Five faculty members honored with endowed chairs
On the Cover:
The Rev. John Yueh-Han Yieh, Ph.D. was appointed to the Molly Laird Downs Chair in New Testament. The Rev. Katherine Sonderegger, Ph.D. was appointed to the William Meade Chair in Systematic Theology. The Rev. Joyce Mercer, Ph.D. was appointed to the Arthur Lee Kinsolving Chair in Pastoral Theology. The Rev. Anne Katherine Grieb, Ph.D. was appointed to the Meade Chair in Biblical Interpretation. The Rev. James Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D. was appointed to the Arthur Carl Lichtenberger Chair in Pastoral Theology and Continuing Education.

Virginia Theological Seminary Journal

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Above: 1881 Chapel Garden Dedication Service held in October during the 2013 Convocation celebrations.

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We are blessed with an outstanding Board of Trustees. It is this dedicated group of women and men who generously give of their time, three times a year, to reflect on, scrutinize, and support the Seminary. Each Board meeting is a significant time commitment; the meeting runs from an early Tuesday morning to Wednesday lunchtime. At the November 2013 Board meeting, the Board committees were in the fortunate position of hearing a range of positive reports about the state of the Seminary, starting with the accreditation result.

Every ten years, we are required to write a self study and submit ourselves to an appropriately rigorous inspection of our academic and social life by the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Back in August, we received the result. The ATS has granted us a further ten year accreditation (the maximum extension permitted) and commended us for the quality of our educational experience and the careful management of resources. There was one area of our life needing attention and this was assessment. So we have started work on the appropriate ways we can measure our educational effectiveness.

Then we had the Capital Campaign. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are pleased to report to the readers of the Virginia Theological Seminary Journal that the total stands at $14.4 million. This is sufficient to create the Worship and Welcome Quad. Our Trustees were given a guided tour around the construction. The basement is in place; the external walls are now out of the ground; the chapel is starting to emerge.

The Board heard reports on the successful convocation (Ms. Eliza Griswold was outstanding); the Chapel Garden was dedicated in a moving liturgy as we recognized the firefighters who were last there battling the challenge of the fire; we have a new Junior class—with 44 students, 35 of which are M.Div.; the Capital Campaign video picked up two awards; the auditors reported an operating surplus for the fifth year in a row; and our endowment is slowly coming back (we are now ahead of where we were before the crash).

The remarkable team of faculty and staff is doing well; as the Board oversees the life of the Seminary, these reports witness to a place of health and vitality. In the end, however, there is only one indicator of success that really matters in an ultimate or cosmic sense. This is our commitment and devotion to Christ. This is the indicator that determines our vitality and effectiveness for the kingdom. Much as we appreciate the recognition by the Association of Theological Schools about our educational effectiveness, our aspiration is to serve the God who loves us and calls us to be disciples. Everything we do must ultimately be judged by this criterion—the extent to which we are providing the space for God to work in the lives of this community.

In my various trips around the country with the Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D. (the vice president for institutional advancement), it is impressive how well our alums are doing. They are making a difference to the kingdom. Our alums reflect well on the work on this Seminary in the past; judged by the ultimate criterion of ‘service to the kingdom’, our predecessors did an outstanding job. My prayer is that our current generation of seminarians is as effective as those in the past.

Yours in Christ,

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.
Dean and President

Dean’s Report

Success at the Seminary

Faculty Members Receive Endowed Chairs

Among the ways in which faculty can be recognized, the highest accolade an institution can bestow is the invitation to occupy an endowed chair. The honor reflects the level of commitment given to particular areas of study at VTS. With a combined 70 years of service, the five professors receiving an endowed chair join a distinguished history of Christian educators who have received this honor, including current colleagues Stephen L. Cook, Ph.D., Amelia J. Gearey Dyer, Ph.D., the Rev. Robert W. Frichard, Ph.D., and Timothy F. Sedgwick, Ph.D. The Board of Trustees unanimously appointed these newest members at their November meeting and they are presented on the following pages.
The Rev. Anne Katherine Grieb, Ph.D.
is the new appointee for the Meade Chair of Biblical Interpretation. Grieb came to Virginia Theological Seminary in 1994 and is Professor of New Testament. After graduating from VTS in 1983, she earned a doctorate degree at Yale and taught at Burger Theological Seminary before returning to teach at VTS. In her 20 years of service at VTS she has been a participant in the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission, a member of the Anglican Communion Covenant Design Group, and now serves on the Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Unity, Faith and Order. A popular preacher and teacher, she leads re- treatment and Bible studies for diocesan clergy days and other church groups. Grieb is the author of The Story of Romans: A Narrative Defense of God’s Righteousness (Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) as well as co-editor for The Word Leaps the Gap (Eerdmans, 2008).

The Rev. Joyce Mercer, Ph.D.
is the newly appointed Arthur Lee Kinsolving Chair in Pastoral Theology. Mercer came to VTS in 2006 after serving as a faculty member of Graduate Theological Union in California and Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines. Mercer is currently Professor of Practical Theology. She completed a Ph.D. at Emory University; a D.Min. at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago; the Master of Social Work from the University of Connecticut; and a M.Div. from Yale Divinity School. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church USA for twenty-eight years, she is the author of several books including GirlTalk Godtalk: Why Faith Matters to Adolescent Girls And Their Parents (San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 2008) and Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood (St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 2005).

The Rev. Katherine Sonderegger, Ph.D.
is the author of several articles and papers, and the book That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew: Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Israel” (Penn State Press, 1992). She completed her doctorate at Brown University; earned a D.Min. and STM from Yale and an A.B. in Medieval Studies from Smith College. Some of her memberships include the American Academy of Religion, Karl Barth Society of North America, and the Anglican Theological Review board where she currently chairs the editorial committee. Sonderegger is the author of several articles and papers, and the book That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew: Karl Barth’s Doctrine of Israel (Penn State Press, 1992).

The William Meade Chair of Systematic Theology
The William Meade Chair of Systematic Theology was created in 1978. Dr. Charles Price, who was the chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology, was the first appointee. Upon Price’s retirement in 1989, Dr. David Scott filled the chair until his retirement in 2001.

The Arthur Lee Kinsolving Chair in Pastoral Theology
The Arthur Lee Kinsolving Chair in Pastoral Theology was created in 1966. The first appointee, the Rev. Dr. Henry Rightor, remained in this chair until his retirement in 1978. The chair was not filled again until 1987, when Dr. Howard Hanchey was appointed and retained the position until he retired in 2001.

The Arthur Carl Lichtenberger Chair for Pastoral Theology and Continuing Education
The Arthur Carl Lichtenberger Chair for Continuing Education was created in 1966 and was first occupied by The Rev. Dr. Bennett J. Sims until 1972. The Rev. Robert W. Estill was the next appointee and held the post until his retirement in 1976. The third person named to the chair was The Rev. Dr. A. Richard Busch until his retirement in 1999.

The Meade Chair of Biblical Interpretation
The Meade Chair of Biblical Interpretation was originally created and funded by a donation to the Seminary in 1870 and was occupied by faculty member, Joseph Packard (Meade Professor of Biblical Learning) from 1871 to 1898.

Endowed Chairs
The Molly Laird Downs Chair of New Testament was created in 1983. Dr. Reginald Fuller was the first appointee of the chair in 1984 and held it until he retired in 1985. Dean Richard Reid was appointed as the next chair in 1987 until he retired in 1994. The Rev. Dr. Lloyd A. Lewis was the appointee until his retirement in 2013.

The Rev. John Yueh-Han Yieh, Ph.D. is the newly appointed Molly Laird Downs Chair of New Testament. Yieh serves as Professor of New Testament. In his 18 years of service, he has written and contributed to a number of books, articles and essays on the Gospel of Matthew, Johannine Epistles, Revelation and Chinese biblical interpretation. Yieh earned a Ph.D., M.Phil. and an M.A. in religious studies from Yale University; an M.Div. from Taiwan Theological Seminary; and an M.A. from Fu-Jen Catholic University. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church USA, Yieh is currently the President of the Ethnic Chinese Biblical Colloquium and is moderator of the Chesterbrook Taiwanese Presbyterian Church in Falls Church, Va. Yieh is also the author of Conversations with Scripture: The Gospel of Matthew (Morehouse Publishing, 2012).

The Spring Visit Weekend is designed to help participants explore theological education at Virginia Theological Seminary. The weekend will include small group discussions, topical panels, information sessions, meals with faculty and students, and opportunities for worship.

To Register visit the VTS website www.VTS.edu/admissions to complete the on-line registration form or email admissions@VTS.edu for further information.

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Embracing Ecumenism

Dr. Mitzi Budde, head librarian and professor, sat down to talk with The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D., vice president for institutional advancement and The Arthur Carl Lichtenberger Professor for Pastoral Theology and Continuing Education. The topics of the interview centered around the important role ecumenical formation has had on Budde’s life and career and the history and future plans of the Bishop Payne Library at VTS.

Budde completed a D.Min. in Ecumenism and Reconciliation at Wesley Theological Seminary. She previously earned a Master of Librarianship from the University of South Carolina, an M.A. in religion from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in S.C. and a bachelor of arts from Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, North Carolina.

Before joining the faculty at the Seminary, Prof. Budde served as library director at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. She is an Associate in Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, serving under call of the ELCA to ecumenical ministry at VTS.

HAWKINS: How or what aspect of your calling led your ministry towards ecumenism?

BUDDE: Well, I think the roots of it came from Newton, the small town in North Carolina just west of Charlotte where I grew up. Every year we had a community Easter service at sunrise in the town cemetery. We would gather in the cemetery in the dark, chilly, early morning—picking our way among the tombstones to the gathering place facing east, and then the sun would rise as we sang hymns and prayed together with townspeople that we did not pray with or worship with other times of the

BUDE: Yes. Emmanuel Sullivan says that we are called to “take ecumenism into the bloodstream of the church’s life,” and that is what the coordinating committee is commissioned to do. We’re responsible for working out implementation of the full communion agreement. So, for example, we maintain a website that has information about all the joint Lutheran and Episcopal parishes and the joint college chaplaincies that we have been able to locate and other local expressions of the agreement we can identify.

We also address difficult questions that have arisen about the agreement. Right now we are working on the different approaches to the diaconate in the two churches, which was an assignment given to us from action taken at the last Episcopal Church General Convention. It was sent to the coordinating committee and we are trying to figure out how to address that. We are also addressing canonical issues that arise in the joint parishes and how they set up their governance documents, the details about who gets the appointment and how you decide which members are Lutheran and which members are Episcopalian. We also try to publicize the agreement to make it known more widely across the church, so please “like” our Facebook page!

HAWKINS: What brought you to VTS 22 years ago?

BUDE: 1991 was a long time ago! I was in Columbia, South Carolina, and I was the library director at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. I had been there first as a student, then as a staff member and then as a faculty member. When I started to look around, I did not know much about Virginia Seminary, but when I saw the ad for this position opening, it seemed that God led me to apply here. I went through the interview process as we mutually discerned whether this was the right place for me. The faculty welcomed me to this place as a Lutheran. The full communion relationship between Lutherans and Episcopalians had just been proposed in 1991 in the Concordat of Agreement, and there was a lot of energy, excitement, and enthusiasm about bringing our two churches closer.

It really was and is a wonderful opportunity for me to be living out that ecumenical relationship in a new way in a context that is so important for training people for ministry, who will be the next generation of clergy and lay leaders of the church, and to help them learn to know and understand this full communion agreement more deeply.

HAWKINS: Can you talk about your new book, Unity in Mission?

BUDE: Yes, I would love to. This book came out of a four-year study group that I co-chaired for the National Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission. It was such a privilege to work with these 14 scholars who represent multiple Christian traditions (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Reformed, Lutheran, Episcopal, Disciples of Christ, Evangelical, Community of Christ, Christian Science, and interfaith as well).

We presented papers to one another, and critiqued them, and had theological conversations about them, and I think we all feel that our contributions were each greatly strengthened by the give and take of the discussion and critique. So we put the essays together in this collection, published by Paulist Press. All the essays of the book explore how a missional approach and attitude can bring Christians and churches more closely together for shared witness to the Gospel. Each article builds on our central theme of Christian pilgrimage, and each one includes a story, a narrative that provides a personal context and that illustrates the dynamic, emergent processes involved with missional outreach, reconciliation, and the search for Christian unity. The book is intended for a wide audience: ecumenists and seminarians, of course, but also we hope it will be read and used by parish study groups and parish clergy.

HAWKINS: What are the challenges of collection development in the 21st century theological library?

BUDE: Publishing is more complex today than ever before, and publishing is increasing in numbers both in print and electronic formats. There are a proliferation of formats as well.

I like to tell seminarians that it is both—a print and electronic world now. In theology you just cannot do thorough research in print resources alone and you cannot do thorough research just using electronic resources either. Seminarians today need to use both. At the library we purchase printed books, adding about 3,000 per year. And we have just subscribed to several academic collections of e-books, which students and faculty can borrow from the library for a week to read online. So now we have 160,000 e-books, in addition to our 225,000 print books.

We have 700 journal subscriptions and some of those are print only; some of those are available in both print and electronic format; and some of them are available only in electronic format. I teach students how to use scholarly, peer-reviewed websites for theological research as well, and not just anything they might find through a Google search or a Wikipedia search. We also subscribe to a number of theological and religious databases, electronic databases, that are not available to people in the open web. We call it the deep web, and through our subscriptions our students and faculty can use those theological resources for research.

It is an exciting time to be a librarian because the resources are more diverse than ever and students need help utilizing the complex array of research resources as much or more than ever.

HAWKINS: Do you anticipate in time we will have more e-books than printed books?

BUDE: It very well could be. It will be interesting to see not only what is available, how those proportions go, but...
also how usage goes. We have seen steady usage of the print resources and increasing usage of the electronic resources, and it will be interesting to see how those proportions go in years to come.

HAWKINS: Do you see print—things that have only been in print that are being adapted to e-books? Or is it just things that are new going forward?

BUDDE: Because of copyright law, anything published in the U.S. before 1923 is no longer under any copyright restriction. So, there has been a vast amount of material scanned and uploaded in e-book format that predates 1923. Then, there is the time period of 1923 until recently that many of the things that were published cannot be uploaded because of copyright law. This was the key issue with the Google Books Project, and the court upheld the copyright law. So now in Google Books, you can get a lot of old stuff, but you can only get small snippets of new material. Often students will find things online and not realize how dated they are.

The Catholic Encyclopedia online is the 1911 edition, not the 1967 edition, which was immediately post-Vatican II and was completely rewritten. The New Catholic Encyclopedia, was published in 2003. The online version is actually 100 years old! If a student finds that online and uses that as a representation of modern Catholicism, it is not at all accurate. But sometimes it is difficult to discern the vintage of the material that you are using online. Fortunately many discern the vintage of the material that is accurate. But sometimes it is difficult to see how those proportions go in years to come.

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HAWKINS: Can you talk about the work that has gone into the rare book collection during your time here?

BUDDE: Yes. We have had some fabulous additions to our rare books recently. One recent highlight was your (Hawkins’) discovery of two treasures in a rare bookshop in North Carolina. Through your work as a purchasing agent for the library and the generosity of the Ira Irene Swift Endowed Fund, which provides money for rare book purchases, we were able to obtain these two wonderful acquisitions. The Architecture of Sir Edwin Lutyens, a prominent 20th century British architect, written by A.S.G. Butler, which is a five-volume work; and Thomas Jefferson, Architect, Original Designs in the collection of Thomas Jefferson Col- lidge, Jr. This is one of only 350 copies printed, so it is a limited edition print book. We had another tremendous acquisition in January of this year when we concluded over a year of conversa- tions and negotiations to obtain the transfer of three named collections of 2,500 rare books from the Washington National Cathedral to the Seminary library. The three collections are the Winfred Douglas Memorial Collection of books related to hymnology, liturgy, and church music; the Elmer G. and Esther K. Beamer Collection of Books of Common Prayer; and then Franklin E. Parker, Jr., Collection of Church History and Theology. The cathedral’s willingness to transfer these three collections here and our willingness to receive them and curate them means that these vital works on liturgy, music, and theology will stay in the Episcopal family. Now that they are here at Bishop Payne Library, they will be available to musicians and clergy, students and faculty, researchers and historians for posterity. These new collections greatly enrich the library’s previously existing holdings of over 4,000 volumes in these subject areas.

HAWKINS: Can you tell us about the need for recent renovations and space modifications in recent years?

BUDDE: The current library building was built in two phases, the original part in 1957 built to house 100,000 volumes, and then the addition put on in 1980 to bring the capacity to 200,000 volumes.

We now have many books, and new publications are continuing to come out without any signs of slacking off. Shelf space was becoming tight. So last year, we put in a section of compact shelving in the lower level. That is the shelving that moves on a track to open the aisle where you need it. And this gives an additional 30 percent of space in the same footprint that ordinary shelves would have. That expanded our space at least for the short term. Peda- gogical methods have changed since 1980 with a new emphasis on group study work and collaborative study. So last year we created two group study rooms in the library, and students seem to love them. They are just about con- stantly in use.

Also, the building as built is not accessible to differently-abled people, especially those in a wheelchair or those with difficulty using stairs and opening doors. So we are currently in a process of building a new external el- evator shaft which will be large enough to accommodate a wheelchair, and that will be completed early in 2014. Next we plan to modify the set of public rest- rooms on the main floor, to make them meet the specifications of the Ameri- cans with Disabilities Act. Alongside these projects, we have also been improving the building’s infrastructure, repairing leaking gutters, upgrading the electrical system and the fire alarm system, upgrading the lighting, replac- ing the blinds, and repainting the build- ing. The place is looking spiffier.

HAWKINS: How do the recent modifi- cations affect the services you provide to patrons?

BUDDE: It’s been interesting working in a construction zone! But our staff and our patrons have been extraordin- arily patient and understanding about the inevitable noise and disruption of construction. We have kept all library services going. And our VTS mainte- nance crew and our general contractor, Whitener & Jackson, have been excel- lent partners in the project, working closely with us to keep the disruptions as minimal as possible.

HAWKINS: Do you have much pa- tronage from the community—the City of Alexandria and from Washington?

BUDDE: Yes. We have a tremendous amount of patronage from outside the seminary community. I think people at VTS may not realize how much the library attracts visitors to campus. Obviously, our core population is our own students, faculty, staff, and board of trustees. But we also serve the students and faculty of the Washington Theological Consortium; we have a reciprocal borrowing agreement with those ten other seminaries.

We also have a large number of local clergy and Christian educators of all denominations who come to use the library. We also get a number of folks from the general public who are interested in looking up something of a religious nature, who are working on a parish history or are working on a Sunday school lesson or a Bible pas- sage that perplexes them, or are looking for an ancestor who was an Episcopal priest or someone researching African Americans in the church, for example.

HAWKINS: What is your vision for the library both physically and concep- tionally? Have you been thinking about a seminary’s library in 25 years? What will it be doing?

