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THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
FALL 1993 • VOL. 5

The Year in Review

PROFESSOR CHARLES REYNOLDS
DEPARTMENT HEAD

The Department has been enriched and its program offerings expanded this year by the arrival of four new faculty members. I am especially pleased with how well all four are performing in the classroom and with the research projects that are under way. Both Assistant Professor Gerda Schmidt and Assistant Professor Mark Hulsether are in their first year on tenure-track positions in the Department. Dr. Schmidt is a specialist in Judaic Studies with a focus on late nineteenth century and twentieth century Judaic religion. Her major areas of research are the role of women in Judaism, Judaic responses to the Holocaust, and art and the Holocaust. She brings a range of new competencies to our faculty and will, I hope, be instrumental in further developing a Judaic Studies Program at UT. I am working with Dean Ratner and some other Department heads in the college as we attempt to obtain funding for at least two other tenure-track positions in Judaic Studies. Dr. Hulsether specializes in the interdisciplinary study of religion in U.S. history. His teaching and research interests include the political culture of post-World War II Protestants, Native American religions, feminist and African American religious movements, and U.S. popular religion. Because of the range of new courses each of these faculty will offer, we are now involved in rethinking the role of our courses in general education and the ways that we need to restructure our major. Partly in relation to this, several of the regular faculty substantive sessions throughout the year will be examining various theoretical and pedagogical approaches to teaching introductory courses in religion.

Instructors Daniel Deffenbaugh and Russell McCutcheon are both with us on

one-year teaching appointments. They are doing an excellent job in the classroom as they complete their dissertations: Daniel at Vanderbilt University and Russell at the University of Toronto. Each has contributed immensely to the quality of discussion among their colleagues. Our Department discussions have also been advanced by the full participation in our meetings of Adjunct Professors Linda Tober, UT Coordinator, Undergraduate Programs, and Thomas Heffernan of English. Also, all of us look forward to the return of Associate Vice Chancellor Ralph Norman

to full-time teaching and research in the Department. Ralph will continue to edit *Soundings* and to dazzle the journal's readers with his brilliant introductions to each issue.

Once again the Department's majors

and double majors number over 50 and I have been pleased to see all the creative double majors that now exist, combining Religious Studies not only with such traditional fields as History, Sociology, and Anthropology but also with Theater, Economics, Nursing, French, and Physics.

On the occasion of Professor Stan Lusby's transition to Emeritus Professor on August 1, 1993, the faculty and staff of Religious Studies presented Stan with a stained glass piece, produced by one of his former students Karen Dotson. Stan continues to attend our Department meetings and to carry on his research



"THE CELTIC BIRD"
BY KAREN DOTSON

in his study in Hodges Library. In early November of this year Stan and his wife, Beryl, left for a major academic and cultural pilgrimage around Asia. They will be visiting Singapore, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

I have two priorities for the Department this year. First, I plan to complete the funding to support our work in Judaic religion. We have raised over \$500,000 in the last two years toward our goal of \$750,000 of programmatic and salary support. State funds that are

(CONTINUED PAGE 3)

Discretionary Fund

Over the past several years, friends of the Department of Religious Studies have donated over \$38,000 to the Discretionary Fund. This fund supports research, publications, and travel for faculty. It is also used to allow the Department to cooperate with other Departments in hosting visiting speakers, exhibits, and conferences when state money is not available. For those wishing to contribute to the fund, checks should be sent to the Department of Religious Studies, 501 McClung Tower, University of Tennessee, Knoxville TN 37996-0450 and made payable to the University of Tennessee. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Faculty Highlights

Rosalind Gwynne is the advisor to the Muslim Student Association as well as the advisor to the Indonesian Student Association. On the first and third Monday of each month, from 12:30-2:00, she participates in the Arabic language table at the International House. Rosalind also will be participating in a panel entitled Universities in the Islamic World at the upcoming meeting of the Medieval Academy of America meeting at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, April 14-16, 1994. In honor of the University's bicentennial that year, the Academy will be emphasizing medieval education and the university. Like many teachers of Arabic, Gwynne has become disenchanted with the 30- year old standard text and has not found an adequate substitute; so with the help of the NISUS Arabic program for the Macintosh, she is producing her own, as yet nameless, Arabic textbook. Besides teaching the usual courses (Asian Civilization, Arabic, and Islam), Professor Gwynne is offering a new course, RS 333, Islam in the Contemporary World, to enable the Department to cover current developments in the Islamic world in a way not possible in an introductory course. She prepared for this in part by offering, in response to student demand, a summer intensive course in the readings of Shi'ism. She had accompanied some of these same students to the national convocation of the Model Arab League in Washington D.C. in March of 1993, where (representing Yemen) they won an award. The students (though not Rosalind) also attended the Model UN at Appalachian State in October, where (representing Morocco) they won the award for outstanding delegation. She will accompany the much expanded delegation to D.C. again in March 1994, where they will have the challenge of representing Iraq.

