

CIRCA

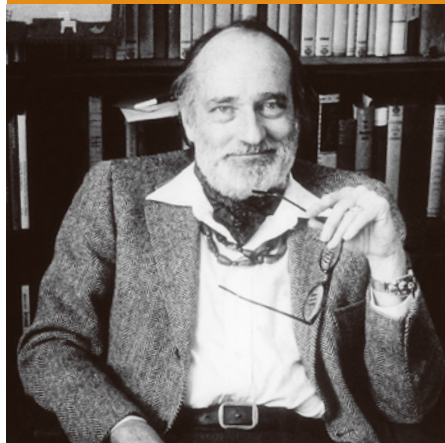
News *from* the University of Chicago Divinity School

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO IS CELEBRATED AS “THE TEACHER OF TEACHERS,” in recognition of the disproportionately large number of its graduates who have pursued careers in higher education. The Divinity School’s contribution to this reputation in the field of religion was beautifully limned by an event that concluded just as I began to compose this letter: the memorial service held at Bond Chapel on February 12, 2005, in honor of Langdon Gilkey, Shailer Mathewes Professor Emeritus, who died last November

at the age of eighty-four. The company who gathered that day came from near and far, and included colleagues, students, friends, and even a few people who had never met Langdon but had admired his books. In reminding us of Langdon, the event also reminded us of what Swift Hall must always be.

Langdon was a teacher’s teacher. He once said that teaching was nothing less than stewardship of conversation. Langdon loved conversation—real conversation, about ideas and arguments and the world—and he worked hard to cultivate it. He could and would lecture exceptionally, but he clearly lived for the moment, perhaps some twenty minutes before the scheduled conclusion of a class, when he would close his notebook and invite questions. (His classes never ended on time.) And he did not think conversation was just for the classroom. Throughout the quarter century of his tenure at the Divinity School, Langdon regularly began his day in the Swift Kick Coffee Shop, with the *New York Times* spread on the table and the expectation, indeed in slow times the solicitation, that passersby join him for conversation about the events of the day and their religious significance. His interlocutors in these early morning bull sessions were as often University maintenance workers and staff as they were students and faculty. Office appointments were similarly extended and collegial; your appointment was likely to evolve into a debate including three or four other students whose appointments yours had impinged upon. In all these venues, Langdon cultivated excellence of exchange. He listened, he queried, and perhaps most of all he made questions better. He had the knack for figuring out, with great sympathy and scrupulousness, precisely what someone was asking. And he insisted that everyone try his or her hand at an answer. Throughout the conversation, he would comment on its direction, making of it something greater than the sum of its parts—and thus truer to the world it attempted to be about and that it might influence.

Letter from the Dean



Langdon’s example underscores
the power of scholarship to
reach across multiple publics ...

Langdon was a great scholar. Without peer as expositor of the thought of his teachers Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr, he made major contributions to our understanding of the challenge of naming God and of making sense of God’s role in history. He wrote technically complex books, but in reading him one does not have to work hard to grasp the deeply felt humanity that drives the inquiry. To endeavor to name God is to grapple with human speech’s powers both to articulate and to deceive; to contemplate

history and providence is to confront in brilliant outline the power of hope and the limits of our certitude.

Langdon was also a public figure. *Shantung Compound*, his account of his internment in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp during World War II, introduced him to a very wide public. It remains in print and engages new generations of readers. His participation as an expert witness in the Arkansas creationism trial, recounted in *Creationism on Trial: Evolution and God at Little Rock*, embroiled him as an avowed theological liberal in a confrontation with fundamentalist Christianity that is perhaps more pertinent today than it was in the early 1980s. Rooted in the Protestant tradition, he was an adventurous dialogue partner, engaging Buddhists and Hindus and becoming a deeply appreciative, if critical, expositor of the Roman Catholic tradition.

If the Divinity School is the place where the teachers of teachers of religion—our faculty and our students—congregate, it seems clear that Langdon Gilkey understood that such teaching must always be based in conversation, must be as wide ranging in membership as possible, and must be ruthlessly insistent on the complementarity of rigorous scholarship and public engagement. Langdon’s example underscores the power of scholarship to reach across multiple publics and to do justice both to the range of humanity that religion engages and the depth of expression that religion represents.

At its best, the Divinity School embodies precisely those values. And it recognizes that it promulgates them as much through the efforts of its alumni, in their work in academy and church and their offshoots, as it does through the denizens of Swift Hall. □

Richard A. Rosengarten, *Dean*

(The testimonials from the memorial service for Langdon Gilkey will be published in an upcoming issue of *Criterion*.)

Catherine Bell Named Alumna of the Year

The Board of Trustees of the Baptist Theological Union has named Catherine M. Bell the Divinity School's Alumna of the Year for 2004. Bell is Bernard J. Hanley Professor and chair of the Religious Studies Department at Santa Clara University, where she has taught since 1985.

Born and raised in New York City, Bell attended Manhattanville College, where she double-majored in philosophy and religion, earning her B.A. in 1975. She went on to earn her M.A. and Ph.D. in the History of Religions from the Divinity School in 1976 and 1983, respectively. Before joining the faculty at Santa Clara, Bell taught at Seishin Joshi Gakuin in Tokyo from 1982 to 1983, and the International University of Japan in Nigata in 1983.

Bell's research interests include history of religions methodology, ritual studies, Asian religions, and Chinese religions, including popular religion, religious tracts (shanshu), and printing and ritual.

Her published work looks at the role of text and rite in Chinese religion and, more broadly, the efficacy of ritual in religion in



general. Her first book, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) won the American Academy of Religion's award for best first book in the history of religions in 1994, and is considered a seminal text in the study of ritual.

A celebrated teacher, Bell has offered a variety of courses in her home institution. These have addressed: ways of understanding religion; Asian traditions; Buddhism; Chinese religions; Japanese religions; magic, science, and religion; comparing fundamentalisms; gender and religion in Asian religions; ethical issues in Asian religions; and religion and violence, among other topics. In 1994, she was awarded the Brutocao Award for excellence in curriculum innovation, Santa Clara's highest award for teaching, designed to recognize those teachers who have had a deep and lasting impact on the lives of students.

In addition to being a great scholar and teacher, Bell is a skilled administrator, which she has demonstrated by chairing Santa Clara's Religious Studies Department since 2000.