BUDDE: I like to say that the library of today and tomorrow is more than ever before. It’s still a physical print collec- tion and repository for archives, but in addition the library’s role has expanded to provide an electronic portal for the expensive digital research subscrip- tions that patrons need. And the library needs to be an instructional center to help patrons access and utilize these complex research resources effectively. Unique collections like rare books and archives and our African American Episcopal Historical Collection project will be more important than ever, made even more accessible to researchers by digitization and online finding aids. In terms of the physical building itself,
a lot of our younger students come from university settings where they have had libraries available 24 hours a day, but we cannot staff that and we do not have the traffic really to warrant what that would cost. But we would love to rework the library entranceway to create a combination student lounge and library reading room that would be part of the library but have a separate entrance so that it could be available 24/7, with coffee machines and printers and copiers and some work furniture and some lounging furniture. This would give students an opportunity to gather, to print out a paper they had just finished writing at 2 a.m., or to collaborate together when they are working on a group project. Or just a place that they can put their feet up and drink a cup of coffee and think and read a newspaper or journal. We have also talked about creating a quiet reading room towards the back of the library with a beautiful vista and a wall of windows, to inspire reflection and thinking and creativity. I would also very much like to see VTS embark upon a preservation project for our greatest treasures in the library, the Assyrian reliefs that date from 865 BC and which came to VTS in 1859. In recent years we’ve upgraded the lighting and created an interpretative gallery, but these beautiful carved stones should be displayed in a museum-quality exhibit (hopefully still in the library!).

HAWKINS: You spent a lot of time with your ministry—the complexities of different states, and I assume we might say different religious traditions and their faiths. It is not so much interfaith as much as it is ecumenical. Are there similar complexities supervising a faith as much as it is ecumenical. Are there similar complexities supervising a faith as much as it is ecumenical.

BUDEE: Yes. Certainly there are. We are blessed with a wonderful library staff of highly competent and professional people who are committed to the mission of this institution and to our students and faculty. They have graduate library science degrees and several have advanced degrees in theology as well. They often labor quietly and with some anonymity in the library. It takes a lot of work to order and acquire all the books and journals, to maintain the computer catalog and the computer databases, to build the electronic help and resources that patrons need, and to staff the library seven days per week. Our staff does a wonderful job of all of that.

Our staff come from a variety of religious backgrounds, and I think that for people in general, and particularly people who work together, a commitment to dialog together, a commitment to hearing one another and honoring one another for the unique gifts that each brings to the conversation, and to work together as a team transcends the differences. This builds on our commonalities and our common mission.

HAWKINS: How does your work in ministry as head librarian influence your work as a professor?

BUDEE: I think that a librarian should always be reading and doing research herself or himself using the library’s collections.

The difficulty of being a librarian is that I can immerse myself in what others have thought and written about a topic, and I can lose myself in the amount of resources available. I can always find more things to read on that topic and follow up footnotes here and follow bibliographies there down many different trails of research. So I sometimes have to stop myself and challenge myself to then develop my own theology and find my own voice.

Using the library as a patron myself helps me, I think, to be a much better librarian: building the collection, using our electronic resources, managing the building and seeing what library services we might want to offer next. It also helps a great deal to visit other libraries and to experience them as a patron and to see what good ideas we can glean from other places. That is part of what is so appealing about doing accreditation visits for the Association of Theological Schools. You get to go to other seminaries and see what they are doing and how they are dealing with the challenges that we all face in theological education today.
I extend my sincere thanks to the dean and president of the Virginia Theological Seminary, the Very Rev. Ian Markham, and the Rev. Joseph Constant, Director of Multicultural Programs, for this distinguished invitation. I also thank the dean, faculty and staff for hosting the meeting of the executive leadership of the Union of Black Episcopalians this week.

Under the Title of “The Challenge, Gift and Promise of Black Episcopalians for the Church” I will offer two lectures. Tonight, I will take a reflective look at the historic challenges early black Christians faced in the United States, in order to create a context for understanding the gifts given by black Episcopalians, and the promise those gifts may hold for the whole Church in our time. I hope to do this by looking at our African roots (both conscious and unconscious), which, combined with the harsh realities of American slavery and Jim Crowism, have produced a unique social and spiritual cultural hybrid. I speak out of an assumption that these cultural realities are not only historic in their development and influence, but are also a legacy evident in contemporary black culture, particularly in religion, including in the Episcopal Church.

Using the musical heritage of this legacy generally, I will look particularly at the phenomena of the blues not just as a genre of music, but also as an essential creative tension in the identity of all traditional black music. The subtitle of the first address, as with tomorrow’s, draws from the Negro national anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” entitled “Stony the road we trod: from the invisible Church to the Civil Rights Church.”

Second, on tomorrow, in my time with VTS faculty, staff and students, I will look at some current social, theological and political challenges confronting Episcopalian African Americans in this post-modern era of “Culture Wars” in America and the Church. I will examine these issues by considering some of the challenges being faced – such as those related to sexuality, gender (“womanism” vis-à-vis feminism), and cultural conflicts within the African Diaspora in America; and also ministering in what some call a “Post-Black” era. I will consider such issues not just as challenges, but as promising gifts and opportunities for the whole Church, especially through the historic and contemporary strategic visions of the UBE and the Office of Black Ministry.

This Second Address also draws from a line in “Lift Every Voice and Sing”: “The place for which our parents sighed”: Contemporary realities in the Promised Land.

This is what I seek to share with you.

Please join me in prayer:

O Lord may the words of my mouth, and the intent of my heart, be acceptable to you, my strength and my redeemer. Amen.
African American Episcopalians trace our origins to Africa, but our formation as a people spans more than 500 years. Our history is steeped in American slavery and Jim Crowism. Although there has been much mixing, Africa is still, more often than not, manifested in our faces, regardless of our individual compositions or accents. While not every African American is comfortable with this reality, our African origins and the history of enslavement are also manifested in our collective primal memory and our cultural DNA. These manifestations are shown forth as we worship, party, work, make love, make family, and make community. Even in the most dangerously isolated and depressed communities, in the music, in the tension of up rhythm and down beat lyric, express sadness or another serious emotion.

Amiri Baraka (earlier known as Leroi Jones) picks up this idea in his book _Blues People_. “Blues as an autonomous music had been in a sense inviolable. There was no clear way into it, except as concomitant with what seems to be the peculiar social, cultural, economic and emotional experience of blacks in America.” Given the blur in the cultural idiom of black music, it is often hard for outsiders to clearly discern the difference in contemporar y music between some of the black sacred and secular styles and sounds. If one excludes the lyrics, questions often asked include, “How is Shirley Caesar different than Etta James?” “How is Wintley Phipps different from Johnny Hartfield?” “How is Kirk Franklin different from Us3?” There is a thin line between these styles and sounds which has often been a curiosity for those who listen with Eurocentric ears.

Slave spirituals, together with field work songs, are forms which have survived in popular culture through movie images of chain gangs. Both employ a “call and response” style—a style evident even in Calypso music, such as Harry Belafonte’s “Day Light Come and I Want to Go Home.” As was slave sacred music, work songs were often called and response. (Call: “Day Oh!” Response: “Day Oh!” Chorus: “Day Light Come and I Want to Go Home.”) The same is true in sacred music, including the lining of hymns, where the leader speaks a stanza line and the congregation responds by singing the same line.

In addition to lining, there was a unique character or quality to the way blacks sang the classic evangelical revivalist hymns in the 18th and 19th centuries. The gift of the Episcopal hymnal, _Lift Every Voice and Sing_, is that it captures such tonal and rhythmic expressions, and even lyric adaptations, when singing Wesley and other evangelical revivalist hymnody. The work of hymnist and composer, the Rev. Charles Albert Tindley (1851–1933), is a prime example of shaping traditional evangelical hymns or composing in the cultural and spiritual idiom of black experience. Using the tone and passion of the spirituals, Tindley wrote:

This world is one great battlefield with forces all arrayed, if in my heart I do not yield I’ll overcome some day.

That passion carried over in the 1940s and ‘50s experience of blacks who brought this particular hymn of Tindley, and other Gospels and spirituals, to the legendary integrated Highlander Folk School (whose most famous student was probably Rosa Parks) in rural Tennessee for civil rights training. The spirit of these faith hymns, even as adapted, expressed the piety and passion of the Civil Rights Movement. For example, noted folk singers Pete Seeger and Guy Carawan took the Tindley song, “I’ll Overcome Someday,” and created what became the anthem of the Civil Rights Movement, “We Shall Overcome.” These and other songs sung by marchers, supported by the powerful singing voices of rally leaders such as Dorothy Cotton and Fannie Lou Hamer, became the songbook and the soul of the Civil Rights Movement.

Twentieth century traditional Gospel grew out of spirituals and southern evangelical hymnody of an earlier generation, just as blues grew out of work songs and deep southern Delta jute-joint songs. Like Tindley’s hymns, these deep Delta blues also spoke of hard times and hope—except hope, or strength to survive, was romantic love rather than religious faith. At the beginning of the twentieth century, two men brought these two advanced forms into the mainstream: Thomas A. Dorsey, considered the father of modern Gospel music, and W.C. Handy, considered the father of “jazz blues.” Both used complex rhythms, harmonies and tones to enrich and liberate the original forms. These new sounds caused some to suggest that Dorsey’s was “the devil’s music” because the line (complex rhythms, harmonies and tones) seemed so fine between sacred and secular.

Let us consider the blues not just as a genre of black music, but also as the embodiment of the emotional tensions and expressions in “soul music” (i.e., the music of the blue experience of the black soul). Renowned theologian James H. Cone, a contemporary contributor to black theological thought, wrote: “What is the blues’ relationship to the spirituals, and how do they relate to segregation, lynching, and the political disenfranchisement of black people? What do the blues tell us about the black strivings for being?” Cone continues,

“I must confess that I am not an unbiased interpreter of the spirituals and the blues. It simply was not possible to grow up with the blues and the spirituals of Macedonia A.M.E. Church and remain unaffected by the significance of blackness in the context of white society. I am therefore convinced that it is not possible to render an authentic interpretation of black music without having shared and participated in the experience that created. Black music must be lived before it can be understood.”

If Amiri Baraka and James Cone are not clear enough, consider the perspective of “Mr. Blues” himself, the legendary B. B. King, who once said in an interview: “You can’t sing the blues unless you have had the blues, then you know nothing can cure the blues but the blues.” Someone then asked him, “How do you know when you really have the blues?” He replied, “When you find yourself singing, ‘No body loves me but my mamma, and she could be jivin’ me, too.’” (From his song, “What We Gonna Do?”)

Indeed, sacred and secular music are both spiritual forms of celebration in soul music or “soul expression” because even the articulation of despair leaves room for hope—e.g., “Nobody knows the trouble I see… glory, hallelujah!” This fine line among spirituals and work songs, jazz, blues, and traditional Gospel, and even hip hop and contemporary urban Gospel, is a gift from the African experience, which has always found reality on that line between the sacred and
secular, the phenomenal and mundane, the material and the transcendent, the sadness and pain of life and religious hope.

One of the earliest to write of African vestiges in African American celebration was historian Miles Mark Fisher. After years of interviews and research, he wrote his award winning book on Negro slave songs, *Negro Slave Songs in the United States*. He wrote, “Whenever African Negroes assembled, they accompanied their songs and dances with perforations, wind, and stringed instruments. They used their voices and their bodies as well as instruments in making music.”

If you have ever spent time in an African country, you will know that the similarities with African American Diaspora culture are striking: the manner of worship, rhythms, and sacred and secular celebrating. If you have ever worshiped with an American black congregation (American, Latin, Caribbean or African), or better yet, attended the Union of Black Episcopalians Annual Conference worship, then you have a sense of what is uniquely different in expressing the familiar (besides the service being a bit longer than you might be used to).

African worship is more than rhythm—it is liturgical. Even Black Churches outside those with a liturgical tradition are still attracted to liturgical patterns of worship—e.g., soulful expressions in singing; the essential nature of the people engaging and responding in commonly understood times and ways. Other frequently seen examples of engaging the holy are ushers who control movement like vergers; choirs that step and sway in procession; and congregations that march in step toward the front to present their offering at the altar.

Yet another thin line is between the expression of spiritual hope and political protest. The protest legacy began in the era of slavery and is still in our cultural DNA. There is a long-established “hermeneutic of suspicion,” i.e., claiming a theology of liberation while causing your oppressor to believe you have accepted his oppression; or expressing an angry institutional memory framed by a theology of hope. When Jeremiah Wright challenged American corporate patriotic blindness to our own injustice by replacing the pious national mantra, “God Bless America,” with “God Damn America,” he stood in a long line of protest, including great Episcopal preachers like Kenneth Hughes, Paul Murray and Paul Washington. Bishop John M. Burgess’ book, *Black Gospel, White Church*, presents an anthology of the sermons of other prophetic black Episcopal preachers from Absalom Jones and Theodore Holly to a newly-ordained priest (at the time) named Nathan Baxter.

It is important to remember that such proclamation of protest is rooted in spirituals. It is also important to know that many of the early spirituals came out of Anglican liturgy and ethos. For example, who else breaks bread on their knees, and more even definitively, who else drinks wine (not Methodists or Baptists!) on their knees? Consider that in Colonial times, only Anglicans and Roman Catholics observed Good Friday: “Were You There When the Crucified my Lord?” and “See How They Done My Lord.”

It is no wonder that spirituals and Gospels so easily became “freedom songs,” and the soundtrack of protest’s piety. As Bishop Burgess wrote in his introduction to *Black Gospel/White Church*, “… blacks have taken the Gospel given to them by those who would use it as an instrument of their pacification and have transformed it into a means of liberation.”

There is also a fine line between black preaching and black singing. In preaching, call and response, the sing-song tones and inflections, the inability of the preacher to advocate for the rights of blacks in the Episcopal Church, the organization was a precursor to the Union of Black Episcopalians. Courtesy of the Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr. Papers, African American Episcopal Historical Collection.
becomes story, imagination and proclamation. Using, for example, the conversion of St. Paul in Acts, the preacher might say, “I can see Brother Paul, lying on the road to Damascus, blinded by the light. And I hear the voice of Jesus saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” Then the preacher calls the congregation to respond: “Sisters and brothers, have you ever heard the Lord speak to you?”

Another aspect of the black proclamation experience is preaching as story(es) rather than rhetoric and liturgical text, and scripture reading as proclamation rather than narrative. As Henry H. Mitchell writes in Black Belief, the oral tradition is paramount: “Words and their standard definitions are important, but the spirit of address is more important than the letter of the interpretations.”

In many black traditions, scripture reading, like preaching, is proclamation rather than narrative. Thus, in liturgical reading, the attempt is to imagine and proclaim the word or activity of God in the text, rather than simply give voice to a literary memory of the Church. This heritage offers the Church an additional liturgical approach and understanding regarding the Ministry of the Word.

The point is that black preaching (and public reading) has been, and promises to be, a gift to the Church’s proclamation, hermeneutically and homiletically; an offering of a particular spiritual vantage point; and a theological perspective of liberation and hope. But I fear that this is a gift being lost to black Episcopalians and the Episcopal Church at large.

Few of us (black or white) are as gifted or skilled as a Michael Curry or a Barbara Harris or a James Forbes. I do hasten to say that, rather than a heritage, preachers of this ilk can, Negro (black), Colored or Black to describe oneself was a cradle, but not an inheritance of Bishop Holly’s consecration. Courtesy of the Thomas W. S.-Henderson/Du Bois, p. 6.

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Few of us (black or white) are as gifted or skilled as a Michael Curry or a Barbara Harris or a James Forbes. I do hasten to say that, rather than a heritage, preachers of this ilk have a charism, a personal gift. We feel it when we hear them. I grew up in a black Pentecostal tradition, and yet, I know I don’t have that gift! While the style of black preaching may not be our gift or even our preference, there are powerful qualities in this heritage. I speak of qualities which encourage a sense of freedom and imagination; rhythm and poetry in preaching; identification with the community’s emotional, moral realities and political priorities. Traditionally, there is a scriptural hermeneutic which requires keeping sight of the God of justice in the story of faith while lifting up the intricable character of hope, even when addressing tragedy. These and others are qualities from an historic legacy available to all of us.

But from the earliest years (18th, 19th and 20th centuries), African American Episcopalians protested racist attitudes with stated pride, and boldly embraced their “twoness,” consisting of their African heritage and their Anglican faith. They collaborated ecumenically with other African American Christians and sympathetic whites to organize for social, religious or political purposes. In doing so, early Episcopalians of African descent clearly labeled themselves by what the majority culture persisted was negative. Consider the titles they chose in establishing institutions and major writings:

- [1787] Free African Society. Absalom Jones with Richard Allen (First AIME bishop) left St. George’s Methodist Church in protest of segregated seating. They founded this ecumenical society for relief aid in the black community and to create a body for political action, and were the first persons of African descent to petition Congress for the abolition of slavery.
- [1792] African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas, founded with Absalom Jones as first rector.
- [1809] Peter Williams, Jr. (a founder of AIME Church) left St. John’s Methodist Church with his father. He became the first rector of the first black Episcopal Church in New York. They named it the Free African Episcopal Church of St. Philip.
- [1875] James T. Holly wrote a widely distributed treatise challenging the dominant perspective in the majority community, even among progressives, entitled “Vindication of the Capacity of Negroes for Self Governance and Civil Progress.”
- [1875] Alexander Crummell founded St. Luke’s Church, the first independent black Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. Earlier, he was the first to develop theological and philosophical concepts of “Pan-Africanism”, or the concept that African peoples, both on the continent and in the Diaspora, share not only a common history, but a common destiny.
- [1892] Anna Julia Haywood Cooper, Ph.D., wrote, A Voice from the South. Cooper is considered the first scholarly articulator of black feminist thought.
- [1906] The first Pan African Conference, beginning one of the most influential movements to end European colonialism in Africa. Key leaders included Episcopalians

Bible passages:

- Acts 9:3-4
- Mitchell, p. 74.
theologically with our twoness, we should understand that GLBT community’s reclaiming the term “queer” does, or the we may fear. Claiming the fullness of our blackness will forms, and both culturally and linguistically), no matter claim our “blackness” (in both its primitive and modern smiles with pride.

President Obama said, “Why don’t you touch it and see?” The five-year-old asked the president if his hair was like his. Bending down so a little black boy can touch his hair. The icon in this regard is the precious picture of President Obama We must find ways to affirm it and celebrate it for ourselves, or, as Professor Kortright Davis calls it, our “ebony grace.”

So, when we read the works of black theologians like Kelly Brown Douglas, Carlton Hayden, Robert Bennett, Horace Griffin, Harold Lewis, Ed Rodman, Michael Battle, Stephanie Speller and Kortright Davis, we know they stand in a long line of articulate, courageous, prophetic and proud black Episcopalians. That legacy is what Amiri Baraka calls “blues people” and Pauli Murray calls “proud shoes.”

To black Episcopalians, collectively we must not be fearful of our blackness, our Africanness, our “Negroidness” or, as Professor Kortright Davis calls it, our “ebony grace.” We must find ways to affirm it and celebrate it for ourselves, our future generations and our beloved Church. My favorite icon in this regard is the precious picture of President Obama bending down so a little black boy can touch his hair. The five-year-old asked the president if his hair was like his. President Obama said, “Why don’t you touch it and see?” The president bends down and the little boy touches his hair and smiles with pride.

This affirmation must begin with us. I believe we must claim our “blackness” (in both its primitive and modern forms, and both culturally and linguistically), no matter what negative class prejudice or pejorative social attitudes we may fear. Claiming the fullness of our blackness will serve Christians of African descent well, much the way the GLBT community’s reclaiming the term “queer” does, or the way “feminism” and “womanism” become badges of honor, although previously they had been pejorative references to the effeminiate as weak and servile.