Charles Reynolds has received one of the University of Tennessee's highest honors for its faculty by being elected Macebearer for 1993's convocations and other academic occasions. Charles continues to serve as President of the Council of Societies on the Study of Religion. The CSSR publishes *Religious Studies Review* which is the most comprehensive English review publication in the field of religion. He also continues to serve as Chair of the Editorial Board of the journal *Soundings*. As well, Charles is working with three students in philosophy who are completing their dissertations this semester.

David Linge's current research project focuses on the theology of twelfth century Cistercian monks, Bernard of Clairvaux and William of St. Thierry. Besides acting as Associate

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Former Student Addresses Commencement

James M. Washington, professor of American Church History at Union Theological Seminary and graduate of our Department (1971) will address the graduating class at the December 19 commencement. Professor Washington has written *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power* (1986) and edited two collections of Martin Luther

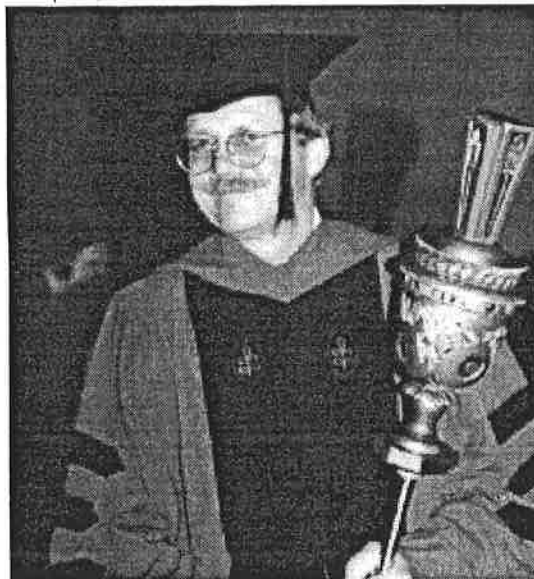
King's speeches and writings entitled, *A Testament of Hope* (1986) and *I Have A Dream* (1992). He was among the first students to graduate from the University of Tennessee's Religious Studies Department and his return to campus this fall as commencement speaker, one year after the Department celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, is indeed a significant event.

Faculty on Research Assignment

John Hodges is spending the fall term doing research on the religious experiences of African-Americans in the Mississippi Delta. He is examining how members of black rural and urban churches in this area conceive of God in light of their social and economic disadvantages. Through interviews, the study of sermons, liturgy, local histories, and comparisons of the economic and educational levels of various congregations and ministers, John is attempting to answer why, in the face of all their misery, monumental suffering, and the obvious economic disparity between many blacks and whites of this region, members of these black churches continue to affirm the basic goodness of God. Through his research, John is also attempting to determine the contemporary response of the black church in this area to the suffering and oppression of its members and how, and in what ways if any, this response has changed as a result of the 1960s-civil rights activities.

David Dungan, supported by an NEH research grant until August 1994, has been writing a history of all known gospels, from the beginnings of the Christian Church until the twentieth century—approximately 42 different gospels. His task is to identify, where possible, their authors, dates of composition, contents, and intended audience. He will include not only the thirty or so gospels written in the early days of the Christian church, but also those written later, during the middle ages and even in modern times (such as the *Aquarian Gospel*). Otherwise, he has been industriously re-turfing his croquet court, in preparation for the annual Departmental croquet tournament and moveable feast.

James Fitzgerald is finishing some parts of his translation of the *Śānti Parvan* of the *Mahābhārata* for the University of Chicago Press. He has a draft translation of almost all of the 28,000 lines of the *Śānti Parvan* and has about 4,000 lines either completely finished or nearly so. In the spring of 1994 he will be teaching the introductory courses on Hinduism and Buddhism and may teach an intensive introduction to Sanskrit to advanced students as well. He will be applying for an NEH translation grant for 1995-96 in order to see the approximately 1,000 printed pages of the *Śānti Parvan* to and through the press.



PROFESSOR CHARLES REYNOLDS
1993 MACEBEARER

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Mark Hulsether Appointed as Scholar of American Religion

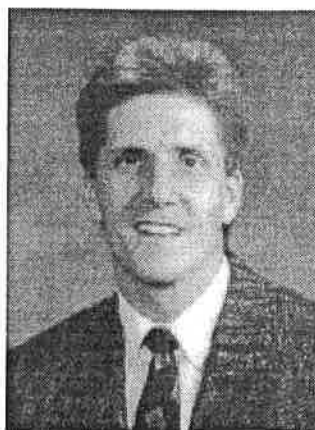
Mark Hulsether joins the Department of Religious Studies this year as an Assistant Professor in North American Religions. Mark was born and raised in the upper midwest. He holds a M.Div. with honors from Yale University Divinity School, where he worked with Cornel West, Letty Russell, and the late Sydney Ahlstrom. He did his doctoral work in the Program in American Studies at the University of Minnesota, where he studied with David W. Noble, Roland Delattre, and George Lipsitz. Before arriving in Knoxville, Mark taught in the Religion Department at Carleton College and in the American Studies Department at the University of Minnesota.