Bell will deliver her Alumna of the Year address, "Theory, Palm Trees, and Mere Being," at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 28, 2005, in Swift Lecture Hall. □

Faculty News

Hopkins Lectures in India and Brazil

This fall 2004, Dwight Hopkins, professor of theology in the Divinity School, delivered a series of lectures throughout India on black Americans, African American religion, black theology, and culture.

In January 2005, he lectured on the state of theology both in the U.S. and at the



World Forum on Liberation Theology in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Hopkins has received a grant from the Louisville Institute to host a national conference entitled "Black Theology and Womanist Theology: Which Way Forward for the Academy and the Church?" coorganized by Dr. Linda E. Thomas, to be held in fall 2005 at the Divinity School.

Klauck to Deliver Bellarmine Lecture

Hans-Josef Klauck, professor of New Testament and early Christian literature in the Divinity School, has been invited to deliver the prestigious Robert Cardinal Bellarmine Lecture at Saint Louis University in 2005.

Ricoeur and Pelikan Awarded Kluge Prize

Paul Ricoeur and Jaroslav Pelikan were awarded the Library of Congress's John W. Kluge Prize for Lifetime Achievement in the Human Sciences in December 2004. Ricoeur is the John Nuveen Professor Emeritus in the Divinity School and one of the world's leading philosophers, and Pelikan is a former Divinity School professor and religious historian who also earned his doctorate at Chicago. The two share this prestigious international award of \$1 million, which recognizes work in anthropology, philosophy, history, and the study of religion, areas for which there are no Nobel prizes.



Zeghal Appointed to Faculty

Malika Zeghal was appointed associate professor of the anthropology and sociology of religion in the Divinity School at the beginning of the winter quarter. (See page 6 for an interview with Zeghal.)

Richards to Deliver Ryerson Lecture

Robert J. Richards, Morris Fishbein Professor of Science and Medicine and associated faculty in the Divinity School, delivered the Nora and Edward Ryerson Lecture on Tuesday, April 12, 2005, in the Max Palevsky Cinema. The title of his lecture was "The Narrative Structure of Moral Judgments in History: Evolution and Nazi Biology." The Ryerson Lectureship, established by the Trustees of the University of Chicago in 1973, is awarded each year to an outstanding member of the University's faculty. The only other Divinity School professor to have been bestowed this honor is Wendy Doniger, Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions, in 1995.

ERRATUM: Circa regrets that in issue 22 (autumn 2004), page 3, it misrepresented Anthony C. Yu's official academic title by suggesting that, in addition to being the Carl Darling Buck Distinguished Service Professor in the Humanities and professor of religion and literature in the Divinity School, he holds "associated appointments" in the Departments of Comparative Literature, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and English Language and Literature, as well as in the Committee on Social Thought. Professor Yu is not an associated member of these departments but a tenured and voting member.

Ministry Program Update



M.Div. student Shane Isaac with Teaching Pastor Laura Truax

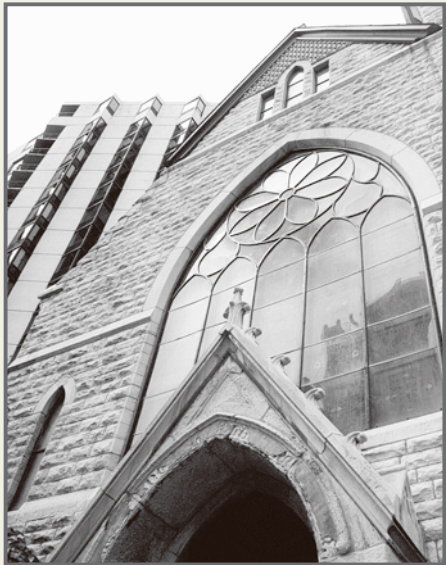
Prospective students shopping for master of divinity programs—and the pastors and religious studies professors who advise them—often articulate the assumption that the Divinity School’s emphasis on intellectual rigor sacrifices meaningful practice in the ministerial arts. Those who take a closer look, however, are impressed by the M.Div. program’s dedication to providing deep experience in religious leadership in the curriculum’s field education sequence.

All M.Div. students are required to complete two segments of field education: a nine-month, fifteen- to twenty-hour-per-week immersion in a teaching congregation under the supervision of one of the Divinity School’s teaching pastors, and a second placement—often Clinical Pastoral Education, an internship in a campus chaplaincy or in an ecumenical, interfaith, or social service agency for a comparable number of hours. Accompanying the congregational placement are intentional supervisory meetings between the student and a lay committee and between the student and the teaching pastor; a Divinity School course sequence on the arts of ministry—worship, preaching, and pastoral care; and a weekly practicum in which students reflect theologically on their parish experiences.

The teaching, learning, formation, and growth that transpire in the congregational placement are powerful and reciprocal. Students who were once ambivalent about

parish ministry are often prompted to think more seriously about congregational leadership as they live, work, and worship alongside thoughtful pastors and committed, dynamic congregations. Pastors are energized by the weekly discipline of theological reflection with students. Congregations are pleased to participate in the education and formation of new religious leadership. And when students bring their insights and observations from congregational practice back into the Swift Hall classroom, religious practice and thought engage one another in mutually beneficial conversation.

Shane Isaac is a Colorado College graduate who, with his second-year M.Div. cohort, is currently in the midst of his congregational placement year. Shane’s teaching parish is



... when students bring their insights and observations from congregational practice back into the Swift Hall classroom, religious practice and thought engage one another in mutually beneficial conversation.

“... We learn in class to be analytical and critical, and the parish experience teaches us also to be faithful, and encourages us to develop the personal integrity to hold these together.”

LaSalle Street Church, located on the northwest edge of downtown Chicago, just blocks from the Cabrini Green neighborhood. The community church is well known for its thoughtful and innovative worship and its powerful commitment to serving its urban neighborhood: the mid-size church operates an entire building filled with community organizations, from day care and alternative high school to clothing and feeding programs, and is a local leader in supporting affordable housing.

