

# CRITERION

A Publication of the University of Chicago Divinity School



Dear Alumni and Friends —

This issue of *Criterion* opens with a talk presented by Rev. Susan B. W. Johnson (A.M. 1978) at a Wednesday lunch on April 13, 2011. She describes a project, organized by her congregation, Hyde Park Union Church, conceived as a contemporary *Urban Dolorosa*, to honor and mourn children killed by violence in Chicago in recent years. Reverend Johnson also explains the issue of ‘collective efficacy’ and recounts her efforts to call clergy and other leaders to find ways to engage in constructive anti-violence work.

The issue continues with tributes to Professor Martin Riesebrodt on the occasion of his retirement from the Divinity School faculty, marked by a conference—“Comparing Religions: On Theory and Method”—held in his honor on January 14, 2011. Participants express their appreciation for Riesebrodt’s admirable scholarship, collegiality, and guidance, as they reflect on his service to the Divinity School as colleague, advisor, and friend.

Next is a talk by Dean Margaret M. Mitchell, given at a Wednesday lunch on September 28, 2011. The talk, entitled “Workshop or Assembly Line: Models of Learning in the Academic Study of Religion,” explores what is at stake in the distinction between understanding graduate work on the model of mass production versus that of a craft workshop.

Concluding the issue is a commemoration of Donald A. Gillies, offered by Richard A. Rosengarten, at a memorial service on August 27, 2011. Gillies was a trustee of the Baptist Theological Union, whose endowment helped establish and continues to support the Divinity School. Gillies’ long service, always consistent and balanced, reflected his deepest commitments.

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

I hope you enjoy this issue,

**Terren Ilana Wein**, *Editor*

# CRITERION

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Rev. Susan B. W. Johnson, A.M. 1978, is Senior Minister at Hyde Park Union Church.



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



Richard A. Rosengarten is Associate Professor of Religion and Literature.

- 1 Contents & List of Contributors
- 2 *Urban Dolorosa*  
Rev. Susan B. W. Johnson
- 9 Martin Riesebrodt Tributes  
Margaret M. Mitchell  
Bruce Lincoln  
Loren D. Lybarger
- 15 Workshop or Assembly Line  
Margaret M. Mitchell
- 21 A Celebration of Life  
Donald A. Gillies  
Richard A. Rosengarten
- 23 Alumni News

REV. SUSAN B. W. JOHNSON

## *Urban Dolorosa*

In September 2008, our congregation of Hyde Park Union Church began to record the names of children murdered in Chicago; 218 children have been killed in violence in our city in the last two-and-a-half school years. In November 2011 we will take a temporary memorial on our east lawn and transform it into a contemporary *Urban Dolorosa*, a

multimedia memorial event inspired in part by John Adams' *On the Transmigration of Souls*, composed after September 11, 2001. *Urban Dolorosa* will be performed at five locations throughout the city coinciding with All Souls Day—St. Sabina in Auburn Gresham, Chicago Temple in the Loop, St. Sylvester in Humboldt Park, New Mount Pilgrim Baptist in Garfield Park, and our own church Hyde Park Union, where a recording will be made. Through these multimedia memorial events, each of which ends with a candlelight walk out of each church and through a neighborhood, we hope to convey the loss in many neighborhoods across Chicago of urban childhood itself.

We have engaged South African composer Vaughn Fayle, OFM, to write the musical score. He has set the poetry of anti-apartheid activist Dennis Brutus to music, as well as poems of Thomas Merton and Chanukah songs from the prison camp at Dachau. The libretto is a radical interreligious reinterpretation of the original medieval hymn *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, evoking Mary's agony as her son dies, in combination with secular themes. Embedded in our memorial

will also be recitation of the children's names. We plan to project the work of documentary photographer Carlos Javier Ortiz onto a drape of fabric throughout the fifty-minute performance. Photographs from Ortiz' documentary, *Too Young to Die*, have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Huffington Post*. We will feature young people in choreographed movement and, at the end, in the distribution of candlelight among the audience members. In order to thoughtfully titrate this multi-media memorial event, we are enlisting artistic direction from Steppenwolf Theatre.

We believe that only through the arts can the entire city begin to mourn this tragic loss of young life and truly embark on a path of rebuilding communities, and in that sense *Urban Dolorosa* is a little bit like a traveling revival praying for conversions; it has even more in common with street theatre movements in New York, Paris and parts of Central America. Only when we come to mourn the loss of children as though they are our own children will we begin to thoughtfully devote resources to heal this wound in our city.



We simply have to know.

In the fall of last year, I spoke to a gathering of a few hundred mothers who had been praying on street corners in troubled communities across the city as they gathered in Daley Plaza. Mothers from Woodlawn, Englewood, Roseland, Garfield Park, North Lawndale and Austin, these women reeled—I mean, literally fell back—when I mentioned the number of children who had died. The fact is that, throughout our city, even if children are dying on your block, there is almost no way to know what is happening across the city. And this is the first impetus of *Urban Dolorosa*. We simply have to know. When we began, there were three websites including our own that tracked child homicide. Not one of our lists was complete; only when we combined them could we develop an accurate picture of the number of children who had died.

I brought with me today representations of the banners outside of Hyde Park Union Church. The actual banners, which are approximately five feet by ten feet each, form the temporary memorial on our east lawn at the corner of East 56th Street and South Woodlawn Avenue. These are the names of the children zero to eighteen years old who have been murdered in Chicago since the start of the school year in 2008. By the end of summer school this year, we will very likely have lost over two hundred and fifty children to violence in our city. These deaths occur across the city. If you rely upon the division of our city into seventy neighborhoods, over forty of the neighborhoods have had at least one child homicide, however fewer than fourteen neighborhoods comprise the vast majority. Child murder is concentrated in low-income non-white communities in our city, neighborhoods that have been low income and non-white for at least thirty to forty years. It is true that few murders occur during school hours or on school grounds, and yet the intimidation and threat that often lead to deaths begin in or around neighborhood schools. Whatever else we need to investigate about these homicides, they are connected to neighborhoods.

Please focus on that for a moment with me while I go a bit deeper into these statistics with you. If we extend the age of majority slightly, from age eighteen to twenty-six, the number of children and young people murdered in our city last year exceeded the number of murdered adults in the same time period. In other words, an adult in Chicago is safer from violence than a child, even as the overall murder

rate in our city is the lowest since the 1960s. It is also vastly safer to be a white Chicagoan than to be African American or Hispanic. In 2010, over 76% of murder victims were black; over 19% Hispanic; barely 4% white. Finally, perhaps the most devastating statistic I will offer today: for every murdered child whose name appears on our banners, there are—conservatively—fifteen children and youth who are treated in a Level One Trauma Center in Chicago and survive violent injury. Two hundred and eighteen times fifteen is 3,270 children seriously wounded in violence across our city in the last two and a half years. Some have suffered catastrophic spinal cord or brain injuries; some have lost limbs. A number who were gut-shot survive with a colostomy bag or other external apparatus that enables them to forge a new and altered life in the world.

Some victims report this re-start as an incredible opportunity to begin again, to leave the life and values they had set up for themselves and start over. But many also find themselves—and their families—lost in the chaotic after-effects of major hospitalization and re-socialization into communities with too few resources to serve them or the other residents in their neighborhood. There are blocks in Chicago on which four, five, six families have lost children in a period of years; there are families who have lost more than one child. And if you talk to the Trauma One surgeons in Chicago about youth violence, they will all tell you—to a person—about sewing up a victim only to see that same child come back months later shot up again.

Fundamental to the violence that kills children across our city are ever-widening gaps between low-income, predominantly African American or Hispanic neighborhoods and middle class or affluent communities (whether racially and ethnically mixed or predominantly white). Across the United States, and especially in urban America, these two groups of people—poor and affluent—live completely different realities, have completely different experiences, and form completely different cultures and world views until, in fact—sometimes blocks apart—they inhabit totally different worlds.

In Chicago, this gap is made perhaps even wider by a strong citywide culture of “neighborhoods” that has drawn formal boundaries around perceived difference, (boundaries with strong racial/ethnic and socio-economic lines) until there is almost no dialogue or comprehension across the

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divide. And it is a divide that has grown exponentially, now to historic proportions: there has never been a time when the gap between rich and poor has been wider in the U.S., or around the world.

When we try to address these problems through diversity training or other remedial programs, we continually miss the deeper issues, compounding the fracture between parts of the city. Neighborhoods with high levels of violence have been poor for over four decades, and the divide between them and more affluent neighborhoods is deep and wide. The violence in these communities has its root in the hopelessness, anger and self-loathing that are the real products of chronic poverty.

These communities need job training and jobs. They need repaired infrastructure, family support, and education. They need health care, health education, grocery stores. But in order to get any of this, what every community needs, is collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is a measure, tracked by sociologists and public health workers, of the resilience of communities in crisis. Who do neighbors trust? How quickly and reliably do people come to one another's aid? How likely are neighbors to treat any child in the community the way they would treat their own? When a crisis hits, do people know where to turn? Do they have the relationships and power to be successful in getting what they need?