Mark has published more than fifteen articles, short essays and reviews in such journals as *Religious Studies Review*, *American Studies*, *Christianity and Crisis*, and the *Canadian Review of American Studies*. His honors include a dissertation fellowship from the Louisville Institute for the Study of Protestantism and American Culture, selection as an alternate for the Fellowship for Young Scholars in American Religion (a national competition mainly for junior faculty, won as graduate student), and an Anne Baxter Award for one of the top graduate student papers at the American Studies Association annual meeting in 1990.

Mark's dissertation, which is currently under review for publication, is entitled *Liberals, Radicals, and the Contested Social Thought of Postwar Protestantism: Christianity and Crisis Magazine, 1941-1976*. It analyzes continuities and changes in this influential journal of religious-political commentary during its transformation from Cold War liberal politics and Christian realist theology in the 1940s to radical politics and liberation theologies by the 1970s. *Christianity and Crisis* provides a fine case study to address several issues of current interest, including the relative

fates of liberal Protestants and conservative evangelicals, the current status of civil religion and other forms of national consensus, the problem of sustaining morally grounded criticism and social activism in the public sphere, and the question of how middle-class Euro-American culture should respond to criticism from feminists, African Americans, the counterculture, and post-colonialists.

There is a strong interdisciplinary emphasis in Mark's research and teaching. He combines the traditional methods of Religious Studies and U.S. history with such diverse types of analysis as cultural studies, social theory, and neo-gramscian theories of cultural hegemony. For example, his dissertation blends cultural, social, and intellectual history with insights from theology, Religious Studies and cultural studies. It systematically relates theological arguments in *Christianity and Crisis* to broader cultural and socio-political issues that the journal treated in detail, and it theorizes the transformation of *Christianity and Crisis* as a case of cultural contestation within a multivocal religious tradition that can potentially take both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic forms. Mark's interest in cross-disciplinary work is also evident in his involvement in the wider field of American Studies. Several of his publications have examined theoretical and methodological trends in the field, notably his recent article entitled "Evolving Approaches to U.S. Culture in the American Studies Movement." At the University of Tennessee, he will have regular teaching responsibilities in American Studies.



MARK HULSETH

Mark is also interested in the complex relationships between religious discourses and American popular culture, especially popular music. As a contribution to a

forthcoming book, *Theomusicology: Thought and Methodology*, Mark compares the content and structure of Madonna's controversial "Like a Prayer" video to some concerns of North American liberation theologies, and finds surprising overlaps. Next year he will offer a course on Religion and the U.S. Mass Media.

All of Mark's courses provide students with an opportunity to combine historical, theoretical, and personal reflections, focused through materials as diverse as music videos, theological texts, and political documentaries. Currently he is teaching an Introduction to Religion in the United States and a course on Liberation Theologies in North and South America. A new course for the spring term, *The Political Culture of Postwar Protestantism*, will explore how Protestants of many stripes—conservatives, moderates, and left-liberals—have thought about and tried to influence American politics and society.

Moving from Minnesota to Tennessee with Mark were his spouse, Anne McKee, and their two children, Lucia and Mark. Anne and Mark are expecting a third child in the spring, and Anne is seeking work in her profession as a Presbyterian minister.

We are pleased to welcome Mark to our Department, and we look forward to the contributions he can offer from his breadth of expertise in North American religions, his interest in broad theoretical and interpretive approaches, and his involvement in the wider field of American Studies.

STUDENT NEWS • STUDENT NEWS • STUDENT NEWS

dist Mission Board. **Teresa Hornsby** is in the M.A. program in Theology at Harvard Divinity School. Recent graduates **Nancy and Elizabeth** are presently living in California and visited the Department in the fall to discuss their interests in attending graduate schools. In this connection they will be attending the AAR and NAASR meetings in Washington. **Geoffrey Bowden** is a second year student at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. **Kim Russell** is in first year here at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. **James Dungan** is in

the Masters program in Church History at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. **Keith McCanless** is now in the doctoral program in Chinese Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle. **Mike Ralston**, after completing his M.A. in Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, has enrolled in the doctoral program in Religion at Temple University, Philadelphia. **Amy Langston** is currently the head cook at a dude ranch in Hidden Valley, Arizona. She will return to Harvard Divinity School next year.