Even if we do find ourselves sometimes struggling theologically with our twoness, we should understand that struggle as a thing of integrity. The truth is that there is twoness in our souls and psychic formation. It is the source of our spiritual and existential identity. We are of African decent and we are American; we are black and we are Episcopalian. America is our home; the Episcopal Church is our home. In this tension, we must borrow a phrase from our GLBT brothers and sisters and “claim the blessing” of our twoness.

Though borne of sin and injustice, God has redeemed our experience and made it a gift. It is a gift which holds promise not just for the Episcopal Church or American Christian-ity, but for the Church universal. I heard James Cone at the National Cathedral tell of preaching in Japan to immigrant Korean workers, who are an economically and racially op-pressed ethnic community in Japan. He said that as he entered the church he heard them sing with inspired tones African American spirituals and Civil Rights songs. As they sang he saw tears running down their faces. As Bishop John Burgess wrote of early slave and Jim Crow Christians, these oppressed Korean Christians had also “taken the Gospel given to them by those who would use it as an instrument of their pacification and have transformed it into a means of liberation.”

An elderly black priest I know once said, “The Church says they get tired of talking about racism. Well, I get so tired of pretending it doesn’t exist and that God is a white Episcopalian, depicted in a stained glass window, and ground in the 1662 Prayer Book. It is so hard when they can’t see beauty also in the blackness of divinity.” It is a deep frustration for Blacks in white Church.”

Countee Cullen, a Harlem renaissance intellectual (and son-in-law of W.E.B. Du Bois), articulated this dilemma very well in his poem, “Heritage”: 13 Burgess, p. XI.

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, So I make an idle boast; Jesus of the twice-turned cheek, Lamb of God, although I speak With my mouth thus, in my heart Do I play a double part? Ever at Thy glowing altar Must my heart grow sick and falter, Wishing He I served were black, Thinking then it would not lack Precedent of pain to guide it, Let who would or might deride it; Surely then this flesh would know Yours had borne a kindred woe. Lord, I fashion dark gods, too, Daring even to give you Dark despairing features where, Crowned with dark rebellious hair, Patience wavers just so much as Mortal grief compels, while touches Quick and hot, of anger, rise To smitten cheek and weary eyes. Lord, forgive me if my need Sometimes shapes a human creed. 14

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14 Arnold Adoff p. 88
15 Hymnal #599

Bibliography


Last night, I attempted to do two things:

- To consider the historic challenges faced by early black Christians in the United States in order to create a context for understanding the gifts given by black Episcopalians. By achieving such understanding, the promise those gifts may hold for the whole Church may be realized.
- To examine the phenomena of the blues not just as a genre of music, but also as an essential creative tension in the identity of all traditional black music.

Today, I will attempt to look at some current social, theological and political challenges confronting Episcopalian African Americans in this post-modern era of “Culture Wars” in America and the Church. I will do this by considering some of the gifts Episcopalian African Americans offer, and what promise these may hold for greater partnership and ministry in the Episcopal Church. This second address, as the first, draws its title from a stanza of the hymn “Lift Every Voice and Sing”: “The place for which our parents sighed: The place for which our parents sighed:

Contemporary realities of the culture wars in the ‘Promised Land’

In a lecture I shared several years ago here at VTS, I talked about the five epochs of the African American Church, noting the particular and peculiar role and development of blacks in the American Anglican and Episcopal Church:

I. The Primitive Invisible (or Slave) Church
II. The Early Visible Church
III. The Jim Crow Church
IV. The Civil Rights Church
V. The Culture Wars (postmodern) Church

This morning, I will focus upon our contemporary era, the Culture Wars Church. I identify this period by the signs of the end of the Civil Rights Church and the signs of the beginning of a culture which is post-enlightenment, politically tribal and ideologically polarized. “Culture Wars” is a term borrowed from the book of the same title by James Davison Hunter, Episcopal layman and Distinguished Professor of Religion, Culture and Sociology at the University of Virginia. In his publication Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America, Hunter describes what he sees as a dramatic realignment and polarization that has transformed American politics and culture.

He argues that in an increasing number of hot-button issues—abortion, gun control, separation of church and state, privacy, recreational drug use, homosexuality—two definable polarities can be identified. Society has divided so as to constitute two opposing groups, chiefly defined not by nominal religious, ethnic, social class, or even political affiliation, but by ideological world view. Hunter characterizes this polarity as stemming from opposing impulses: progressivism vs. orthodoxy. Of course, this rather prophetic and descriptive insight (written in 1991) is undeniable today in society and the Church. While much of this book is descriptive and interpretive, his subsequent related works are richly prescriptive. There are a number of other fine resources I could recommend; however, Hunter’s work is, in my opinion, the richest introductory resource to this aspect of religion in the postmodern era.

It is in this context that I narrowly consider these issues as they relate to the African American Church community, especially in the Episcopal Church. I will do this by briefly looking at several cultural issues and by identifying efforts to broaden our experience of them by entities in our Church. These issues are largely socio-cultural, including post-blackness, gender, race, and homosexuality. I will consider them because of the challenge, gift and promise they collectively represent in the black church.

There are two cultural matters related to post-blackness: redefining identity (that is, what does it mean to be “black”); and bridging the gap between new cultural, economic and ethnic black communities in America. While these are phenomena in African American society at large, it is a particular matter of concern for the Union of Black Episcopalians and the Office of Black Ministries of the Episcopal Church. All of these are among the most critical issues for understanding contemporary generations and evangelizing in a contemporary society.

In his book, Who’s Afraid of Post-Blackness: What it Means to Be Black Now, Toure (Neblett is his last name but he goes by his first name only), a 32-year-old MSNBC journalist and cultural arts critic, provides those of us from the Civil Rights generation an insight into the very different way a new generation understands “blackness.” Those who benefit (such as those born after 1970 or so) from the Civil Rights struggles and the necessarily narrow collective political foci, now have more individualistic ways of self-identification and celebrating “blackness.” Toure writes in a chapter entitled “Forty Million Ways to Be Black”:

To be born Black is an extraordinary gift bestowing access to an unbelievably rich legacy of joy. It’ll lift you to ecstasy and give you pain that can make you stronger than you imagined possible. But today, to experience the full possibilities of Blackness, you must


2 I worked with Professor Hunter when I served on the Advisory Board of the University of Virginia’s Center on Religion and Democracy and highly recommend him as a future speaker at VTS.
Another issue challenging the contemporary black community is the suspicion about intensity and commitment to the struggle. If one is not directly confronting every suspicion of racism, or if one is seeking ways to collaborate and affirm with the majority to achieve political or economic opportunity (individual or collective), is then the integrity of the community threatened and the legacy of the Civil Rights era betrayed? A chief concern is this: Will members of a generation which may not know the historic brutality of slavery, nor have endured the indignities of Jim Crow and the risk civil resistance to racism—times in which confrontation of racism meant bodily, economic or political death—might such a generation not appreciate the cost and protect the privileges they now naively enjoy?

Touré understands this and explains in a chapter titled, “How to Build More Baracks”:

Where some black politicians of previous eras seemed to run by presenting themselves as part of redressing racial wrongs of the past, modern Black politicians tread lighter. They wield Blackness far differently. They don’t discuss race or racial history, or don’t discuss it until forced to, and above all try not to use race in ways that will make white voters feel guilty about the past—they want their Blackness to help voters feel hopeful about the future.

How will the Episcopal Church, Union of Black Episcopalians, and individual congregations deal with this, as a matter of mission and evangelism? For example, will the UBE present itself primarily as a body to redress racial wrongs of the past, or “tread lighter” on race and seek ways to collaborate with the larger Church and its mission? Can this be done while being vigilant regarding racism? Can blackness be wielded differently enough to make intergenerational integrity possible? Is integrity now possible in using blackness—identity and legacy—in ways that will help white Episcopalians feel hopeful about the future? Or do such approaches encourage the larger church to ignore the challenge, gifts and promise of black Episcopalians? These are matters which the board of the Union of Black Episcopalians is addressing in their vision for the 21st century, available on the UBE website.

Another issue of challenge is articulated by Washington Post journalist Eugene Robinson in his book Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America. In brief, he identifies four contemporary demographic realities which challenge the traditional black community:

1. A mainstream middle-class majority with a full ownership stake in American society;
2. A LARGE, abandoned minority with less hope of escaping poverty and dysfunction than at any time since Reconstruction’s crushing end;
3. A small transcendent elite with such enormous wealth, power, and influence that even white folks have to genuflect;
4. Two newly emergent groups—individuals of mixed race heritage and communities of recent black immigrants—that make us [the traditional black community] wonder what ‘black’ is even supposed to mean.

Regarding immigrant communities, it is important to understand that since the 1965 Immigration Act expanded quotas, a great percentage of new immigrants from places such as the Indian sub-continent, Africa, Latin America and Asia. Focusing on communities of the African Diaspora, a growing number of new Episcopalians in the American Church are ethnic congregations or existing congregations with a significant presence of Sudanese, Haitians, Ugandans, Liberians, or Spanish speakers (Caribbean and Central American), among many others.

The Rev. Canon Angela Ifill of the Episcopal Office of Black Ministries (OBM) has been reaching out to these communities of the African Diaspora, a growing number of new Episcopalians in the American Church are ethnic congregations or existing congregations with a significant presence of Sudanese, Haitians, Ugandans, Liberians, or Spanish speakers (Caribbean and Central American), among many others.

The Rev. Canon Angela Ifill of the Episcopal Office of Black Ministries (OBM) has been reaching out to these communities seeking to develop leadership in local congregations. One current example is her significant programmatic relationship with Episcopal Sudanese Church communities. OMB also has growing collaboration with other Ethnic Mission Offices. The UBE has created full board membership to representatives of African Diaspora groups that have formal organizations. This year’s Annual UBE Conference will include a Convocation of African American, African and Caribbean communities and bishops. The goal is to learn from each other.
one another and seek ways to support unique expressions and agendas of ministry. Robinson describes the contemporary leadership of women may feminize the Church and thus weaken it as an institution in a prophetic, personal and candid manner. The Episcopal Church's commitment to, and identification with, “the community”

There remains not only a Biblical concern but the belief that acceptance of homosexuality weakens the male identity—a belief that finds resonance as the black community seeks to assert itself in the context of society’s “white warrior” (powerful dominant image of masculinity portrayed in media and public art). This is an extension of the fear in the larger Church that the rich gifts of theology and modeling for the larger church. Perhaps the most important recent book on the topic is by Episcopal priest Horace Griffin, Professor at Pacific School of Religion, California. His book is titled Their Own Receive Them Not: African American Lesbians and Gays in Black Churches. Griffin provides some of his own pilgrimage as a gay black man in denial, beginning with his early years as a young adult in the black Baptist Church. But, his central contribution is an historical overview and critical analysis of the black church and its current engagement with lesbian and gay Christians. Griffin challenges the larger Church, gay and straight, about continued racism. But chiefly he seeks to end “hundreds of years of silence” on the question of homosexuality in the Black Church, writing, “The black church’s teaching that homosexuality is immoral has created a crisis for lesbian and gay Christians in black churches...” In a classical, colloquial style of critique and sarcastic humor in black preaching, Griffin writes, “This black-church-sanctioned homophobia produces a lot of twisted black people.”

Next, let’s consider the challenge of competitive issues regarding gender and race, that is, feminism vis-à-vis womanism. A definitive work on the subject is God’s Fierce Whimsy: Christian Feminism and Theological Education. Episcopal Divinity School theologians Carter Heyward (white) and Katie Cannon (black) were among the contributors. Heyward and Cannon brought together well-known feminist theologians and others from minority Christian communities, black and post-colonial communities (Latin and Asian) in a group called The Mud Flower Collective. In the course of discussions, conversations and writings, these scholars came to recognize real distinctions and challenges to traditional, white, Euro-centric, middle-class feminism. A distinction for the black feminist was the realization of this contrast: while white feminism came out of a well-educated, middle- to upper-class suffrage legacy, black feminism, as a class, claimed a sense of identification with the economic and socially oppressed; and, they saw the power of their community as a target in light of an interest in both challenging and healing the whole community in its economic and social struggle. From this came the title “womanism”—a term used to describe a common hermeneutic of liberation, but with a different use and identity. Womanists tend to be more tolerant, while no less confrontational, of the struggle of black men in a racist, repressive society. I remind my brothers that tolerance has its limits, and that we must have greater respect for, and collabo- rate as equals with, our sisters. The conversation continues between womanists and feminists, which is providing some rich gifts of theology and modeling for the larger church.

A gift which holds promise for the Episcopal Church is to understand the role that black Episcopalian have and are playing in this regard. Perhaps one of the best efforts in this area is the foundational work of Anna Julia Cooper. Cooper was born a slave in 1858, graduated from St. Augustine College and earned a Ph.D. from the University of Paris. Historians recognize her as the mother of feminism and womanism. The central thesis of her 1892 work, A Voice from the South, is that the educational, moral, and spiritual progress of black women should improve the general standing of the entire African American community. She says that the violent nature of men often runs counter to the goals of higher education [gender critique], so it is important to foster more female intellectuals because they will bring more elegance to education [gender equity/empowerment]. She advanced the view that it was the duty of educated and successful black women to support their uprooted peers in achieving their goals [commitment to, and identification with, “the community”]. Her book also touched on a variety of topics, from racism and the socioeconomic realities of black families, to the administration of the Episcopal Church. I can’t imagine that the Church could not benefit in its work for women’s equality and empowerment by recognizing her foundational contributions.

Another pioneer in womanism is the late Rev. Dr. Pauli Murray, Episcopal priest, lawyer, and Civil Rights advocate. Murray brought together feminism, race and sexual orientation in a prophetic, personal and candid manner. Pauli Murray was a distinguished Civil Rights legal scholar. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall (a cradle Episcopalian) said her classic text States’ Laws on Race and Color (1950), was the lawyer’s “Bible” of the civil rights movement. [Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History] Dr. Murray was also the first Black women ordained in the Episcopal Church (1977).

Just as boldly, Murray addressed issues of homosexuality and sexism in the Civil Rights community with autobiographical candor. Although acknowledging the term “homosexual” in describing others, Murray preferred to describe herself as having an “inverted sex instinct” that caused her to behave as a man attracted to women; she wanted a “monogamous mar- ried life,” but only in which she was the man.11

In 1963, Murray became one of the first to criticize the sexism of the Civil Rights Movement in her speech “The Negro Woman and the Quest for Equality.” In a letter to civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph, she listed, among other grievances, the fact in the 1963 March on Washington no women were invited to make any of the major speeches or to be part of the delegation of leaders that went to the White House:

I have been increasingly perturbed over the blatant disparity between the major role which Negro women have played and are playing in the crucial grassroots levels of our struggle and the minor role of leadership they have been assigned in the national policy-making decisions. It is indefensible to call a national march on Washington and send out a call which contains the name of not a single woman leader.11 13

Today, in this lineage, we are privileged to have other Episcopal women working on womanism as an ecclastic hermeneutic for liberation. One such woman is the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, priest, and Professor and Director of Religion at Goucher College. In the typical fashion of womanist hermeneutics, Douglas’ writings bring together gender, race, and sexuality as issues and a theological framework. A sampling of her work includes:

- **Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective** (1999)
- **The Black Christ (Bishop Henry McNeal Turner/ Sojourner Truth) (1993)**
- **What’s Faith Got To Do With It: Black Bodies/Christian Souls (2005)**
- **Sexuality and the Sacred: Sources for Theological Reflection (2010)**

There are many other points of challenge, and many other gifts which offer promise for the mission and ministry 11Mack, pp. 214-215. 12Cole and Guy-Sheftall, p. 89. 13 Priest and activist, the Rev. Altgracía Perez received the 2012 UBE Pauli Murray Humanitarian Service Award

8 Ibid.


10 The Union of Black Episcopalians has established an award in Cooper’s honor. The 2012 recipient was the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, Professor and Director of Religion, Goucher College.

11 The Union of Black Episcopalians has established an award in Cooper’s honor. The 2012 recipient was the Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, Professor and Director of Religion, Goucher College.
of the Episcopal Church. However, it is both challenge, gift and promise that the black community within the Episcopal Church finds itself in “The place for which our parents sighed.” This “place,” this era of the Culture War Church is for us of African Descent a place of accomplishment, conflict and redefinition.

The gifts of legacy remain and new treasures beckon, including gifts of collaboration, diversity and inclusion. Leadership entities such as the Office of Black Ministries, UBE and most recently a fellowship called Episcopal Bishops of African Descent (EBAD), are seeking ways to nurture the gifts and meet the challenges. I encourage you to visit the websites of these ministries and see how you might help us and the larger Church meet these challenges. Whether your passion might be addressing gun violence, or the school-to-prison-pipeline, or education, or domestic poverty, or congregational and leadership development these are challenges Black Episcopal lay and ordained leaders are increasingly passionate about. But it will take the courage and collaboration of the whole Church to address these challenges and opportunities to make Christian witness.

Yesterday and today we began with prayer. I’d like to close with a prayer—a gift from W.E.B. Du Bois, whom I referenced extensively in yesterday’s lecture. Du Bois was a cradle Black Episcopalian and one of the greatest intellectuals of the 20th century. However, his spirituality is often overlooked. During his short tenure at Atlanta University, which began in 1909, he often participated in student chapel life—reading scripture and offering meditations and prayers. During this time he composed a number of chapel prayers which were collected and published as Prayers for Dark People. I have chosen a prayer he wrote which was inspired by a meditation on Esther 4:9-16.

Let us pray.

Give us grace, O God, to dare to do the deed which we well know cries to be done. Let us not hesitate because of ease or the words of others’ mouths, or our own lives. Mighty causes are calling us—the freedom of women, the training of our children, the putting down of hate and murder and poverty—all these and more. But they call with voices that mean work and sacrifice and death. Mercifully grant us, O God, the spirit of Esther that we say: I will go unto the King and if I perish, I perish. Amen. 14

14 Du Bois p.28

There are many other points of challenge, and many other gifts which offer promise for the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Church. However, it is both challenge, gift and promise that the black community within the Episcopal Church finds itself in “The place for which our parents sighed”
Clockwise beginning in upper left: M.Div. graduate Margaret Peel with her parents, Joe and Mary Margaret Peel; M.Div. graduates Dorota Pruski and Elizabeth Tester in the bell tower of Aspinwall; Bishop James J. (Bud) Shand in conversation at the Commencement reception; M.Div. graduates John George and Connor Newlun; M.Div. graduates Sarah Hoptman Carter, Chana Winger Tetzlaff, and Shireen Baker, with Grey Maggiano in back.