Not surprisingly, where collective efficacy is high, violence tends to be lower, and where collective efficacy is low, violence tends to be higher. Collective efficacy is higher in communities where there are places to shop and visit, since neighborhood businesses, libraries and houses of worship promote relationship-building. Collective efficacy is lower in communities where people are afraid to go out and therefore do not know each other and do not have reliable networks of concern.

The suffering of families and friends is compounded in communities where trust in authorities is low, where violence is not protested as wrong, where children, families and individuals feel that they fend for themselves with little or no common agenda. What is critically missing is people who willingly cross the great divides in our city to stand with victims of violence, to understand the effects of chronic poverty, and to advocate for systemic change.

There are clergy who serve congregations, schools or community organizations that are deeply embedded in some

of these neighborhoods, and who are doing powerful and important work with residents, with youth. Their good work, however, does not reach the level of saturation necessary. There simply are not enough of them; they are spread too thin. You have undoubtedly been following the saga of Fr. Michael Pfleger, the pastor of St. Sabina in Auburn Gresham for over twenty years and the perennial question of whether the cardinal will move him to another parish. The real question, however, is not whether he will be moved but why there are not more of him. It is in large measure an indictment of theological education and denominational politics.

I began by saying that youth violence ought to be one of the most troubling issues facing the American Church today, and—now that I've given you some background material—I want to focus on the role of the Church. I will begin with an indictment, then offer a bit of analysis, and conclude with several opportunities. The indictment comes from our outgoing mayor, Richard M. Daley. On August 10, 2010, eight-year-old Tanaja Stokes was shot to death in her own front yard while jumping rope; her seven-year-old cousin was shot in the head in the same incident but was expected to live. The following day, Mayor Daley turned to one of his African American deputies, a man with whom he had worked for years, a man who is bi-vocationally the minister of a church on the West Side of Chicago and a colleague of mine, and in exasperation and I am certain genuine sorrow, said, “Where are the civil rights pastors in this city who used to keep my father up at night?”

And that's how *Urban Dolorosa* began. Not as an attempt to explain to the mayor or anyone else where the clergy have gone, but as an urgent attempt to awaken a public voice in sorrowing solidarity with the families whose children have died and communities in which urban childhood itself is threatened or gone, and to work to shift and deepen the public discourse around the root causes of violence in order to effect some healing and greater peace.

So, last October, in response to this epidemic of youth violence in Chicago, we initiated a three-part citywide ecumenical ministry which includes: 1) identifying and nurturing neighborhood resistance and resilience through pastoral visitation in the most deeply affected neighborhoods; 2) dignifying and memorializing the children who have died and the loss of urban childhood itself; and 3) delivering

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targeted pastoral care to survivors of youth violence and their families. We recruit clergy from any church, any denomination, any neighborhood to join us—along with lay professionals. We want to train one hundred clergy and others—so far we have trained about forty—and our original goal, last fall, was to log ten thousand hours of pastoral care addressing this issue in this next year.

Some of you, I realize, may want to talk more about why—or whether—the mayor really needs the voice of the city's churches in order to move forward. And I guess I would start by saying that the mayor's remark was not the first time I'd heard this. In late 2009 I attended a daylong gathering at Northwestern University's Medical School in which we focused on violence. Author Alex Kotlowitz kicked it off with a very powerful piece documenting his encounters with urban violence as a journalist. He was followed by a variety of experts in public health, medicine, sociology and psychology. Toward the end of the day, though, after all of the experts had spoken, conference attendees were not satisfied that they were any closer to understanding what to do, and kept coming to the microphone with one urgent question or concern after another, until—again in a kind of mass exasperation but also generic blame, the same question emerged: "What I want to know," said one participant, "is where are the clergy?"

It is important to acknowledge that calling for the clergy could be akin to shaking one's fist at the sky—a gesture of genuine expression of despair, or perhaps done for its rhetorical power. In the Book of Jeremiah, the prophet calls for the mourning women to come—and one could debate whether Jeremiah's point was that the lament of generations of women had the power to turn the people around, or whether he believed the world was going to hell in a handbasket and intended to announce it with power. In the cases of both Mayor Daley's remark and the Northwestern gathering, it seemed to me both rhetorical and genuine, as though wanting others to share the blame for the state of the city, and as though desperate for a kind of moral outrage that will not live this way any longer. Our outgoing mayor and, no less, our incoming mayor do often rely upon the court of public opinion as a fulcrum against which to leverage their political power—that is, to give them the political capital to do the right thing. Even so, if we stop for a moment and simply ask the question—where are the clergy when violence

against children is at an all-time high?—the silence of our religious communities on this issue is deafening.

My own first attempt at anti-violence work in Chicago was largely symbolic; we focused on six years of monthly candlelight vigils publicly decrying the city's very high murder rate in the mid 1990s. In 1995, there were over five hundred murders on the South Side alone. At that time, the *Chicago Tribune* earned a Pulitzer for its coverage of the murders of children under fifteen. I'll never forget a mother who came to one of our vigils just to find her son's name on our banner. She kissed his name, and said, "My baby had just made fifteen; they wouldn't give him no mention in their f—ing paper."

Back in the 1990s we were very effective at getting news coverage. Over time, our vigils were on every local television station; I was interviewed by National Public Radio on two separate occasions, and we were covered not only by the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times*, but by the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. Perhaps we did contribute in some small way to raising consciousness—the murder rate did gradually decline—however, in retrospect one could just as easily credit us with a small role in the dynamics that led to the teardown of massive amounts of public housing in Chicago and the building of a new police headquarters on the very corner where we gathered. One thing I do know looking back; neither we nor the *Tribune* had much effect at all on the violence against children and youth, much of it perpetrated by children and youth themselves.

This time, we wanted to answer the question "Where are the churches?" but we also wanted to pose the question "What kind of involvement does it take?" One of the most heartening things about starting this project was the realization, through conversation after conversation, that indeed many people—many churches, many clergy—do care, albeit often quite passively and as though filled with a paralyzing mixture of denial and fear. It is at least heartening that we are shocked and saddened whenever it is brought to our attention; we care when we see reports of youth violence on television or in the paper, when we hear about it on the radio, or—worse—when the violence comes close to us, in our neighborhoods, our parks, our schools. But when we are not being exposed to it directly, it is amazing how quickly violence against children and youth is dropped from conversation, how rarely it is discussed even in our sermons

...we join them in making their voices heard...

and our Bible studies. And, when it does come up, it is amazing how easily we are satisfied by saying the same tired and often unenlightened things over and over again. Many good people feel guilty about this. However, this guilt doesn't actually help; it doesn't do anything.

In recruiting clergy I have also found that many do not feel as guilty as they might because they really don't know what to do. Violence, particularly gun violence, seems so far beyond our ability to control. And in the third largest city in the United States, when the authorities and commentators all point to gang violence and the drug trade as part of the equation, many of us are certain we do not have the expertise to intervene. We had to be very clear when we began to recruit and train clergy. We weren't asking people to get in over their heads, or take imprudent risks.

We were asking, instead, that they rethink their powerlessness. That we assume, for a moment, that the mayor had a point about some invaluable contribution which the church and its clergy—as ineffectual as we often are—nevertheless might make. As well as the damage that our silence, our reticence, does. I can say, as a middle-aged white clergy woman, that it is very easy to get in touch with how little street credibility I must have in some parts of Chicago. Jewish scholar/activist Michael Lerner called it "surplus powerlessness." As intelligent as I may become regarding any problem, if I consistently identify potential solutions as driven by expertise I do not possess, resources beyond my control, powers that do not recognize me—if I dwell on what I don't have, and I do not ask myself what I do have to give—then, I am claiming a kind of spiritual, emotional and intellectual poverty that exempts me from action.

How do we help to build the collective efficacy in communities beyond our own? It may not be obvious how churches and clergy from outside a community help to raise the collective efficacy within a community besieged by violence, but let's consider what clergy contribute at the bedside in a hospital, or called to a distant location in the case of a disaster, even when they do not know the people for whom they care.

Pastoral care providers are trained in empathic, agenda-less, non-judgmental listening. They are skilled in assisting people in identifying their needs and concerns. Pastoral care providers are intrinsically interested in stimulating and reinforcing functional, even fragile, networks of people. They

facilitate relationships. Pastoral care providers work confidently even in situations that do not resolve quickly or easily, even in the face of tragedy and loss when other service providers feel helpless. Religious leaders embody and express hope—by their presence, their patience, their attention, their concern. Even when their own resources are very modest, religious leaders represent a way for the oppressed and marginalized to be heard, an advocate with a conscience, an advocate with relationships to other caring individuals and communities. And, best of all, clergy are technically self-employed. Unlike almost every other professionally-trained volunteer, they have weekday hours that they can devote.

So far, with a small cadre of clergy we have begun to identify community leaders in five communities at every level (pastors, businessmen and women, teachers and principals, after-school workers, counselors, block club presidents, volunteers). We literally make friends with them, listen to their stories about their community; affirm the value of their perspective and their work; empathize with their concerns; walk the neighborhood with them; solicit names of others with whom we should speak.