Faculty Highlights

Chinese history, and to Japan to work with Professor Ishii Shudo, one of the world's leading scholars of Zen history. With the generous help of Dr. Hansen she spent two weeks at Yale searching through various kinds of local histories to find evidence about monasteries and temples for women Buddhist practitioners in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. At the very least, the book should establish that Zen Buddhist communities and teaching lineages in China included a number of women whose contributions were valued. The sermons and stories of these women will, she believes, find an audience today that will value them anew. In addition to this work, Miriam has spent time as a consultant for a travelling exhibition organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum on children and childhood in Chinese art. Because of her heavy research schedule this semester, Miriam's only teaching assignment has been the Women and Religion course. As well, she has participated in a number of recent conferences and is one of four faculty leading a teaching workshop for pre-tenured professors sponsored by the AAR and the Lilly Foundation. This semester she also took part in a very productive meeting held in Boston on the possible relationships between Christian Theology and the Study of Religions, particularly non-Christian religions. Miriam has also recently published a long essay entitled "Women, the State, and Religion Today in the People's Republic of China" in a book edited by Arvind Sharma of McGill University, Montreal, entitled *Today's Woman in World Religions* (SUNY Press).

Lee Humphreys is teaching both Introductory Biblical Hebrew and Religious Aspects of Biblical and Classical Literature this fall for those who are willing to rise early enough for an 8:00 class. He is also combining his teaching in Religious Studies with his work as Director of the Learning Research Center through a project that he jointly directs with Mary Kay Kramp which is supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. In this project students are asked to construct their stories as learners over the course of a term and to interpret their stories. Fourteen faculty from a variety of college/universities, disciplines, and teaching situations are attending to their students' stories and reflecting and redesigning their courses and teaching as a result of this experience. Lee is also extending his work with narrative theory into a study of the stories of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis, looking especially at the interweaving of the plots of each story, the development of the voice, and shifting points of view and the values they represent. He continues to serve as Editor for Biblical

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Campus Visitors in Religious Studies

PROFESSOR ASANTE VISITS CAMPUS

In September, the Department helped sponsor and organize the visit of Professor Molefi Kete Asante from Temple University as part of Africa Week. Professor Asante is the leading proponent of Afrocentricity which calls for an Africa-centered, as opposed to or alongside a Europe-centered, view of the world. In addition to his major public lecture, he also spoke to Rosalind Hackett's African Religions class, regaling them with his knowledge of ancient Egyptian religions and challenging them to consider the importance and interest of African thought and culture.

BISHOP OLUWO SPEAKS TO STUDENTS

Bishop Dr. Victor Oluwo, founder and leader of the Cross of Christ World Ministry, an independent pentecostal church based in Ibadan, Nigeria, lectured in Rosalind Hackett's African Religions class on October 19th. He spoke about the changes occurring in his church as a result of increased female participation and showed a video of the 15th anniversary celebrations of his church.

JOHN COBB DELIVERS TWO LECTURES

John B. Cobb, Ingraham Professor of Theology, Emeritus, at The Claremont Graduate School and Anne Potter Wilson Distinguished Visiting Professor at Vanderbilt Divinity School during the Fall semester, 1993, gave two public lectures at UTK on October 28. One of the leading American Christian thinkers since World War II, and the author of over twenty-five major books, Cobb spoke on the subject of Christianity and Economics. In his afternoon lecture he presented a critique of current economic theory and argued that economics must be redirected so as to support human community and the long-time sustainability of human economic activity. That evening he delivered his second lecture in the University Center to an audience of over three hundred faculty, students, and members of the Knoxville community, on the topic, Religion and Homosexuality: The Debate in Contemporary Christianity. The lecture and subsequent discussion expanded on some of the constructive suggestions for relating gay persons to Christianity that he developed in his recent book, *Matters of Life and Death*.

STEVEN KATZ SPEAKS ON THE HOLOCAUST

Steven T. Katz, Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Cornell University, visited the University of Tennessee on Tuesday, November 9. The first Jewish scholar to earn a Bachelor of Divinity from the University of Cambridge, Professor Katz has earned distinction for his work in Jewish mysticism, philosophy and the Holocaust, not only within Jewish Studies, but in the Humanities at large. He spoke to members of both the University and local community on "The Holocaust and Comparative History." Professor Katz is the author of more than a dozen books. His latest work, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*, forthcoming from Oxford University Press, is the focus of a Judaic Studies section at this year's national meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Washington D.C. Professor Katz is also the founder and editor of *Modern Judaism*, a distinguished professional journal, and editor of several Judaica book series.

This lecture was the first to be presented under the auspices of the newly formed Judaic Studies Program, under the direction of Professor G. Gerda Schmidt, and was co-sponsored by the Knoxville Jewish Federation, the Department of Religious Studies, the Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages, the Department of History, and the Department of Philosophy.