Clockwise beginning in upper left: Adjunct instructor the Rev. Dr. Elbert Ransom, Jr., Dr. Kathleen Brown and the Rev. James Farwell, Ph.D.; M.A. graduate Guilene Fiefie; the Class of 2013 Master's degree graduates; graduates and students waiting to process; Members of the Class of 2013 participate in the age-old tradition of writing their names on the bell tower of Aspinwall Hall; Pierre (Reginald) Valliere with his family.
The Humility of Moses

Address by Dr. Ellen F. Davis
Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor of Bible and Practical Theology at Duke Divinity School

Occasioned by the 190th Commencement
at Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia, May 23, 2013

I am very grateful to Dean Markham, the Trustees, and the Faculty of Virginia Seminary, and especially to you, Class of 2013, for honoring me with the invitation to address you this morning. Especially I am grateful to you all for giving me special permission to depart from the lections you had chosen for this day, and allowing me to speak about Moses. When I received the invitation from Dean Markham, the words that came immediately into my mind are that remarkable sentence from the 12th chapter of Numbers: “Now the man Moses was utterly unassuming (‘anav me’od), completely humble, more so than any other person on the face of the fertile earth” (v. 3). I found that I could not get it out of my mind, whenever I thought of you and this day, so perhaps this text was given me for you. Pray with me, then, if you will:

In this hour, in this place, may God’s word only be spoken, and God’s word only be heard. Amen.

Class of 2013, although I do not know you as individuals (with a few happy exceptions), I know something of the people who had stood with you and struggled alongside you sometime in the future. Remember this story when the people who had stood with you and struggled alongside you suddenly become jealous of whatever has prospered under your hand. (It happens.) Remember it when they say hurtful things about you, when you make your job so much more difficult—and yet, and yet, these troubled individuals stand at your hand. (It happens.) Remember it when they say hurtful things about you, when you make your job so much more difficult—and yet, and yet, these troubled individuals stand

First, in the story that was just read, we see Moses’ humility demonstrated in how he handles power and conflict, those twin phenomena that figure so centrally in the life of ministry—like it or not.

Second, if we read on a few more chapters in the story, we see the one instance when Moses’ characteristic humility fails him, the moment of presumption that tragically bars his entrance into the Promised Land. But that is not the end of the story.

So third, we see Moses’ habit of humility, renewed and deepened when God disappoints his greatest personal hope, the hope that inspired his whole ministry and kept him going. We see how humble Moses keeps faith, when God lets him down. First, then, power and conflict—how does a genuinely humble leader handle them? The story begins when Miriam and Aaron raise that incendiary question: “Is it only through Moses that Yhwh has spoken—really? Hasn’t [God] also spoken through us?” (12:2). Moses’ siblings are tired of playing second and third fiddle to their little brother. They even make some kind of slur against Moses’ Ethiopian or Sudanese wife, but it’s the power issue that really bothers them. Yet in fact, Moses does not hold all the power in the community. You remember that just before this God took some of the prophetic spirit that was upon Moses and shared it among 70 hand-picked elders. There was even a little extra that spilled over onto some other folks, and Moses was thrilled: “If only all Yhwh’s people were prophets, that he would put his spirit upon them!” (11:29).

Note this: Moses doesn’t care about being unique in God’s eyes. Just the opposite: “If only all God’s people were prophets!” That is his humility speaking. Moses has the wit and the wisdom to see that his spiritual stature cannot be measured directly, by looking at him, but rather by looking at everybody around him, as they all share the spirit that empowers them in God’s service. How different would the church look if all our leaders had that kind of understanding of power?

It is just at this point, when the divine spirit is overflowing into the community, that Miriam and Aaron get up and say, “Well, what about us? aren’t we just as special as he is?” And Moses says nothing in response, not a mumblin’ word. That, too, is his humility. He doesn’t say who ought to be speaking for God…because he doesn’t know, and he knows he doesn’t know. So Moses leaves an empty space for God to speak and act freely, and I have to believe that is why (to put it crudely), why God craves Moses’ company. Just because he assumes nothing, claims nothing for himself, God is able and eager to get up close to Moses, even “mouth-to-mouth” (12:8)—because Moses isn’t running his own mouth,asserting his own distinctiveness all the time.

So Aaron and Miriam make their bid for spiritual power, and God gets angry, really angry. As a result, Miriam gets scale-disease, while Aaron just gets egg on his face—a high priest’s immaturity, I suppose. There is nothing especially fair about that, but I can’t clean the Bible up for you. As you know, fairness as we reckon it is not a big part of the divine economy, and I am sure on the whole that is lucky for us. But the point of this story is elsewhere, namely on what godly leadership looks like in the face of conflict, and so it is notable that as soon as Miriam is stricken, Moses cries out to God for her to be healed. Now think about that for a moment, and think about it again, sometime in the future. Remember this story when the people who had stood with you and struggled alongside you suddenly become jealous of whatever has prospered under your hand. (It happens.) Remember it when they say hurtful things about you, when you make your job so much more difficult—and yet, and yet, these troubled individuals stand

But that is not the end of the story. In this hour, in this place, may God’s word only be heard. Amen.
in need of your compassion. Then, like Moses, you must pray God’s mercy upon them. “Love is not irritable or resentful. ... It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:5-7). When Paul wrote that, he might have been meditating on the humility of Moses, who claims nothing for himself, who in the midst of conflict leaves space for God to act, who in the face of mean-spiritedness implores God to act in mercy.

Moses is the best of us, in many ways, and the great value of his long story is that it shows us how the very best of us can and will go wrong, terribly wrong, in our service to God. That is a good thing to consider on this Commencement Day, as you begin a new stage of your life with God, so you will not waste precious energy contending with the fear of failure. It happened to Moses; it will happen to you. What you must fear is falling utterly away from God, and Moses can help you with that.

You remember the story of what God names as Moses’ worst failure in ministry—just a few chapters further on in Numbers, when he strikes the rock to bring forth water for the people. “He spoke rashly with his lips,” as the Psalmist says (Psalm 106:33): “Shall we bring forth water for y’all?” The people. “He spoke rashly with his lips,” as the Psalmist says (Psalm 106:33): “Shall we bring forth water for y’all?” (Num. 20:10). “Shall we”—that’s where Moses went wrong. He was just one letter off the mark (as the rabbis taught); Mo- we (Num. 20:10). “Shall we”—that’s where Moses went wrong. He was just one letter off the mark (as the rabbis taught); Mo- we should have said, “Shall He [God] bring forth water...?” For one rash moment, Moses thought it all depended upon him, and so he spoke foolishly with his lips, the very lips that might have nearly touched God’s own. He takes credit, even if just for an instant, for what only God can do—that is how Moses’ humility fails him.

But after all Moses had done with and for God, couldn’t we call this an understandable error? So why does divine judgment fall like a sledge hammer on Moses and Aaron both: “Because you did not keep faith with me and show my holiness in the eyes of the Israelites, you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given to them” (Num. 20:12). This is one of the hardest sayings of God in the whole Bible. “Because you did not keep faith with me and show my holiness... Because you were not fully transparent to us, you, Moses and Aaron, will not enter the land of promise.” Lack of humility in the leaders—that has to die in the wilderness, along with the whole generation that came out of Egypt. God is unrelenting on this point, precisely so we can be clear on it. At the moment when we in our self-absorption cease to be transparent to God, we cease to be useful in the ministry to which we have been called.

We might suppose that at this point Moses’ story would end: he has failed God publicly and terribly, and he is done. But of course it’s not like that. Moses’ story and his service to God go on for years after this, almost as though nothing had changed: God continued to trust in Moses, and Moses continued to trust in God. And what does this say about Moses’ unconditional humility? It is just because Moses claims nothing for himself that he can endure disappointment and continue the ministry to which he is called. Because he is more humble than any other person on the face of the earth, he can endure loss of the goal to which his whole adult life seemed to point, loss of the hope for which he has sacrificed so much—and still, Moses will serve God totally. “Leaders have to be people who give up things.” That’s what Moses says to Aaron in Zora Neale Hurston’s novel about Moses. “Leaders have to be people who give up things. They ain’t made out of people who grab things” (Moses Man of the Mountain, 214).

Leaders have to be people who have learned, inevitably through much pain, to wait upon God with open hands and boundless patience—and something even beyond that. Think of the remarkable prayer of thanksgiving we have just said, written by Charlie Price, a beloved teacher at the Seminary: “We thank you also for the disappointments and failures that lead us to recognize our dependence on you alone” (BCP, 836). Moses himself might have written that prayer. You can pray it only when you know beyond the shadow of a doubt that everything is gift, every single thing and hope you cherish is pure gift, given just for a time. “Leaders have to be people who give up things. They ain’t made out of people who grab things.” This is a wise saying of Ms. Hurston’s, yet we could and must add just one thing more: Leaders for the church ain’t made out of people who grab things, but rather out of people who grab onto God and hold fast, people who through suffering, yet with fathomless humility and gratitude are led to recognize their dependence on God alone. That you should be people like that—that is our prayer for you, Virginia Seminary Class of 2013. May your humility, like Moses’ own, be a source of overflowing blessing for the church in this generation, giving glory to God, whose power working in you can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus, forever and ever. Amen and amen.
Admiral Hyman Rickover was a leader in the development of nuclear power for the Navy. As that change was becoming a reality he spoke to a graduating class at Annapolis and congratulated them on being highly trained and well qualified to serve in a navy that no longer exists. That class, like the class of 2013, was on the cusp of something new, something much discussed but essentially un-explored, a future sought by some, feared by others but unknown to all.

The unexplored mission field before us is like and unlike all of the mission fields that have beckoned this Seminary’s graduates for the past 190 years. It is our Promised Land, our Nineveh, the cup that will not pass from us, the tomb and upper room where the power of God is flexing and flashing. But unlike Admiral Rickover’s graduates, the VTS Class of 2013 is as prepared as anyone can be to explore and serve this unknown mission field.

There is, however, one caveat that must be acknowledged. The chronicles show that during your time here the seminary managed to burn down the chapel, close the bookstore and open a pub. God knows what that peculiar legacy will provide for the future Church. And that is just the point. God knows what will unfold. We do not. That is why we are called followers of Jesus Christ. If we knew where we were going, we would not have to follow anyone. But we don’t and so we do. Our ability to follow Christ into the unknown is what qualifies us to explore and serve in the mission field.

While the field itself remains unknown, there are some truths we can see from here. New truths that need to be explored, wounded truths that need to be healed and at least one great truth that needs to be fiercely held. Come with me and see what we can of the mission field before us.

New truths have a way of growing out of old ones and our mission field illustrates that adage. From the beginning, our faith has had a community base. It began when Abraham was told to take Lot with him to Canaan, it continued when Moses was given Aaron. Tonight’s Gospel honors that point as the missionaries go out in pairs. Faith and community are intertwined. The wisdom of that connection was made wonderfully clear by a man named R. H. Tawney who wrote, “Those who seek God in the absence of their fellows find not God but Satan, whose countenance bears a striking resemblance to their own.” In other words, by ourselves we begin to worship ourselves, so God calls the faithful into community. That ancient truth wants a new understanding in the age of the internet and social networking. When I served as interim dean of the Washington National Cathedral one striking statistic was that the people who connected to the Cathedral’s worship online regularly outnumbered those who actually came through the door. Their interest was wonderful, a cause for joy. But there was no connection between them, no community in any sense we had known before. They were a congregation that never congregated. Was it a new kind of community or no community at all? Were they each fashioning their own god, finding a devil in their own likeness? Or a new truth? Is Facebook the logical extension of congregation and diocese? I can tell you with all of the authority I can claim, I have no idea. The answer will be found in the Church we plant in the new mission field.

Another truth that must be refashioned was spelled out by a man named Stephen Rose who, over half a century ago,
prophetically wrote, “A religion which spends 70 percent of its money on buildings and 70 percent of its talk on reforming the world has got to be hypocritical.” Think about it. The mission field of a previous generation was prosperous eclesiastically if not spiritually. And being good Americans they responded by building buildings. The mission field before us promises incredible spiritual richness but in a waning institution. Whatever God may require of us it is most unlikely that we will be able to drag along a surfact of parish halls, offices, Sunday school rooms, meeting rooms, youth group caves, clothing stores, food pantries, parlors, shelters and kitchens, to say nothing of acres of empty pews, racks of unintelligible organ pipes and stained glass images of a European Jesus as we respond to God’s expectations. How long the Church remains lashed to the mast of yesterday’s prosperity and how ably we fashion new concepts of holy things and holy places will be major issues in our faithfulness. Your background in chapel burning, book store closing, and pub opening may come in handy.

There are new truths to be developed in our mission field and there are wounded truths that need a healing touch. One of those is the current emphasis on diversity. Every church brags about being diverse these days. I once worked with a congregation that claimed diversity on the basis of having two-door and four-door Volvos in the parking lot. Diversity is a fine thing, to be sure, but it is not the point. Our task is to make harmony out of dissidence, unity out of plurality. Diversity is an important step but a foolish goal. In the same way that a dinner party is not about eating but conversation and a symphony is not about playing but listening, the point of a church is not difference but common cause, not mutual understanding but common mission, not breadth so much as depth. Our heritage includes the hyphenated term Anglo-Saxon. Be aware that the Angles and the Saxons were competing tribes and only the grace of God massaging and pulling on them made them into a single word. That is our task with whatever tribes we find in our mission field. Diversity is the raw material. Community is the finished product.

Another wounded truth is about outreach. Just as every church with a pulse describes itself as diverse, so too do we trumpet our commitment to community service. A parish that fails to call itself a wonderful group of people who love each other while providing significant service to the world is an anomaly and an embarrassment. No cutting-edge cleric would consider such a place because few cutting-edge clerics notice the difference between a good church and a good Rotary Club. Rotary Clubs are composed of wonderful people who meet to provide service to the community. Most churches would not even make good Rotary Clubs because Rotary actually requires attendance and has the good sense to have a different speaker at each meeting. Outreach and community service are byproducts of a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ. They are not what churches basically do, they are what happens after we do it. And what we do is bring people into dynamic relationship with the living God. People in such a relationship with God tend to make a difference in the world around them. Faith is the product. Service is the by-product. Diversity and outreach are worthy values but they have been wounded over the years by being placed in a central role that neither can sustain. They are good things but they are not the main thing, not the great truth that any and every mission field requires.

The main thing, the sine qua non of the Church that must be fiercely held as we venture into this mission field is the continuing experience of the living God. Not the hope of that experience nor the memory of it, not the signs that point to it nor the sacraments that share in it, not the longing for it nor the envy of it, not the stained glass that depicts it nor the music that celebrates it but the Holy-cow, what-was-that, where-did-that-come-from, how-did-that-happen experience of the living God. It is feeling the wind of the Spirit caress and whip around us. It is drawing on the life-defining effects of spiritual discipline. It is seeing doors open where there had only been walls before. It is finding still water in a shadowed valley, feeling the rod that comforts, the staff that guides. It is being drained by intercessory prayer and rejuvenated by praise. It is the recurring miracle of loaves and fishes that is seen over and over by the generous and the vulnerable. It is what happens when proximity becomes presence and the fire of the Spirit arcs from person to person as it did in the Upper Room. It is in the unfocused eyes of the newly born and the about to die who know that the unknown at either end of life is held in common cause and common embrace. It is standing on the holy ground that Rudolf Otto described as a mystic moment when you feel something drawing you into a situation, something powerful like a magnet when at the same time something within you is afraid, resisting, wanting to move back. It is wanting to run toward and away at the same time. The experience of the living God is what happened in Abraham’s Canaan, Moses’ mountain, Joshua’s Jordan, David’s Jerusalem and Solomon’s Temple. It was in Amos’ anger, Isaiah’s vision and Jeremiah’s lament. It happened in Jesus’ manger, Peter’s fishery, Paul’s Damascus and John’s heavenly city. It is what defines the mission field. It is the essence of the truths we are to explore, heal and hold. It is known only to those who live into it and, believe it or not, we are as ready as anyone has ever been to do just that if we know how to follow Jesus Christ.

We are already blessed and the mission field beckons. Live into it. There is no better way to live.
Reflections on Israel

“I was reminded of God’s presence many times daily in many ways...”

by Christie Hord, M.Div. ’15, Diocese of Central Gulf Coast

I boarded the plane in Washington, D.C. shortly after dinnertime, said goodbye to my husband and two wonderful children, and began the long trip to Israel with no expectations. I was already aware of Jewish people who practice a very orthodox expression of their faith, which I witnessed in person after changing flights in Newark. Several Orthodox Jews on board this overnight flight home made their way to the bulkhead of our economy section to pray. I found their diligence inspiring, committing to this practice even in the most inconvenient of spaces. Some would pray for 20 to 30 minutes, a talisman over their shoulders, their body swaying as it found the rhythm of the prayer. I watched in admiration, not only for the tradition, but also for the reverence and steadfast commitment of their heart. In the belief that we love the same God, I felt a great sense of peace.

It could seem impossible to travel to the Middle East today without trepidation. Is a land of ceaseless turmoil appropriate for a naïve traveler? I arrived in the Holy Land with some typical preconceived notions about the geo-political situation in Israel. I had read articles and books, heard commentary, and watched countless events unfold on newscasts. I was well informed, or so I thought. I returned home 15 days later with a different understanding; in fact, I was more confused and uncertain than ever, knowing the only thing I can do is to pray for peace. A maxim my New Testament professor shared with us weeks before rang true:

“If you have been in Israel a week you can come home and write a book about what is wrong and how to solve it. If you have been there for a year you could possibly write a poem, if you have been there for 10 years… you have nothing to say.”

It took my classmates and me only two weeks to realize...
A minaret (left), just outside the Pool of Bethesda (or Bethesda or Bethsaida) in Jerusalem.


Left to right: The Very Rev. Dr. Graham M. Smith, Dean of St. George’s College Jerusalem; Sherry (a visitor from Texas); and Maxine Barnett, M.Div. ’15.

Below: Church of Dominus Flevit on the Mount of Olives.

A Note to the Reader: A swimsuit is a necessity for swimming in the Jordan River. The Jordan River is cold—between 58-64 degrees Fahrenheit. The Jordan River is unclean, and the Israeli authorities do not recommend swimming in the Jordan River.

we had very little to say, if anything. Even in the political intensity, however, even in the chaos, God was present. I was reminded of God’s presence many times daily in many ways; The Muslim call to prayer heard from the many minarets served as a recurring reminder to take pause and thank God. Some say the topography of Israel is the fifth Gospel. It is one thing to read about or hear about this land, it is quite another to see it and to touch it. The terrain is primitive, craggy and discordant, particularly in the Judean region. “Heavy laden” became a reality to take pause and thank God.

Meeting at the well became a very real encounter. We spent several days in Jerusalem, the topography changes and tells a different story. The landscape and a beautiful backdrop to the surrounding region before we began to make our way toward Galilee. Approaching Galilee, the topography becomes the eastern border between Israel and Jordan, it is a wide muddy river where John would perform many baptisms. Several of us took our shoes off to stand on the shallow steps leading into the river. The dark soft mud on the river bottom oozed between our toes, the brisk water creating a slight numbness to our feet and calves.

