

FOCUS

The magazine of Union Presbyterian Seminary

Summer 2015



Godly Play



The Richmond campus celebrated the seminary's 203rd commencement exercises. Forty-six students were awarded 44 degrees at Union Presbyterian Seminary's Richmond and Charlotte campuses this spring. The graduates included exchange fellowship students from Bern, Switzerland and from Seoul, South Korea.



COVER: Each spring the PC(USA) seminaries meet on the Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond campus, for a friendly yet highly competitive tournament of Ultimate Frisbee. One of the highlights of the year, it promotes camaraderie and sportsmanship, and offers students an experience in "Godly play."

PHOTO BY DAVE SWAGER



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*Director of Communications: Mike Frontiero; Associate Director of Communications: Suzan White;
Communications Coordinator: Crystal Sygeel; Associate Vice-President for Alumni/ae Development: Lynn McClintock*



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MISSION AND VISION

*Union Presbyterian Seminary equips Christian leaders for ministry in the world—
a sacred vocation that requires deep learning, commitment to service, and an ability to read culture
and circumstance in the light of the rich resources of scripture and theological tradition.*

*The seminary's core mission is to participate in the mission of the church by forming and equipping leaders
for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12).*

*We confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus is God in the flesh, the Son of that One whom
he called Father. His life, ministry, death, and resurrection have transformed the world.*

As the risen and living Lord, Jesus has called us to bear witness to his transformative presence in the world.

*We serve as a theological resource for church and society. We weave together distinctive approaches
to theological education for pastoral and educational ministries. We educate, inspire, and empower leaders
for congregational life, theological scholarship, and bold Christian service to the world. We seek to participate faithfully
in the Holy Spirit's transformation of the seminary, the church, and through the church, the world.*



Brian K. Blount

Dear Friends,

I can still remember my mom's encouraging summer words, "Go outside and play." I never had to be told twice. In the small, rural town in which I grew up there was a lot of outside territory in which to play. On bike and on foot, my brothers and I covered that ground as copiously as we could. Today, physical and mental health care professionals laud the positive impact that play, and especially outside play, can have on a growing child. Following the health care lead, organizations like those represented by professional and college sports, implore kids to go outside and play. More and more we are finding that the impact of play can be just as positive on adults.

Spiritual care professionals have long known about the importance of play. The spirit, too, is revived when the body and mind release themselves from the harness of work, even if for but a small measure of time. I experienced this truth first-hand last year during a consultation of recreation specialists at the seminary's Leadership Institute. Our work involved more than strategizing about the curricular importance of Godly play; play was a vital part of the work itself. Called away from the consultation for work at my office, I returned to the gathering a little less spry than I had left.

A blessing occurred. I arrived just in time for the announcement, "time to play." We gathered in a circle. I learned a game I had never played before. I laughed. I unwound. I re-gathered spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Rejuvenated, I engaged the rest of our work with renewed vigor. Play did that.

Godly play, I have learned from ministers and counselors and specialists in recreation, is not a detraction from God's work in the world. It is one way, one really delightful way of expressing and, indeed, amplifying our response to that work. In our Christian education classrooms, on the Frisbee fields of play, on the floor of the barn dance, in the small groups and large gatherings of the camp, in the education wing of the church, and so many other important faith venues, play happens and play rejuvenates and play restores.

In this edition of *Focus* you will learn more about the power of play in a Christian context. I hope that, as you engage the articles in this edition, the act of reading about play will increase your appetite to join in the fun of celebrating the gift of God's creation by exulting in the wondrous opportunities to enjoy God's creation. To play.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian".

Brian K. Blount, President

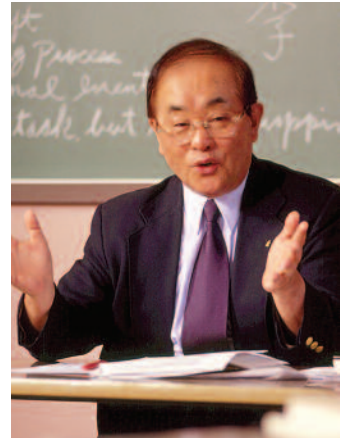
o n c a m p u s

Global Mission Center for Christian Education Named

The envisioned Global Mission Center has a name. The Syngman Rhee Global Mission Center for Christian Education will honor the man whose life-time dedication to mission and education inspired thousands across the globe.

The center, to be located in a renovated Richmond Hall on the Richmond campus, will be a resource for educators from other countries who seek support for their Christian education work. International students, along with students from the U.S., will be prepared for passionate and effective careers that will spread the good news of God's grace throughout the world.

The Rev. **Syngman Rhee** served as Visiting Professor of Mission and Evangelism and director of the Asian American Ministry and Mission Center at Union Presbyterian Seminary from 1998 until his retirement in 2013. He died on January 14, 2015.



The Rev. Syngman Rhee

The James B. Holderness Dining Room

A Life of Grace, Gratitude, and Generosity

Housed within the Global Mission Center will be the James B. Holderness Dining Room, a fitting tribute to the life and ministry of **Jim Holderness** (M.Div.'67; D.Min.'82), a man whose life modeled God's hospitality and grace.

The dining room in a renovated Richmond Hall will be a place for the entire seminary community to share food and conversation. The simple act of gathering for a meal and sharing thoughts after a long day of classes forms bonds that last a lifetime.

Through the years, Jim served pastorates—often with his wife, **Ginny Ward Holderness** (PSCE'71) as a pastor/educator team—in Georgia, Arkansas, and North Carolina. Upon his retirement in 2006, he served as parish associate at First Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, NC, until his death on December 27, 2012.

For more information and to view proposed renderings, go to richmondhall.wordpress.com or imjim.org. Ω



The Rev. Jim Holderness

Construction to Begin on Student Housing

In April, the Board of Trustees voted to move forward, in partnership with the Bristol Development Group, with the construction of new student housing on the Westwood Tract. The apartment complex will include up to 300 apartment units, 25 of which will be designated as student housing, with the capacity to increase or decrease as student need demands.