As we stimulate a network of people through our conversations, we "connect the dots" with community leaders in a sometimes dormant map of collective efficacy in the community, raising it to greater visibility both for those in the network and the people they work with and care for. Working with the community leaders, we join them in making their voices heard, in order to deepen the public discourse about the root causes of violence and what needs to be done. This may mean a forum to educate our own church members; it may mean doing advocacy with and for communities at risk. Even small amounts of attention cheer the people who are working on the front lines, how isolated and depleted they can become, how desperately they desire to be listened to, how deeply we are challenged and changed by listening to them. ✕



## Martin Riesebrodt Tributes

A conference called “Comparing Religions: On Theory and Method” was held in Swift Hall on Friday, January 14, 2011, to honor Martin Riesebrodt, Professor of the Sociology of Religion, on the occasion of his retirement from the faculty of the Divinity School.

Margaret M. Mitchell

*Dean and Professor of New Testament and  
Early Christian Literature*

### Welcome

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the faculty of the Divinity School, to welcome you to this day-long conference, “Comparing Religions: on Theory and Method,” in honor of Professor Martin Riesebrodt.

Martin Riesebrodt has been on the faculty of the University of Chicago since 1990, and has held appointments in both the Divinity School and in the Sociology Department. He has played a pivotal role in reinvigorating the field of the sociology of religion, which has been an area of study in the Divinity School since its founding (1891), and has counted such figures as Joachim Wach among its numbers. His work has been vital to the conversation on the academic study of religion that is the Divinity School; he is a deeply respected and valued colleague in Swift Hall and throughout the University.

In his published monographs and articles, and in his teaching, Professor Riesebrodt has championed, in the tradition of Max Weber, a historically grounded sociology of religion that combines a relentlessly practical bent with concern for good theoretical reflection. His work has engaged fundamentalism in the United States and Iran, comparison between “secularization” in Europe and the United States, and religious movements, expressions and aspirations in global contexts, including increasingly east Asia (Japan in particular). His most recent book, *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion* (Chicago 2010; German original, *Cultus und Heilsversprechen: eine Theorie der Religionen*, München: Beck, 2007) argues that it is both possible and necessary to define the category of “religion” because analytical research requires concepts with which to think, and because there is a reality of human religious practices to which the scholar can and must attend: “If religion always means something different in different contexts, how do the critics of the concept of religion know that what is different in each case still represents ‘religion,’ especially in societies that have no concept of religion?” (p. 11). Hence he argues for a definition of religion that is

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provisional (in a telling Martinesque turn of phrase he calls it “a legitimate form of science fiction”): “practices that are based on a belief in superhuman powers that can provide blessings or ward off misfortune.” This flexible definition can be a starting point for comparative study of religions, such as this conference.

It is a testimony to Martin Riesebrodt’s identity as a professor, an educator, that he insisted from the start that his retirement celebration showcase not his own work, but that of his former students and colleagues. The array of topics represented on this program is truly expansive, and gives one a sense of the extraordinary breadth of Martin’s purview and appetite in studying religious practices and testing sociological models on the widest possible range of religious traditions, geographical locations, institutions and actions.

I would like to thank the Department of Sociology in the Social Sciences Division for support towards this conference. This conference has been planned from its inception by three former students of Martin, who have done an outstanding job, and to whom we are most grateful for organizing this set of conversations: Professors Loren Lybarger, Kelly Haesung Chong, and Mary Ellen Koniczny. Their impressive range and attainments tell you much about them, and also about him.

Loren Lybarger is Assistant Professor in the Department of World Religions at Ohio University and author of *Identity and Religion in Palestine: The Struggle between Islamism and Secularism in the Occupied Territories* (Princeton 2007). He is currently working on a book project entailing ethnographic description and analysis of the adaptation of Islamic religious institutions among Somali and Palestinian Muslim immigrant communities in Columbus, Ohio and in Chicago.

Kelly Haesung Chong is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Kansas. The author of *Deliverance and Submission: Evangelical Women and the Negotiation of Patriarchy in South Korea* (Harvard 2008), her current research projects include the production and construction of gender and ethnic culture in the Asian and American contexts, the transformation and global circulation of religion, and cultural change in contemporary South Korea.

Mary Ellen Koniczny is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Notre Dame.

Her tentatively entitled book manuscript, ‘The Spirit’s Tether: Family, World and Religion among American Catholics,’ is under review at Oxford University Press, and her continuing research includes an historical and ethnographic study of religion at the United States Air Force Academy.

It has been a pleasure to work with them, and I am truly grateful for all they have done to honor their former teacher, and our colleague and friend, Martin Riesebrodt. ✕

### Bruce Lincoln

*Caroline E. Haskell Professor of the History of Religions*

This is not a day I am glad to see and it is one I have anticipated with considerable misgivings. I remember clearly the occasion when Martin told me he had not only decided to retire, but had signed the necessary papers for a five-year transition toward that end. Reacting with shock and an acute sense of loss—for he is, after all, a dear friend, a close colleague, someone with whom I have frequently co-taught, and someone I find invaluable—I asked if we couldn’t discuss this, hoping he might reconsider. We certainly could talk, he said, for we’ve always been able to take up even the most difficult and challenging issues, but no change was possible. The papers were binding and there was no turning back.

I was—and remain—surprised by the decision, but not by Martin’s utter lack of ambivalence about it. He has always known himself and known his own mind. His decisions—like his opinions—are not always easily predictable. He is consistently original and independent, coming to his views by way of long and serious reflection. He can (and occasionally does) change his mind, but only after thoughtful reflection and thorough reconsideration, and never does he follow habit, convention, or fashion.

He is, in fact, determinedly unfashionable in all sorts of ways and this is one of his most attractive traits. I remember him describing how he came to study Sociology of Religion when this subdiscipline had fallen from favor. “You’ll never find a job doing that,” his professors and fellow students told him (an opinion that seemed all too likely to be true).

I don’t think I’ve ever heard him raise his voice.



“That’s all right,” he responded, “This is what interests me and I’ll do my best work by following what I care about. If I find a job, so much the better. But if not, at least I’ll have done what I wanted to do.” It’s the same advice he gives students—and colleagues—and it seems to have worked out well. In a similarly unfashionable spirit, he has gravitated toward qualitative and not quantitative methods, classical and not contemporary theory, Weber and not Marx or Bourdieu. In so doing—but also by doing it extremely well—he has largely remade the field, at this institution and beyond.

The unfashionable nature of his work is further evident in the books he has written. *Pious Passion* took up the theme of “fundamentalism” at a time when that category was as modish—also as inflammatory, tendentious, and shallow—as “terrorism” is at present. By a careful interrogation of beautifully chosen evidence (Iranian Shi’a and American Protestant varieties of the phenomenon) and an interrogation largely free of conventional presuppositions, Martin concluded that then dominant views emphasizing the way “fundamentalists” took scripture to be inerrant and the way they were locked into rigid, intolerant faith-commitments were misguided and misleading. Rather than putting a specific style of religiosity at the center of an

alarmist story, he saw that style within a broader context and understood it as part of a last-ditch defense a panicked patriarchy has mounted against changes it finds threatening in sexual morality and gender relations.

Similarly, *The Promise of Salvation* was written when trendier types were suggesting that the category of “religion” is nothing more than a discursive construct imposed on the rest of the world by Christian scholars and apologists: a term riddled with prejudices and contradictions, best criticized and then abandoned. In the face of such dismissive attitudes, he showed that one can—and should—still speak of “religion” in ways that are meaningful, precise, and revealing. Acknowledging that the term—like all abstract nouns—is constructed, he shows that it does, indeed identify common features in disparate systems, features that include belief in supernatural powers, a desire for aid and security in the face of existential difficulties and dread, a set of practices designed to secure such assistance, and institutions that advance the promise of help in exchange for some measure of commitment. Against postmodern posturing, this reworking of classic Weberian themes feels both solid and refreshing.

Part of what makes Martin such a fine theorist is that he is neither intimidated nor enraptured by theory *per se*. And he handles abstraction deftly because he also deals well with concrete examples, selecting them shrewdly, paying close attention to detail, and making their specificities shed light on broader questions. Further still, he mixes critical and sympathetic styles of observation, both of which contribute to his analyses. Teaching with him and talking with him, I’ve learned an incredible amount, not just about the issues at hand, but about styles of intellectual engagement.

In my experience, he is a near-ideal colleague and co-teacher, for he takes issues and materials extremely seriously, without taking himself seriously as well. There is nothing pretentious, arrogant, or bombastic about Martin and I don’t think I’ve ever heard him raise his voice. One can thus talk about the question at hand, without ego intruding, and one can disagree in ways that are professional, principled, and eminently productive. Occasionally, one of us has succeeded in persuading the other on some given point, but this I confess is easier on a point of relatively

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minor importance. More often, we shift position only slightly, but always—always—learn things from the disagreement and come away better for it. As Martin has observed at times, conflict doesn't frighten him and he views it as an opportunity for people to clarify their differences and sharpen their understanding of the issues and each other. It's the position of a very secure—and a very generous—individual.