As I stood in the river dreaming, two older women, not part of our group, began to make their way down the stairs. They were dressed in white gowns which I recognized from the gift shop up the hill. The women giggled with excitement. Each of them carried a towel. As they waded into the water, I tried to avert my eyes, but could not help but watch. They slowly, carefully entered the water. One of them stopped to hang her towel on the handrail. Afraid it would fall into the river, I slowly, for fear of slipping on the slimy steps, walked over and picked it up. I expected the icy cold water would stop them short, but it did not. They continued to the last step, well above their waist in the water. Holding on to the handrail, each submerged her head into the water three times. They were impassioned and unashamed, vulnerable in the presence of God. I fought back an overwhelming urge to wade into the stream with them, to join them and relish in that moment of pure unadulterated joy. Their desire overcame the awkwardness that would have stopped many people. As they made their way out of the river, I offered the towel and wrapped it around one woman’s shoulders. She looked at me, her eyes sparkling with elation, her smile a mile wide. She spoke to me kindly in an unfamiliar language, but I could tell she welcomed me into her experience—I was grateful. As we made our way back to our bus, I stopped at the shower to rinse off my feet. The two women from the river were there as well still laughing and giggling, expressing their joy in song. They reminded me of my two daughters when I overhear them in their beds at night singing, laughing, and talking about their dreams. Of all my experiences in Jerusalem, the opportunity to meet others and share this life’s journey stand out as the most powerful: singing quietly with a classmate; spending an afternoon in a tiny shoe shop in East Jerusalem as the shop owner repaired my shoes; an evening on the roof of the Austrian Hospice in the Old City; celebrating in the joy with the chef who prepared our daily meals over the birth of his baby; or showing our gratitude to the families who fed us in the West Bank. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to take this journey, not only with some of my classmates at VTS, but also with others from around the world. There were several people from Australia, others from the United States, and two seminarians from Wales. We traveled far and met at St. George’s College. We worshiped, we learned, we wept, we...
laughed, we prayed. Our love for Jesus Christ and our desire to experience our faith in light of where it all began brought us together.

Today I think of Bishara, Father Lawrence, and Hosam. Bishara, an Arab Christian, is one of a dwindling minority in a land where many of his Christian brothers and sisters are choosing to leave. Those who remain face the challenge of being overlooked often. I think of Father Lawrence and his work at the Anglican School in Israel with no expectations. As Christians and people of faith we belong to a community beyond our borders. We are united in our humanity by something much bigger than ourselves. I did not spend two weeks in the mission field but I did spend time reconnecting with the foundations of the Christian faith. I returned home with a renewed sense of purpose, a fresh understanding, and an eagerness to continue working toward the Kingdom of God.

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Who Cares about Lipitor® and God Anyway?

As a public relations (PR) and marketing executive in agency and internal corporate settings, one of the most exciting product launches that I had the pleasure to work on was the launch of the cholesterol-lowering drug Lipitor in 1998. The team brainstormed ways to, first, penetrate the market and to, second, sustain lead market share in the post-launch years. We asked questions like, “Who cares about Lipitor?” and “Why would anyone care about Lipitor if they don’t have high cholesterol?” In asking these questions we sought to address the primary question of relevance. “How can Lipitor become relevant to as many people as possible?” In the PR world, this systematic approach for uncovering hidden audiences is referred to as “fracturing the market.”

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The early-adopting audience of patients with high cholesterol was obvious. Our launch team dug deeper to uncover audience bases for which Lipitor would have long-term relevance for a diversified consumer market. Understanding, for example, that high cholesterol is a leading factor in the development of cardiac disease we created messages that were particularly relevant to an African-American audience, statistically shown to be a high-risk population. Lipitor’s resulting strong brand equity translated into years of market dominance in the cholesterol-lowering therapeutics market.

As the Church considers her role of reclaiming the marketplace for the kingdom of God, she may ask, “Who cares about God?” and “Why would anyone care about God if they neither know, nor have the desire to know, Jesus Christ?” The strategic approach of “fracturing the market” addresses

A marker on the pathway toward the Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu.
Taking the Church to Market through Business and Industrial Chaplaincy

The belief by employers, and sadly, by the employees, that one can separate the personal from the professional in the workplace is a dangerous myth which ignores the reality of the human person. Individuals are incapable of leaving their “personal” life at the entrance of their workplace because it is inextricably entangled with their “professional” life. Disruption in the home, or strained personal relationships, translates into a distracted worker on the job and strained working relationships.

I have worked in several toxic corporate environments which were fueled by fear, anxiety, and stress. It always puzzled me when executive leadership invested in onsite yoga instructors and massage therapists as employee benefits. While the superficial bandage had been applied to address physical stress, such tactics did not address the underlying issues that strained workplace relationships; deteriorated the company culture; and inevitably threatened the vitality of the company’s bottom line. Over the years my employers changed, but what remained consistent, in each workplace, was what Soren Kierkegaard identified in The Sickness Unto Death as the human condition of despair. Coupled with this underlying despair was a deep need to reconcile one’s work with one’s life purpose.

Business and industrial chaplaincy is a ministry of presence, situated in the local context of the workplace. Yet, the human need to make sense of suffering transcends one’s workplace. Therefore, the pastoral role of the chaplain is exercised in the same way as it would be in the better-known military, hospital, school, and prison contexts. Chaplains walk alongside the workers and are the visible manifestation of the company’s message of concern for the care of the employee—the whole employee, including their spiritual well being. Modern-day industrial chaplaincy in the U.S. can look most directly to the military chaplaincy model. In-house chaplains, hired by companies after World War II, were former military chaplains who translated their experiences and adapted their priestly function to another non-parochial context.

Uniquely trained for this specialized ministry, industrial chaplains tend to spend the bulk of their time attending to the personal crises of workers, which distract from their day-to-day work. They often have counseling licenses, such as Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) or Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), paired with a Master in Divinity (M.Div.) or Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.), and may be ordained in one’s faith tradition. Other primary training for industrial chaplains includes organizational conflict resolution, family mediation training, and professional ethics and practice.

Professionally-trained industrial chaplains do not proselytize and do not try to re-create church within the workplace. They offer a personal, confidential means of early intervention and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you…” (Matt 28:19-20, NRSV). Being present and caring for one’s brother or sister is deeply sacramental and honors Jesus’ Great Commission. There may not be an altar or baptismal font visible in the corporate office or manufacturing plant, but the unseen reality of the living Word is always among us.

My first day shadowing an Industrial and Commercial Ministries industrial chaplain in a local turkey manufacturing plant offered me the experience to suit up in a white lab coat, thick rubber boots, protective eye and ear wear, and a bright yellow hard hat. The chaplain had been at this site for 10 years and had the advantage of years of established trust with the workers. I walked with him as he placed a sympathy card in a worker’s lab jacket, as she had lost her mother the previous week. The line manager updated him on a team member’s surgery and the hospital location to schedule a visit. A few people tagged on the chaplain’s lab coat, and he discreetly handed them his contact card, ever careful not to disrupt work or to call attention to the worker’s request. One of the workers approached me as the chaplain began to walk away.
She took her earplugs out and said to me with a smile and watery eyes, “He’s really modest, but that man helped save my marriage.” We even conducted a pastoral home visit to the brother of one of the plant workers.

Multi-lingual and Multi-Cultural Competency in the Local Workplace

I am aware that the secular, industry language shared thus far may be off-putting to some church leaders. I invite the reader to consider that the language, knowledge, and best-practices of the marketplace can provide a framework. This affirms the Anglican Five Marks of Mission, as a source of strength for the church as we attempt to re-vision approaches to diverse mission fields.

As we enter new mission fields, we must be conscious that the context in which the “buzz” words or industry jargon of any workplace are used is a product of its local company culture. The local context, whether it is a corporate office or a production line in a manufacturing plant, must be respected on its own terms. A sincere attempt to engage conversation in the language of the people is necessary if the church is to hold itself accountable to its own cultural “buzz” phrase, “moving from maintenance to mission.” The idea of proactively engaging the language and practices of the workers within a company parallels diocesan theologian and missiologist, Lesslie Newbigin. Commentary about his views on local mission was captured in a 2011 article in Missiology entitled, “Lesslie Newbigin’s Missional Approach to the Modern Workplace,” by Christian ethicist Matthew Kaemingk. According to Kaemingk, “If the gospel was to transform the local village, the Eucharist had to be celebrated and the Word of God preached—in and on the terms of the village. It is here, in this concept of a deeper locality, that we find the relevance of Newbigin’s insights on the parish and the workplace...

Newbigin aptly observed that the modern Western church had chosen to make itself ‘local’ to where its congregants slept but not where they worked. This created a situation in which the institutional church was local and relevant to one part of life and quite distant and irrelevant to the other... modern church must find a way to be truly local to its spiritually alienated laity in the workplace.”

Understanding workplace cultures and leveraging marketplace languages parallel the church’s views of local mission. Just as society is not comprised of one culture, the workplace is also hugely diverse. We must attempt to learn as many languages as possible and to develop deeper cultural sensitivity in order to proclaim—primarily through embodiment—the Gospel in the marketplace to those who do not yet know Jesus Christ.

Our Mission Should We Choose to Accept It

I recently conducted research for my senior thesis about the praxis of industrial chaplaincy. It included visiting the national headquarters of the National Institute of Business and Industrial Chaplains (NIBIC) in Houston, Texas, and Industrial & Commercial Ministries, Inc. (ICM) in Harrisonburg, Va. During this time I interviewed and shadowed industrial chaplains and immersed myself in NIBIC’s extensive archives.

Weeks of reading through primary documents about the Industrial Mission Movement in the United States, which began shortly after World War II, left me disappointed to find that the Episcopal Church was neither leader nor significant participant in this movement.

As I was beginning to lose hope of finding evidence of my denomination’s presence in the movement, I found a blueprint for industrial chaplaincy. Mission to Metropolis: A Total Strategy, was co-written and published in 1965 by the founder of the Detroit Industrial Mission, The Rev. Hugh C. White, Jr. White is an Episcopal priest and 1963 honorary alumnus of VTS. The Detroit Industrial Mission, led by White, spun off into several other cities. In 1963 this network of industrial missions became known as the National Industrial Mission (NIM) and was a vital agent of the church outside of the traditional parish walls.

In 1961 the Convention of the Episcopal Church, held in Detroit, Mich., voted to commit financial support for the nurturing of industrial missions. Since the height of the NIM, however, this viable ministry of industrial chaplaincy has received little recognition from the Episcopal Church. Providing spiritual support to workers on the production lines of the major automobile manufacturers in Detroit was a radical form of mission and a non-traditional form of chaplaincy. Intended as an active partner to parish ministry, industrial chaplaincy sought to contribute to congregational vitality by attending to the needs of the same parishioners in the pews who were being encountered in the workplace by priests.

The history of the Detroit Industrial Mission gives me hope for the Episcopal Church’s re-entry into the mission field of the workplace because there was proof that, although not at first, the Episcopal Church has not always been dormant. While Lipitor was not first-to-market in the cholesterol-lowering drug market, it overcame this disadvantage to become the industry gold-standard. Similarly, the Episcopal Church can overcome its late re-entry into the mission field of the workplace by leveraging secular frameworks to revitalize church mission. The Episcopal Church is poised to penetrate and saturate the marketplace as an emerging leader in the next iteration of business and industrial chaplaincy. It can by creating initiatives to support priests, who are already functioning at workplaces, and by creating a pipeline for new chaplains, that offers seminary curricula and Clinical Pastoral Care options that are tailored to the existing and anticipated needs of the American worker.

If the Episcopal Church is to be vibrant and relevant in the 21st century, we must look beyond the walls of our buildings to reclaim the people of God by uncovering possibilities for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Jesus and his disciples did not remain in one location teaching the Gospel; they traveled from one town to the other healing the sick, comforting the afflicted, and sharing the Kingdom of God on their way. They met people where they were. Therefore, it is imperative that we meet the people of God where they are, and one of those locations is the workplace in its many forms. By embodying (thereby proclaiming) the Gospel in the marketplace, we re-establish relevance for Christ’s Church in the world. Powered by the Holy Spirit, we can blur the divisions that society has created between our secular and sacred spaces to the point of divine entanglement in which all spaces become sacred spaces for encounters with God.

When we actively respond to human need by loving service and seek to transform unjust structures of society that disproportionately affect the marginalized, we proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. We are called to serve, and serving God’s people is perfect freedom. So, we must “Proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19, NRSV).

Notes:
1. The Five Marks of Mission are as follows: To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom; To teach, baptize and nurture new believers; To respond to human need by loving service; To seek to transform unjust structures of society; To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Retrieved on October 23, 2013 from http://www.episcopalchuch.org/page/five-marks-mission.
During the first two weeks in June, the Washington Theological Consortium conducted a study trip to Istanbul for a group of 25 Muslims and Christians. Some were official students and others were students of Islam by avocation and interest. The group arrived in Istanbul just a few hours after the explosion of public protest broke out in Taksim Square downtown. The protest, which quickly spread to other parts of Turkey, brought into sharp relief the ongoing tension between secular decision-making in the political arena and the values of Islam. We arrived early in the evening at the Guest House of the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture, our home away from home for the next 12 days. The Foundation is dedicated to Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, a Muslim theologian, and to promoting his work and his theology.

We were unaware of the unrest in downtown Istanbul until the following morning. Ironically, our agenda for that day included a visit to an Anglican church in Taksim Square. Some last minute adjustments were made and in the interest of safety, our tour group headed to the Hagia Sophia (Greek for “Holy Wisdom”) and the Blue Mosque instead. It turned out to be the perfect starting point for this mixed group of Muslims and Christians. The Hagia Sophia was originally constructed to be the largest Christian cathedral in the world in what was then Constantinople. Consecrated on December 24, 537, it was occupied first by the Eastern Orthodox Church and then by the Roman Church. In 1453, the Turks conquered the city, and Sultan Mehmed II ordered the church be converted into a mosque. In 1934 when Turkey became a republic, the Hagia Sophia was turned into a museum. The history of this holy space is reflected in the Christian iconic mosaics, the Muslim mihrab pointing the way to Mecca, and the huge roundels in Arabic calligraphy proclaiming Allah as the one true God and Muhammad as his messenger.

During our first days in Istanbul, we heard several speakers who gave us insight about the pluralistic nature of the society. These included a local university professor who talked about “Islam in Turkey and the Nursi Community”; Zeynep Sayilgan, one of our group leaders and VTS visiting professor, provided us with the Qur’an description of the attributes of God and mainstream Muslim orthodoxy; Father Jean-Marc Ballan, a Jesuit priest, spoke about minorities in Turkey and shared his experience as a parish priest in Ankara; and the Grand Mufti of Istanbul, Dr. Rahmi Yaran, from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, provided us with some history of Islam and also described the interface between religious values and secular government structures. We also spent several days with with Dr. Colin Turner, one of the world’s foremost authorities on Bediuzzaman Said Nursi. At the end of our first
week, we moved to the host hotel of the International Graduate Conference on Nursi Studies, where we saw presentations of graduate papers on the theologian’s work.

Between hearing from experts, we spent some glorious days exploring Istanbul and its environs. A highlight of the trip was our audience with the Eastern Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, Bartholomew. He spoke to us about the current state of the church and the Patriarchy, his experience as the head of a religious minority in Turkey, and his work in inter-religious relations. On one particularly beautiful day, we took a two-hour ferry ride to Halki Seminary, located at high elevation on Heybeliada Island. No motorized vehicles are allowed on the small island, only horse-drawn carriages. The Turkish Naval Academy is also located there, so we saw the plebes marching in formation. The ferry ride over and back gave us a breathtaking view of both the European and Asian sides of Istanbul. On another day we visited İzni̇k, the site of the Council of Nicea, where former VTS professor Dr. David Scott provided extensive information on the Nicene Creed.

The 12 days were full of sights, sounds, and experiences that made understanding a predominately Muslim society a little easier. The hauntingly beautiful Muslim call to prayer broadcast throughout the city five times a day became part of the background noise of our explorations around Istanbul.

that made understanding a predominately Muslim society a little easier. The hauntingly beautiful Muslim call to prayer broadcast throughout the city five times a day became part of the background sound of our explorations around Istanbul. We visited several beautiful mosques, took night walks in the neighborhood, rode the tram, and looked in hundreds of shop windows. We visited Mini-a-Turk, a local park that displays perfectly constructed scale models of famous sites in Turkey. We shopped at a local neighborhood bazaar as well as the Grand Bazaar that attracts so many tourists. We shopped for local clothing and talked with one another over coffee and tea about our own faith traditions. We went to the highest geographical spot in Istanbul and watched the sun set. We ate in a mountaintop restaurant on the Asian side of the city and had dinner overlooking the Bosphorus Straits. We spent a gorgeous afternoon wandering the grounds of Topkapi Palace and had dinner on a boat cruise of the Bosphorus Straits. We also attended a banquet hosted by the Istanbul Foundation for Science and Culture held on the ruins of the Byzantine Wall. Despite the fact that I don’t speak Turkish (yet!), I spoke with the group about my experience in Turkey and with the Foundation.

All of it was unforgettable. I hope I was able to convey through the translator how transformative those days were.

How do Episcopal parishes relate to other faiths—especially Islam?

by The Rev. David T. Gortner, Ph.D. • Katherine Wood, M.Div. • The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.

“Among the great changes taking place in the contemporary world, migration has produced a new phenomenon: non-Christians are becoming very numerous in traditionally Christian countries, creating fresh opportunities for contacts and cultural exchanges, and calling the Church to hospitality, dialogue, assistance and, in a word, fraternity.”

~ Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio (37b), 1990
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hristianity remains a significant force in the social
and cultural life of the United States and other parts
of the world—but increasingly in the U.S., it must
“share the stage” with people from a wide range of religious
perspectives. Certainly, the advancing rise of the “Nones”
those claiming no religious affiliation, with its accompany-
ing decline of church attendance and membership, has been
on the minds of church leaders across denominations for at
least the past ten years. But Christian life and discourse in
American society has also been impacted significantly by the
slow but steady shift from a predominantly Judeo-Christian
society to a religiously pluralistic society. This shift has been
happening steadily for nearly fifty years. The 1965 U.S. Im-
migration Act opened (and in some cases reopened) the doors
to newcomers to the U.S. from across the world, including
people from the Middle East and Asia who brought with them
their own faith traditions.

Since that time, the presence of Islam, Hinduism, and
Buddhism has slowly but steadily increased across the
American landscape. According to the Pew Research Center
Religion and Public Life Project, an estimated 2.75 million
Muslims lived in the United States as of 2011—compared to
1.92 million active, baptized members of the Episcopal
Church that same year.2 In other words, while Christianity
remains the largest single religion in America, there now
are more Muslims than Episcopalians living in the United
States—a fact noted by religion scholar Diana Eck, Director
of Harvard University’s Pluralism Project, more than a decade
ago.3

Moreover, looking beyond the U.S., as cross-cultural
migration and interchange increase, as the world moves
toward a global community connected intimately through
trade, education, economics, politics, sports, friendships, and
—importantly—Facebook and Twitter, we have come to find
ourselves more and more in relationship with people of other
faiths. The exotic world of the foreign missionary is now
increasingly home to all of us, no longer exotic or strange
but simply the world that is where we live. Across the globe,
wherever religious freedom has been allowed, the trend to-
ward religious diversity has increased, and people have faced
the challenge of coming to understand one another for the
sake of the common good.

The challenge of interreligious dialogue is as old as
connection, commerce, and contest between nations. It has
long been an effort among religious leaders at both grass-
roots and global levels, including through the work of the
Parliament of World Religions since 1893. In the 1980s, the
Roman Catholic Church embraced interreligious dialogue as
“a part of the Church’s evangelizing mission.”4 But the need
for interreligious dialogue has become more strongly felt
since September 11, 2001. As Archbishop Rowan Williams
pognantly stated, “it was particularly the events of 9/11 that
created a widespread awareness among both Christians and
Muslims of the pressing need for deeper mutual understand-
ing and more positive relationships.”5 As is often the case, it
is vivid moments of unexpected tragedy, cruelty, or kindness
that stir us to pay attention in new ways to neighbors we had
previously ignored or simply tolerated (in the worst sense of
tolerance as “putting up with”). Since then, we have needed
more closely witnessed and heard stories of Christians and Mus-
lims in conflict, and also of Christians and Muslims coming
to each others’ aid and protection—in Egypt and Lebanon,
in Nigeria and the Sudan, in England and France, and in the
United States. Perhaps of all religions with whom we engage
in interfaith dialogue and action, none require as much im-
mediate, careful attention as our relationship with Islam.