The project is in keeping with the seminary's goals to provide outstanding housing for the next generation of students with families, while providing a reasonable financial return to the seminary budget, and maintaining the school's tradition of being a good neighbor in the Northside Richmond community. The remaining 19 acres will remain untouched as open space for at least the next two years. Visit westwoodtract.wordpress.com for more information. Ω



New Faces on Campus

Christopher Richardson: A Familiar Face on Campus

Union Presbyterian Seminary welcomed back alumnus **Christopher Richardson** (M.A.C.E.'99; Ed.D.'01) on June 15th as the new director for both Union Presbyterian Seminary libraries—William Smith Morton Library on the Richmond campus and the Charlotte campus library. He will also serve as the director for the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

"Richardson brings a wealth of experience and a love for theological education that will translate into wonderful library leadership," said Union President Brian K. Blount. *"I'm excited about his plans for the library as we strive to serve faculty, students, and the church."*

Richardson previously served as director of library services and adjunct instructor of education and information literacy at Southern Virginia University. His research interests include topics in library administration and educational philosophy, and his writings appear in a number of peer-reviewed journals and popular magazines, including *Virginia Libraries*, *Journal of Adult Theological Education*, *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, *Religious Education* and *the Christian Education Journal*.

Before coming to Southern Virginia University, Richardson worked as a public librarian in Staunton, VA, and as a curriculum design specialist in Richmond. He also lived in Brazil for eight years and speaks fluent Portuguese. Ω



Christopher Richardson

Visiting Assistant Professor of Evangelism Called to Union



John W. Vest

Dr. **John W. Vest** was welcomed in July as the new Visiting Assistant Professor of Evangelism at Union Presbyterian Seminary. His work at Union will focus on engaging students in the study of evangelism, church growth, and vitality, new church development and ministry among emerging generations. In addition to teaching, he will work with the Presbytery of the James to explore new models of missional evangelism and to coordinate internships focused on evangelism within the presbytery and beyond. Vest began his appointment this summer.

"This is an exciting day for Union," said President Brian K. Blount. *"In a time when the church needs to tell its story and tell it well, the Union faculty will have an experienced and gifted professor who can equip our students in the vital task of evangelism and church revitalization."*

Vest received a B.A. in Religious Studies and Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations from Rice University, an M.Div. from the University of Chicago Divinity School, and a Doctor of Ministry from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. He also participated in advanced study in the Hebrew Bible at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and at the University of Chicago Divinity School. Vest has served as associate pastor for youth ministry at Fourth Presbyterian Church since 2006. He was the moderator of the Presbytery of Chicago for 2014 and served as commissioner to both the 219th and 221st PC(USA) General Assemblies. He is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Academy of Religion, the Presbyterian Youth Workers' Association, and the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators. Ω

Kenneth J. McFayden Appointed Dean of Richmond Campus

Kenneth J. McFayden (D.Min.'86), a widely-recognized expert in leadership and change, was appointed the next academic dean of the Richmond campus of Union Presbyterian Seminary beginning July 1. He succeeded F. S. Royster Professor of Christian Missions Stanley H. Skreslet, who continues to teach on the faculty.

"Dr. McFayden is a superb administrator and is excellent in the areas of strategic visioning and planning," said President Brian K. Blount. *"Upon my arrival at Union in 2007, his expertise in strategic thinking was of invaluable support. I look forward to seeing him put these skills to work through the administrative endeavors he will lead as dean."*

McFayden currently serves as dean of the seminary's Leadership Institute and Professor of Ministry and Leadership Development, and teaches courses in the areas of congregational leadership and administration.

"I am deeply honored by the appointment to serve as academic dean," said McFayden. *"This is a critical time in the life of the church, and therefore in the life of the seminary as we serve the church. I am looking forward to working with our faculty, staff, students, and trustees in this new capacity as our seminary continues to equip Christian leaders for ministry in a rapidly changing world."*

McFayden has provided leadership for international travel seminars to Brazil, Ghana, Korea, and China; served as keynote speaker on the topic of leadership and change in a variety of settings; and conducted numerous workshops and consultations for clergy and lay professionals in the theory and practice of leadership, team development, strategic planning, and conflict management.

Prior to joining the faculty in 2000, he was executive director of North Central Career Development Center in New Brighton, MN, a hospital chaplain in Louisville, KY, and an associate pastor in Alliance, OH. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Ω



Ken McFayden leads a workshop during Union's annual Seminary For A Day event.

FACULTY NOTES



Samuel L. Adams



Samuel E. Balentine



Susan Fox



Paul Galbreath



Frances Taylor Gench



Stan Hargraves



Kenneth J. McFayden



Stanley H. Skreslet



Karen-Marie Yust

Samuel L. Adams, associate professor of Old Testament, presented a paper at the University of Naples, Italy, on educational practices in early Judaism and Christianity. He explored the influence of Greek philosophy and literature on some of the key Jewish sages during the two or three centuries before the Common Era. Adams continues to serve as parish associate at Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA, and leads workshops and preaches on wealth and poverty in the Bible, the topic of his recently published book, *Social and Economic Life in Second Temple Judea*.

Samuel E. Balentine, director of graduate studies and professor of Old Testament, published *Have You Considered My Servant Job? Understanding the Biblical Archetype of Patience*. He served as editor-in-chief of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Bible and Theology, 2 Volumes*. Balentine presented "If You Do Not Obey, The Lord Will Send Upon You Disaster, Panic, and Frustration: Legislating Divine Trauma" at Cornell University in March.

Adrian Bird, affiliate assistant professor for church history, Charlotte campus, contributed the following entries for *Religion in Southeast Asia; An Encyclopedia of Faiths and Cultures*: 'Liberation

Theology,' 'Humanization,' 'Education in Southeast Asia,' 'Religion in Burma,' 'Confucianism,' 'Daoism,' and 'Mahasi Sayadaw.' He wrote an essay entitled "Locating M. M. Thomas between Word and World," in the forthcoming Ashgate publication: *The Life and Legacy of M.M. Thomas; 'Only Participants Can Be Prophets.'* Bird gave a four week lecture series at Forrest Lake Presbyterian Church, Columbia, SC, entitled "Shifting Centers of Christianity in the Twentieth Century: Mission, Theology and the Bible in the Midst of a Rapidly Changing World." He led a nine-week lecture series at the Shepherd Center, Columbia, SC, entitled "Christian Encounters with World Religions."