I have always been amused by one story Martin tells about his (imagined) failures as an interlocutor and observer. This comes from the period when he had not yet found his proper vocation and was considering anthropology, a field he abandoned after his first fieldwork. According to his account, he went to Iran, where he enjoyed hanging around with the elders, drinking, relaxing, and telling stories, but he also realized how little he was actually seeing or understanding, at which point he shifted to sociology, which better suited his skills. Clearly, he found a home where these were put to good use, but I suspect that here—as elsewhere—Martin is overly modest. As testimony to his powers of participant-observation, he is absolutely the only European I have ever known who both likes and understands American football. To have gained this from watching the Bears, of all teams, is nothing short of miraculous.

Of all Martin's gifts, that which is perhaps most highly developed—and also most admirable—is his skill as advisor and mentor. He has worked with an incredible variety of students, who came to him with different interests, different backgrounds, different strengths, and different areas where they initially needed to grow and learn. No one I have ever known takes such care, invests such time and energy, gives such sage counsel, provides such encouragement, or lavishes such nourishing concern. I have watched Martin at home, with Brigitte and Max, and have always been impressed—also deeply moved—by the love, mutual respect, and mutual support that characterizes their family, which seem near-ideal. What Martin does with and for his students has the same qualities, and the results are evident today, when an extraordinarily talented set of scholars has offered truly original, serious, accomplished and revealing papers that are very much their own, but all of which grow out of long conversations—affectionate, challenging and nurturing

conversations—with a man who has been their friend, colleague and mentor. To the extent that Martin is something of a father to them as well, I feel rather like a proud uncle and I'm very grateful to Martin for having permitted me the pleasure of working with his students over the years, and for having let me share his pride and pleasure in their accomplishments.

It has been a wonderful association and I feel quite fortunate to have had such a colleague. ✕

### Loren D. Lybarger

*Assistant Professor, Department of Classics and World Religions, Ohio University, Athens*

Fifteen years ago, I was sitting in my first seminar with Martin as a doctoral student. Five weeks in or so, Martin turned to me and asked, "Why don't you ever say anything?" My throat burned as tense silence suddenly descended. Martin's question, directed to me in front of a room full of students, had stripped me of my carefully cultivated but always tenuous anonymity. I now had nowhere to hide.

I had spent the entire quarter seated at the corner of a large conference table immediately to Martin's right. The course was "Theorizing Religion." Maybe some of you remember it. In each class session, Martin would present a thesis during the first hour and then open the floor to the rest of us to critique what he had just presented. But I was barely keeping my head above the tidal wave of what to me, at that time, were entirely new concepts, debates, and ways of thinking. Determined to stay afloat, I conspired with two other rookie students to audio-record and transcribe every one of Martin's lectures. These were the lectures that would become the foundation of his just published theory of religion. I placed the transcripts of those lectures into a three-ringed binder and have returned to them repeatedly since leaving the Divinity School in December 2001. Each time I have gleaned new understanding of what Martin was trying to say as my own appreciation of the problems entailed in defining and deploying the religion category has matured from one year to the next.

It also caused me to think new and strange thoughts.

In that first seminar with Martin, however, my objective was merely survival. It was all I could do to make even minimal sense of the issues Martin was engaging. The class made no concessions to the uninitiated. I was learning on the run and doing my best not to let on in front of my far more competent peers how uncertain and unpracticed I really was. My tactics of dissimulation entailed silence and peripheral seating. My methods were working, it seemed, and I had almost made it through the quarter until Martin's question exposed me.

I forget exactly how I responded in that moment but the event looms as pivotal in my formation as a scholar and in my relationship with Martin. I had met Martin nine months earlier in a seminar he had co-led with Bruce Lincoln on "Religion and Political Radicalism." Martin's book on modern Iranian and American fundamentalism was on the reading list and I devoured it, underlining nearly every word in my effort to assimilate its argument and the multiple fine distinctions that supported it. I've re-read that book two or three times since and have now completed the underlining, highlighting, and interlinear commenting, filling in all the conceivable marginal space. I think I need a new copy, Martin!

For that course with Martin and Bruce, I ended up writing a paper on Baptism and Anabaptism that Martin, to my great surprise and joy, invited me to present at a Divinity School social theory workshop. I was an M.A. student at the Lutheran School of Theology at the time, and Martin's invitation was immensely flattering. It also caused me to think new and strange thoughts. Perhaps I could do a Ph.D. here at the Divinity School? Maybe Martin would sponsor my application? Again, to my great delight, Martin agreed to support me and one year later I found myself in his theory seminar facing a demand to join fully in a conversation I felt I had no business being part of.

Yet, Martin seemed to think that I should be taking part and he had let me know it. Some months later, he would tell me explicitly that I needed to cultivate the skill of public conversation and debate. Was it a matter of confidence? I needed to get over it. I had every right and certainly the ability to be in these high-level intellectual discussions. Was it the need for practice? Martin invited me to join workshops and present my papers even before I had reached

the dissertation phase. He also urged me to take courses across the university and seek the advice of others. He never openly expected that I become his student even though he had originally sponsored my application to the Divinity School's program in the Psychology and Sociology of Religion.

In a sense, my reply to Martin's implied request—or was it an overt demand—to speak up and "say something" came two years later, at the end of 1997, as I moved toward my exams and grappled with finding a dissertation topic. Martin had given me various suggestions. I remember he pointed me toward millenarianism. I took books out of the Regenstein and read up on the topic, deciding finally I didn't want to pursue it. What then? I ultimately found myself returning to experiences that had propelled me into the study of religion in the first place. I decided I wanted to return to Palestine and do fieldwork there on the Islamic revival. Taking responsibility, perhaps for the first time, for my own intellectual concerns, I went to Martin, told him of my ideas, and asked nervously, "Will you support me? I need to know if you'll support me." Martin paused and then responded with firmness and warmth, "You will always have my support. Now, let's work on finding a really good question to ask." In that very moment, Martin became my mentor and not just an adviser or gatekeeper who had assisted me across the Divinity School's threshold. But before that crucial transformation could occur, I had to find my voice and claim a place in the conversation.

Ever since, Martin has made good on his promise, supporting me at every juncture in my development as a teacher and scholar. I have continually turned to him for guidance on how to conceptualize a problem or new project and he has unfailingly responded with warmth and clarity. He has come to embody for me the quintessence of principled devotion to scholarship as a vocation. A supremely disciplined and creative thinker, Martin is also a teacher and mentor to students of diverse backgrounds. This fact alone bears witness to how profoundly committed he is to serving his students regardless of their particular identities. What has mattered most to Martin is the common commitment to scholarship, a commitment that entails a suspension of value judgments and a willingness to confront inconvenient

*Continued on page 26*



MARGARET M. MITCHELL

# Workshop or Assembly Line?

## Models of Learning in the Academic Study of Religion

I In the Swift Hall glossary, you may have noticed, “what are you working on these days?” means, “Hi, how are you?” In the spring of 2010 when I taught my Early Christian Rhetoric course, as we were translating around the room I was struck by a line in Gregory of Nazianzus’ funerary oration for his brother, Caesarius, who died in 368.

In this speech, Gregory contrasts the educational paths of the two brothers, and in turn both of their journeys away from home to new sites of learning away from their native Arianus, in Cappadocia (in central Asia Minor/Turkey). In so doing he introduces some key terms for educational institutions and curricula around which I would like to focus my talk today.

If I may quote the passage in full, Gregory says (in my translation),

“We were reared (*traphentes*) in such morals and customs [*ēthē*, as learned from our saintly parents] and educated (*paideuthentes*) and well practiced in *the lessons learned here*—in which Caesarius, as no one would dispute, was greater than the bulk of people, due to his swift mind and wonderful nature (oh, how might I approach this memory without tears and not have my emotion convict me of being no philosopher in my bearing!)—But when it seemed to be the right time to go abroad, we were then separated from one another for the first time. I, out

of love for rhetoric, went to the *paideutēria* situated in Palestine that were blooming up at that time, and he arrived at the city of Alexandria, a place that—both then and now—in reputation and in reality, is an *ergastērion* of manifold *paideusis*!

As Gregory tells it, both brothers set out from their home, where they had learned the virtues of their Christian parents, which he has been at pains to describe (one might note—in the presence of those parents at the graveside of his brother) and in elementary education in their homeland in the arts of literacy, which he terms, τὰ ἐνταῦθα μαθήματα (“lessons learned locally”). United in their moment of departure, each sought an institution in which to move on to advanced studies; Gregory chose a course of instruction in the art of rhetoric in a *paideutērion*, a “school of learning.” The *Lampe Patristic Greek Lexicon* unnecessarily adds the word “secular” to “schools of learning, grammatical, rhetorical, legal, and philosophical education.” In fact, this was what university education in the mid-fourth century

...in the balance lie two completely different models of education...

looked like, and the elite Christian youth like Gregory and Caesarius were groomed for it and into it (as you may recall, this is what would incense their contemporary, the emperor Julian).<sup>2</sup> At this *paideutērion* Gregory says he focused on rhetoric, which meant that he engaged in a combination of textual studies of the great rhetorical masters of the past (Demosthenes, Lysias, et cetera) and lawyerly training for the present, in the context of “Palestine” which he deliberately paints as rural, both by using that regional designation rather than that of the city of Caesarea Maritima (with its extensive Christian library of more than 25,000 manuscripts), and by employing the botanical metaphor of schools “blooming up” as though in the desert of the eastern Mediterranean. With this slight diminishment, delivered with a skill that shows the successful acquisition of rhetorical prowess, Gregory underplays his own education in favor of his dear, deceased brother.