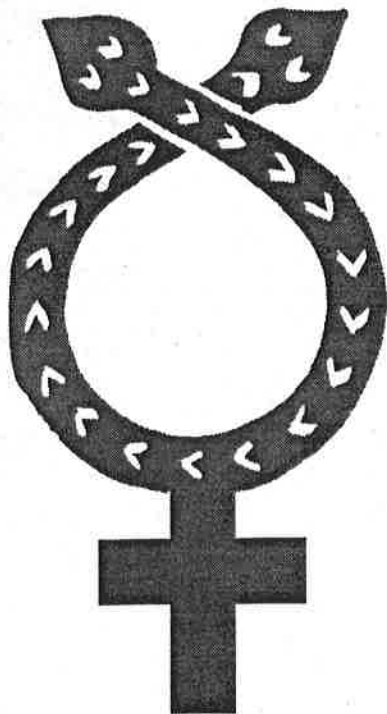
CORNEL WEST VISITS THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Cornel West, one of the nation's leading intellectuals, visited the University of Tennessee on November 10-12, 1993. West is professor of religion and the director of the prestigious Afro-American Studies Department at Princeton University. Through his numerous publications, Professor West has been at the forefront of conversations between traditional disciplines of Religious Studies, on the one hand, and secular discourses of neo-pragmatist philosophy, cultural theory, and neo-Marxist social theory, on the other. During his visit to Knoxville, which was coordinated by the Black Cultural Programming Committee, Professor West met with students, participated in staff development workshops, and gave a public lecture.

"Women in Religion" Class Offers Alternative Perspectives

For centuries, the unquestioned assumption of religious thinkers, predominantly men, has been that their reflections on the nature of the ultimate should be regarded as normative for all constituents of their respective communities. Recently, however, this perspective has been disputed by a hitherto silent voice: that of women. "Women and Religion," a class offered by Professor Miriam Levering, is now in its second year of introducing students to the religious and philosophical insights of women from around the world.

Professor Levering has designed the course to meet two basic objectives. First, students read and reflect on narratives concerning the particular religious experiences of women from diverse cultural backgrounds. The intent is to demonstrate that religion itself is "gendered," and that it both supports and subverts the gender values which inform the beliefs and actions of individuals and communities. While women's voices have often not been heard, the readings stress



ways in which women have nonetheless become creative and powerful religious agents. The second objective is to review the more specific challenges to the Jewish and Christian traditions coming from such authors as Carol Christ, Judith Plaskow, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Charlene Spretnak, and Mary Daly.

Professor Levering suggests that one of the great strengths of the class has been her ability (in good feminist fashion) to draw on the insights and knowledge of colleagues who have done extensive research on gender issues and the roles of women in various world religions. Guest lecturers have included Professors Gerda Schmidt on women in Judaism,

Rosalind Hackett on gender in African religions, Daniel Deffenbaugh on Eco-feminism, John Hodges on women in the African-American Church, and Lee Humphreys on feminist explorations of the Hebrew scriptures. Professor Rosalind Gwynne has also been helpful in the study of women within Islamic cultures.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW (CONTINUED)

now providing the full salary for our Judaic Studies scholar will be supplemented by income from the private funds once our scholar in this position has tenure. My second priority is to put in place a Department Advisory Council which will advise us on the general operation of our program and assist us in raising funds to be used as salary supplements for faculty, research and travel support, and the appointment of additional graduate assistants. Also, the Department has elected a Head's Advisory Committee, constituted by a representative of each rank of the faculty. This body will advise the Head on Departmental matters when a full meeting of the faculty is not possible.

My own research has been limited this year because of the heart attack I had last November. My health continues to improve and I hope to return to a full range of productive work within the next year. I appreciate the extraordinary encouragement and support that I have received from so many people, both at UT and at other universities, over the past year. I especially want to thank Dean Ratner and the Department faculty for permitting me to share a greater amount of the administrative duties with Professor David Linge, the Associate Head. David's willing assistance in this respect has been greatly appreciated.

Faculty Highlights

Head of the Department, David has been training and working with graduate teaching assistants and developing more effective pedagogical approaches to the first year introductory course in world religions. In his spare time David and his spouse Barbara continue to feed family and friends with elaborate vegetarian meals and his own brand of homemade bread.

Rosalind Hackett has been busy this year helping to establish the African Association for the Study of Religions after it was launched in Zimbabwe last year. As part of the International Executive Committee, and as Vice President of the North American Association for the Study of Religion, she wonders what life was like before e-mail. In September of this year she attended a regional conference of the International Association for the History of Religions in Paris and presented a paper on the challenges facing the academic study of religion in Africa. Before returning to Knoxville, she participated in a conference on Tibet organized by the Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C. She is part of their working group which examines the religious dimensions of situations of conflict around the world. In July she was at Oxford to attend the decennial meeting of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the U.K. and the Commonwealth. The topic of the meeting was "Local and Global Knowledge." The theme was pertinent to her own work on charismatic/pentecostal movements in Africa. She was able to present aspects of her research earlier this year in April as a Zora Neale Hurston fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study and Research in the African Humanities at Northwestern University. Two of her earlier presentations on this subject were published this fall. The high point of Rosalind's year was learning that she was the recipient of a research grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts through the Overseas Ministries Study Center for travel to Ghana, Nigeria, Singapore, the Philippines and South Korea while on research assignment next spring and summer. She will be studying the growing connections between African and Asian evangelists. In the meantime she continues to work to promote the study of the religions of Africa in this country through panels, special journal issues and public lectures.