Susan Fox, professor of supervised ministry and director of supervised ministry and vocational planning, participated in the ordination of **Dorothee Tripodi** (M.Div.'08; Th.M.'10), associate director of field education and vocational planning, and in the installation of Rev. Amy Russell at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Glen Allen, VA. She wrote an article, "The Changing Landscape: Placement in the PC(USA)," with Vice-President of Alumni/ae Development **Lynn McClintock** for the April edition of *The Presbyterian Outlook*. Fox co-taught a six-week class this spring entitled "Spirituality in Practice" at the Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Glen Allen, VA.

Paul Galbreath, professor of worship and preaching, was a member of the Wabash Institute 2014-15 Teaching and Learning Colloquy for Mid-Career Theological School Faculty in Mustang Island, TX, and Crawfordsville, IN. He was the preacher at the ordination service for **Charles Freeman** (M.Div.'14) at Grace Presbyterian Church, Gainesville, NC, in February. Galbreath served as retreat leader and preacher for the Shandon Presbyterian Church, Columbia, SC, at Montreat, NC. He was the speaker for the adult class at Williamsburg Presbyterian Church, Williamsburg, VA, and preached at First Presbyterian Church in Roanoke Rapids, NC. Galbreath presented "Tracing the Sacramental Circle: Baptism, Eucharist and Creation Care," at the College Theology Society Annual Conference in Portland OR, in May.

Frances Taylor Gench (M.Div.'82; Ph.D.'88), Herbert Worth and Annie H. Jackson Professor of Biblical Interpretation, led a Spring Saturday Seminar for Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Milwaukee, WI, and preached at the ordination of **Susi Stoll** (M.A.C.E.'06; M.Div.'09) as Immanuel's Associate for Pastoral Care. She also preached at the ordination of **Rachel Jenkins Shepherd** (M.Div.'14) at First Presbyterian Church in Henderson, NC, and preached and led a workshop on "Faithful

Disagreement" at Cary Presbyterian Church in Cary, NC. She led the women's spring retreat for New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., and taught an adult education series on "Reading the Bible with People on the Move" and Philemon.

Stan Hargraves, registrar and United Methodist student advisor, attended the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) Conference in Baltimore, MD. He taught Sunday school at Trinity United Methodist Church, Richmond, VA, and led the United Methodist Theology and Tradition group at the United Methodist Licensing School, Virginia Conference. Hargraves preached at Trinity United Methodist Church, Petersburg, VA. He co-facilitated with **Dorothee Tripodi**, associate director of field education & vocational planning, at a United Methodist provisional elder and deacon discussion group.

Kenneth J. McFayden, dean of faculty, Richmond campus, and professor of ministry and leadership development, preached at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, Suffolk, VA; Choongshin Presbyterian Church, Seoul, South Korea; and Hanil University and Presbyterian Seminary, Jeonju, South Korea. He was the keynote speaker at the Western National Leadership Training Event, Jackson

Hole, WY, and a leader at the Church Transformation Conference, Shenandoah Presbytery, at Massanetta Springs Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA. He was the keynote speaker at the Leadership Development Conference for the Presbytery of Kiskiminetas at Calvary Presbyterian Church, Indiana, PA. McFayden was the keynote speaker and workshop leader at the Three-Presbytery Event for the Presbyteries of John Knox, Milwaukee, and Winnebago at the Kalahari Resort and Convention Center in the Wisconsin Dells. He participated in the Trent Symposium for Newly Ordained Ministers at Second Presbyterian Church, Roanoke, VA, and led a workshop on "Leading into an Adaptive Vision: What's Your Story?" at Union Presbyterian Seminary. McFayden served as congregational leadership for a class at Hanil University and the Presbyterian Seminary in Jeonju, South

Korea. He assisted with strategic planning processes at Presbyterian Church of Jackson Hole, Jackson Hole, WY; Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church, Southern Pines, NC; and in the coordinating body of the Presbytery of New Hope, Raleigh, NC. McFayden published a book review in *Interpretation* on "Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War" by Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini. He participated in the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators annual event in Baltimore, MD, and offered a workshop on "Strategic Planning: Learning to See Anew." He was a participant in the Interim Ministry Consortium meeting of the Presbyterian Church (USA) at Ghost Ranch Conference Center, Abiquiu, NM. McFayden participated in a delegation to South Korea with President **Brian K. Blount**, and Professor **Sung Hee Chang**, director of super-

vised ministry and assistant professor of Christian education, Charlotte campus, to deepen partnerships with Presbyterian Korean Men (Lay Leadership Academy Group), National Presbyterian Korean Women, Presbyterian Church of the Lord in Seoul, Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, Honam University and Theological Seminary, and Hanil University and Theological Seminary.

Stanley H. Skreslet, F. S. Royster Professor of Christian Missions, completed a five-year term as the dean of faculty, Richmond campus, in June 2015. He also served a one-year term as president of the American Society of Missiology.

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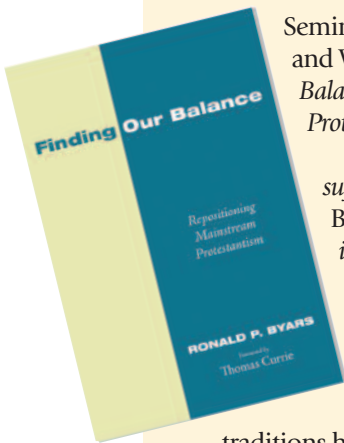
Professor of Biblical Interpretation Frances Taylor Gench reports that she enjoys climbing mountains for recreation. She is seen below on the peak of Mt. Lady Washington in the Colorado Rocky Mountains.