Students are responsible for locating and securing their congregational placements in consultation with the Divinity School’s field education director, Santiago Piñón. Shane chose LaSalle Street Church for its commitment to the concerns and challenges of people living in the city, its “hands-on, authentic, and intimate community in the face of urban alienation,” and its unique theological outlook: “it has an evangelical flavor but is open to ambiguity,” Shane comments. Teaching Pastor Laura Truax has been a generous and dynamic mentor for Shane. She and the congregation have invited him to observe, ask questions, participate, and learn by trying his hand at religious leadership “in ways that one can’t learn from reading and reflection alone.” Shane has preached and been involved in worship leadership; taught children, youth, and adults; participated in planning and implementing various social ministries; and learned valuable lessons about organization, administration, and funding in this unique setting. Most importantly, Shane and his cohort have had the opportunity to explore the many dimensions of pastoral identity, and to try on the role for themselves. The teaching parish experience, Shane reflects, “challenges us to be intentional and constructive about our theological endeavors. We learn in class to be analytical and critical, and the parish experience teaches us also to be faithful, and encourages us to develop the personal integrity to hold these together.”

The ministry program staff are always interested in learning about healthy congregations with thoughtful, seasoned pastors who would like to partner with us as teaching parishes. Contact Cynthia Lindner, director of ministry studies (clindner@uchicago.edu), or Santiago Piñón, director of field education (spinon@uchicago.edu), to learn more. □

Left: LaSalle Street Church

Spring Events



Maimonides and Hebrew Prayer

Wednesday, April 6

4:00 p.m., Swift Lecture Hall

Dr. Stefan Reif will deliver a lecture entitled “Maimonides and Hebrew Prayer” and exhibit manuscript fragments authored by Maimonides from the Genizah, the storage place of a thousand-year-old synagogue in Cairo containing the world’s most precious collection of Hebrew and Jewish documents. The documents are no less important than



Moses Maimonides

the Dead Sea Scrolls, and shed light on the everyday life, religion, and culture of communities around the Mediterranean from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries. Dr. Reif is director of the Genizah Research Unit and head of the Oriental Division in the University Library, professor of medieval Hebrew studies in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, and fellow of St. John’s College, all at the University of Cambridge. His major fields of research are the Hebrew prayer book and the Cairo Genizah, and he is the author/editor of nine books and over 250 scholarly articles. His most recent publications are: *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo* (Curzon, 2000); *Why Medieval Hebrew Studies?* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); and *The Cambridge Genizah Collections: Their Contents and Significance* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

A Conversation in Divinity with Amy Hollywood

Thursday, April 7

5:30 p.m., Chicago Cultural Center, 78 East Washington Street, Southwest Meeting Room

See page 5 for details.

Ministry Conference: Contemporary Reflections on the Body

Friday, April 8

10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Swift Hall

“Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: Contemporary Reflections on the Body,” a conference organized by the Divinity School’s ministry program and sponsored by the Martin Marty Center. (See page 10 for details.)



Alumna of the Year Address

Thursday, April 28

4:00 p.m., Swift Lecture Hall

“Theory, Palm Trees, and Mere Being,” the 2004 Alumna of the Year Address, will be delivered by Catherine M. Bell, Bernard J. Hanley Professor and chair of the Religious Studies Department at Santa Clara University. (See page 2 for details.)

For calendar updates, check the Divinity School’s Web site at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/news/events.shtml>. To subscribe to *At the Divinity School*, the School’s weekly electronic events calendar, please go to <https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/atds>.

A Conference to Honor Anthony C. Yu

Tuesday, April 12–Wednesday, April 13

Swift Hall

A conference entitled “Religion, Literature, and the Comparative Perspective” will be held to honor Anthony C. Yu, the Carl Darling Buck Distinguished Service Professor in the Humanities and professor of religion and literature in the Divinity School, also in the Departments of Comparative Literature, East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and English Language and Literature, and the Committee on Social Thought. Yu will retire from teaching on June 30, 2005, after thirty-seven years of dedicated service on the University of Chicago’s faculty. Details can be found on the Divinity School’s Web site, at http://divinity.uchicago.edu/news/spring_2005/yu.shtml.



Ethics Club Lecture Series

Thursday, April 14

4:00 p.m., Swift Lecture Hall

Eric Gregory, assistant professor of religion at Princeton University and junior fellow at the Erasmus Institute of Notre Dame University, will inaugurate the Ethics Club’s spring 2005 lecture series, “Politics, Virtue, and Theology: Limits and Horizons.” Students will present papers in subsequent weeks, on the afternoons of April 21, April 26, April 28, and May 19, in Swift Lecture Hall. Check details closer to the date at <http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/conferences/ethics/index.shtml>.

Religion and the Democratic Prospect Conference

Thursday, May 12–Friday, May 13

Swift Common Room

The spring conference of the Martin Marty Center’s Project on Religion and the Democratic Prospect. (See page 10 for details.)

The Shohet Conference on Roman, Jewish, and Christian Burials

Sunday, May 22–Tuesday, May 24

Swift Hall

“Commemorating the Dead: Texts and Artifacts in Context”—The Shohet Conference on Roman, Jewish, and Christian burials. (See page 10 for details.)

An Interview with Amy Hollywood

Amy Hollywood is professor of theology and the history of Christianity in the Divinity School. A graduate of the Divinity School, Hollywood taught Christian thought at Dartmouth College before returning to Chicago in fall 2003.

CIRCA: Your first book, *The Soul as Virgin Wife*, which won the International Congress of Medieval Studies' Otto Grundler Prize for the best book in medieval studies, examines the body and gender in late medieval Christian mysticism, while your most recent book, *Sensible Ecstasy*, examines the fascination among certain thinkers with affective forms of mysticism. What are you focusing on in your current research?

AH: There was a real continuity between those two projects, and I always knew I was going to move from the first to the second. Now I am in the curious position of having too many ideas and not yet being able to decide where to focus my energies. I've recently written a number of essays dealing with questions of bodily practice, ritual, and belief. Some of this work focuses on contemporary theoretical materials, some brings that material into conversation with medieval practices as they can be reconstructed through texts and surviving material artifacts. I am very interested in the ways in which medieval Christian men and women understood the relationship between their religious practices and extraordinary experiences of the divine. There is an entire psychological and theological vocabulary with regard to these issues within medieval texts that might, I think, contribute in very interesting ways to some particularly vexing questions in the contemporary study of religion. So that's one possible large-scale project, but there are others.



