemaking practices of Luba Congolese in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Paul R. Dekar, A.M. 1973, Ph.D. 1978, Professor Emeritus of Evangelism and Mission, Memphis Theological Seminary, has three recent publications: *Building Communities of Love: Thomas Merton and the New Monasticism* (Eugene: Cascade, 2010); *Building a Culture of Peace: Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America* (Eugene: Pickwick, 2009); and *Community of the Transfiguration: The Journey of a New Monastic Community* (Eugene: Cascade, 2008). He and his wife Nancy are North American members of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Australia.

Robert D. Denham, A.M. 1964, John P. Fishwick Professor of English, Emeritus, at Roanoke College, has several recently published books: *Conversations with Charles Wright: Fifteen Interviews* (2009); *The Early Poetry of Charles Wright: A Companion,* 1963–1990 (2009); *Northrop Frye: Selected Correspondence* 1934–1991 (2009); and *Poets on Paintings: A Bibliography* (2010).

Robert Fuller, A.M. 1975, Ph.D. 1978, Caterpillar Professor of Religious Studies at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, has recently published his twelfth book, *Spirituality in the Flesh: Bodily Sources of Religious Experience* (Oxford University Press, 2008). The book takes a scientific look at why humans become religious.

Lowell K. Handy, A.M. 1980, Ph.D. 1987, an indexer/analyst for the American Theological Library Association, has edited *Psalm 29 through Time and Tradition* (Pickwick, 2009, Princeton Theological Monograph series 110). The volume contains ten contributions that document the variety of uses and meanings of Psalm 29. Included are chapters by Divinity School graduates **Esther Menn** (A.M. 1985, Ph.D. 1995), **Brooks Schramm** (Ph.D. 1993), and **Nancy Pardee** (A.M. 1985, Ph.D. 2002).

C. David Hein, M.A. 1977, is coeditor (with Charles R. Henery) of a new book, *Spiritual Counsel in the Anglican Tradition* (Wipf & Stock, 2010). The book offers practical devotion to inspire and to instruct pilgrims in the path of discipleship.

Rev. Jonathan Huyck, M.Div. 1995, joined Grace Episcopal Church in Providence, Rhode Island, as its twenty-first Rector on August 1, 2010. Huyck came to Providence from France, where he served as Canon Pastor at the American Cathedral in Paris. Prior to his position at the Cathedral in Paris, Huyck served as the first Episcopal Chaplain at New York University, and as Director of Young Adult and Newcomer Ministries at the Church of the Holy Trinity in New York City.

William J. Hynes, A.M. 1969, Ph.D. 1976, has been appointed the 17th President of Holy Names University in Oakland, California. Dr. Hynes comes to Holy Names with a breadth of academic experience that includes faculty and administrative positions. Hynes previously served as president of St. Norbert College in Wisconsin for eight years, as Vice-President of Academic Affairs at St. Mary's College of California, and as Dean of the College at Regis University in Denver, Colorado. He has held faculty appointments at all these institutions and taught undergraduates and graduate students for more than 20 years. "His background in developing rapport with students and creating an exciting campus life will greatly enrich the Holy Names experience," says Ron Rosequist, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Hynes is the author of three books. He is concluding work on a fourth book on *The Principles of Entrepreneurship* based upon interviews with twenty-five entrepreneurs.

Ralph Keen, Ph.D. 1990, has been appointed Schmitt Chair of Catholic Studies and Professor of History at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Robert Keller, B.D. 1961, M.A. 1963, Ph.D. 1967, Professor Emeritus at Western Washington University, was selected as an Inquiring Mind speaker for 2010–11 by Washington state's Humanities Commission. During the fall of 2010 he is teaching at Holden Village Lutheran Retreat. In 2009 Keller helped inaugurate the first West Coast 'green burial' program. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of The Dudley Foundation and Whatcom Land Trust. His most recent article, "Mission Accomplished: Teaching Pacific Northwest History," appeared in *Columbia: The Magazine of Northwest History* (24:2 Summer 2010).

Rev. Kimberly Meinecke, M.Div. 1997, is an Ecumenical Accompanier for the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel. She spent three months in the Spring of 2010 living and volunteering in Bethlehem, Palestine, collecting stories and photographs of Palestinians, and working with Israelis and Palestinians toward a just and peaceful resolution between the two parties. She is now offering presentations to interested communities around the United States.

Richard B. Miller, Ph.D. 1985, Professor of Religious Studies and Director of The Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions at Indiana University, has received a grant from the New Science of the Virtues program of the University of Chicago and the John Templeton Foundation. The interdisciplinary and collaborative project, "Virtuous Empathy: Scientific and Humanistic Investigations," will explore empathy's relation to virtue. Miller has recently published *Terror, Religion, and Liberal Thought* in the Columbia Series on Religion and Politics of the Columbia University Press (2010).