“For me, re-creation is soulful and nourishing. Music, sports, play with a child, travel, immersion in nature’s beauty, a good story: these are precious and renewing gifts,” says John T. Carroll, Harriet Robertson Fitts Memorial Professor of New Testament.

Reclaiming Mainline Protestant Identity



Ronald P. Byars, Union Presbyterian Seminary Professor Emeritus of Preaching and Worship, is the author of *Finding Our Balance: Repositioning Mainstream Protestantism* (Cascade Books 2015).

“Mainstream American Protestantism is suffering from an identity crisis,” said Byars. “We are not fundamentalists, but it is easy to define ourselves in reaction to them.” In *Finding Our Balance*, he argues that the mainline Protestant church has become paralyzed by the shock of a cultural turn toward skepticism. Mainline Protestant

traditions have been tempted to make allies of the skeptics, partly to distance themselves from the religious right and partly to lay claim to credibility in a milieu in which it is accepted to be spiritual but not religious.

In the book’s foreword, Professor Emeritus of Theology Tom Currie, former dean for the Charlotte campus, says “Byars sees a church that wants to be committed to the principles of inclusivity, hospitality, and tolerance without the burden of affirming the heart of the Christian faith, a faith that is scandalously particular and often painfully distinct from the virtues or values that the culture often prizes.”

According to *Finding Our Balance*, this commitment has created a crisis of identity for mainline

Protestant traditions. The historic Protestant principle serves as an enabler when it privileges questioning over affirmation, causing the Church to lose the necessary balance between the two.

American-style generic Protestantism as it has evolved does not have strong enough foundations to withstand cultural pressures. Discovering an identity worth being taken seriously will require revisiting the broad catholic and reforming tradition in order to find an authoritative rather than merely reactive voice. Byars asserts the challenge is theological, but not to academic theology. The challenge rather is to the theology that sustains the local congregation through teaching, certainly, but most pressingly through preaching and worship. The times call for thoughtful and strategic repositioning.

Byars served at Union Presbyterian Seminary following many years in pastoral ministry in both Michigan and Kentucky. A prolific writer, his works include: *Christian Worship: Glorifying and Enjoying God* (The Foundations of Christian Faith) (First Edition, 2000), and *The Sacraments in Biblical Perspective: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2011). Ω



Ron Byars

Reflections on Paul, Women, and the Authority of Scripture

Frances Taylor Gench, the Herbert Worth and Annie H. Jackson Professor of Biblical Interpretation, has recently published *Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts: Reflections on Paul, Women, and the Authority of Scripture* (Westminster John Knox Press, May 2015).

"Gench writes for those whom Scripture is still a living tradition or wish it could be," said **Holly Hearon** (D.Min.'83), T. J. and Virginia Liggett Professor Emerita of Christian Traditions and Professor of New Testament at Christian Theological Seminary. "A scholar with a deep love for the church, she fearlessly takes on some of the most terrifying texts for women in the letters of Paul and proposes ways to respectfully engage them that do not minimize their dangers nor overlook their insights."

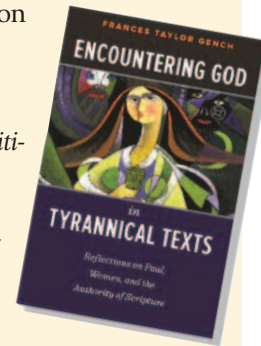
The Bible includes any number of "tyrannical texts" that have proved to be profoundly oppressive in the lives of many people. Among them are Pauline texts that have circumscribed the lives and ministries of women throughout Christian history. What are people who honor Scripture to do with such texts, and what does it mean to speak of biblical authority in their presence? In *Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts*, Gench provides strategies for engaging such texts with integrity and as potential sources of edification for the

church. She also facilitates reflection on the nature and authority of Scripture.

"Gench tackles Paul's thorniest texts about women with trenchant criticism, in the best sense of the word," said F. Scott Spencer, professor of New Testament and biblical interpretation at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. "Steering a judicious course between blatant criticism and blind acceptance, she honestly and respectfully assesses both the harmful and helpful dimensions of these passages for the body of Christ in Paul's day and ours."

Encountering God in Tyrannical Texts provides access to feminist scholarship that can inform preaching and teaching of problematic Pauline texts and encourages public engagement with them.

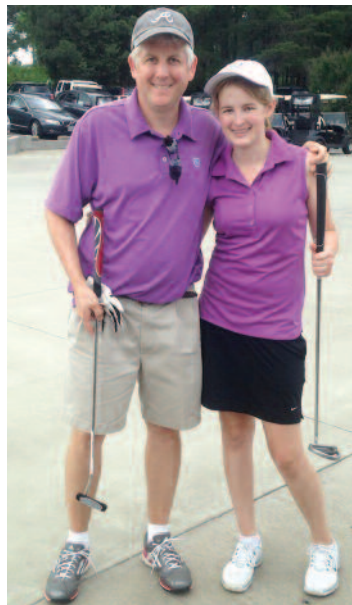
Gench's other published works include *Back to the Well: Women's Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels*, as well as *Hebrews and James* in the Westminster Bible Companion series, all published by Westminster John Knox Press. Ω



Continued from page 7

Karen-Marie Yust, Josiah P. and Anne Wilson Rowe Professor of Christian Education, taught a D.Min. course on "Intergenerational Ministry" at Lancaster Theological Seminary. She presented the workshop "Cultivating Christians: Families and Faith Formation" at the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD. She preached at St. John's United Church of Christ, Richmond, VA, and presented "Speaking of Faith: Young Children's Moral Development and the Cultivation of Child Theologizing" at the Religiosity and Early Childhood Conference in Leuven, Belgium in February.