Caesarius, the younger brother, in turn, Gregory says, had chosen the variegated curriculum (*pantōia paideusis*) that the famous cosmopolitan port city of Alexandria, with a library that boasted some 750,000 manuscripts, could offer. This range of educational offerings, which often went under the name of the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία (“all-encompassing education”), included astronomy, music, geometry, et cetera, and for Caesarius would go on to include specialized professional instruction in the arts of medicine (he later was court physician to emperors Constantius II and that same Julian whom I mentioned earlier). According to Gregory, the entire city of Alexandria deserved the name of παντοίας παιδεύσεως ἐργαστήριον, which I would translate as “a workshop of manifold learning.” The standard Greek lexicon of Liddell and Scott glosses ἐργαστήριον as “any place in which work is done: workshop, manufactory,” giving as examples from Herodotus through third-century papyri: a butcher’s shop, a perfumer’s, a barber’s shop (and, as a side note, also observes that the term is used “euphemistically” for brothels).

As we read this text from Gregory’s speech and translated it around the table that spring, we discussed the difference between translating ἐργαστήριον as “workshop” or as “factory,” because they give two quite different resonances in English. The distinction is crucial, because in the balance lie two completely different models of education: a workshop is

the place where a craft is practiced, whereas a factory is a place where products are produced. The first generates a mental image of a workbench full of tools and redolent of sweat and patience joined with creativity and artistry; the second of an assembly-line, punching out prefabricated products, with human robots performing mindless repetitive movements on objects under a deafening din of machine noise.

Not so far from the time of my seminar (one year earlier, in fact), Professor Mark C. Taylor of Columbia University had published an Op-Ed piece in the *New York Times* entitled, “End the University as We Know It,” that employed the assembly-line metaphor for graduate education in general, and for his own specialization, the academic study of religion, in particular. The opening salvo of that editorial, which was to receive an expanded treatment in a later book, *Crisis on Campus: A Bold Plan for Reforming Our Colleges and Universities*, (Knopf, 2010) is that,

Graduate education is the Detroit of higher learning. Most graduate programs in American universities produce a product for which there is no market (candidates for teaching positions that do not exist) and develop skills for which there is diminishing demand (research in subfields within subfields and publication in journals read by no one other than a few like-minded colleagues), all at a rapidly rising cost (sometimes well over \$100,000 in student loans).

Although I regard Professor Taylor as a valuable voice and author of other pieces, such as the Op-Ed “Religious Correctness” in the *Times* some three years earlier, which I thought was in most ways spot-on in its analysis, reading these words over morning coffee, I was immediately troubled at the analogy with which he chose to enter the debate about the need to improve American higher education. My first reaction was visceral—deep offense at the idea that our students are a “product” that is “produced” by us, as in a factory, inert and animate objects cast in cellophane at the end of the assembly line. As the piece continues Taylor will lament the rise of specialization in the modern university, regarding *it* as the culprit, but I bristled that he did not challenge the commodification of

Students are ... conversation partners in this scholarly enterprise we call the academic study of religion.



students itself. I am a teacher in many ways because of the words of a former professor who said that, when asked what he does, he answers, “I am a teacher,” and asked what he teaches, he replies, “students.”

Students are independent thinking human beings, neither products we make nor consumers we serve (another disastrous econometric model of education), but conversation partners in this scholarly enterprise we call the academic study of religion. Scholarly, I say, because, as the Greek has it, a σχολή is a place where people have the leisure to study, think, read, write and speak with one another about things that matter—a place for “learned discussion, disputation, lecture” (LSJ). We work in a workshop where the tools of argument, evidence, knowledge, logic, linguistic proficiency, conceptual thinking, methodological self-consciousness and scrutiny, writing, creativity, reconsideration, refutation and reflection are employed in our craft, *The Craft of Research*, as the quintessentially Chicago book by Wayne Booth, et al., terms it. One image of this workshop in the academic study of religion that stays with me is that by Professor Tikva Frymer-Kensky (of blessed memory, formerly on this faculty as Professor of Hebrew Bible). Tikva liked to say that exegesis—the interpretation and elucidation of texts

—has to be “learned at the elbow.” Not at the feet (as a worshiping disciple) but as a fellow-reader around the table with the professor and fellow students, all responsible for reading, translating, arguing and making the case for the interpretations they offer and why they may matter.

Professor Taylor castigates American universities for acting on a business model while adopting without criticism a business model as the basis for his own critique. Graduate education must change, he tells us, because society does not want or need its “product.” Even if one were to share that assessment (which I do not), there are various ways to analyze the problem. Taylor for his part sought to trace the origins of a factory-orientation to the university to Immanuel Kant, who wrote in his 1798 work, *Der Streit der Fakultäten* (“The Conflict of the Faculties”), that universities should “handle the entire content of learning by mass production, so to speak, by a division of labor, so that for every branch of the sciences there would be a public teacher or professor appointed as its trustee.”

It is at this point that Taylor turns to his own—and our own—specialization, the study of religion, as a test case. This is what he sees:

Unfortunately this mass-production university model has led to separation where there ought to be collaboration and to ever-increasing specialization. In my own religion department, for example, we have ten faculty members, working in eight subfields, with little overlap. And as departments fragment, research and publication become more and more about less and less.

The situation Taylor describes is the complete antithesis to what Gregory names as the goal of “the workshop” of education—*pantōia paideusis*, “manifold learning.” The mass-production model, as he casts it, means each scholar has her small role on the assembly line, working in isolation on her own monotone trivial tasks that just don’t amount to much.

This description of the state of affairs in graduate education does not in fact fit my experience in the academic study of religion, which has been carried out, as both student and scholar-educator at the University of Chicago

...it takes a University to train a scholar of religion...

Divinity School for twenty of the last thirty years. For all its inexactitudes, the three-committee structure of this faculty (religion and the human sciences, historical studies in religion, and constructive studies in religion) and the numbers of faculty who in their teaching and research engage in work that bridges the ten areas of study, across historically identified religious traditions, across methodological perspectives, show that this isolation and fragmentation are not the order of the day here. In part that is due to the University itself, which has tried from its inception to promote and generate interdisciplinary work (or in some ways just to get out of the way of it happening naturally among a community of intellectuals with unbridled natural curiosity). Faculty at the Divinity School do not just teach a single subject divorced from the larger engagement with the study of religion in all its manifestations, and the students who are educated here, if we are doing our job (craft) right, do not, either.

The School, as the graduate professional school for the academic study of religion, at this University (founded as it was by liberal Baptists who thought there was a *science* of the study of religion), by definition and design does not foster only one kind of approach to the study of religion, one religious tradition, or one way of thinking and conducting advanced research, nor presuming to know what alone may count as a significant contribution to knowledge. I have argued in my Wednesday lunch speech last year<sup>3</sup> that there is a set of specialized skills for the academic study of religion, and that the purpose of the Divinity School, set within the context of this research University, is to inculcate in persons those skills and the capacity to think and speak about religion in ways that are maximally informed, rigorously critical and honestly engaged. Whether we think of this as itself a discipline or as a set of disciplinary conversations under the host category (which is itself always under construction) of religion does not much matter, especially if one takes seriously—as I firmly do—that *it takes a University to train a scholar of religion* (and hence there are huge areas of skill and expertise overlap with departments throughout the Humanities and Social Sciences and other professional schools such as Law, Medicine, Public Policy and Social Service Administration).

Team-teaching abounds, and interdisciplinary workshops bloom on campus, even as students in all of our degree programs must do work in all three committees of the school. For the last three years all our master's level students have read *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* and heard Professor James Robinson and some seven faculty members outside of Islamic studies engage that text from the point of view of their own disciplines. This year the students and some seven members of the faculty will engage Kant's *Critiques* with Professor Ryan Coyne leading and orchestrating the conversation. Later this year Professors Wendy Doniger (History of Religions) and Jeffrey Stackert (Hebrew Bible) will teach the Brauer seminar together on the art and science of translation (working at the elbow in Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, and more languages enrolled students will bring). The doctoral student does not graduate until she or he has made an original contribution to knowledge, and all master's level students have that expectation built into their classwork and other requirements. Sheer rote, simple imitation, or repetition of what has been done by definition cannot be rewarded, because we think that knowledge itself is manifold and that it is not all known even about things we think we know well. And this is strikingly so when it comes to the human phenomena that we argue constitute "religion" or "a religion" or "the religious"—there are manifold perspectives to them (the literary, the economic, the historical, the cultural, the psychological, the political, the hermeneutical, the philosophical, the aesthetic, et cetera). All may not have equal interest in each of these perspectives, or, frankly, skills for attending astutely to them, but the conversational matrix of Swift Hall makes it extremely difficult for one to sustain a narrow vantage point.