CIRCA: Describe your approach to working in the History of Christianity.

AH: As a historian of Christianity whose primary training is in theology, I want to understand the ways ideas are embedded in, shaped by, but also often alter, the material conditions in which they emerge. Most varieties of medieval Christianity are as much about materiality as about transcendence—transcendence occurs in and through materiality, which is difficult for many of us now

to apprehend. I see my work as fundamentally in continuity with the traditions of Jean Leclercq, Marie-Dominique Chenu, and my own teacher at Chicago, Bernard McGinn, for all of whom theology was inextricable from religious practice, and religious practice inexplicable outside of its theological contexts. What I bring that is perhaps new to this tradition is an explicit interest in issues of gender, sexuality, and the body as they are articulated within medieval sources and contemporary theory. I try to allow these seemingly divergent sets of texts to speak to each other in my work.

CIRCA: You left the Divinity School with an M.A. and Ph.D. in 1991 to teach at Dartmouth College, and returned in 2003 as a professor. What has this experience been like for you?

AH: I was away long enough for it to be more exhilarating than daunting—although it is still daunting enough. It's nice to come back to a place one knows and to see how it has altered and grown. That basic familiarity makes some of the other difficulties of changing jobs a bit easier. The biggest challenge has been to move from undergraduate to primarily graduate teaching. I had excellent undergraduates at Dartmouth, but there is something different about graduate-level teaching that I can't yet fully articulate. You'll have to check back with me on that one! □

I am very interested in the ways in which medieval Christian men and women understood the relationship between their religious practices and extraordinary experiences of the divine.

A Conversation in Divinity with Amy Hollywood

Thursday, April 7

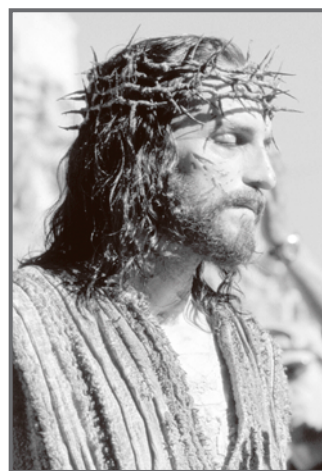
5:30 p.m., Chicago Cultural Center,
78 East Washington Street,
Southwest Meeting Room

"Traumatic Devotion: Mysticism and Mourning in Late Medieval Mysticism" by Amy Hollywood, professor of theology and the history of Christianity in the Divinity School.

Mel Gibson's 2004 film *The Passion of the Christ* has provoked impassioned responses, both positive and negative, largely because of its emphasis on the extremity of Christ's physical suffering. Gibson here follows traditions first established in the late Middle Ages—traditions that call on the believer to

visualize, meditate on, and feel compassion for Christ's intense bodily pain.

In this Conversation in Divinity, Amy Hollywood will look at the *Revelation* of the German Dominican Margaret Ebner, a virtuosa of meditation on Christ's Passion, whose own body physically conforms to that of Christ on the cross. The real question, of course, will be, Why? What religious value did Ebner find in her compassion for and identification with Christ's suffering?



Do the values and meanings visible in Ebner's practice find a parallel in Gibson's twenty-first-century filmic representation?

Conversations in Divinity, a quarterly series, is free and open to the public. To register or for more information, please contact Molly Bartlett at 773-702-8248 or mbartlett@uchicago.edu.

Film Still from Mel Gibson's 2004 film *The Passion of the Christ* © 2003 Icon Distribution Inc. All Rights Reserved. A Newmarket Films release. Photo: Philippe Antonello.

An Interview with Malika Zeghal

Malika Zeghal was appointed associate professor of the anthropology and sociology of religion in the Divinity School on January 1, 2005. She taught at Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris before coming to Chicago as a visiting associate professor in spring 2003.

CIRCA: You were trained as a political scientist and study religion through the lens of Islam and power. How did you become interested in this subject and what are your current research goals?

MZ: My interest in the subject of Islam and power stems from a phenomenon that I find puzzling: religious revival. Why do certain groups and even whole societies occasionally rediscover their religion? What kinds of political forms can this rediscovery and its attendant redefinitions take? How is the rediscovery embedded in social structures?

Before I began studying it, I directly observed the Islamic revival of the 1980s in Tunisia, where I spent some formative years. While studying at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris, I became interested in sociological fieldwork and theory. I was dissatisfied at the time with the way in which the sociological literature was dealing with political Islam and the Muslim revival. For a very long time, the “Orientalist” style was prevalent. It is extremely erudite but lacks sociological perspective, defining Islam as the main basis of an essentialized “political culture.” It is only recently that, in France, the study of Islam has been tackled by sociologists and political scientists. I wanted to link the study of Islam with a rigorous sociological approach.

My first experience in the field was in Egypt. The work I did there provided the ground for my Ph.D. thesis, which later became my first book, *Gardiens de l'Islam* (1996). It is a sociopolitical study of al-Azhar (the most important Islamic institution and university in the Sunni Muslim world) in the second part of the twentieth century. I just published a book on contemporary Morocco, *Les islamistes marocains: le défi à la monarchie* (2005), where I examine the changing religious and political status of the “Commander of the Faithful” (the king) as the monarchy is faced with serious religious competition. This, in turn, will provide part of the basis for a theoretical book on public Islam in the modern world, a long-term project where I will examine theories of secularization in light of the recent history of Islam.

In the meantime, I will continue my work on an ongoing project involving fieldwork on Islam and Muslims in the United States. My aim is to develop a sociology of religious experience in a diaspora situation in relation to larger sociological topics: the process of building religious authorities and organizations, and the “import” and “export” of religious ideas between the American



I want to acquaint students with the textual aspects of Islam in relationship with the social and political manifestations of Islam in modern times.

Muslim diaspora and the rest of the world. Also, I am currently editing, with Farhad Khosrokhavar, a volume entitled “New Intellectuals in Islam.” We look at new trends in liberal and reformist Islam in eleven countries, from the United States and several European countries to Iran, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia. . . . The most vibrant intellectual discussions among intellectuals and theologians are taking place today outside of the Arab Middle East, particularly in the United States and Iran.

CIRCA: To date, there hasn't been a sustained program in the study of Islam at the

Divinity School. How do you think your presence here will change that?