Yust was installed into the Josiah P. and Anne Wilson Rowe chair of Christian Education in March. Her inaugural address, "Digital Formation: Online Habits and the Cultivation of Spirituality," at Union Presbyterian Seminary, is available online (<http://buff.ly/11ChdWe>). Yust preached at First Congregational Christian Church, Chesterfield, VA, and she published "The Case Study Fishbowl" in *Teaching Theology and Religion* 18.2 and "The Challenges of Fostering an International and Interdisciplinary Conversation" in the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 20.2. Ω



"I believe deeply in 'Godly Play.' It makes me a better parent, teacher, and person. My two primary recreational interests are golf and running," Associate Professor of Old Testament Sam Adams (left, at play with his daughter, Virginia, 14) tells us. "I enjoy the challenge, camaraderie, and natural beauty of golf."

I have been running since I was a kid, and it gives me time for reflection and keeps me in shape. Since coming to Union, I have run six marathons, including the Richmond race three times. I love being outdoors in beautiful Virginia. My son, Charlie (11), and I regularly camp and hike with fellow dads and their sons."

Balentine Editor-in-Chief to Prestigious Ministry Resource

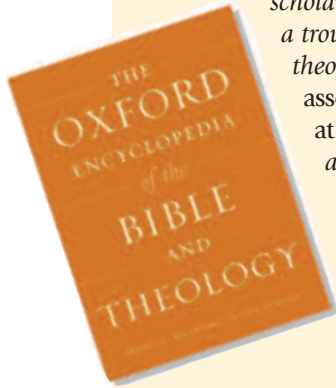
Samuel E. Balentine, Union Presbyterian Seminary professor of Old Testament and director of graduate studies, served as the editor-in-chief for the newly published *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology*.

"This resource will provide pastors, scholars, and other readers with a trove of fresh insights on the Bible's theology," said Samuel L. Adams, associate professor of Old Testament at Union. *"Faithful interpreters will also be able to utilize this witness on key topics in often rapidly changing contexts of ministry."*

The two-volume set is a new encyclopedic treatment

of major theological issues and themes in the Bible that surpasses all similar reference works in scope and significance. Leading scholars provide extensive overviews of key topics. While many entries address the Bible's historical context, others are more rooted in modern issues, featuring biblical perspectives on contemporary concerns such as wealth and poverty, gender/race discrimination, and market economics.

"The Bible impacts so many areas of life because it is a seedbed for theological reflection," said Balentine. *"From ancient authors to contemporary readers, both religious and irreligious, the quest to understand what makes life worth living has long intersected with studying the biblical repository of words (logoi) to, from, and about God (theos)."* Ω



Summer weekends provide the opportunity to slow down and enjoy. Professor of Supervised Ministry Susan Fox is doing just that (featured at right) as she shows off the good-sized rockfish she caught while fishing in her boat on the Potomac River.





Professor of Preaching and Worship Paul Galbreath is a member of the Timbers Army, a supporters' group for the Portland Timbers Football Club who play in Major League Soccer. Can you find him in the photo at left? (hint: look right above the M)

"To be a member of the Timbers Army is to participate in a community of people who love soccer and who feel a deep sense of connection to Portland, OR, and the beauty of the Pacific Northwest." He added, "To stand and sing with the Army throughout a match is an experience of passion, emotion, exultation, and bewilderment (usually at the referees!)."

Contemporary Model of Patience in Ancient Job

In *Have You Considered My Servant Job?* (University of South Carolina Press, February, 2015), **Samuel E. Balentine** examines a rich and varied history of interpretation—beginning with early Greek and Jewish translators and goes on to points of view from around the globe, religious and irreligious. He is professor of Old Testament and director of graduate studies at Union Presbyterian Seminary.

Each chapter begins with a concise analysis of the biblical description of the principal characters in the story—Job, God, the satan figure, Job's wife, and Job's friends, then goes on to explore how subsequent readers have expanded or reduced the story, shifted its major emphases or retained them, read the story as history or as fiction, and applied the morals of the story to the present or dismissed them as irrelevant. Balentine demonstrates how each new generation of readers is shaped by different historical, cultural, and political contexts, which in turn require new interpretations of an old yet continually mesmerizing story.

"In this work Balentine is a provocative, generative, and discerning theologian," said Walter Brueggemann, Old Testament professor emeritus at Columbia

Theological Seminary, in Decatur, Georgia. *"The book is a must reading for any who cares about the human crisis we now face, a crisis of our own making to be sure, but a crisis beyond our making hidden in the depths of evil, alienation, and excessive certitude."*

In addition to this most recent publication, Balentine has also authored numerous books, including *The Hidden God* (Oxford University Press), a commentary on Leviticus in the *Interpretation Bible Commentary Series* and *The Torah's Vision of Worship* (Fortress Press). He recently served as the editor-in-chief for the newly published *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Bible and Theology*. Balentine currently serves as the general editor of the Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary series; series editor of *Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church*; and editor-in-chief of *The Oxford Handbook on Ritual and Theology* (forthcoming). He is presently writing an introduction to *Wisdom Literature*, which will be published by Abingdon Press. Ω

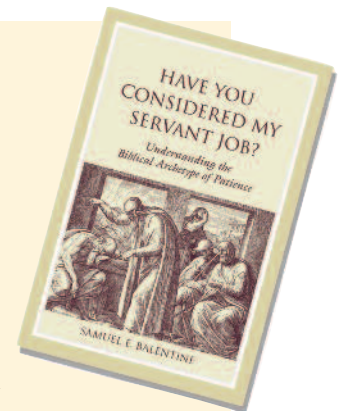




Photo courtesy Montreat/Mike Erdely.

Play: A Theological Perspective on Recreation

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*by Joyce Ann Mercer, Arthur L. Kinsolving Professor of Pastoral and Practical Theology,
Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, Virginia*

SUMMER 2015

An infant smiles as her father hides his face in her blanket. In the brief pause that ensues, the child's smile threatens to fade. Her eyes search for her father's face as a hint of anxiety registers on her features. Suddenly, the father whisks away the blanket to reveal his own smiling face with an energetic cry of "Peek-a-boo!" and the child's eyes light up with delight at finding him again in this age-old form of play.