Miriam Levering is working on a book about women in Chinese Buddhism which will include translations of a number of biographies about, and sermons by, Chinese women Zen masters from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. She received an NEH summer grant that enabled her to travel to Yale University to work with Professor Valerie Hansen, a scholar of pre-modern

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Gerda Schmidt Appointed as Judaic Scholar of Religion

The Religious Studies Department is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Gilya Gerda Schmidt to the newly created endowed position of Judaic Scholar of Religion. The position is the result of several years' effort on the part of Department Head Charles Reynolds, Dean Larry Ratner of the College of Liberal Arts, and members of the Knoxville and greater Jewish community to establish a Judaic Studies Program at The University of Tennessee. The College hopes eventually to offer both an undergraduate concentration and minor in this academic discipline.

A native of Germany, Professor Schmidt has lived all her adult life in the United States. A mother of two, she returned to college as an adult student and received her Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies (*summa cum laude*) and Master of Arts in Germanic Languages and Literatures from the University of Pittsburgh. A recipient of the prestigious Mellon Pre-Doctoral Fellowship, she studied Comparative Religion with a concentration in Judaic Studies at the University of Pittsburgh and was awarded the Ph.D. in 1991. She joins the Department after a two-year tenure as Post-Doctoral Fellow in Judaic Studies and Research Associate in the Department of Religious Studies at The University of Alabama. In Tuscaloosa, she also served as Faculty Advisor and Director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at the University of Alabama. This past summer, she participated in an NEH Seminar on Zionism at Columbia University and conducted research on Zionism at the Leo Baeck Institute in New York.

Dr. Schmidt's primary area of expertise is Modern Judaism, with a particular interest in German Jewry and the formative years

of the Zionist movement. In addition to her dissertation, *Martin Buber's Struggles for a New Concept of Jewish Community 1897-1915*, she has undertaken extensive historical research on the question of Jewish identity following Emancipation in Germany, and the effort of Central European Jewry to create for themselves a distinctive modern community. The work and reflection of Martin Buber was central to this project as he was one of the first thinkers to introduce to this primarily political movement a new objective: cultural Zionism. The idea was discussed in detail by Buber at the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1901, and is the subject of a forthcoming translation of essays, with an introduction by Dr. Schmidt.



DR. GERDA SCHMIDT

Though Buber interposed the cultural trajectory to the Zionist cause, his primary fascination up until about 1909, Dr. Schmidt suggests, was not with the idea of Jewish community but with the concept of the individual. This thesis is set forth by Professor Schmidt in a book soon to be published by The University of Alabama Press, *Martin Buber's Formative Years: From German Culture to Jewish Renewal, 1897 - 1909*. The work is an intellectual and spiritual biography of the great Jewish philosopher and religious thinker.

In addition to these interests, Professor Schmidt is also concerned with promoting education of the Holocaust in both the University and local community. One work currently in progress is a translation of a German book by an Austrian scholar, Erika Thurner, on the fate of the Gypsies during the Nazi occupation of Germany and Western Europe. Topics of papers which Dr. Schmidt will read at professional conferences include "The Significance of the Fifth

Zionist Congress for a Definition of Zionism" at the Association for Jewish Studies annual meeting on December 14, 1993 and "Hasidism Through the Ages: An Analysis of *Devekut*" for the 29th International Congress of Medieval Studies May 5-8, 1994.

Dr. Schmidt has also recently initiated a series of lectures and events sponsored by the Judaic Studies Program, with the support of the Knoxville Jewish Federation, and several Departments in the University. On November 9, Professor Steven T. Katz of Cornell University gave the inaugural lecture, speaking on "The Holocaust and Comparative History."

Education about the Holocaust will also be central to one of the courses developed by Professor Schmidt for the new Judaic Studies Program for undergraduates. "Voices of the Holocaust," to be taught every other year, will introduce students to the cultural trends which facilitated the development of Hitler's "final solution" to the Jewish question. Other classes in the Program include: "Figures in Contemporary Jewish Thought," also to be offered alternately, covering a variety of nineteenth and twentieth century Jewish philosophers, historians, and religious thinkers; "Modern Israel," which will familiarize students with the history and culture of Israel, from its inception as a political ideal in Zionism to the present day; and "Introduction to Judaism," a foundational course which will introduce students to the civilization of the Jewish people, including a section on women's voices in the Jewish tradition.