Virginia Theological Seminary has a long heritage of
concern for Christian relations with and witness among other
religions. Courses offered at VTS have provided interested
students with opportunities to learn about other faiths in the
course of preparation for Christian mission and ministry. In
the past, these courses tended to focus on other faiths as they
existed abroad, in other cultures. Today, we find ourselves
facing a different reality. In the words of ELCA Bishop Mark
Hanson, “Muslims are our neighbors, friends, colleagues, and,
in some cases, family members. Our neighborhoods have
become a living laboratory for engaging with the ‘other,’
for loving our Muslim neighbors as ourselves.”6 And yet, the
challenge is the same as that for missionaries entering a new
context: whether in America or in a distant geographic and
cultural context, contemporary Christian mission involves an
artful, balanced mix of confident, clear identity and witness
coupled with deeply respectful listening to the authentic
witness of others. This mutual witness and listening can only
happen in the context of relationship and dialogue.

Survey: Islam and Other Faiths

The question then arises: How have the Seminary’s
alumni prepared for, and do they engage in and foster,
interfaith relationships and dialogue? To explore this ques-
tion, VTS invited its alumni (as well as other lay and ordained
church leaders) to participate in an online survey about their
interfaith experience. We wanted to hear from them whether
and how these alumni (and others) learned about other
faiths. We were interested in their experiences of teaching
about other faiths in their parishes, and in their interfaith
work in their communities. We also wanted to know about
alumni perceptions regarding the similarities and differ-
ences between Muslim and Christian theology, and perhaps
most challenging, whether our alumni have seen evidence of
“Islamophobia” in their parishes and communities. In addi-
tion, we wanted to know about alumni goals, hopes, and plans
regarding evangelism, interfaith education, and interfaith
relationships. All of these questions helped us get a sense for how
VTS alumni prepared for and engaged in evangelism and
building interfaith relationships.

Through a portion of a generous grant from the Henry
Luce Foundation, we created an online survey and distributed
email invitations to solicit participation among over 4,000
ordained and lay leaders in the Episcopal Church, including
1,700 VTS alumni. The invitation explicitly solicited alumni.
From this group of email recipients, we received 353 survey
responses (nearly a nine percent response rate from the total
pool of recipients, but more likely a 20 percent response rate
among alumni). Of these, over 300 completed the first 12 sur-
vey questions, over 200 wrote thoughtful responses to later
open-ended questions, and 265 completed the basic demo-
graphic information at the end of the survey.

Survey respondents were from all regions of the U.S.
and from other countries. Nearly half were from the southern
United States and close to one-third were from the north-
east. The remainder came from the Midwest and western
U.S., except for about three percent (eight people) from
other countries. Nearly two-thirds of respondents were men (with
a higher percentage of men among older alumni). Similar to
the racial distribution of clergy and laity in the Episcopal Church,
92 percent were white. Only 14 percent were under the age of
35, an additional 21 percent were between 35 and 49, and 40
percent were ages 50 to 64; one-fourth were age 65 or older.
Most were ordained, with 15 percent identifying themselves
as lay leaders. A large majority, 74 percent, serves in urban or
suburban settings; the remainder are in small towns or rural
areas.

The following sections of this article provide an introduc-
tory glance at results from this survey.

1 The Religious Affiliation of U.S. Immigrants: Majority
www.pewforum.org/2013/05/17/the-religious-affiliation-of-u-
www.episcopalchurch.org/sites/default/files/downloads/do-
mestic_fast_facts_trends_2007-2011.pdf, accessed October 15,
2013.
3 Diana Eck, A New Religious America, New York: Harper-
4 Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio (37b), Libreria
5 Foreword to Christian-Muslim Relations in the Anglican
and Lutheran Communitons: Historical Encounters and Contem-
porary Projects by David D. Grafton (Editor), Joseph Duggan
(Editor), Jason Craige Harris (Editor), Palgrave Pivot (Septem-
6 ibid., p. ix.
Interest in Interfaith Relations

Two key findings emerged: a solid majority of ordained and lay church leaders associated with VTS has pursued some education in other religions, but this exposure does not consistently lead to action in the form of parish programs for interreligious education or cooperative interfaith engagement. Two-thirds of respondents indicated having some education in Islam and 72 percent indicated education in other religions. But less than half of respondents have held any forums or instruction about Islam (46 percent) or other religions (44 percent) in their parishes. Furthermore, only a few more than one-third (36 percent) have partnered with non-Christian congregations on various interfaith activities. The same pattern held when we restricted responses to those who were ordained, and it did not vary by years of ordained ministry.

This pattern, which held constant across gender, geographic location in the U.S., and other demographic features, deserves further examination. What contributes to the gap between church leaders’ interreligious education and their efforts to provide opportunities for such education and engagement in their parishes?

Two main factors contributed to a church’s degree of involvement in interreligious education and relations: geographic proximity to a non-Christian house of worship and prior education of a church’s leaders.

Let us turn briefly to proximity, which may have the most fundamental impact. Reflecting the increasing diversity of contemporary religious life, 61 percent of respondents were in parishes located within 10 miles of a mosque, and 82 percent were within 10 miles of another non-Christian house of worship (mainly Jewish, but also Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Bahai, and Mormon). But, as the chart reveals, compared to other non-Christian houses of worship, mosques or Islamic centers were much less frequently within a five-mile distance from respondents’ parishes—and were much more frequently at a distance of over twenty miles. Church leaders from smaller congregations were most likely to note a long distance from the nearest mosque, while church leaders from larger congregations (typically in urban and suburban settings) most frequently noted mosques within five miles of their parishes. As we will see later, this proximity has a direct impact on interfaith education and relations—as the saying goes, “out of sight, out of mind.”

Setting proximity aside, a parish’s engagement in interreligious education and relations also depends directly on the interest and investment of ordained and lay leaders in such efforts. One clear signal of interest and investment is prior education—especially through courses or through direct reading and study of a religion’s sacred texts. Two-thirds of respondents reported some form of education in Islam and 78 percent reported reading at least some portion of the Qur’an (20 percent having read “significant portions” and 51 percent having read “a few verses”). In comparison, 72 percent reported education in other non-Christian faiths (Buddhism, Judaism, and Hinduism) were most frequently cited and nearly two-thirds indicated having read at least portions of sacred texts from other traditions (primarily Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, and Mormon). Beyond direct reading of sacred texts, education varied widely in breadth and depth, from formal courses to single lectures, public broadcasting programs, self-directed reading, travel or residence in foreign countries, visits to worship services, formal interfaith dialogues and informal conversations with non-Christian believers.

Although survey participants mentioned diverse means of learning about Islam and other religions, personal contact with other believers and/or living in a country with a different majority religion had a particularly strong impact. This was true with Islam specifically, as exemplified in the following two written survey responses:

“The working with Islamic teachers and community leaders has been the most helpful for me. I can research and teach the tenets of other faiths, but to work with others who actually live out a life based in a different faith was very helpful to me emotionally and spiritually…”

“Living with Muslims in a country with Muslim leadership was especially helpful. Talking with Muslims – both those who actively practice their faith and those who are cultural Muslims – to hear their perspectives. Reading the Koran and commentaries that explain the historical background so I can better understand what the Prophet said and meant.”

In sum, many of our VTS alumni and other affiliated church leaders have been well-equipped through education and self-directed study to engage the work of interfaith education and relations. How then does such preparation influence ministry in Episcopal parishes?

Interfaith Education

The question begins with examining whether or not our affiliated church leaders provide opportunities for parish members to learn about other faith traditions. Although two-thirds to three-quarters of our church leaders have sought or received education in other religions, less than half have taught or held forums about Islam (46 percent) or other religions (44 percent) in their parishes. Significantly, this is nearly half of VTS-affiliated church leaders who are offering education about other non-Christian faiths.

A leader’s personal education in Islam or other faiths has a direct impact on his or her offering some educational programs in the parish or other ministry setting. Of those who taught or held forums about Islam, 80 percent had previously taken a course or received education in that religion. The remaining 20 percent who taught or held forums about Islam did so without benefit of such previous education, and one may ponder what information was conveyed in these cases. There was an even clearer relationship between one’s personal education and one’s offer of education to parish members about other faith traditions. Among those who offered educational forums in their congregations about another religion, 90 percent had previous education in that religion, while 10 percent had no such prior education. With regard to other religions—but not to Islam—there was also a clearer relationship between someone’s prior study of the religion’s sacred text and their offer of education on that religion. Just as with the Bible, knowing the texts makes it easier to offer education and exposure to others.

As these charts clearly illustrate, an Episcopal church leader’s education in other faiths is almost a pre-requisite for education in our parishes about other religions. But it is also interesting to note that only around 55 percent of ordained
and lay leaders with prior education in other religions actually offer some form of education about other religions in their parishes. Sometimes, not offering interreligious education is due to geographic distance from people of other faiths. But 122 participants offered other barriers including lack of time, lack of knowledge, lack of interest (among parishioners or in themselves), and lack of a rationale or priority. The most frequently cited reason for not offering interfaith education was that educating and forming people in their Christian faith was a first priority, and that most people did not even understand their own Christian faith sufficiently.

A majority of participants (83 percent) were mildly to strongly in favor of interfaith education—either to begin offering it or to expand on what has already been offered. These respondents not only desire more forums and speakers, but want their parishes to get involved directly with other faith communities in programs such as joint community worship services, shared fellowship meals, joint outreach projects, visits to other houses of worship, and discussions.

Leaders’ prior education in other faiths increases the likelihood of interreligious interaction. Nearly two-thirds of those with prior education were involved in interfaith associations, and 40 percent of those with previous education had partnered with congregations of other faiths in some shared experience. Education of parish members also has a direct effect on interreligious interaction. Two-thirds of those who had offered education about another religion at their parishes were also involved in interfaith associations and half had partnered directly with other non-Christian congregations. The ripple effect of educating church leaders about other religions is clear. But what does this have to do with Christian mission and ministry?

Interfaith Relations and Evangelistic Witness

Let us return to the earlier discussion of Christian mission in a religiously pluralistic world. John Paul II’s encyclical, Redemptoris Missio, can once again be instructive about why interreligious education and interaction matter for Christian mission:

In the light of the economy of salvation, the Church sees no conflict between proclaiming Christ and engaging in interreligious dialogue. Instead, she feels the need to link the two in the context of her mission ad gentes. These two elements must maintain both their intimate connection and their distinctiveness; therefore they should not be confused, manipulated or regarded as identical, as though they were interchangeable. 7

A variety of church leaders, missionaries, and scholars can testify to the truth of this claim, that interreligious dialogue and proclamation of Christ are intimately intertwined. Respect and understanding of the other precedes and helps frame our sharing of the Gospel. Hearing the other helps us clarify who we are. As this quotation also illuminates, we cannot do one task without the other—and, while they overlap, they are not identical. Interfaith relations and evangelistic witness can be said to exist in creative tension with each other. In the midst of such interfaith relationships and dialogue, our proclamation of the Gospel may not yield many converts. But, as David Gortner has elsewhere stated, conversion is not the point of evangelism. Proclamation of God’s good news is the point of evangelism and is the work of Christians in both word and deed. Conversion is God’s business. 8 Entering relationships, respectfully hearing who others are, and being clear about who we are comprise the full art and spiritual work invited by John Paul II, as well as by Rowan Williams and Mark Hanson. Constructive interfaith relations can be fostered through a wide range of connections and events, beginning with invitations between clergy or lay leaders to offer instruction, pulpit exchanges, interfaith prayer services on days of remembrance or other holidays, participation in interfaith alliances for social outreach or action, and specific partnerships between congregations for the sake of public ministry.

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Sharing our story with others must be part of a dialogue in which we listen to the stories others share with us, whether from places of little faith or from other religious paths. The religious diversity of the 21st century, like that of the early centuries of Christianity, calls us to hold together the multiple tasks of listening, learning, and bearing witness to Christ events and sustained activities between congregations. And yet, relationships and mutual understanding cannot easily be strengthened simply by a visit from a leader of another faith tradition, or by leaders engaging only one another in conversation. That is why the 2012 General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted a resolution “that all members of the Church be encouraged to be involved actively and appropriately on every possible level in interreligious work such as ... service, prayer groups, educational programs, community service, and study groups.” 10

So, who engages in interreligious work matters. Involvement is needed both at the grassroots and the grassroots. But how this engagement takes place also matters. “Sharing our story with others must be part of a dialogue in which we listen to the stories others share with us, whether from places of little faith or from other religious paths. The religious diversity of the 21st century, like that of the early centuries of Christianity, calls us to hold together the multiple tasks of listening, learning, and bearing witness to Christ.” 11 This view is confined neither to the Episcopal Church nor to the Anglican Communion, whose Lambeth Conference called for dialogue based on mutual respect and as a medium of authentic witness in 1988. 12 Rather, it is part of a broader Christian movement that began in 1965 at the Second Vatican Council. That year, in a new Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate (“In Our Time”), Paul VI proclaimed that the Church “rejects nothing that is true and holy in [other] religions” and re-affirmed the dignity and human rights of all persons, regardless of their race or religion. 13 Two decades later, the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians (subsequently renamed the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue), issued “The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission.” This document describes the evangelizing mission of the Church as a “single but complex and articulated reality” involving both presence and witness. 14 Thus, Christian mission and ministry to people of other faiths involves a complex process of listening, learning, identity formation, and evangelistic witness. Yet of 322 survey respondents, only 51 percent (165) have provided instruction or training in practices of everyday evangelistic discourse and sharing faith stories. The survey suggests that this is an area needing great attention in the Church.

Interreligious education and dialogue are of little use if we do not put them into action. And, as Pope John Paul II reminds us, it is not enough to be passive partners in a movement that began in 1965 at the Second Vatican Council. That year, in a new Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate (“In Our Time”), Paul VI proclaimed that the Church “rejects nothing that is true and holy in [other] religions” and re-affirmed the dignity and human rights of all persons, regardless of their race or religion. 15 Two decades later, the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians (subsequently renamed the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue), issued “The Attitude of the Church Towards the Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission.” This document describes the evangelizing mission of the Church as a “single but complex and articulated reality” involving both presence and witness. 16

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One survey question asked, “What would you like to see happen in terms of evangelism in your parish?” We received 204 written replies. In general, those responding wanted “more of it,” greater witness to the Gospel and to God’s love for all persons, more authenticity and enthusiasm in our relationship with God, more listening to others and sharing of personal stories, and/or more community service and outreach to youth and other groups. A very frequent answer was “more comfort” on the part of people being able to talk about their faith; the words “comfort” or “comfortable” appeared in 24 replies (12 percent of 204) and were implicit in many more. Several respondents said their parishioners were reluctant to discuss their faith with the unchurched due to public perceptions about Christianity created by the religious right. Respondents also requested tools for building the confidence and evangelistic capacity of parishioners.

Most responses implicitly addressed evangelism in relation to a secular world. However, 38 responses mentioned evangelism in connection with persons of other faiths, including 11 that specifically mentioned Muslims or Islam. Most of the 38 focused on relating to religious “others” in the spirit of love, acceptance, respect, and finding common ground. Only five respondents explicitly said that Muslims should convert to Christianity.

“Evangelism” remains an uncomfortable term for many in the Episcopal Church, perhaps more than even most mainline Protestant denominations. Thus, some respondents were eager to distinguish evangelism from proselytization, while others thought the two were identical and incorrectly wrong. Several sought to re-conceptualize evangelism, correctly unhooking it from conversion and church growth, but further diminishing it to wordless proclamation by living one’s faith through example, especially through service. The following are some examples of how VTS-related ordained and lay leaders consider the term “evangelism”:

“Most people, religious or not, will hear our behavior before they hear our voice. My prayer for evangelism is that our parish continue to seek out and engage the poor, the sick and the needy as well as the rich, the pompous and the greedy. The word and example of Jesus Christ, God in the Flesh, is our most potent means of achieving that goal.”

“I love to find new ways to encourage our parishioners in their evangelistic efforts outside of simply how they live their lives. How might we encourage them to speak more with others about how their faith impacts and influences their lives and how they live?”

“I personally do not believe in seeing to convert Jews and Muslims to Christianity since we all worship the same God.”

“To see more Muslims are coming to know Jesus, that at the name of Jesus every knee shall [bow] and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Lord.”

“I serve two very small, struggling churches. Evangelism for us is reaching out to members of our community -- many of whom are in precarious financial situations. We minister to their needs, and provide a witness in this very challenged community.”

“We are restarting a church, so evangelism is very essential...We are talking a lot about evangelism and establishing an invitational culture. Evangelism is all about relationships and sharing good news with those around us. With all the brokenness and heartache in the world, the Gospel of Jesus Christ is desperately needed...”

“Please define ‘evangelism.’ ”

“Evangelism is another word with a lot of baggage; it has a history of proclaiming a deficiency in the ‘other’...I’d like to see people secure enough ... to have a more ‘come and see’ attitude rather than ‘you are deficient.’ ”

The wide range of responses suggests that this is an opportune time for Church leaders to revisit the theology of evangelism and then find new ways to apply it. The differing perspectives on evangelism expressed in the survey suggest that a major challenge for the Church going forward will be learning how to fully engage with anybody outside the Church, including those in other religious traditions. Our survey results reveal that evangelism is intimately intertwined with interreligious education and relationship. Among the 51 percent of church leaders who reported offering training in evangelism and the sharing of faith stories in their parishes, nearly two-thirds had previously studied Islam or another religion—and nearly two-thirds also offered forums about Islam or other faiths. Church leaders who did not offer training in evangelism in their parishes were also less likely to offer education about other religions, and were less likely to be involved in interfaith associations. Evangelism and interreligious engagement mutually reinforce each other.

Proximity and Parish Size

Let us return to the question of proximity of Episcopal parishes to other religion’s houses of worship. Proximity increases the likelihood of interreligious relationship. And parish size is closely related to proximity to non-Christian houses of worship—particularly, proximity to mosques and Islamic centers. Parish size did indeed make a difference in interfaith education and relationships. Among our respondents, smaller “family size” congregations (average attendance less than 50) were more likely to offer education about Islam or Muslims since they are likely to be involved in education about Islam or in Muslim-Christian cooperative events, while those from larger “resource size” parishes (average attendance over 350) were most likely to offer education about Islam and collaborate with Muslims in ministry. Interestingly, respondents from smaller congregations were also least likely to indicate evidence of “Islamophobia” in their congregations.