The game of peek-a-boo between this father and child is easily recognized as play, a joyously expressive way of human relating. Play is a central and lifelong activity, not only among humans but also many other animal species as well. But is play theological? In this brief essay I discuss play as a deeply theological enterprise in three specific dimensions. First, play is, for Christians, re-creation, literally, a renewal and refreshment that ties us to the creative, imaginative work of God. Second, play comprises a crucial part of our vocations in the world. Third, play as transformative practice draws us into new possibilities for personhood and community.

Re-creation: Not a Trivial Pursuit

My town government has a "department of parks and recreation," responsible for caring for spaces and programs people enjoy in their leisure time. In a society obsessed with productivity, recreation's associations with leisure suggests it is unimportant. Every few years a group of city residents argues that recreation is a trivial pursuit compared to other needs for government services.

Fortunately, those responsible for decisions about the balance of human needs in our town recognize the connection between play spaces and the well-being of citizens, and continue to prioritize recreation among other needed services.

In fact, the importance of recreation for human well-being and renewal is anything but trivial. The word recreation means to renew, to revitalize. This speaks to the recovery of vitality and energy, easily lost if life becomes reduced to

work or necessity alone. Recreation is essential for human thriving and the flourishing of communities. And play is one primary means by which human beings re-create. As physician and founder of the National Institute for Play, Stuart Brown puts it, "*Play is called recreation because it makes us new again, it recreates us and our world*" (Brown 2009, 127). Recreational ministries invite people into such experiences of renewal and revitalization.

Theologian Hugo Rahner recognized the importance of recreation when he refuted the idea that whatever is playful lacks significance. Rahner wrote about God's creative activity as play: "*The words 'meaningful but not necessary' bring into focus the essential content of this idea of the playing of God, yet they do not detract in any way from the enormous seriousness of God's creative activity...*" (H. Rahner 1972, 11). Rahner also connected human and divine play:

Icebreakers for Introverts (and others who want to run the other way)

Icebreakers are like vegetables – they are good for you, but they are not always the most appealing thing on the plate. Here are some tips for leading icebreakers that (most) everyone can enjoy.

- For many, sharing as part of a small group is more comfortable than sharing in pairs.
- When you do ask people to share in pairs, control the time and keep it short—try to eliminate unnecessary lag time where people encounter the dreaded pressure of small talk.
- Be mindful of what you ask people to share, keeping it simple and giving choices when possible (you can do this without resorting to multiple choice; asking an open-ended question such as “one thing you’re looking forward to” lets the participant choose how deep they want to go).
- For so many reasons, it’s helpful to keep touching to a minimum, especially when the members of the group are new to one another. Handshakes and high-fives are comfortable for most everyone; the same can not be said of back rubs.
- Try to avoid activities that put one person on the spot to provide an answer; opt instead for activities where groups work together to solve problems or provide answers.
- If you’re asking people to share a reflection on something they’ve just heard, give a moment of silence so that both introverts and extroverts can form their thoughts before sharing.
- Read your particular group; are they experienced in this kind of participation, or is it brand new? Are you reading signs of apprehension, or is non-nervous laughter coming easily? Is your group mixed in age? If so, adjust! Always make sure you have a few more things planned than what you will need to use; that way you can eliminate one part of your plan without coming up short.

Special thanks to my workshop participants at the annual gathering of the Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center Association (pccca.net), and to the Annual Recreation Workshop (recreationworkshop.org) for encouraging this kind of thinking! Ω

Carol Steele (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'05)

“The man [sic] who truly plays is, therefore, first of all, a man in whom seriousness and gaiety are mingled; and, indeed, at the bottom of all play there lies a tremendous secret. We had some intimation of it, surely, when we were considering the creative play of God. All play—just as much as every task which we set ourselves to master with real earnestness of purpose—is an attempt to approximate the Creator, who performs his work with the divine seriousness which its meaning and purpose demand, and yet with the spontaneity and effortless skill of the great artist he is, creating because he wills to create and not because he must” (H. Rahner 1972, 28).

While human play differs from divine play in some important respects (cf. Moltmann 1973), both God and human creatures of God enjoy play. As fourth century bishop Gregory Nazianzen rendered Proverbs 8: 30ff poetically, “*For the Logos on high plays, stirring the whole cosmos back and forth, as he wills, into shapes of every kind*” (in H. Rahner 1972, 23).

Called to Play

Reformed Christian faith confesses that humans are called to live into God’s mission and purposes in the world that God creates, loves, and redeems. Vocation is the term we use to express this sense of call to participation in God’s life. Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann once famously defined vocation as “*finding a purpose for your life that is part of the purposes of God*” (1979, 126).

In many respects, play appears to be the opposite of vocation. Play, after all, is in large measure defined by its purposelessness: notably not goal-directed, play happens for its own sake with no particular agenda. Players who become deeply engaged in their playing often lose track of

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time, lose self-consciousness, and forget all about other obligations, in effect becoming “lost in play.” Human beings, drawn to the pleasure of play, play not because they must but because they may. Emphasizing this same freedom from necessity in God’s play, the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann underscored this freedom grounding the divine play of creation. That is, God does not create because God needs to make something:

“For what purpose did God create the world? This is the question of the adult in the child who does not want to play anymore but needs goals in order to make something respectable of himself. But the creator God is not deus faber. He did not have to create something to realize himself... [H]e has brought forth his creation to enjoy it, to display its splendor and in all things to glorify himself... Play as world symbol goes beyond the categories of doing, having, and achieving and leads us into the categories of being, of authentic human existence, and demonstrative rejoicing in it. It emphasizes creative against the productive”

(Moltmann 1973, 42, 46).

What could play possibly have to do with vocation, then, given vocation’s seeming emphasis on purpose, goal-directed activity, and mission? Embedded within Christian theological understandings of vocation is the idea that God calls God’s people to be most fully who they are. Many

Christian thinkers writing on vocation underscore being fully and truly who we are as synonymous with living out our vocations as Christians in the world. The Quaker spiritual writer Parker Palmer, for example, writes, *“Our deepest calling is to grow into our authentic selfhood.”* John Neafsey speaks of it theologically as the intuition of a sacred purpose for our lives, and, *“from a psychological perspective, callings can be understood as originating in our deepest and most authentic self, our ‘true self’”* (2006, 6).