Professor Schmidt comes to the Religious Studies Department with a stated goal and mission: to introduce students and colleagues to Jewish life, customs, and ideas, and to be a resource person for both the University and the greater Knoxville community. The Religious Studies Department stands only to benefit from her significant scholarship, leadership, and insight in both academic and communal affairs.

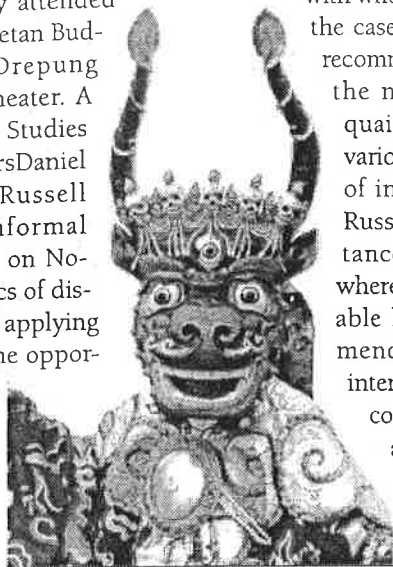
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Kevin Thompson, a major, graduated in May, 1993 and is now working with youth and children at the Ebenezer Methodist Church, Knoxville. Esther Godfrey, a Whittle Scholar, is now attending the University of Manchester, England, for the 1993-94 academic year. Eric Selbo, a former major with an M.A. in Religion from Miami University, has completed his doctoral field exams in Religious Ethics at the University of Chicago and is proceeding with his dissertation. Other former students now working as Teaching Assistants while completing their M.A. degrees

at Miami University of Ohio are Carolyn Coleman, Robert Waltz, and Todd Godwin. Andrew Wicks completed his Ph.D. in Religious Ethics at the University of Virginia and accepted a tenure track position in the College of Business at the University of Washington. The journal *Soundings* has accepted one of his articles. Meg Tullis is studying for the year at the University of Dundee, Scotland. Jeff Brumley (B.A. journalism UTK, M.A. in religion from Miami) is now a reporter for The Catholic Telegraph in Cincinnati. Sam Tutton is now on a two year assignment for the Meth-

News from the Religious Studies Association

Last December, a large group of students and faculty benefited from attending the movie *Malcolm X*. This September, some students and faculty attended the performance by the Tibetan Buddhist monks from the Drepung Monastery at the Bijou Theater. A group of twenty Religious Studies majors met with instructors Daniel Deffenbaugh and Russell McCutcheon for an informal evening at the Falafel Hut on November 4th. The main topics of discussion were the process of applying for graduate schools and the opportunities and challenges that graduate programs offer. Among the most valuable points that Daniel and Russell made were the importance of reference letters, GRE scores, and the personal statement of academic interest. Daniel presented



"SACRED MUSIC, SACRED DANCE" AT THE BIJOU THEATRE: ONE OF THE EVENTS ATTENDED BY THE UT RELIGIOUS STUDIES ASSOCIATION

two basic ways of how one can choose a graduate program: by picking the school because of its name, or choosing the person with whom one wants to work. In the case of the latter, which he recommended, he emphasized the necessity of being acquainted with the work of various scholars in the fields of interest to the students. Russell stressed the importance of choosing an area where one would be comfortable living. He also recommended the academic and interpersonal challenges that come along with pursuing advanced degrees. All in all, the meeting was most helpful and provided an opportunity for majors to meet one another and exchange ideas with the faculty in an informal setting.

Religion and Wanderlust

A MAJOR REFLECTS ON HIS TRAVELS

BY JASON CHUMLEY

So what does the study of religion and aimless voyaging have to do with each other? Plenty. There is something to be said for picking up a backpack and heading out across "the great somewhere else." One does not have to be involved in the discipline of Religious Studies to experience Otto's *mysterium tremendum* in the shaded glare of Chartres' stained-glass windows, or the imposing shadow of St. Vitus in Prague. And Eliade's concept of sacred space is never more tangible than when standing at the base of the Acropolis.

This summer found me in thirteen different countries, and while no textbooks were involved, the travels proved to be immensely beneficial to me as a Religious Studies student. Take, for example, my brief pass through Serbia. In many conversations the topic arose of the strong bond between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Greek Orthodox Church. The intimate relationship between these two institutions and the people within them has never been more evident than in

this time of Serbian need. With tight sanctions choking the Serbian economy, no one was hesitant to give thanks to their Greek brothers and sisters who were notorious for breaking sanctions and bringing food and other supplies to the struggling nation. And no one was hesitant to point out the Orthodox religion's role in such dealings - not as a political institution, but as a source of cultural unity. "The Greeks and the Serbs are the same type of people," I heard often from Greeks as well as Serbians. Travel provides this type of particularly useful insight into comprehending a religion's effect on culture. So, while watching construction continue on the world's largest Orthodox church (now being built in Belgrade), I paid careful attention to the faint shudder of the *mysterium tremendum* building in the back of my religious self, and made a mental note of the people around me. Many of them were as transfixed by the monstrous building as I. There is a lot to be learned from just passing through.