W. Creighton Peden, M.A. 1960, B.D. 1962, is Fuller E. Callaway Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Augusta State University and President Emeritus, Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought. His recent publications are: *Evolutionary Theist: An Intellectual Biography of Minot Judson Savage,* 1841–1918 (2009); *Empirical Tradition in American Liberal Religious Thought,* 1860–1960 (2010); *Life and Thought of Henry Nelson Wieman,* 1884–1975*, with an Intellectual Autobiography of H. N. Wieman* (2010); *Whitehead's View of Reality* (coauthored with Charles Hartshorne, 2010); and *Life And Thought of Bernard Eugene Meland,* 1899–1993*, with an Intellectual Autobiography of B. E. Meland* (in press, due out Fall 2010).

Richard (Dick) Peterson, B.A. 1962, has published a book entitled *True Christians Can Change the World: Steps We Must Take to Salvage Christianity from the 'Christians' and Build a New World*. (Xlibris 2008).

George W. Shields, Ph.D. 1981, Professor of Philosophy, Chair of the Division of Literature, Languages, and Philosophy, and 2000–2001 University Distinguished Professor at Kentucky State University, is the author of "Pan experientialism, Quantum Theory, and Neuroplasticity," in *Process Approaches to Consciousness,* eds. Michel Weber and Anderson Weekes (SUNY, 2010). His recent work with Donald Viney on the logic of future contingents is the topic of a *Process Studies* Special Focus on "Eternal Objects and Future Contingents" appearing in Vol. 39, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2010), which includes his paper "On Eternal Objects, Middle Knowledge, and Hartshorne: A Reply to Malone-France." His article "*Quo Vadis*? On the Current Status of Process Philosophy and Theology" appears in the *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (May 2009). Professor Shields served as President of the AAR-Southeast in 2007, presenting the plenary keynote address, "On the Limits of Disenchantment: Postmodern Conversations with Umberto Eco and C. S. Peirce." He is currently serving as a Research Fellow at the Center for Philosophy and the Natural Sciences at California State University–Sacramento, where he is working on problems in the philosophy of quantum physics.

Robert Short, M.A. 1982, an ordained Presbyterian minister and author of several previous books on popular theology, has published *The Parables of Dr. Seuss* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2008). The book argues that Dr. Seuss was a well-informed Christian thinker who wove his thinking into many of his stories, and that Dr. Seuss's theology offers a new view of the Christian message.

Michael Skerker, M.A. 1999, Ph.D. 2004, is an Assistant Professor in the Leadership, Ethics, and Law Department at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, where he is to help shape and teach the required military ethics course. His book, *An Ethics of Interrogation* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), addresses a host of issues associated with prisoner rights and interrogation ethics in domestic and international contexts.

Benjamin D. Sommer, Ph.D. 1994, Professor of Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages at the Jewish Theological Seminary, received one of four Awards for Excellence in the Study of Religion presented in 2010 by the American Academy of Religion for his *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge University Press, 2009). Sommer's book was judged the best religious studies book dealing with textual analysis published in 2009. Previously, *The Bodies of God* had received the Jordan Schnitzer Award from the Association for Jewish Studies, for the best book published in the years 2006–2009 in the category of biblical studies, rabbinics, or archaeology. The book addresses perceptions of divine embodiment in ancient Israel, Canaan, and Assyria, and how these perceptions reappear in later Jewish philosophy and mysticism.

Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, J.D. 1976 (University of Chicago Law School), Ph.D. 1993, Associate Professor and Director of the Law and Religion Program, University of Buffalo Law School, has been named a Fellow of the Guggenheim Foundation and has received a fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies. During the 2010–2011 academic year she will also be a member of the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, New Jersey. Professor Sullivan's research focuses on the intersection of religion and law in the modern period, particularly the phenomenology of modern religion as it is shaped in its encounter with law. Her latest book, *Prison Religion: Faith-based Reform and the Constitution* (Princeton University Press, 2009), looks at 'faith-based' prison programs in light of the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state.

John Wall, M.A. 1991, Ph.D. 1999, Associate Professor of Religion at Rutgers University, has published *Ethics in Light of Childhood* (Georgetown University Press, 2010). Wall's research focuses on the creative nature of moral life. He has written on the relation of ethics to poetics, postmodernity and religion, the social ethics of childhood, and children's international rights. His newest book is on "childism" or how considerations of childhood should transform moral thinking.

Michael J. Zogry, M.A. 1991, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas has published *Anetso, the Cherokee Ball Game: At the Center of Ceremony and Identity* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010). It is one of the first books in a new series, First Peoples: New Directions in Indigenous Studies.

LOSSES

Harry M. Buck, Ph.D. 1954, emeritus professor of religion at Wilson College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, died July 4, 2010, at age 88. He was a key leader of the AAR's mid-1960s transformation from the National Association of Biblical Instructors to the American Academy of Religion. On learning of his death, former President Christine Downing recalled the important role he played "in moving the AAR from a period when most of its members had taught at Christian seminaries to its becoming the large multidisciplinary organization that we now take for granted."