MZ: It is important that Islam be taught today in the Divinity School. I look forward to teaching modern Islam here and participating in the construction of a program in the Anthropology and Sociology of Religion as well as in the study of Islam. Today, Islam is not just the majority's religion in what we call the “Muslim world”; it has also become part of the religious landscape of the West, which is one of the reasons why Islam—in its very diverse manifestations—should interest scholars of religion today.

I want to acquaint students with the textual aspects of Islam in relationship with the social and political manifestations of Islam in modern times. This spring, for instance, one of my classes will treat the topic “Reform and Revival in Modern Islam (Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries).” We will examine the complex historical mutation of the original religious nineteenth-century reform into politicized and fundamentalist versions of Islam. I will also look at the very recent reform movements toward a more liberal apprehension and practice of Islam. I intend to teach courses in fieldwork methodology and analysis, too.

CIRCA: As you mentioned, you spent time in Tunisia, where you received your primary and secondary education, before moving to Paris, where you studied at the prestigious Ecole Normale Supérieure and Institut d'Etudes Politiques. How has this background prepared you for teaching religion?

MZ: I studied in the sociology department at the Ecole Normale Supérieure, where the influence of Durkheim, but also scholars like Pierre Bourdieu and Foucault, is important. I can now develop my own perspective on the relationship between religion and power by focusing on religious institutions, which I broadly define as structures of

mediation between believers and religious ideas. For instance, I think that it is relevant to compare the “clergy” in the West with religious clerics in the Sunni Middle East, even if in Islam there is no definition of a clergy or church. I am also interested in recent sociologists of religion who deal with religious pluralism in secular societies, and the consequences of globalization on religion. I am particularly intrigued by a process that I notice often in my fieldwork on

Islam and Muslims in the United States: that of the standardization of religious ideas that circulate and get transmitted widely and rapidly through new media as well as religious organizations and authorities. □



Mosques and sunset in Cairo, Egypt

Marty Center News and Events

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

—Wendy Doniger, *Director of the Marty Center*

Marty Center Fellowship Programs

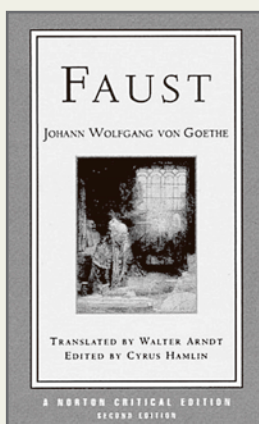
The Alma Wilson Teaching Fellow

Each year, the Alma Wilson Teaching Fellowship, made possible by a generous endowment gift, provides one advanced graduate student in the Divinity School an opportunity for supervised teaching experience in the University of Chicago's undergraduate college. David L. Simmons, a Ph.D. candidate in Religion and Literature, was awarded the fellowship for 2004–2005. He offered the following report on his experience:

The opportunity to teach a course on Goethe's *Faust* as a Wilson Teaching Fellow has been thrilling in both senses of the word, since the experience has been more fun and more terrifying than I had anticipated. Originally designed for the University's Graham School of General Studies, the course was primarily intended as an opportunity for students to read Goethe's masterpiece in its entirety, given that the extremely difficult, five-act second part of the epic dramatic poem is rarely taught. In revamping the syllabus for the religious studies program in the College, I saw an opportunity to teach *Faust* as a thoroughly modern literary response to ancient religious questions about God, the nature of evil, the place of humanity in the cosmos, and the possibility of salvation, among others. This perspective also seeks to understand Goethe, who once proclaimed that all of his works were "fragments of a great confession," as a profound religious thinker.

The wildly ambitious scope of the course became increasingly apparent during the first three weeks of the quarter, when my students made it clear that the graduate-level reading load of Goethe, background material, and interpretive essays was not merely onerous, but impossible. I had not thought pragmatically enough about the reading assignments, so I reduced the secondary reading to what I considered the bare minimum required to understand the Faust myth and Goethe's

development of it in a religious studies context: Luther and the Reformation, philosophy of religion in the Enlightenment, and German Romanticism.



Although these readings already suggest that teaching *Faust* is tantamount to teaching a course in Western civilization (one of the terrifying aspects of my experience), the sixteen students who stuck with it proved to be ready for the challenge and contributed eagerly and insightfully to the seminar-style discussions about the text. Moreover, their first essays exceeded my expectations in the intensity of their engagement with all the assigned reading and the diversity of their interests. The other aspect of the thrill of teaching is being able to witness a student becoming passionate about a work you love.

Nevertheless, each day in the classroom presents new and unexpected challenges, as well as the chance to improvise ways of dealing with them. Part Two of *Faust* com-

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prehends nearly all of Goethe's learning over a lifetime, from classical mythology, philosophy, and literature to the latest developments in science, politics, and the economy. It has confounded its interpreters ever since its publication after Goethe's death in 1832, and as the drama becomes increasingly obscure, encyclopedic, allegorical, abstract, hermetic, and heterogeneous, my students are finding fewer and fewer secure footholds in the text that would support a coherent interpretation of it. I have discovered that more lecture and less discussion is required for Goethe's frustratingly opaque moments.

In this way, however, teaching in the College has already proven invaluable: in the chance to revise a ridiculously demanding syllabus, to discover and possibly transcend the limits of one's abilities in the classroom, to test a variety of teaching techniques, and to work with a group of intelligent, dedicated, and energetic college students. It may be a truism, but the students are most important. *Faust* demands not just to be taught, but to be taught well, and it is my students who are teaching me to do this, whether in their vocal objections to the reading load, the questions they ask that send me back to my books, or simply in their silence in the face of an unanswerable Socratic question. For all of these reasons, it has been a privilege to serve as the Wilson Teaching Fellow this year. □

David L. Simmons

Marty Center Publications

Sightings

On January 1, 2005, Elizabeth Hayes Alvarez retired from her position as *Sightings*'s managing editor to tend to two small children and her Ph.D. dissertation. Ably stepping into Alvarez's shoes is Jeremy Biles, who received his Ph.D. from the Divinity School in Religion and Literature last winter and who has since served as an occasional teacher and writer for the University. "I've long been interested in publishing projects, particularly in the area of religion," commented Biles, "so *Sightings* is a great opportunity for me in that regard. And as an occasional contributor, I have some familiarity with the venue—its parameters and the overall editorial vision. Doing this job allows me to continue and expand upon this experience. In particular, I hope to incorporate more columns addressing the relations between religion and literature, visual arts, and popular culture."