Points of Theological Similarity and Difference

Where do we begin conversation with those religiously different from us? In a 2009 Pew Forum study broadly measuring the outlook of American Christians on Islam, only 19 percent of American Catholics and 15 percent of American Protestants said that Islam was similar to their own religion. Our survey was more nuanced in that we chose to ask specifically where our respondents thought the similarities and differences between the two religions are to be found, i.e. in which points of belief and practice. The responses, examined collectively, create a sensible map for dialogue. Using a scale from most different (1) to most similar (4), the 290 respondents to this question indicated stronger similarity than difference between Islam and Christianity in the role of personal spiritual practice (65 percent rated this very or somewhat similar), the purpose of communal prayer and ritual (63 percent),
and ethics and morality (62 percent). Responses were evenly divided regarding views of Muslim and Christian similarities and differences regarding the nature of God and regarding war and violence. But the greatest differences between Islam and Christianity were perceived to be the two faiths’ teachings about the role of women (84 percent rated them very or somewhat different) and about sin and redemption (68 percent rated them different).

In written comments, many of those surveyed qualified their answers, noting that the wide range of theological viewpoints within each religion made simple comparisons between religions difficult if not impossible. A few examples:

“This may be an impossible exercise, because Christian and Muslim teachings vary enormously among themselves...I suspect, individually, many Christians are closer to Muslims, and vice versa, than they are to other Christians.”

“It is almost impossible to answer this question. Both Islam and Christianity are divided into so many different sects and schools of thought that any one generalization falls short of providing an accurate description of the diversity of faith and practice.”

This further goes to show the importance of getting to know our neighbors, and of coming to know ourselves more fully. Only in conversation and relationship will we learn to overcome stereotypes and develop a more nuanced understanding of others—and, as a consequence, of ourselves.

Islamophobia

“Islamophobia” is a widely used, if controversial, word. The survey asked people simply to respond to two questions about the presence or absence of Islamophobia in their parishes and communities, without defining it. Our survey participants responded with a mixture of feeling to the term (“a strong word;” “define Islamophobia”).

“Islamophobia” has become a widely used term in both academic and public discourse. It has been used widely in the scholarly literature in the social sciences, has appeared in the mainstream news media, and is utilized by the United Nations, European Union, and U.S. State Department in connection with their human rights work, often in conjunction with efforts to counter anti-Semitism as well.

Despite some misgivings about the word, more than a third of survey respondents (37 percent) reported evidence of Islamophobia in their congregations, and nearly half (47 percent) reported the phenomenon in their surrounding communities. Church leaders reported comments made by parishioners about Muslims that many would consider stereotypical (“all Muslims are anti-Christian”), fearful (“they are out to get us”), disrespectful (“nasty emails, jokes”), or hostile (“outright hatred”). Such parishioner comments equated all Muslims with terrorists or extremists. Regarding their surrounding communities, church leaders reported not only demeaning comments, but some acts of violence against Muslim property and against Muslim persons.

Concerns about Islam are not the same as Islamophobia. Some respondents to these questions mentioned parishioner concerns about extremists based on factual evidence (“Christians in the country I serve have been attacked and had their churches burned by Muslims, so there is some real fear here”). Others observed that there are various strands of Islam, some but not all of them violent.

Replies to these two survey questions brought to light at least two vital issues in our relations with Muslims. First, where does legitimate, understandable fear of Islamist extremism end and excessive, irrational fear (“phobia”) of all who follow Islam begin? And second, what is an appropriate pastoral response to expressions of both legitimate and excessive fears?
The Rev. Luis Leon (VTS ’77) serves as rector of St. John’s Lafayette Square in Washington, DC. He began his tenure at St. John’s in 1995 after serving in parishes in Wilmington, Delaware; Paterson, New Jersey; and Charlotte, North Carolina. His spiritual journey began when he was baptized into the Episcopal Church in Guantanamo, Cuba. In 1961 he came to the United States as part of the “Peter Pan” flight out of Cuba. He was 12 years old when he arrived in the U.S. and was supported by the Episcopal Church in Miami. Now he serves the parish that is often called “the President’s church” because of its location immediately across from the White House. And Luis Leon has had the unique privilege of participating in two presidential inaugurations, offering the invocation for George W. Bush’s inauguration in 2005 and the benediction for Barack Obama’s inaugural in 2013. We’re pleased to share both prayers here, along with some reflections by Luis that he shared in a wide-ranging conversation earlier this year with Alumni Director Shelagh Casey Brown.

On the pivotal events and people during his Seminary years…

...The independent study classes that I took with Murray Newman, Marianne Micks, and Allan Parent. And of course Charlie Price had a huge influence on all of us. Meeting week after week, one on one, with these outstanding faculty—this had a huge influence on me and I still consider all of them mentors. Studying Neibuh with Allan Parent, Augustine with Marianne Micks, the Book of Amos with Murray Newman—wonderful memories. All the faculty were terrific and these four in particular for me.

Advice for the seminarians he works with at St. John’s…

I’m always asking them, “What are you reading besides the assigned reading?” We also spend a good bit of time also talking about leadership and how to exercise it… I learned a lot about leadership from the first rector of the church where I served. I was fortunate to have that experience—I spent three years with him and just learned a lot about leadership from him. I think it’s important for new priests to realize that… the church hasn’t been waiting for you to arrive. We’ve been around for a long time. We’re going to be around a lot longer after you and I depart this world. Which is my way of saying we need you, we want you, but you’re not coming up with the answers. I think part of seminary, at least during my time, intentionally or unintentionally, you get overly confident about what you know. And then you go to the parish. And fortunately if you go to a place like I did, you learn that you don’t know that much. And that in fact is not a bad thing. It’s not a bad idea to sit with a rector and ask the rector a lot of questions about what he or she thinks is the best way to negotiate a particular issue.

On how the unique location of St. John’s has shaped or shifted his understanding of faith in the public square…

It hasn’t, actually. When I was in St. Peter’s in Charlotte we were very involved in civic affairs. We went to the legislature to petition changes within the legislature that affected some of the things that churches were trying to do. Having been with Murray Newman, Allan Parent, and all of the faculty at VTS, it never crossed my mind that we shouldn’t be in conversation with the public civic leadership. I went to Patterson, New Jersey, after I was in North Carolina and that was a very blue-collar, broken-down city at the time. But we became very involved in civic affairs. The mayor hated us and I always thought that was a compliment. I’ve always thought that involvement in civic affairs was part of the role of the church. How we exercised it responsibly was really the question, whether we should be involved in it or not.

I recognized pretty early on the church’s two ministries: one of them is to meet immediate human need, which is why we have soup kitchens and shelters and all those activities, and then the other is about systemic change. How do you work to change systems so you don’t have hungry people at your door. So it’s a “both-and” kind of ministry for the church and I’ve always felt strongly that it is a necessary part of our work.

When I was in Seminary I went to the Kennedy Center and there was a large mural depicting a community. Down at the very bottom is a very little church. I always thought it symbolized the problem. This artist didn’t recognize us as being important enough in the civic life of the community. But it is our role to have our voice as part of the city voice, to be in the conversation.

Coming to Washington, it all gets heightened because D.C. is D.C. and the church is across the street from the White House. You never know who is going to be in your pews on Sunday morning. But in terms of what I’ve always felt was the role of the church, that hasn’t changed much.

On balancing the demands of the history-making moments at the church with the ongoing congregational life…

We have a lot of visitors—not just the President. We have a lot of visitors on Sunday mornings because of the historic nature of the church. My sense is that we are really talking to the congregation and that what we have to say may be of value to the people who are visiting the congregation. The focus is on the congregational life. I hope I would have the guts to say what I was going to say whether the President was in the pews or not. I hope that I’ve been able to do that. And the other thing is—if you’re ready to condemn a public figure, ask yourself the question, would I do this when that person is sitting in the pews or would I just keep my mouth shut? If your answer is, I would keep my mouth shut, then you probably shouldn’t do it.
Reflections on the two inaugurations—and the challenges that lie ahead

The occasions were very different. Inaugurations are classic moments in American history—I think it’s a celebration of American life that we can pass from one administration to the next without warfare. By and large, we transfer power without violence. I think that’s a celebration of American life. I felt honored to be asked. I felt it was a privilege to be asked. And it’s a real different thing when you’re doing it as an immigrant.

After I gave the invocation at the 2005 inauguration, one of the interesting things afterwards was the number of Hispanics who would stop and say, “I’m so glad you did it. You’re the first one to do it. They know we’re here. They know we’re part of this country and you represent that.” I mean, it was unbelievable the number of people who just stopped me out on the street and said that.

And in 2013, this time was a Benediction, so a little different. I still was nervous as a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. In 2013, the poet Richard Blanco’s mother was sitting there and she’s a tiny little woman just like my mother was. I kept looking at her and thinking of my mother. Then Robert Blake got up there and mentioned his mother a couple years ago said to me, you’ve changed. I said, “I know I have and I have you to thank for that because you’ve influenced me.” And I said, “And I think you’ve changed.” And she said, “You’re right.” I thought that was sort of the best of all worlds. We’ve had an impact on each other and we’ve grown in our understanding.

I thought that was a great conversation. You learn from each other, you grow with each other, which is why it’s a necessity for a diverse church is so important. It’s of likeminded people you don’t grow.

The place is just loaded with great people. We had our vestry meeting last night and you know, it is such a good atmosphere, the leadership of a church. It doesn’t mean we agree on stuff. It just means we are willing to work with each other to strengthen the life of the congregation.

On the role of VTS in the Church…

I think it’s the premier Seminary in the Episcopal Church. What I see is that we’re graduating from there some effective and good clergy leadership for the church. I’ve been very impressed with the quality of the students that come to me as seminarians interns. They’ve been just wonderful, students that brought different dimensions to St. John’s Church. I think the professors at VTS are doing a really good job for them and for the ordained ministry.

And we actually have a number of people in our church taking classes at VTS with no intention of ordination, which I think is a huge step in the right direction of seminaries. The impact of the seminary at our congregational level is broader than ordained ministry.

Invocation for the January 20, 2005 Inaugural of George W. Bush

Most gracious and eternal God, we gather today as a grateful people who enjoy the many blessings you have bestowed on this nation.

We are grateful for your vision, which inspired the founders of our nation to create this democratic experiment—one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

We are grateful that you have brought to these shores a multitude of peoples of many ethnic, religious and language backgrounds and have fashioned one nation out of our many traditions.

We remember before you the members of the armed forces. We commend them to your care. Give them courage to carry out their duties and courage to face the perils which beset them and grant them a sense of your presence in all that they do. (BCP, p. 823.) We pray for their families. Support them and hold them in the palm of your hand while their loved ones are absent from them.

Today, we are especially grateful for this inauguration marking a new beginning in our journey as a people and a nation. We pray that you will shower the elected leaders of this land and especially George, our President, and Richard, our Vice President, with your life-giving spirit. Fill them with a love of truth and righteousness that they may serve you and this nation ably and are glad to do your will. Endow their hearts with your spirit of wisdom that they may lead us in renewing the “ties of mutual respect which form our civic life.” (BCP, p. 825.)

Sustain them as they lead us to exercise our privileges and responsibilities as citizens and residents of this country that we may all work together to eliminate poverty and prejudice so “that peace may prevail with righteousness and justice with order.” (BCP, p. 825.)

Strengthen their resolve as our nation seeks to serve you in this world that this good and generous country may be a blessing to the nations of the world. May they lead us to become, in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., members of a beloved community, loving our neighbors as ourselves so that all of us may more closely come to fulfill the promise of our founding fathers—one nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

All this we ask in your most holy name. Amen.
Benediction
given at the January 21, 2013 Inauguration of Barack Obama

Let us pray:
Gracious and eternal God, as we conclude the second inauguration of President Obama, we ask for your blessings as we seek to become, in the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., citizens of a beloved community, loving you and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

We pray that you will bless us with your continued presence because without it, hatred and arrogance will infect our hearts. But with your blessing we know that we can break down the walls that separate us. We pray for your blessing today because without it, distrust, prejudice and rancor will rule our hearts. But with the blessing of your presence, we know that we can renew the ties of mutual regard which can best form our civic life.

We pray for your blessing because without it suspicion, despair, and fear of those different from us will be our rule of life. But with your blessing, we can see each other created in your image, whether brown, black or white, male or female, first generation or immigrant American, or daughter of the American Revolution, gay or straight, rich or poor.

We pray for your blessing because without it, we will only see scarcity in the midst of abundance. But with your blessing we will recognize the abundance of the gifts of this good land with which you have endowed this nation.

We pray for your blessing. Bless all of us, privileged to be citizens and residents of this nation, with a spirit of gratitude and humility that we may become a blessing among the nations of this world. We pray that you will shower with your life-giving spirit, the elected leaders of this land, especially Barack our president and Joe our vice president. Fill them with a love of truth and righteousness, that they may serve this nation ably and be glad to do your will. Endow their hearts with wisdom and forbearance, so that peace may prevail with righteousness, justice with order, so that men and women throughout this nation can find with one another the fulfillment of our humanity.

We pray that the president, vice president and all in political authority will remember the words of the prophet Micah, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness and always walk humbly with God?”

Señor Presidente, señor Vicepresidente, que Dios bendiga todos sus días. Todo esto lo ruego, en el más santo nombre.

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, may God bless you all your days. All this we pray, in your most holy name, Amen.

Bishops Provisional Draw on a Mix of Skills and Experience

Ministering to dioceses during a transitional leadership period

by Corinne Marasco

A unique caucus gathered for an impromptu breakfast during the House of Bishops’ meeting this past fall in Nashville, Tenn. Most who attended are bishops who now serve as bishops provisional; temporary shepherds to guide dioceses in transition in much the same way as “priests in charge” lead congregations between settled pastors. Some of these bishops who came together to exchange ideas and experiences, as well as to provide invaluable moral support, agreed to talk about the role of bishops provisional in The Episcopal Church today. As it happens, two are current bishops provisional and all three are Virginia Theological Seminary alumni.

“We know they are there and that I can call on them at any time is important to me,” the Rt. Rev. Charles vonRosenberg, bishop provisional of The Episcopal Church in South Carolina, said.

While many of the bishops provisional who met in Nashville serve dioceses that are affected by breakaway groups, all of them preside during a critical period of time: Bishops provisional are a bridge into the time when a diocese is ready to elect a permanent diocesan bishop. Sometimes, they are even called upon to “steady the ship” in periods of great turmoil.

“Although the contexts in which they serve may be different, they are the bishop,” the Rt. Rev. F. Clayton Matthews, head of the Office of Pastoral Development for The Episcopal Church, said. “They may be there for a time certain, until the next bishop is selected, but during that time they are a bishop with full jurisdiction.” In his role he facilitates bishops provisional transition.

Both the terms “bishop provisional” and “provisional bishop” are technically correct, according to Matthews. Prior to the 1997 General Convention, the term in use was “provisional bishop.”

The first provisional bishop was James Hervey Otey, who was appointed the provisional bishop of Arkansas in 1841.

There were seven provisional bishops in other dioceses until 1915. The first contemporary provisional bishop was elected in 1980, when Herbert Donovan succeeded Frank Griswold after the latter’s election as presiding bishop. Matthews described it as “a very positive way to carry on the leadership of the diocese.”

The alternative to a bishop provisional, he said, is a non-canonical office called “bishop assisting.” In this instance,
Alumni News

The Rt. Rev. Peter James Lee

Bishop Lee (former chair of the VTS Board of Trustees) attended the groundbreaking ceremony and service for the new Immanuel Chapel on September 14, 2013. He is shown here with the current chair, Bishop James “Bud” Staub.

The Rt. Rev. Charles vonRosenberg

The Rt. Rev. Charles vonRosenberg and East Carolina came as surprises to me. They were not planned. At age 75 I’m ready to lean back a little bit and play with my dog and my grandchildren. I’m leaving myself open to the Holy Spirit, and God’s sense of surprise. God’s wonderful sense of humor means sometimes you find yourself in places you didn’t expect.”

The Rt. Rev. Charles vonRosenberg also found himself somewhere he didn’t expect. His expectation was to settle down after retiring as bishop of the Diocese of East Tennessee in 2011 after serving more than 12 years. VonRosenberg has long-time ties to South Carolina; he and his wife, Annie, moved to be with their two sons and six grandchildren. He was looking forward to supporting Annie’s vocation as a watercolor artist, working on his golf and tennis games, and spending time with the family and grandchildren.

“I didn’t anticipate this role [as bishop provisional],” vonRosenberg said. “I remember telling my wife every move in our married life has been because of the church but this one is in spite of the church.”

In late 2012, Matthews called to ask vonRosenberg...
whether he’d be available to lead the church in South Carolina. The Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence was found to have abandoned the Church by the Church’s Disciplinary Board and it was affirmed by the House of Bishops. As a result, Lawrence and most of the clergy left. Although vonRosenberg was already serving as an adviser to the steering committee that formed to help reorganize the diocese, he admitted he spent significant time thinking about Matthews’ request.

“I said well, this is probably something we need to respond to,” he recalled. “There was no infrastructure in place because the bishop and the standing committee had left. Folks volunteered to prepare an organizing convention that the presiding bishop had to call since there was no one to call it.” With Jefferts Schori presiding over the convention, vonRosenberg was elected bishop provisional.

“What I do now bears little resemblance to what I had done before,” he said. He felt called because “we live here, so there’s a commitment to the church here and to the people who simply want to be Episcopalians who had been deserted. Also, I think the people were glad that I’d been a bishop before, glad for that previous experience.”

Some of the skills vonRosenberg became known for during his tenure in East Tennessee was a pastoral sensitivity and responsiveness. Those skills were now sorely needed in South Carolina.

“The people who interviewed me that wanted to be Episcopalians asked me what my priorities are,” he said. “First, it was to provide pastoral care for the clergy and lay people. That was the primary skill set that was needed. The second is education; the skill of being a teacher is so important because what the folks in South Carolina had heard and learned about The Episcopal Church in recent years is rooted in misunderstandings.”

VonRosenberg said his educational outreach met with regular surprise. “I think people were surprised that they had support from beyond the local area. They were surprised that the larger church cares; they had been taught the larger church is the enemy. As I have tried to teach people about The Episcopal Church, the way we operate, and support in our unity, not only is there a surprise in response, there is also a sense of relief and gratitude.”

VonRosenberg’s experience reinforces his belief of a big tent in The Episcopal Church. “That big tent is very real,” he said. “We need to be inclusive of those who are conservative as well as liberal and everyone is welcome. It’s something I have always believed and practiced. Current circumstances are still raw so people are somewhat dubious but the message hasn’t really changed.”

He continued, “The most important thing to remember is that these folks in South Carolina who are Episcopalian remained so at great cost. They left churches their families belonged to for generations because they are committed to The Episcopal Church. We need the prayers and support of the larger church so we’ve tried to encourage that as well as invite people here.” He added they were greatly appreciative that the Rev. Gay Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, and the presiding bishop have visited. The diocese also encouraged and welcomed groups representing the larger church to hold meetings there. These meetings have included the national conference of Chaplains to Retired Clergy and Surviving Spouses, the Province IV House of Bishops, and the Province IV transition officers.

VonRosenberg says The Episcopal Church in South Carolina wants to play its role in the larger life of The Episcopal Church, providing what gifts they have. “The worshiping communities,” he said, “are an inspiration to everyone.” Yet, he added, “I never thought I would be doing this in my time of life. I’ve never worked harder or had more fun doing it.”

Honorary Degrees

From around the world and from conservative to progressive, we are blessed to have alums who are making a difference to the Church and to the world.

The Very Rev. Ian S. Markham

Honorary doctorates were conferred upon five distinguished recipients at the annual Academic Convocation in Oct. 2013.