I could go on to talk about our cooperative work in team-teaching, search committees, et cetera, but this is enough for now. I think that I can say, quoting Gregory on Alexandria, that the Divinity School "both then and now—in reputation and in reality," is an *ergastērion* of multifaceted *paideusis*.

But Gregory's double phrasing in his praise of Alexandria—"then and now" and "in reputation and in reality" being a "workshop of manifold learning"—gives us no pause for rest or self-congratulation. My charge to you, as

Is it really so small or unworthy a subject?

it is to myself and the faculty, is to ensure that in the future as now, and in reality as in reputation, the Divinity School remains a place where exacting standards of the craft of research in the academic study of religion are refined, taught, modeled and carried out. Each one of us has a role in that enterprise. We need to cultivate and insist on the highest levels of specialized skills in languages, historical and textual knowledge, theoretical sophistication and originality; we need to push each other to be better, to think more clearly, to work across areas, to engage various methods and traditions with proper humility, curiosity and intellectual integrity as well as appetite.

Now before I close I want to make two more points. The first is about what is nowadays customarily called the "outcomes of education," though I much prefer the University of Chicago trademark formulation of the "aims of education." *An assembly line* is designed to issue forth in a predictable product, sent out to a targeted market of (themselves pre-packaged) consumers. Products that come down the belt that are not according to this design are deemed defective, unsellable, to be discarded. *The workshop* is designed to inculcate skills of a craft that—since originality and creativity are essential to it—must lead to unpredictable results. But the unpredictability is not only due to the researcher or to the ways in which the realities he or she studies are in flux, but to a rapidly changing world within which the meanings and significances of that craft are yet to be fully known or recognized.

Professor Taylor articulates a different view:

Each academic becomes the trustee not of a branch of the sciences, but of limited knowledge that all too often is irrelevant for genuinely important problems. A colleague recently boasted to me that his best student was doing his dissertation on how the medieval theologian Duns Scotus used citations.

As an author who writes extensive footnotes (one of my books has a page which is just footnote and no text) and believes deeply in footnotes as requirement of civil conversation with the living and dead about what we study, and as a colleague to faculty in Swift Hall who are all

friends of the footnote (most famously, perhaps, Bruce Lincoln's *bon mot* that scholarship is "myth with footnotes"), when I read this example about the footnote in Duns Scotus that morning in the *Times* it had a reverse effect than Professor Taylor intended. Is it really so small or unworthy a subject? One might compare the double resonance of the rabbinic term פלפול: seasoned, spiced, exacting comparison of Talmudic texts as a positive thing, or the quintessentially negative "hair-splitting" "casuistry" for vanity and meager gain? Who should decide which version of *pilpul* one sees in any given moment of scholarship?

But even beyond the affront to the scholar of antiquity or the medieval world, there is a larger issue at stake in the presumption of this example. This was pinned down with characteristic acuity by another lover of the footnote (and graduate of the University of Chicago), Anthony Grafton,<sup>4</sup> who countered Taylor's claim that "most scholarship is worthless," with two simple questions. The first was: "How does he know? The second: "How could he know?"

This is not just a plea for learning for learning's sake (though I would defend that vehemently), nor learning for potential commercial reception, but learning precisely because the future is unknown, and the significance of the citation in Duns Scotus or any of the other myriad things we study here is yet to be seen. In education we "aim" toward a future that, precisely because it is unpredictable, needs deep stores of knowledge and discerning habits of mind that are both rigorous and flexible.

Circling back to Gregory, I want to end where he began, with the moment of transition he and Caesarius made from "home schooling" to education in the metropolis. He lists three components of their earlier education: being "reared in the morals of their parents," being educated in their lessons in literacy and culture (*mathēmata*), and being practiced in the use of these tools. Now we might think that the first of these means simply that Gregory and Caesarius went out into the world already formed by the simple Christian faith of their parents, from the frying pan into the fire, so to speak (and indeed Gregory wants us to think that). But in fact we know that Gregory's father (the elder Gregory) was not born a Christian, but was a *Hyppis-tarian*, a believer in the one highest God, who practiced

...religion is a subject that can and must be discussed *in public*...

rituals connected with Jewish practice (such as Sabbath observance, though not circumcision) and perhaps some Persian elements (such as fire worship).

The religious picture of this cult (if a separate or separable cult) is very difficult for us to reconstruct. We do have inscriptional and other evidence, but it is hard to know how much to connect the religious rhetoric of the “highest god” into a single “religious movement” or group. That at least some Hypsistarians rejected some who regarded themselves as Christians seems clear in that Gregory of the Elder was cut off by his family after marrying the Christian woman, Nonna. He later did become the heir, but apparently the families remained divided over religious practices, and, for instance, Nonna, the younger Gregory’s mother, would not eat with ‘pagans’ (presumably meaning her in-laws). Gregory, who would go on to be one of the great exponents of the “catholic” faith of Nicea and Constantinople, was reared in a multi-religious home, a home where religious practice and belief were disputed, and presumably somehow negotiated.

Everyone who comes to this place (Swift Hall) to study religion has a history in religion—whether “reared” in a particular religious tradition (or, more accurately from an analytical point of view, in a particular thread within a particular strand of a religious tradition) or outside of any religious tradition, or nominally attached to or adamantly opposed to “religion.” This is entirely unavoidable, and it is indeed a fact of epistemology (how we know anything of what we know) and pedagogy (how we learn what we do not know), that no one begins as a *tabula rasa*. Like Gregory and Caesarius, we all have complicated religious pasts which we bring to the enterprise. What the university context means is that religion is a subject that can and must be discussed *in public*, by persons who have manifold and divergent experiences, bases of knowledge, theoretical perspectives, commitments and reasons for studying it. In this workshop of manifold learning there is no union card, though there is a pledge: to engage in this study honestly, to hold ourselves and others accountable to the evidence and to reasoned argument, and to refuse just to repeat any motion or assumption uncritically, whether learned at home or here (τὰ ἐνταῦθα μαθήματα, both as “lessons learned locally).

This is enough for a Wednesday lunch (maybe too much); now back to the workshop. So, what are you working on these days? ✕

#### Endnotes

1 Ὑπὸ δὴ τοιούτοις ἦθεσι τραφέντες καὶ παιδευθέντες καὶ τοῖς ἐνταῦθα μαθήμασιν ἰκανῶς ἐνασκηθέντες, ἐν οἷς ἐκεῖνος τάχει τε καὶ μεγέθει φύσεως οὐδ’ ἂν εἴποι τις ὅσον ὑπὲρ τοῦς πολλοὺς ἦν (ὡ πῶς ἀδακρυτὴ τὴν τούτων παρέλθω μνήμην, καὶ μὴ με ἀφιλόσοφον ἐλέγξει τὸ πάθος παρὰ τὴν ὑπόχρῃσιν;), ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ γε ἀποδημίας καιρὸς ἐδόκει, καὶ τότε πρῶτον ἀπ’ ἀλλήλων ἐσχίσθημεν, ἐγὼ μὲν τοῖς κατὰ Παλαιστίνην ἐγκαταμείνας παιδευτηρίοις, ἀνθοῦσι τότε, κατὰ ῥητορικῆς ἔρωτα, ὁ δὲ τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρου πόλιν καταλαβὼν, παντοίας παιδείσεως καὶ τότε καὶ νῦν οὐσάν τε καὶ δοκοῦσαν ἐργαστήριον (*Or.* 7.6 Boulenger).

2 “I consider it absurd for those who interpret the works of these writers (Homer, Hesiod, Demosthenes, Herodotus, etc.) to dishonor the gods whom they honored ... it seems to me to be just absurd for people to teach things they don’t consider correct. But if they deem those whom they interpret and regard as prophets to be truly wise, then let them be the first to emulate their piety towards the gods. But if they think those authors are deceived about the most honored of beings (the gods), then let them go off to the churches of the Galileans to interpret Matthew and Luke ... (Julian, *Ep.* 61c; text Bidez, my translation).

3 “Playing with Fire: the Task of the Divinity School,” *Criterion* 48/2 (2011): 2-7.

4 This critique of Taylor appeared in Grafton’s review of Louis Menand, *The Marketplace of Ideas: Reform and Resistance in The American University*, in the *New Republic* (February 17, 2010). At the outset of that review Grafton critiques both Taylor and Williams Chase; since I am focusing here on Taylor, I have adapted the pronouns from plural to singular (“he” for “they”). Grafton also reviewed Taylor’s book, alongside that by Andrew Hacker and Claudia Dreifus, *Higher Education? How Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids—and What We Can Do about It* (New York: Times Books, 2010), in the *National Interest* (December 16, 2010).