Buck also worked to make the AAR more inclusive. Former president Vasudha Narayanan credits him with "intellectually and institutionally opening up South Asian studies at the AAR." In addition to his efforts within the AAR, he founded Anima Books, which published a number of volumes on religion in India. Buck also fostered increased participation of women in the Academy and, as founder and editor of the journal *Anima*, Buck was instrumental early on in providing a place for scholarship on religion and gender, thus helping launch the careers of a number of feminist scholars.

Buck is survived by, among other family members, his wife, Esther Buck, credited as a partner in making substantial contributions to his AAR work during his period of leadership.

Taizo Fujishiro, A.M. 1951, passed away on December 5, 2008, in peace at the age of 91. He was professor at The School of Theology, Doshisha University, in Kyoto, Japan. His research focused on Martin Luther, the Reformation period, and post-Reformation Church History.

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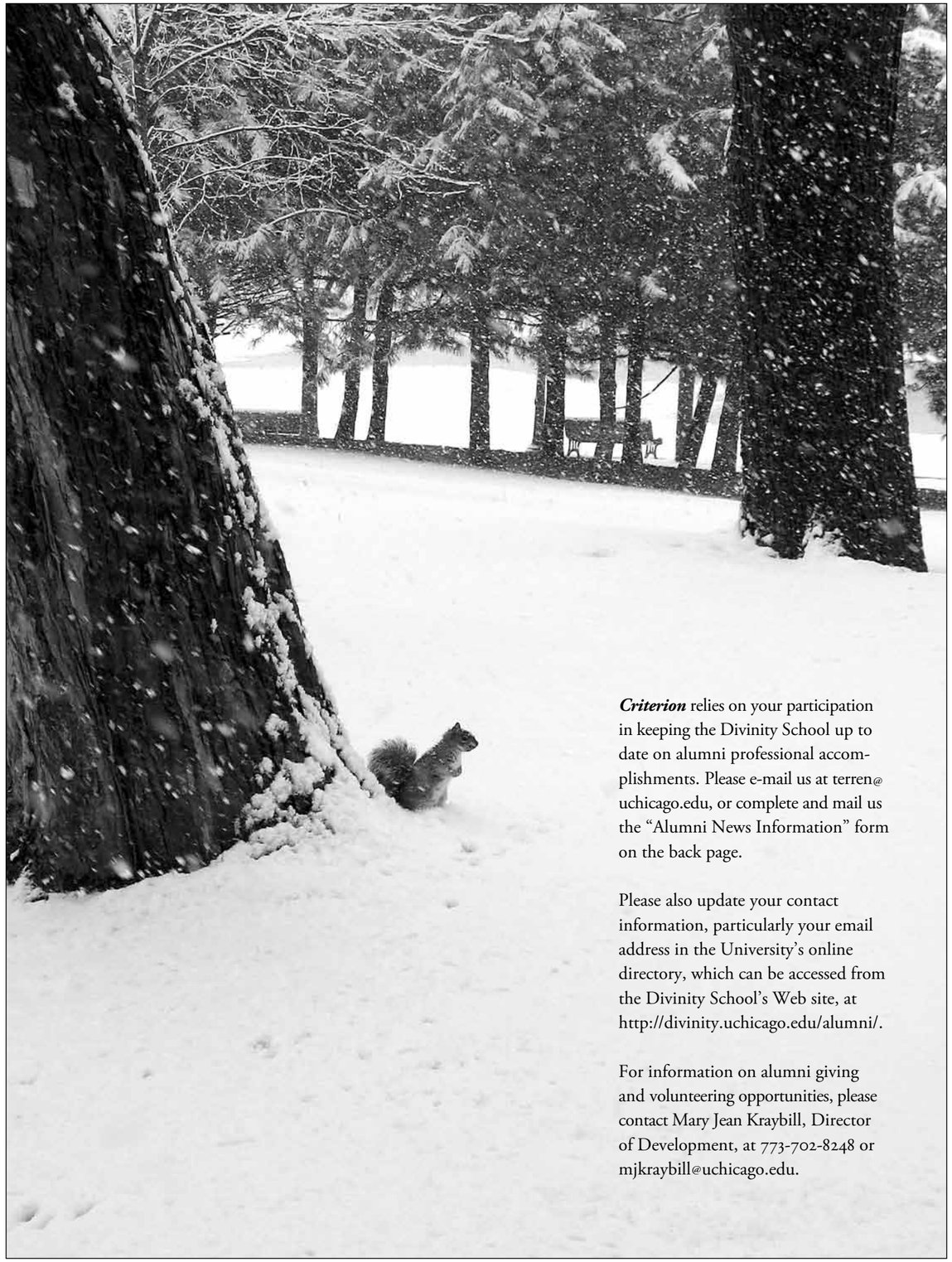

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