The Annual Fund at VTS is an Investment in the Future

The Annual Fund at VTS is an Investment in the Future by William Campbell

In the fifth century, Augustine asserted that in Christ “all our longing will be fulfilled, all our desires will be satisfied.” In his masterpiece, “The City of God,” this saint of the Church prays for tolerance in the earthly city, especially in his time for Jews in the practice of their religion. Sadly, we live in a time of little tolerance. The volume of our public discourse is strident and shrill. Tolerance seems to be a lost virtue. We have trouble giving the “other” his or her due.

In this issue of the Journal, we have an interview with Dr. W. Jonathan Dailey from Montgomery, Alabama on why he supports the Annual Fund. His story is terrific and I hope you will read how his giving is influenced by his faith and the VTS mission. Many of you are already “in” with us. Thank you. For those still thinking about it, I invite you to see the video on our website, read the fall News From the Hill, or call me. I’d like to talk to you and hear your story.

In the fifth century, Augustine asserted that in Christ “all our longing will be fulfilled, all our desires will be satisfied.” In his masterpiece, “The City of God,” this saint of the Church prays for tolerance in the earthly city, especially in his time for Jews in the practice of their religion. Sadly, we live in a time of little tolerance. The volume of our public discourse is strident and shrill. Tolerance seems to be a lost virtue. We have trouble giving the “other” his or her due.

As Christians we live with waiting, even in the tide of Christmas, for our longings to be “fulfilled… our desires… satisfied.” At VTS we watch and wait for a new Immanuel Chapel. It is our habit to watch students arrive and leave. VTS is an ever-changing community. You get to know and love a class—and then suddenly it is the class graduates.

My colleagues in Institutional Advancement have referred to our Chapel as the heart of VTS with the Annual Fund being the lifeblood. So, it is. Your gifts to VTS keep giving new life to a venerable institution with 190 years of “longing,” of serving and of being faithful in the world. The Annual Fund is critical because, I suppose you could say that, it keeps us young. The Annual Fund is not from generations who have gone before—many of whom have given in life and death to secure VTS. The Annual Fund is about the present not about the past. The Annual Fund is our turn to care; to be faithful; to support theological education and a learned clergy in the Episcopal Church. The Annual Fund is our lifeblood—our lifeblood going now for a higher purpose.

So, thank you for joining others in keeping VTS strong. VTS does not belong to us or to our generation. We have an awesome task to safeguard this treasure for the Episcopalians who will come after us. Yes, none of us is ready “for the banquet of our Father.” We are, however, called to “contemplate the manger of Jesus Christ our Lord.” We are called to “contemplate the manger of Jesus Christ our Lord.” We are called to “contemplate the manger of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

Safeguarding the lifeblood for the generations to come

St. Augustine of Hippo accepted that the meaning of Christ’s life, death and resurrection was “still beyond our understanding,” but he said: “let us at least recognize his dwelling that he has placed beneath the sun. We cannot yet behold him as the only Son, abiding for ever in his Father, so let us recall his coming forth like a bridegroom from his chamber. We are not yet ready for the banquet of our Father, so let us contemplate the manger of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

As Christians we live with waiting, even in the tide of Christmas, for our longings to be “fulfilled… our desires… satisfied.” At VTS we watch and wait for a new Immanuel Chapel. It is our habit to watch students arrive and leave. VTS is an ever-changing community. You get to know and love a class — and then suddenly it is the Service for the Mission of the Church and the class graduates.

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The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.
Vice President for Institutional Advancement

The Annual Fund at VTS is running ahead by about $100,000 of where we were last year at this time. We have a goal of $675,000 and as of December 17, we have $285,702 in gifts and pledges. Our Board of Trustees led the way by committing one hundred percent to supporting the Annual Fund. We celebrated their accomplishment with signs on campus saying “We’re all in!” — ARE YOU? The fall phonathon was our most successful one ever. The first evening set the tone, fueled by pizza, camaraderie, and good-natured competition that enabled us to make 463 calls and raise $12,984. The energy and enthusiasm continued during the week as we surpassed our $60,000 goal.

Clearly, there is great energy for this year’s Annual Fund. For that, we must thank our Dean and President, the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham. The dean has made the Annual Fund a priority for this year. His words and direction have referred to our Annual Fund as our lifeblood. So, it is. Your gifts to VTS keep giving new life to this venerable institution with 190 years of “longing,” of serving and of being faithful in the world. The Annual Fund is critical because, I suppose you could say that, it keeps us young. The Annual Fund is not from generations who have gone before—many of whom have given in life and death to secure VTS. The Annual Fund is about the present not about the past. The Annual Fund is our turn to care; to be faithful; to support theological education and a learned clergy in the Episcopal Church. The Annual Fund is our lifeblood—our lifeblood going now for a higher purpose.

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The following recognition gifts were received by Virginia Seminary between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013. Much care has been given to the preparation of this report. The names and titles listed are as requested by our friends and graduates. Errors or updates should be referred to the Institutional Advancement at 703-461-1730 or by email to report@vtc.edu. Thank you for your continued support.

**VTS Giving Societies**

- **Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans Society:** $25,000 +
- **Bishop Meade Society:** $10,000 - $24,999
- **Dean’s Society:** $5,000 - $9,999
- **Henry St. George Tucker Society:** $2,500 - $4,999
- **William Sparrow Society:** $1,000 - $2,499
- **Aspinwall Tower Society:** $500 - $999
- **Seminary Hill Society:** $150 - $499

**Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans Society**
- The Constance Dundas Foundation, Richmond, VA
- Lettie Pate Evans Foundation, Atlanta, GA
- The Henry Luce Foundation, Atlanta, GA
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**Bishop Meade Society**
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- Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church, Virginia Beach, VA
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- Mr. Thomas M. Moore, ’71

**Dean’s Society**
- Ayco Charitable Foundation, Albany, NY
- Christ Church Cathedral, Indianapolis, IN
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- The Historical Society of the Episcopal Church
- IVAKOTA Association, Inc., Alexandria, VA
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- Mr. William Marino
- The Honorable Thomas R. Pickering, ’93
- Ms. Stasy Poland
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- Ms. Ana-Minna Betancourt and Ms. Kathleen Connelly
- Mary and J. P. Caussy, Jr. Fund of The Community Foundation
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- St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Richmond, VA

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- All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Greensboro, NC
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- Anonymous Donors
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- The Rt. Rev. and Mrs. Leslie Markham
- The Rt. Rev. and Mrs. Edward Morgan III, ’55
- St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, San Antonio, TX
- St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Columbus, MS
- Christ & Grace Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, PA

**Church of the Good Shepherd**
- Church of the Holy Apostles, New York, NY
- Church of the Holy Cross, Alexandria, VA
- Church of the Incarnation, New York, NY
- Church of the Redeemer, New York, NY
- Church of the Virgin Mary, Alexandria, VA

**Endowment Value**

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**VTS Annual Fund Giving by Fiscal Year (Parish, Alumni, and Friends)**

- The Annual Fund Chart was revised on February 24, 2014.

**St. John’s Episcopal Church**
- Montgomery, AL

**St. Martin’s Episcopal Church**
- Alexandria, VA

**St. Paul’s Episcopal Church**
- Lynchburg, VA

**St. Peter’s Episcopal Church**
- Collierville, TN

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- Houston, TX

**The Canon Thomas G. Clarke, ’70**
- The Rt. Rev. Carolotta Cochran, ’93
- Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cochran
- Mr. Garrett V. Coleman
- The Rev. Dr. John R. Cope and The Rev. Canon Jan Naylor Cope, ’13

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- Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey B. Dienno
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- The Rev. and Mrs. J. Stewart Bryan III
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- The Rev. Anne B. Bonnyman, ’82
- Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth M. Bivins, Jr.
- The Rt. Rev. and Mrs. Scott A. Gaskin
- The Rev. Cynthia O. Gaskin, ’95
- The Rev. and Mrs. Scott A. Gaskin
- The Rt. Rev. and Mrs. Leslie Markham
- The Rt. Rev. and Mrs. Edward Morgan III, ’55
- St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, San Antonio, TX
- St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Columbus, MS

**Church of the Good Shepherd**
- Knoxville, TN

**Church of the Holy Apostles**
- Collierville, TN

**The Church of St. John the Divine**
- Houston, TX

**The Rev. Canon Thomas G. Clarke, ’70**
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- Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cochran
- Mr. Garrett V. Coleman
- The Rev. Dr. John R. Cope and The Rev. Canon Jan Naylor Cope, ’13
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tradewell
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- Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Campbell
- The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Andrew J. MacIver, ’70
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- The Rev. Canon Gray Lesesne, ’01
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- Mr. and Mrs. Francis Pinter Lodder
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- Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Campbell
- The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Andrew J. MacIver, ’70
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VTS offers several methods by which you can transfer capital to the Seminary but retain the income from the asset for your lifetime or the lifetime of your spouse or another person. Working through the Episcopal Church Foundation, you can fund a Charitable Gift Annuity arrangement, whereby you transfer capital and receive a guaranteed fixed income each year, paid quarterly. For larger gifts, you can establish separate Charitable Trusts which will pay you either an annuity or percentage amount.

The advantages vary according to your circumstances and objectives, but all of the plans at Virginia Theological Seminary offer you the following benefits:

1. Annual income for yourself and/or another beneficiary.
2. Immediate federal income tax deduction.
3. Avoidance of a capital gains tax when giving appreciated property.
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When the last income beneficiary dies, the principal is transferred to the Seminary for a purpose of your choosing.

We would be pleased to discuss any of these giving opportunities with you and your counsel. For additional information, please contact the Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D., Vice President for Institutional Advancement at 1-800-941-1003 or 703-461-1754, or by email at bhawkins@vts.edu.
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The Rev. R. Stewart Wood, Jr.

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The Rev. Randolph K. Dakos
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The Rev. Sidney J. Gervais, Jr.
Tell us a little bit about your faith story. What brought you to the Episcopal Church, and what keeps you here?

A Community. That is essential to being a Christian—you are part of a community. And this likewise entails responsibilities to those in the community who are in some need. The Bible mentions widows and orphans, but we each have “causes” that inspire us to action. In my mind responsible stewardship starts at the parish level and then branches into other areas of mission—things that resonate with me as an individual. Primarily my focus has been in support of foreign medical mission, but recently I have come to realize the importance of financial support for VTS.

Q Why VTS? Where does your faith intersect with VTS’s mission?

A The short answer is that it appears that VTS is educating real priests. To amplify that thought, I want to draw a parallel with my own profession. I practice primary care medicine as a general internist. I treat patients in the office and hospital, but also have to attend to the business side of the practice. It is fine that we have medical school professors and various specialists, but someone has to provide effective frontline medical care. I contend that it is the same in the church. Yes, we need expert theologians and professors with special interests, but we need priests who can provide spiritual primary care. They must be capable preachers, teachers, and parish administrators. Having interacted with many VTS graduates, I am convinced that the Seminary is providing just this sort of effective clergy for the church.

Q What motivates your philanthropy? Why do you give to charity at all?

A Giving An Intersection of Faith and Mission

Last spring Dean Markham extended an invitation to Dr. W. Jonathan Dailey to join the Dean’s Roundtable in Montgomery, Alabama. Jon accepted with alacrity and made an almost immediate gift to the VTS Annual Fund. Bill Campbell, Director of the Annual Fund, recently spent time with Jon to learn about his faith story and to ask why he chose to make a financial gift to VTS.

The Rev. and Mrs. Jonathan Bryan Busch
The Rev. Dr. Richard A. Busch

The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Winston B. Charles
The Rev. David T. Gorton, Ph.D.
The Rev. A. Katherine Grieb, Ph.D.
The Rev. J. Barney Hawkins IV, Ph.D.
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The Roundtable goals are the same regardless of geographic location:

1. Time with the Dean and others at VTS as a “council of advice”;
2. Theological conversation and reflection on the challenges facing the Episcopal Church;
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4. Significant financial support to assist in implementing the Seminary’s vision and advancing its national and global ministry;
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St. John’s Episcopal Church, Weyersboro
St. John’s Episcopal Church, West Point
St. John’s Episcopal Church, Wytheville

WASHINGTON

St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Moses Lake

WEST VIRGINIA

St. Matthias’ Episcopal Church, Grafton
St. Timothy’s in the Valley Episcopal Church, Hurricane
Grace Episcopal Church, Middleway
St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church, White Sulphur Springs

WISCONSIN

Christ Episcopal Church, La Crosse
Episcopal- Lutheran, Galax, VA
Church of the Holy Apostles, Hoover, AL
Church of the Holy Apostles, Saint Paul, MN
Church of the Holy Apostles, Collierville, TN
Church of the Holy Comforter, Vienna, VA
Church of the Holy Cross, Vald Crucis, NC
Church of the Holy Spirit, Tulsa, OK
Church of the Resurrection, Omaha, NE
Diocese of Alabama, Birmingham, AL
Diocese of Arizona, Phoenix, AZ
Diocese of Arkansas, Little Rock, AR
Diocese of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
Diocese of California, San Francisco, CA
Diocese of Central Gulf Coast, Pensacola, FL
Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, PA
Diocese of East Carolina, Kinston, NC
Diocese of East Tennessee, Knoxville, TN
Diocese of Easton, Easton, MD
Diocese of Florida, Jacksonville, FL
Diocese of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI
Diocese of Kentucky, Louisville, KY
Diocese of Lexington, Lexington, KY
Diocese of Long Island, Garden City, NY
Diocese of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA
Diocese of Maryland, Baltimore, MD
Diocese of Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
Diocese of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
Diocese of Mississippi, Jackson, MS
Diocese of Missouri, Saint Louis, MO
Diocese of Nebraska, Omaha, NE
Diocese of New Jersey, Trenton, NJ
Diocese of New York, New York, NY
Diocese of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC
Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania, Erie, PA
Diocese of Olympia, Seattle, WA
Diocese of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
Diocese of Pittsburgh, Montrose, PA
Diocese of Southern Virginia, Norfolk, VA
Diocese of Southern Virginia, Roanoke, VA
Diocese of Spokane, Spokane, WA
Diocese of Virginia Islands, St. Thomas, VI
Diocese of Washington, Washington, DC
Diocese of West Tennessee, Memphis, TN
Diocese of Western Massachusetts, Springfield, MA
Diocese of Western North Carolina, Asheville, NC
District of Columbia Baptist, Washington, DC
Episcopal Bishop Of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
Episcopal Church Center - Domestic & Foreign Missionary Society, New York, NY
Episcopal Church in Idaho, Inc., Boise, ID
Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist, York, PA
Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, Starkville, MS
First Christian Church, Ashland, KY
First United Methodist Church, Pittsburg, KS
Galilee Episcopal Church, Virginia Beach, VA
Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Silver Spring, MD
David W. Heldon
Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, South River, NJ
Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, Alexandria, VA
International Order of the King’s Daughters & Sons, Brookhaven, MS
Leeds Episcopal Church, Markham, VA
Mt. Olivet Church, New Orleans, LA
Ohto Proof Editorial Services LLC, Centreville, VA
Order of Daughters of the King Inc., Woodstock, GA
Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, Washington National Cathedral, Washington, DC
R. E. Lee Memorial Church, Lexington, VA
Jane M. and Dennis B. Sigloh
Mr. Christopher Slane
The Rev. Melanie Janaijakos Slone
St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Selinsgrove, MD
St. Andrew’s On-the-Sound, Wilmington, NC
St. Columba’s Episcopal Church, Washington, DC
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, West End, MD
St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Hermitage, PA
St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, PA
St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA
St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church, Lynchburg, VA
St. John’s Episcopal Church, Alexandria, VA
St. John’s Episcopal Church, Montgomery, AL
St. John’s Episcopal Church, Newport News
St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Huntsville
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, Plainview
Trinity-By-The-Sec Episcopal Church, Port Aransas
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, San Antonio
St. Mark’s Cathedral Church, Salt Lake City
St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Circleville
St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Cincinnati
St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Middlebury
Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Alexandria
Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, Alexandria
Meade Memorial Episcopal Church, Alexandria
Oliver Episcopal Church, Alexandria
Ascension Episcopal Church, Amherst
St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, Annandale
St. Barnabas’ Episcopal Church, Annandale
St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Arlington
St. James the Less Episcopal Church, Ashland
St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, Burke
Washington Episcopal Church, Gloucester
Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Greenwood
Cople Parish Episcopal Churches, Hague
St. Cyprian’s Episcopal Church, Hampton
St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, Hampton
St. John’s Episcopal Church, Hopewell
Grace Episcopal Church, Kilnlow
Grace Memorial Episcopal Church, Lynchburg
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Lynchburg
St. Dunstan’s Episcopal Church, McLean
St. John’s Episcopal Church, McLean
St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church, McLean
Trinity Ecuemonical Parish, Moneta
St. James’ Episcopal Church, Montross
Andrew’s Church, Newport News
Church of the Epiphany, Richmond
Emmanuel Episcopal Church at Brook Hill, Richmond
St. James’s Episcopal Church, Richmond
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Richmond
St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Richmond
St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Richmond
Grace Episcopal Church, Stanardsville
Trinity Episcopal Church, Upperville
Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church, Virginia Beach
Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Virginia Beach
Trinity Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C.
St. John’s Episcopal Church, Weyersboro
St. John’s Episcopal Church, West Point
St. John’s Episcopal Church, Wytheville
St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Moses Lake

THE STATES

St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Washington
Grace Episcopal Church, Weldon
St. James Parish, Wilmington
St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, Winston-Salem
OHIO

Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati
St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Circleville
Christ Church Glenlake, Glenlake
St. Huber’s Episcopal Church, Kirtland Hills
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Put-in-Bay
OKLAHOMA

St. John’s Episcopal Church, Tulsa

PENNSYLVANIA

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Lebanon
Church of the Messiah, Lower Gwynedd
Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati

TENNESSEE

Church of the Epiphany, Summerville

TEXAS

St. Matthew’s Episcopal Church, Austin
St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, Cypress
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, Dallas
St. Martin’s Episcopal Church, Houston
The Church of St. John the Divine, Houston

SOUTH CAROLINA

Church of the Epiphany, Summerville

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St. Andrew’s On-the-Sound, Wilmington, NC
St. Columba’s Episcopal Church, Washington, DC
St. Cross-by-the-Sea Episcopal Church, Hermosa Beach, CA
St. David’s Episcopal Church, Lakeland, FL
St. Francis In The Fields, Zionville, IN
St. Gabriel’s Episcopal Church, Oakwood, GA
St. George’s Episcopal (Anglican)
Best known for writing the Star Spangled Banner, Francis Scott Key was one of the founders of Virginia Theological Seminary. In order to ensure the Seminary's lasting good health, Key set aside one-tenth of all he earned throughout his life for charities, including the Seminary. Upon his death in 1843, the money was disbursed according to his wishes.

We wish to thank the following thoughtful and loving friends who have followed the example of Francis Scott Key in the nearly 200 years since the Seminary's creation.

We FSK Society?
Want to save the date for a special event honoring all Francis Scott Key Society members.

SUNDAY, SEP. 14, 2014

The 200th anniversary of the day Key penned the poem that became our National Anthem.

Not sure if you are a member of the FSK Society? Want to become a member?

Contact Linda Dienno at ldienno@vts.edu or 703-461-1717.