RICHARD A. ROSENGARTEN

## A Celebration of Life Donald A. Gillies

Many of you here today knew Don Gillies better than I knew him. My knowledge of Don was restricted to one specific context, that of the University of Chicago Divinity School and the Baptist Theological Union, whose endowment made possible the establishment of the School at the time the University was founded in 1890.

Thanks to the work of Don and his fellow Trustees, that endowment remains today an essential financial support of the institution. Equally importantly, the association of the B.T.U. and a non-denominational Divinity School devoted to scholarship on religion signals a unique and remarkable—and for our strident age, crucially prescient—coalition.

I saw Don at least twice a year for Trustee meetings, and often once or twice more for subcommittees and consultations. But such was the distinction of Don’s service—and also its steadiness of duration—that I feel I can say that while my acquaintance was limited I nonetheless was privileged to know him well.

Don was appointed a Trustee of the Baptist Theological Union in 1967. From 1974 through 2001, he served as its President. To give you some sense of the span that makes that tenure remarkable: over those twenty-seven years, Don served five Deans of the Divinity School, as well as at least two generations of its faculty and at least five generations of its students. In the course of that tenure, the

University of Chicago appointed six Presidents and ten Provosts.

In terms of the B.T.U. and its work, it means that Don convened and conducted fifty-four formal meetings of the Trustees. It also included more sub-committee meetings, and a wide array of consultations with the Trustees and with the Dean of the Divinity School, the number of which only Don could know.

In all these settings, Don’s work displayed certain perennial hallmarks. He was nothing if not consistent. My first B.T.U. board meeting and thus my first encounter with Don was in October 1985. It was immediately clear in his bearing—quiet but firm, not steely but certainly stentorian—that Don regarded his work for the Union and the Divinity School as nothing less than a sacred trust.

The work Don orchestrated was to a very significant extent financial, and Don impressed me by the degree to which he was crystal clear both about the importance of overseeing investments, and of keeping firmly in mind the students

Don regarded his work for the Union and the Divinity School  
as nothing less than a sacred trust.

and faculty whose work those investments served. This is not an easy balance to maintain, but Don walked this tightrope steadily and surely, and with a firm grace that I came to admire.

Over time I discovered that Don's participation in meetings tended to take one of two forms. On the one hand, Don invariably asked penetrating questions about the investment portfolio. I myself am not much more than a balancer of a checkbook who readily hands over the IRS forms to his spouse, but I came to look forward to Don's mini-seminars on responsible investment, the proper mix in the moment of real estate and other speculative interests, and the calibration of payout on principal, as highly instructive. I also got a sense of the kind of lawyer Don must have been: in twenty-six meetings over thirteen years, Don never asked a question to which he didn't know the answer. He was more concerned to be sure that the auditor the B.T.U. was paying knew the correct answer. His questions always referenced the bylaws and purposes of the B.T.U. and underscored its purpose in serving maximally the University of Chicago Divinity School and its students and faculty.

This concern with principal (as in money) had as its principled (as in moral) complement the second form of Don's participation: an often expressed, and no less firmly stated commitment to the academic independence of the Divinity School. Don was keenly alert to any form of deliberation by the B.T.U. that could be construed to compromise the distinction between financial stewardship on the one hand, and independent intellectual research and teaching on the other. He cherished the academic freedom of the Divinity School and recognized the close relationship between that value and the School's historic preeminence in scholarship on religion. In this way Don brought forward the great tradition that undergirds the historic association of the B.T.U. and the Divinity School. It was no longer 1890, but it did not need to be.

I came to cherish what I would call Don's principled discretion in this regard, and I think it was an expression of his Baptist heritage. As a faculty member and, eventually, Dean of the School, I came to regard it as an implicit but enduring statement of confidence and regard for our work,

and for cherished Baptist principles of free thought. I found that over time, I often spoke of the B.T.U. when I spoke about the school to convey this tradition. Don's person and work had a good bit to do with that, and I shall always be grateful.

In his letters to the first Christian communities, one theme that The Apostle enunciates on several occasions emerges that applies particularly to Don. Paul writes that we come into this world from the Lord, we leave it to return to the Lord; and this means that, whatever we are, we are the Lord's. What Paul expresses seems to me to crystallize what Don Gillies acted on in his stewardship of the B.T.U.—the recognition that the work of our days is, ever and anon, the Lord's work; and that as such, attention to financial principal was itself a matter of moral principle. To go about one's work as Don did was surely the best tribute he could give—day to day and week to week and month to month and year to year—to the God he served. He surely now rests in peace, and we who continue are the stronger for his work and its memory. ✕

# Alumni News

**Rev. Homer Bain**, Ph.D. 1971, received an honorary doctorate in pastoral leadership from Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, Texas on May 13, 2011. Rev. Bain is the emeritus Director of Education for the Ecumenical Center for Religion and Health in San Antonio, and served as pastor of several United Methodist churches. He has published in the area of pastoral counseling and family therapy and has been an adjunct faculty member at OST. He founded the Metropolitan Congregational Alliance in San Antonio, now MetroAlliance.

**G. William Barnard**, Ph.D. 1994, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University, has published *Living Consciousness: The Metaphysical Vision of Henri Bergson* (SUNY Press, 2011). The book examines the insights of French philosopher Henri Bergson. Offering a detailed and accessible analysis of Bergson's thought, Barnard highlights how Bergson's understanding of the nature of consciousness and its relationship to the physical world remain relevant to numerous contemporary fields.

**Robert Benne**, M.A. 1963, Ph.D. 1970, is Director of the Roanoke College Center for Religion and Society and the Jordan-Trexler Professor of Religion Emeritus. He has recently published *Good and Bad Ways to Think about Religion and Politics* (Eerdmans, 2010). In this book, Benne describes and analyzes wrong ways to relate religion and politics and offers a way that he calls critical engagement, derived from the Lutheran tradition, but adjusted to adapt the tradition to deal with the new challenges of our present situation. Benne serves on the Commission on Theology and Doctrine of the newly formed North American Lutheran Church.

**Rabbi Elliot J. Cosgrove**, Ph.D. 2008, the Senior Rabbi at Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City, has been tapped by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) to serve as its Rabbinical Advisor on Interfaith Affairs and Co-Chair of

ADL's National Outreach and Interfaith Committee. In these newly created leadership roles, in addition to his ongoing role as a congregational leader, Rabbi Cosgrove will work to enhance and strengthen ADL's interfaith program to develop constructive relations among Jews, Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, Protestants, Muslims, Mormons and other religions. Rabbi Cosgrove was among the charter members of the ADL Interfaith Coalition on Mosques, established in September 2010. He participated in ADL's first ever conference on Eastern Catholics, Judaism and Israel in March 2011, and recently engaged in conversation with New York Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan at a public session on Catholic-Jewish relations during the League's annual meeting in November.

**Dennis C. Duling**, A.M. 1967, Ph.D. 1970, Emeritus Professor and Koessler Distinguished Teacher at Canisius College, has recently published *A Marginal Scribe: Studies in the Gospel of Matthew in a Social-Scientific Perspective* (Cascade Books, 2011), collecting eight studies written over a period of two decades. These are prefaced, first, with a new chapter on the struggle between historians and social scientists since the Enlightenment and its parallel in New Testament studies, which culminated in the emergence of social-scientific criticism; and, second, with a new chapter on recent social-scientific interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew. The eight, more specialized studies, cover a variety of themes and use a variety of models, but are held together by those that illumine social ranking and marginality.

**Philip Harrold**, Ph.D. 2001, Associate Professor of Church History at Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, has recently coedited (with D. H. Williams) and published *The Great Tradition—A Great Labor: Studies in Ancient-Future Faith* (Cascade Books, 2011). The contributors to this volume show how “profitable and commodious” (as Richard Hooker has said) the Great Tradition can be in nurturing

the worship, communal life, and mission of the Church. While the focus is on contemporary Anglicanism, the wider search among evangelicals for “deep church” (C. S. Lewis) is described from a multidisciplinary perspective.

**Joel S. Kaminsky**, M.A., 1984, Ph.D. 1993, Professor in the Department of Religion at Smith College, is the coauthor (with Joel N. Lohr) of the recently published *The Torah: A Beginner's Guide* (Oneworld Publications, 2011). The book examines the Torah through Jewish, Christian, and modern critical viewpoints. The authors explore the key debates surrounding how the two religions share this common scripture, while simultaneously illustrating the importance of the Torah in western jurisprudence, ethics, and contemporary conceptions of the family, morality, and politics.

**Rev. Jesse Knox, III**, M.Div. 1989, was installed as the senior minister of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Congregational United Church of Christ, in Chicago on June 12, 2011.

**Robert N. McCauley**, M.A. 1975, Director of the Center for Mind, Brain, and Culture and William Rand Kenan Jr. University Professor of Philosophy at Emory University, has recently published *Why Religion is Natural and Science is Not* (Oxford University Press, 2011). The book offers an examination and comparison of the cognitive foundations of religion and science, exploring in its final chapter seven surprising consequences, including the propositions that theological incorrectness is inevitable and that some human beings have minds for which religion inescapably proves baffling.