Biles is off to a promising start. In addition to penning his own column on the proliferation of BibleZines—Bibles designed to resemble fashion magazines—he has delved into the difficult task of broadening the editorial's contributor base. New columnists have offered insightful analyses of the rhetoric employed by conservatives in combating the alleged "war against Christmas," religion

and the inaugural prayer, myth and the war on terror, and the religious dimensions of the Super Bowl. Martin Marty's regular Monday columns have been similarly wide-ranging and penetrating, addressing matters such as the dubious ethics of the Iraq war, the presence of exclusivist evangelical clubs in colleges and universities, community-building in Europe and the U.S., the decline of dominant figures in theology, and the momentous disaster of the Asian tsunami.

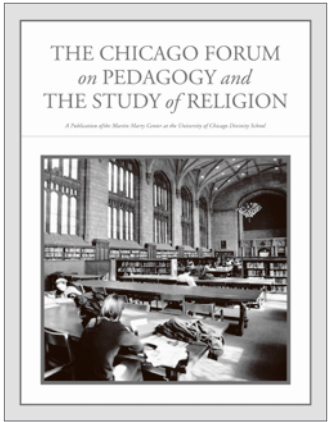
"One column that elicited a great deal of response," reports Biles, "was Michael Kessler's 'A Place for Prayer:'" (January 27), which examined the role of religion in the inaugural prayer. "It appeals directly to the mission of *Sightings*, which is to report on the role of religion in public life." *Circa* is pleased to reprint Kessler's column below, and hopes that it will serve both to acquaint new readers with the publication and perhaps inspire further contributions. Those interested in submitting to *Sightings* may do so by e-mailing Jeremy Biles at sightings-admin@listhost.uchicago.edu. ▢

To access the *Sightings* archive, go to <http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/sightings/index.shtml>.



Special Issue on Pedagogy and the Study of Religion

In January 2005, the Chicago Forum on Pedagogy and the Study of Religion, sponsored by the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion, published an overview of its three-year program in volume 2 of the Martin Marty Center's occasional papers series. The publication, which bears the same name as the forum, contains an introduction by Dean Rosengarten and Forum Director Lucy K. Pick; the three Wabash Center lectures—by Jonathan Z. Smith, John Stratton Hawley, and Paul J. Griffiths—each of which considers the theme for that year; as well as essays by three of our graduate student fellows—Caroline Tolton, David Clairmont, and David Simmons—which reflect on questions raised during the three years of the forum. To receive a complimentary copy of the issue, please contact jquijano@uchicago.edu.



Sightings Column: A Place for Prayer?

By Michael Kessler

At the 2001 presidential inauguration, the Reverend Kirbyjon Caldwell's benediction concluded on a controversial note: "We respectfully submit this humble prayer in the name that's above all other names, Jesus, the Christ. Let all who agree say, 'Amen.'" Caldwell explained prior to delivering the 2005 inaugural benediction, "I expect to speak God's word over the world . . . and pronounce God's blessing on the people."

And God's word, for Caldwell, is Jesus. But this year, in newfound deference to America's melting pot of faiths, Caldwell modified his closing: "Respecting persons of all faiths, I humbly submit this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

Franklin Graham, who also appealed to Jesus in his 2001 invocation, was less concil-

iatory: "There are factions of society today that hate God. . . . In America, where our currency declares 'In God We Trust,' it still surprises me that when a Christian minister does what he is ordained to do—read and quote from the Bible, share the truth of the Gospel, pray in the Name of Jesus—some people view those acts as borderline subversive!" (*The Name*).

Indeed, a minister ordained to lead prayers and preach the Word ought to do just that. And after all, Christian or not, everyone understands that the key event of the inauguration is the chief justice's administration of the oath to defend the Constitution. So what is the harm in a president's spiritual advisors giving it up for Jesus in a public, political event? Michael Newdow, California activist for separation of God from government, felt harmed by the prayer, but his lawsuit to

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The Religion and Culture Web Forum

The Religion and Culture Web Forum, the Marty Center’s online forum for thought-provoking discussion on the relationship of scholarship in religion and culture to public life, invites you to read recent and upcoming essays and discuss them online at <http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/webforum/index.shtml>.



November

Susanna Morrill, visiting assistant professor at Lewis & Clark College, examines the importance of two female figures in early Mormon theology and culture: the Mother in Heaven and Eve.

December

Wendy Doniger, director of the Martin Marty Center and Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions in the Divinity School, examines the layers of meaning in cases of

individuals who, while passing as something they do not believe themselves to be, pretend to be what they in fact are.

January

Jeremy Biles, managing editor of *Sightings* and instructor in the University of Chicago’s College, considers the social and sacred meaning of monster-truck mayhem.

February

Kristin C. Bloomer, Ph.D. candidate in Theology and the History of Religions in the Divinity School, reflects on her experiences in southeast India in the wake of the December 26, 2004, tsunami.

March

Paul Mendes-Flohr, professor of modern Jewish thought in the Divinity School, considers Martin Buber’s vision of a shared land

Those interested in submitting to the Web Forum are welcome to do so by contacting Seth Perry, the forum’s managing editor, at perrysa@uchicago.edu. Submissions should not exceed ten to fifteen double-spaced pages in Word, and should be on topics accessible to non-specialists.



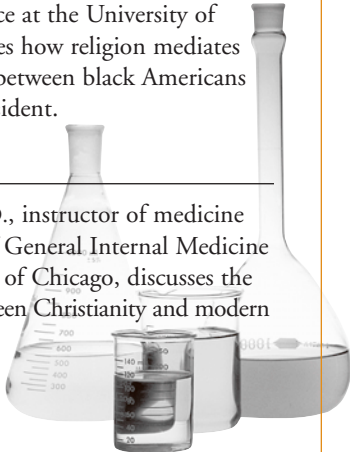
for the Jewish and Arab populations of Palestine, and how Buber would have interpreted the wall currently being constructed by the State of Israel to separate it from its Palestinian neighbors.

April

Melissa Harris-Lacewell, assistant professor of political science at the University of Chicago, discusses how religion mediates the relationship between black Americans and the U.S. president.