Faculty Highlights

and Related Areas for the *Religious Studies Review*, and as Editor for the "Spotlight on Teaching," an occasional segment of the *Religious Studies News* devoted to issues in learning and teaching in Religious Studies.

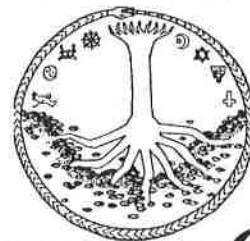
Ralph Norman announced his intention to resign as Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs during the 1993-94 academic year. The move will probably become effective in late spring term 1994. At that point Ralph will return to the Department full-time and will continue in his role as editor of *Soundings*. He will also continue on the Board of Directors of the Society for Values in Higher Education. Chancellor Snyder and Dean Ratner have asked him to continue in his role as general liaison for the UT-Bonn University Faculty Exchange program and for the UT Normandy Scholars Program. Ralph will participate in the Bonn December Symposium on American Studies with a paper entitled, "The Republican vs. the Biblical in the Imagination of American Community, Washington to Lincoln." In the spring of 1994 he will give a plenary lecture at a National Conference on Scholarly Publishing to be held in St. Petersburg, Florida. During the transitional year while moving back into the Department, he will be working on several research projects, the primary one being a manuscript on the imagination of argument in poetry and the novel. Ralph plans to spend a substantial portion of time during this period at Harvard University and in England. However, he will be seeing at least four issues of *Soundings* through to completion in the same period. On resuming teaching, he will devote time to the Religious Aspects of Modern Literature course, as well as to various incurably Eurocentric courses in Western Religious Thought.

Thomas Heffernan, who recently joined Religious Studies as an adjunct faculty member, is a member of the English Department at UT. He has his Ph.D. from Cambridge University and a diploma in Latin palaeography from Harvard University. His principal area of research is religious autobiography in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Professor Heffernan has published extensively in these areas with more than forty articles in print and two books. His latest book, *Sacred Biography*, published by Oxford University Press, has recently been reprinted in paper. His work has received international recognition and he has been a recipient of the Van Courtland Prize awarded by the Medieval Academy of America. He has received fellowships from the American Philosophical Society, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES NEWSLETTER
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Faculty Highlights

Daniel Deffenbaugh joins the Department this year as an Instructor of Religious Studies. He will be teaching three classes per semester: two sections of "World Religions in History," and one section of "Comparison of World Religions." Dan is currently a Ph.D. candidate at Vanderbilt University and plans to spend much of his spare time writing his dissertation on the theology of nature in the Reformed, Process, and Platonic mystical traditions. Other academic interests include the study of religion and science, contemporary theology, and environmental ethics. He will be presenting a paper at this year's meeting of the Southeastern Commission for the Study of Religion entitled, "Speaking Up For the Universe: Theology and the Elements in Two Works by Norman Maclean." Every now and then he manages to do a little fly-fishing in the Cumberland Mountains.

An Important Thank You...

No newsletter from the Department would be complete without reference to the role played by the Departmental secretaries, Debbie Myers and Joan Riedl. Besides keeping the operation running smoothly, Debbie and Joan provide important continuity between faculty and students and help coordinate the itineraries of jet-setting faculty. From proofreading faculty research and designing the Departmental brochure, to coordinating birthday cake purchases and advising new members of the Department on the best places to live, eat, hike, and shop in Knoxville, Debbie and Joan far surpass the requirements of their jobs and are indispensable. Without mentioning names, it is widely accepted throughout McClung Tower that the Religious Studies office, where coffee or tea is available to anyone with a clean cup and a few coins, is by far the most pleasant office in the building. In case you are in the neighborhood and are thirsty, it's room 501 straight off the elevator and the coffee or tea is on the right.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The writing, design, and production of this news letter is a co-operative Departmental effort coordinated by Daniel Deffenbaugh and Russell McCutcheon. Special mention, however, must be made of Ian Blackburn, a major in the Department and Mac wizard, for his time, efforts, and creativity in designing and producing it.

The Samsara logo was designed by Greg Spinner, a graduate in Religious Studies (1987), and is intended to reflect the multiplicity of religious traditions taught in our Department.

Faculty Highlights

Russell McCutcheon is teaching two introductory courses in world religions and an upper-level course on anthropological theories of myths and rituals. He is completing his dissertation at the University of Toronto's Centre for the Study of Religion on the ideology of the regnant idealist discourse in the modern study of religion. As well, he keeps busy as one of the editors of the North American Association for the Study of Religion's quarterly journal *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*, published by Mouton de Gruyter of Berlin. His most recent article "The Myth of the Apolitical Scholar: The Life and Works of Mircea Eliade," was published in the fall issue of *Queen's Quarterly*.



Samsara