**Stephen G. Post**, Ph.D. 1983, is Professor of Preventive Medicine, Chair of the Division of Medicine in Society, and Director of the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics at Stony Brook University School of Medicine. His recent book, *The Hidden Gifts of Helping* (Jossey-Bass, 2011), was listed on the nonfiction bestseller list of the *Wall Street Journal* in May 2011. Post remains President of the Institute for Research on Unlimited Love, and a Trustee of the John Templeton Foundation.

**Stephen Rowe**, Th.M. 1969, A.M. 1970, Ph.D., 1974, Professor of Philosophy and Liberal Studies at Grand Valley State University, has published *Overcoming America/America Overcoming: Can We Survive Modernity?* (Lexington Books, 2011). The book shows how the current problems plaguing

America are symptomatic of the fact that America has been overtaken by the modern values that she exported to the rest of the world.

**Rebecca Schorsch**, Ph.D. 2003, together with her husband, received the Dr. Tikva Frymer-Kensky Award for Distinguished Alumni from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) on May 24, 2011. The award honors graduates whose professional and personal achievements reflect the values of JTS and celebrate the scholarship exemplified by the late Dr. Tikva Frymer-Kensky.

**Nelson Tebbe**, Ph.D. 2006, is Professor of Law at Brooklyn Law School. He writes about religious freedom and general constitutional law and theory. He is Chair of the Law and Religion Section of the American Association of Law Schools, co-organizer of the Brooklyn Legal Theory Colloquium and the Annual Law and Religion Roundtable. His most recent article, on the constitutional status of nonbelievers, will be published in the September 2011 issue of the *Virginia Law Review*.

**Emilie M. Townes**, M.A. 1979, D.Min. 1982, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology at Yale Divinity School, has joined The Fund for Theological Education (FTE) Board of Trustees. Five accomplished leaders in theological education, ministry and scholarship have become new trustees, elected by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). FTE is a national, ecumenical organization dedicated to supporting a new generation of diverse young Christian leaders who renew the church and change the world through vocations in pastoral ministry and theological scholarship.

## Losses

**Rev. Dean Brackley**, Ph.D. 1980, died in El Salvador on October 16, 2011 at the age of sixty-five, after a long struggle with cancer. He was surrounded by Jesuits, friends, and many other caregivers. Dean came to El Salvador to help replace six Jesuits murdered in 1989. His life as a Jesuit ended in the Santa Tecla residence, where the six murdered Jesuits had done their two-year novitiate.

Born in upstate New York in 1946, Dean Brackley entered the Jesuits in 1964. He was ordained a priest in 1976 and received his doctorate in Religious Ethics from the Divinity School in 1980. For most of the 1980s Brackley worked as

an educator, teaching at Fordham University, and as a community organizer in Manhattan's Lower East Side. He also led a church-sponsored leadership program in the South Bronx. He described witnessing the reality of poverty and drug-related violence, and spoke of how this experience of dense life-and-death drama, with its “daily crucifixions and resurrections,” helped gather together his scattered self that followed years of soul searching living as a privileged man in a world of injustice. After graduates of the School of the Americas killed six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter in 1989 at the University of Central America (UCA) in San Salvador, Brackley volunteered to take the place of one of the martyred Jesuits. He joined the staff of the University in 1990 and administered its School for Religious Education and assisted in schools for pastoral formation sponsored by the UCA. Beyond his academic responsibilities, Brackley did pastoral work in a poor urban community in San Salvador.

He was the author of several books, including *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times: New Perspectives on the Transformative Wisdom of Ignatius of Loyola* (Crossroad, 2004) and *Divine Revolution: Salvation and Liberation in Catholic Thought* (Wipf and Stock, 1996), as well as numerous articles that appeared in *America*, *Revista Latinoamericana de Teología*, and *Grail*.

**Joseph Colombo**, A.M. 1978, Ph.D. 1986, passed away on January 2, 2012. A passionate and inspiring professor at the University of San Diego, Colombo joined their Department of Theology and Religious Studies (T&RS) in 1984, and served as Department Chair from 1998–2004. He earned a University Professorship award in 1997, the highest honor available to a USD faculty member. He was also a 2006 recipient of the Clarence L. Steber Professorship. His extensive service to the College and University included multiple terms on the University Senate, as well as serving on, and chairing, the Committee on Rank, Reappointment and Tenure for the College of Arts and Sciences. He was active in the American Association of University Professors at the local, state and national levels. Colombo taught courses in philosophical theology and more, including Belief and Unbelief, The Problem of God, Jesus of Hollywood, and Gay and Lesbian Voices. But his impact went far beyond the classroom. He was an advocate for creating a welcoming and respectful campus environment for all students, including gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgendered student, and he helped establish campus LGBT organizations for both undergraduates and law students at USD.

**Ian J. McCrae**, B.D. 1950, died on May 12, 2011, at Belton Research Hospital in the greater Kansas City area. A memorial service was held on Monday, May 16, at Saint Andrew Christian Church in Olathe, Kansas. He is survived by Cynthia McCrae, his wife of sixty years, and their five children, plus grandchildren, extended family, and many dear friends.

A native of Canada who earned his A.B. from the University of Toronto, Ian James McCrae received his B.D. in 1950 from the University of Chicago as a Disciples Divinity House Scholar. In Chicago, he met Cynthia Rice, who was a student at Chicago Theological Seminary. They married and had five children. He received his S.T.M. from Yale Divinity School in 1958; in 2006 he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Christian Theological Seminary. In 2007, he was given the Distinguished Alumnus Award by Disciples Divinity House, which commended him “for a lifetime of service across the breadth of the church as advocate, educator, minister, and colleague, as provoker of questions and change, and as lover of God, neighbors, and strangers” and for his “keen mind, clear vision, and sharp wit and for vistas of mercy and justice opened because of them; for mentoring persons in ministry, amidst the priesthood of all believers; and for a life of faith that melds and models conviction, integrity, honesty, and humility.”

An educator, ethicist, and change agent, McCrae directed denominational efforts in human rights, economic justice, and global awareness for nearly thirty years, and also served in campus ministry and as a seminary professor. More recently, he was the Volunteer Assisting Minister at Saint Andrew Christian Church, where among other things, he had an important mentoring role with a new generation of Disciples House Scholars.



**Riesebrodt** *Continued from page 13*

facts and achieve conceptual clarity. It was this commitment of Martin's that made it possible for me even to pursue a doctorate at the Divinity School and along the way to discover a potential I barely recognized in myself.

For this, I am forever indebted to you, Martin. I raise my glass now in your honor. Mentor and friend, may the years ahead in Berlin and Tuscany bring you and Brigitte new and creative possibilities in your scholarship and art. I will miss you but trust, as well, that we shall remain in touch. Thank you. ✕

**Margaret M. Mitchell**

*Dean and Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature*

**Closing Remarks**

It is a bittersweet task to recognize the retirement of such an esteemed and truly beloved colleague as Martin Riesebrodt, after twenty years on this faculty. Martin will continue to haunt these halls in non-concrete forms (not just in memory, but through his scholarship, especially his theory of religion, which will continue to be a touchstone and to be debated), and we very much hope he will not be a stranger in these parts. But we shall miss his day to day presence among us, and his intellectual companionship, very much (though the entire faculty is already plotting an interventionist practice to relieve our sense of crisis—Googling the price of summer plane tickets for a drop in visit to Tuscany to resolve our sense of loss).

Martin has been my colleague on the faculty since 1998 (I am trying not to be offended that the minute I became dean he decided to retire), and we had offices across the

hall from each other here in Swift. One of the neat things about this conference is the way it fills in for me what different things were being discussed behind his door as we held office hours each week, from Korean women evangelicals to Palestinians, Confucianism, East African Catholic missionary endeavors, Senegalese Muslim women, the crosses of Auschwitz, et cetera. These former students in this room and others not with us today have been well served by Martin's honesty, clarity, quality of attention, intellectual rigor and civility. And we his faculty colleagues feel precisely the same. I have very much appreciated and relied upon Martin's trademark no-nonsense approach—to things academic and otherwise; he is blunt with a purpose, a bluntness not born of impatience so much as with a firm sense of what is most important, and needs to be said. I like his style.

I would also like to extend appreciation on behalf of the faculty to Brigitte Riesebrodt, who has also been and will remain a very important figure in the Divinity School community. Having an accomplished and tremendously successful artist in our midst has made us feel more sophisticated than we had the right to, giving us the opportunity to mingle with artists and others at her exhibition openings. We have all fallen in love with her subtle, gritty, intoned and sublime art (I have had a postcard from one of her openings on the wall of my home study for—I think—a decade now). This includes the conference poster, which is just a stunner; a collectors item. Brigitte's departure decreases our cool factor by at least fifty percent. ✕

**Tributes were also delivered** by Malika Zeghal, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Professor in Contemporary Islamic Thought and Life, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the Committee on the Study of Religion, Harvard University (and former Divinity School colleague), and Kelly Chong, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology, University of Kansas, but because they spoke from notes, are not reproduced here.

For more information on the conference, please visit us online at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/conferences/riesebrodt/>.

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