This understanding is also found in Christianity’s Jewish roots. Jewish existentialist philosopher Martin Buber offers a story about a rabbi named Zusya explaining what God requires of persons in this life: *“In the world to come, says Rabbi Zusya, ‘I shall not be asked, ‘Why were you not Moses?’ Instead I will be asked ‘Why were you not Zusya?’”* (in Neafsey 2006, p. 57).

These perspectives on vocation tie being called by God with living one’s fullest, most authentic personhood. If we accept the claims of theologians such as Rahner and Moltmann that play is a part of the divine character and also a constitutive element of human thriving, then authentic and full human personhood must include play. Seen in this way, playing constitutes a crucial aspect of how we live as God’s called people in the world.

Through play, we imagine spaces in which we...act with courage, are more loving, and live in greater wholeness, than we are able to actualize in our everyday lives. Through play we imaginatively practice being the people God calls us to be in, and for, the world God loves.

Play as Eschatological and Transformational

Another aspect of the call to live in Christ, however, is the assertion that even living our lives to the fullest, humans are not already all that God intends. Living out Christ's call to participate in the love and justice of God is not only a matter of being most fully what we already are, but also entails continually being formed into a people and way of life often radically different from our own inclinations. Play engages in this dimension of vocation too, because it participates not only in human be-ing but also in human becoming.

Stuart Brown, notes, for instance, that our brains hunger for play and use it as a way to grow, change, transform. Brown asserts that the act of playing helps to 'sculpt' the brain. Human brains possess a high degree of plasticity. Accordingly, our brains are continually engaged in creating and pruning networks of cells, in order to effectively confront new tasks posed by human living. In play, people imagine and test situations they have never experienced before and learn from those situations. Brown contends that the act of playing thereby promotes the creation of new connections that did not exist before in the brain. Play activates what he calls "divinely superfluous neurons" (Brown 2009, 41), neurons that did not seem to have a purpose before but are brought into action by play. Once active, these new neural connections "have an

essential role in continued brain organization" (Brown 2009, 41). As Brown says of play's transformative effects, "[W]ith a pinch of pleasure, [play] integrates our deep physiological, emotional, and cognitive capacities. And quite without knowing it, we grow. ... Play is nature's greatest tool for creating new neural networks and for reconciling cognitive difficulties..." (Brown 2009, 104; 127-8).

From a Christian theological perspective, play's transformative capacities can be seen as God's redemptive work in human lives to move us from stasis and fixity to freshness and newness, opening us to new ways of being that can draw us more fully into the life of God. This is the redemptive work of the Spirit, according to Karl Barth (cf. CD IV.3, 941ff), a releasing or "loosening" of persons to become children of God. Jessica DeCou notes that for Barth, relaxation, play and recreation are eschatological gifts of the Spirit who "confers the gift of play. ... Barth argues that, in viewing ourselves as the children of God, we must go further and understand ourselves as little children, as 'God's little children at play'" (2013, 91).

In many forms of play, children (and adults!) imagine themselves to be what they are not: superheroes, animals with magical powers, people able to overcome extreme difficulties. An often-noted characteristic of play is the paradox that play both is and is not what it purports to be. That is, when children at play imagine a world in

which one is a lion, another a princess, another a witch, and another a hunter, in order to play as such they must allow those roles to be true. They must on some level truly become that which the play requires for the time of the game. The minute one of them stops being the lion, witch, princess or hunter, so stops the play. And yet at the same time, they also remain children as such while they play. Play thereby mirrors the phenomenon Christian theology names as “realized eschatology.” Through play, we imagine spaces in which we for example act with courage, are more loving, and live in greater wholeness, than we are able to actualize in our everyday lives. Through play we imaginatively practice being the people God calls us to be in, and for, the world God loves.

Play’s creation of a ‘virtual reality’ allows players to practice dealing with sometimes-difficult life situations and emotions. As play, the consequences of actions and decisions remain imaginary, and thus play offers its participants opportunities to gain skills and capacities for navigating “real life” in all of its complexity. Christians engage in a version of this when we practice liturgically what life might be like in the fully realized reign of God. Christians pass the peace with one another, for example, for that moment experiencing God’s peace in and among them in spite of the ugly budget fight that is going on in the finance committee meetings or the antagonistic feelings held onto from a long-term disagreement. Such liturgical actions allow us to practice being reconciled in Christ, and as we perform them in practice, they form us for participation in the ultimate peace-filled reality of life lived in God’s reign.

In that sense, play and worship both are situated theologically in the realm of eschatology: they allow us to “try on” what we have not yet fully realized, looking toward a way of being that is only partially glimpsed in the present. They relate to what we can become, and not only to what we are now. Playing thus is eschatological, looking toward and anticipating an alternative future in the fullness of God.

A Practical Theology of Play: Recreational Ministries

For the child and father playing peek-a-boo, or the four adults looking across a card table at each other in a bridge game, or two young adults in love making silly faces at each other as they walk through a park, theology may not seem to be the leading category for describing what is going on. And yet, the God who is the Spirit and Giver of Life is also present in our play and calls us to play. Play for God is creation: shaping a cosmos out of nothingness. Play for humans is recreation: a means of respite, renewal, and transformation. Play is a characteristic that connects us to the creativity of God, expresses our vocational calls to live our most full and authentic selves, and participates in our transformation toward God’s future. Ministries that invite people into play are not merely distractions from the troubles of our world, or a means to rest up for the heavy work of “serious” theology. Recreational ministries invite people to live their faith and embody their theology in recreation. Let us play! Ω

See page 31 for sources.

Music as a Bridge

by David Ealy

...music should be a bridge —not only to the power of God— but to the purpose of God to help us remember grace and to connect with each other despite our barriers.



One of the great anxieties (at least among some students) is the anticipation of having to learn Hebrew and Greek. This was at least true for me even though I had already learned German. But the German came within the context of actually living in Germany. The necessity of finding good bread, good deals at the local butcher and making new friends gave me all the motivation I needed to learn as much German as I could as fast as I could.