May

Farr Curlin, M.D., instructor of medicine in the Section of General Internal Medicine at the University of Chicago, discusses the relationship between Christianity and modern medicine.



remove the prayer from the inauguration was predictably dismissed at each level of the federal courts. He argued that being exposed to a religious observance at a public event constituted an injury to his public freedom. In its motion to dismiss the charges,

the president’s inaugural committee submitted that, “in Newdow’s previous attempt [to stop the prayers], the Ninth Circuit held that ‘Newdow lacks standing to bring action because he does not allege a sufficiently concrete and specific injury.’” It seems the

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court applied “sticks-and-stones” jurisprudence here; it is action, and not mere words, that causes harm. Many Christian commentators took this approach: Newdow and any others “offended” by the grace of Christ proclaimed could simply tune out. It is a free country, after all. Supporters of the prayer note that it is steeped in American tradition, which is true. Others assert that having a Christian minister deliver an invocation and benediction reflects the Judeo-Christian heritage of the American nation. Those who make this claim will say that the inaugural prayer is a nonsectarian

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Marty Center Conferences

Contemporary Reflections on the Body

April 8, 2005

For some, embodiment is humanity’s greatest gift, for others its greatest curse. Our bodies connect us to the world of finitude, yet also yearn to transcend that world. The body has been and remains a source of paradox, anxiety, and hope.

On April 8, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Swift Hall, the ministry program will host a conference entitled “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made: Contemporary Reflections on the Body.” Details can be found on the Marty Center’s Web site, at <http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/conferences/body/index.shtml>.



Religion and the Democratic Prospect

May 12–13, 2005

The Marty Center’s Project on Religion and the Democratic Prospect will host its annual spring conference on May 12 and 13 in Swift Common Room to discuss papers by recent Divinity School Ph.D. graduates Jerome Copulsky (Virginia Tech) and Michael Kessler (Georgetown University), as well as by Divinity School Professors Richard A. Rosengarten and Winnifred Fallers Sullivan. Papers will be posted on the project’s Web site a week in advance, at <http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/research/religion.shtml>.

Roman, Jewish, and Christian Burials

May 22–24, 2005

Did Christians practice inhumation in imitation of the Jews or was this an expression of an early Christian theology of resurrection? What Greco-Roman funerary images were taken over and “baptized” as Christian ones?

Do the material remains from Jewish burials evidence an adherence to or disregard of Mishnaic regulations? Is the development from columbaria to catacombs the result of evolving religious identities or simply a matter of a change in burial fashions?

These questions and others will be addressed at “Commemorating the Dead: Texts and Artifacts in Context”—The Shohet Conference on Roman, Jewish, and Christian Burials. The conference is part of a two-year interdisciplinary endeavor to investigate, read, and interpret inscriptional remains and catacombs in light of Roman, Jewish, and early Christian texts. It will feature the work of scholars of Roman history, archaeology, Jewish studies, Christian history, and the New Testament who engaged in two weeks of field research in Rome and Tunisia, bringing their different methodologies to bear on the catacombs, necropolis, and museum artifacts. Responses will be given by doctoral students in complementary fields of study. For a conference schedule, speaker bios, and to register, go to <http://marty-center.uchicago.edu/conferences/thedead>.

Top: Cillium Tomb, Tunisia
Bottom, Left: Vatican Auto Park Necropolis



Sightings: A Place for Prayer? *Continued from page 9*

reflection of our link to a moral and religious past that permeates our laws.

President Bush expressed a similar sentiment in his speech: “In America’s ideal of freedom, the public interest depends on private character. . . . That edifice of character is built in families, supported by communities with standards, and sustained in our national life by the truths of Sinai, the Sermon on the Mount, the words of the Koran, and the varied faiths of our people . . . ideals of justice

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and conduct that are the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

If this were true, of course, the prayer could have been offered in Allah’s name or delivered by a rabbi or cleric of any religion that expresses the fundamental principles of “good will” proclaimed by Bush. These various religions, Bush seems to suggest, are all really saying the same thing: respect the ideals of liberty, justice, and equality embedded in the Constitution. Anyone who hears “In Jesus’ name” should merely remind himself that the Sermon on the Mount offers a set of moral ideals roughly consistent with the Mosaic Code or the Koran, or even John Locke for that matter.

But this construal poses a double bind for those religious persons who want to proclaim their version of Jesus from the rooftops—or the presidentially appointed

pulpit. Those who invoke the name of Jesus would likely resist equating “their” Jesus to a set of common moral principles, for if one makes the case for the inclusion of Jesus along these lines, the name becomes a mere

“passive symbol” with a “secular purpose” (as Chief Justice Warren Burger put it in reference to the placement of crèches on public land).

Thus, if believers like Caldwell take “their” Jesus seriously—more seriously than political power—perhaps *they* should consider keeping Jesus out of political events.



Michael Kessler (M.A. 1997, Ph.D. 2003) is assistant dean for strategic planning and faculty development and teaches religion and political theory in the College at Georgetown University.

An Interview with Christian Wedemeyer

Christian Wedemeyer was appointed assistant professor of the history of religions in the Divinity School in fall 2003. After receiving his doctorate from Columbia University in religion and Buddhist studies in 1999, he taught at the University of Copenhagen before coming to Chicago.

CIRCA: You work primarily on Indian and Tibetan Buddhisms, with a focus on the esoteric Buddhist traditions of the Mahayoga Tantras. What are your current research interests and how are these reflected in your classes at the Divinity School?

CW: I have devoted most of my attention in recent years to text-critical and interpretive work relative to the literary corpus of esoteric Buddhist scriptures and commentaries. I am finishing the long and difficult project of editing (in Sanskrit and Tibetan), translating into English, and commenting upon an influential late-first-millennium Indian work that argues for, and details, a gradual path to enlightenment in an esoteric mode. My next book will attempt a synoptic view of the larger traditions of which this work is representative—that is, the schools of the Esoteric Communion Scripture (Guhyasamāja Tantra) in India and Tibet. I am interested primarily in Buddhism, so most of my teaching is also in this area—from introductory classes on Indian and Tibetan Buddhism to more advanced seminars on topics such as Indian Esoteric Buddhism or the popular genre of sacred autobiography in Tibet. The approach I take to scholarship entails a critical perspective with regard both to the constructed object of its study *and* the constructing subject, its discourses and its practices. I therefore devote a part of my teaching to methodological courses, such as “Representation and Ideology in the Study of South Asian Religions” and “Studies in Buddhism,” which explore a range of epistemological issues endemic to these areas and seek to locate their discourses in their proper historical contexts, tracing strategies of legitimation, sources of funding and institutional foundations, and the directions of research that have characterized these studies in the modern academy from its formative period to the present.

CIRCA: How does your work fit into the History of Religions paradigm at the Divinity School?

CW: That is a tricky question, for the answer depends largely on how one defines the “History of Religions paradigm.” Shall we refer to the paradigm(s) of the current faculty or adopt a longer historical perspective on the “Chicago School”? In many ways, the History of Religions has, since its inception, been a signifier in search of a signified. A tremendous amount of writing in the History of Religions has been dedicated to



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Rock painting of Buddha in Tibet

defining a “paradigm” without yet reaching a consensus. HR has largely defined itself in contradistinction to constructive studies in general, and theology in particular. It holds religions to be purely human phenomena, and brackets claims that are in principle unverifiable; it is content to describe, analyze, and interrogate religions’ histories and ideological dynamics, rather than to engage their discourses and practices on their own terms. I think this approach characterizes the methods of the current HR faculty, and in that regard, my own work fits squarely into the paradigm.

Others have noted that in the famous Chicago School—with its concern for cross-cultural and cross-temporal comparison—there was actually not much “history” in the History of Religions. My own work is in some sense defined in contradistinction to this paradigm, seeking instead to be relentlessly historical. A comparative approach does not figure largely in my intellectual makeup, nor does any great confidence in the category of “religion” as *in itself* a useful focus of scholarly inquiry. I am trained in and apply historical, philological, and literary modes of analysis, focusing on delimited archives of historical (largely literary) data, with an eye to understanding their dynamics and their significance for the study of human cultural forms. I thus consider comparison a result, not a method.

CIRCA: This is your second year coleading one of the Marty Center’s dissertation seminars, at which advanced graduate students and senior fellows from a variety of disciplines within the study of religion meet regularly to discuss their works in progress. How have you found this experience and do you think it has influenced your own work?

CW: My work in the Marty Center has been a wonderful experience in all respects. It has given me, a new faculty member, insight into the intellectual life of the Divinity School across all nine of its areas of study. I have been able to learn about and engage arguments and evidence in a wide range of periods, areas, and approaches that are not otherwise part of my scholarly “daily bread.”

The mandate of the Marty Seminar—to encourage reflection on the contribution one’s specialized research makes to scholarship and society at large—is of relevance not only for advanced doctoral candidates but also for scholars at all stages of development. The challenge to think in this way—beyond the boundaries of one’s specialized subdiscipline—has been salutary and is beginning to move my thinking in new directions. Finally, I have greatly appreciated the opportunity to get to know many of the current doctoral students and their research, and to be able to work in close collaboration with such outstanding colleagues as Clark Gilpin, Winni Sullivan, Bill Schweiker, Cathy Brekus, and Wendy Doniger. In all regards, this has been a valuable experience, and I hope to continue contributing to the life of the Marty Center throughout my time here. ▢

Wednesday Community Luncheons



Spring Quarter 2005

Wednesday community luncheons are held at 12:00 noon in Swift Common Room. They cost \$4 at the door and must be reserved in advance by e-mailing jquijano@uchicago.edu or calling 773-702-8230.

March 30

Arthur Callahan, a second-year M.Div. student, will deliver the annual Franz Bibfeldt Lecture, commemorating the life and scholarship of eminent theologian and proteanist extraordinaire Franz Bibfeldt, mentor to Martin E. Marty, Fairfax M. Cone Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of the History of Modern Christianity in the Divinity School. Beer will be served.



April 6

Dean's Forum on *Politics as a Christian Vocation* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) by **Franklin I. Gamwell**, Shailer Mathews Professor of Religious Ethics, the Philosophy of Religion, and Theology, with formal responses by Divinity School colleagues **W. Clark Gilpin**, Margaret E. Burton Professor of the History of Christianity and Theology, and **Martin Riesebrodt**, professor of the sociology of religion.

April 13

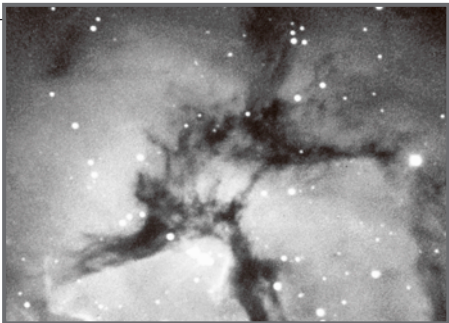
Tributes to **Anthony C. Yu** on the occasion of his retirement from teaching. This lunch will take place in the context of the conference being held in Yu's honor on April 12 and 13. (See page 4 for details.)

April 20

Live music by the University of Chicago's premier undergraduate cappella groups, **Voices in Your Head** and **Soul Umoja**.

April 27

Bernard McGinn, Naomi Shenstone Donnelley Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology and the History of Christianity in the Divinity School, will reflect on his intellectual heritage.



May 4

The Reverend **Davidson Loehr**, senior minister of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, Texas, will discuss "The Legitimate Heir to God."

May 11

Bromleigh McCleneghan, a master of divinity/master of public policy dual degree program student, will present her senior ministry project, "Ticking Time Bombs? Thinking Theologically about Adolescent Sexuality."

May 18

Dean's Forum on *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom* by **Winnifred Fallers Sullivan**, dean of students and senior lecturer of the anthropology and sociology of religion in the Divinity School, with formal responses by **James Robinson**, assistant professor of the history of Judaism in the Divinity School, and **Omar McRoberts**, assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and associated faculty in the Divinity School.



May 25

Robert Fefferman, Max Mason Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Mathematics and dean of the Physical Sciences Division, will discuss some of the weird and

interesting problems posed by our efforts to understand infinity in a talk entitled "Infinity and Beyond."

June 1

Cookout and live music in Swift Courtyard.



For calendar updates, please consult the Divinity School's Web site at <http://divinity.uchicago.edu/news/wednesdays.shtml>.