I would guess that were churches to require folks to learn these beautiful Biblical languages before becoming members, the lines to come through our doors would be shorter. And yet we use all kinds of foreign language in the Church. It's no wonder some outside the Church found

curious our penchant for cannibalism (Let us eat the "Body and the Blood") or even our way of describing God (God is "holy and glorified." What does that really mean?). One reason for the proliferation of the "seeker" churches is their ability to make their theology much more accessible by using language more familiar and vernacular. Martin Luther would be proud.

But one way the Church has found the ability to connect and convey, soothe and syncopate faith has been through music. Even in periods where illiteracy was rampant, music was a tool that could not only teach the theology of the Church but could enliven the imagination linguistically through the craft of melody and lyric. Some of the most beloved hymn tunes had their start in a pub or other popular cultural settings only to be abrogated in their secular purpose for one divine. Music conveys powerfully what many mediums cannot and to lasting effect.

Working in an assisted living facility, I am astounded to observe even dementia patients recalling a song or hymn before remembering a family member. Or the ability of a particular song to transport someone to a whole host of multi-sensory memories that can span space and time ("that song really takes me back"), causing someone to recognize by "feel" whether or not something is "church."

It is this last piece that I suppose is at the heart of what (for me) is a superbly ironic war. A language that is so powerful that it can be understood in multiple cultures, settings, economic conditions, varying levels of literacy and appreciation, is precisely the tool used to bitterly divide congregations along worship lines.

Psalms 150, to me, suggests that music lends its power to the very life-giving activity of God ("Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!"). And yet, in my own church setting, there are few issues that can polarize my congregation faster than what kind of music is appropriate for worship.

In what I have heard some call a "thin place," Montreat Conference Center has been host to a

Engagement through play

Neil Myer (M.A.C.E.'03) interviewed Bill Buchanan (M.A.C.E.'94) for Focus magazine about his involvement in recreational ministry.

This issue of *Focus* is exploring the role of recreation, play, and community-building in ministry settings. I have it on good authority that popsicles have played an important role in the ministry of Asheville Youth Mission (AYM) and Raleigh Youth Mission (RYM). How is that possible?

Popsicles have indeed played an important role in our ministry, as well as games like cornhole, bingo, checkers, chess, and craft activities like bracelet making!

To explain how that is, let me give some brief background. At Asheville Youth Mission (AYM) and Raleigh Youth Mission (RYM), we engage youth groups in mission and service activities that are both physical and relational in nature. Some of our more "physical" ministries include sorting and packing food at the local food bank, painting rooms, gardening, and landscaping. But our more "relational" ministries include planning and leading recreation events for kids who live in the local housing projects, and providing hospitality and recreation for our neighbors who are living on the streets or camping in the surrounding area.

The popsicle ministry in particular is when we hang out with our groups at a couple of local homeless ministries during the summer and hand out popsicles to our friends living on the streets. Especially during the hot summer months, those popsicles are a delightful treat, providing hydration and a boost of energy. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for our youth and adults to have conversations with our sisters and brothers on the street.

Our youth can engage with someone by simply saying, 'Hi there! Would you like a popsicle?' Some folks would have their favorite color, 'You got any blue ones left? You know that's the best flavor!' Some would change it up week to week, 'I'll try an orange one today!' A conversation about choosing a popsicle would lead to exchanging a first name, which leads to hearing a little bit about their story. Our young people walk away from these mission experiences with their minds

and hearts changed about homelessness and poverty. They see homeless people as real people, with names, and smiles and stories. Our sisters and brothers on the streets come away with a cold treat on a hot day, and with the experience of being treated as a guest, a new friend, and a valued human being, as opposed to being constantly avoided or ignored.

What other ways do you incorporate recreation and play into your ministry? How does this help AYM/RYM live out its mission?

Recreation is a crucial part of our ministry at AYM and RYM. Young people naturally have a knack for having fun and building community through games, so it is a gift that they have to share with those in the most need in our community.

Every week throughout the summer in Raleigh our groups will go to Moore Square — a downtown park that's in the middle of a lot of different sectors of the community. Hipster bars and restaurants are on one side, homeless missions on the other, a children's museum on another, as well as the public bus transfer station. Lots of different folks are either passing through the park or hanging out there for a while. We show up each week with a cooler of water, some popsicles, giant Jenga, and cornhole games. Folks who come out of the homeless ministries will drop by to see us. People who depend on the public buses to get around will have an hour to spend, so we invite them to have a seat in the shade and enjoy some cold water. We ask them to join us for a game of cornhole, or just strike up a conversation.

All of us have had those days when everything seems to be a struggle and nothing comes easy. Maybe we get some bad news, all our plans fall



Bill Buchanan, executive director of the Asheville Youth Mission.

through, or little things happen all day that irritate us. But then, sometimes, on those kinds of days someone will do something nice for you — like let you in front of them in line, hold open the door for you, or give you a smile. We like to think that we, through recreation, are providing those kinds of moments for folks in our community who have the hardest time every day, and who need our compassion and kindness the most.

Enjoying some hospitality or a moment of fun and games reminds them that life is to be enjoyed. It means that someone wants you around. Someone wants to include you in their fun. I think that's a little taste of what Jesus means in John's gospel when he says that he came to bring life, and life abundant.

What have been some of the most memorable reactions from neighbors when a group uses games and other recreation techniques as a way to reach out?

There are so many it is hard to narrow it down! Here are a few:

- At Moore Square in Raleigh, it didn't take long for cornhole to become a big hit. A number of folks who are at the park are there daily — waiting for their bus to show up, resting during their lunch hour, etc. There is one fellow, I'll call him Sam, who seemed to be there most times RYM had a group there. Within the first few weeks he came to expect our groups to show up. And he LOVES playing cornhole with our groups. So from then on, whenever he would see us walking down the street toward the square with all our gear, he would shout from across the way, 'Hey! Hey! I got first game, alright? Someone's gonna' play me first game!' It's funny. We always brief our groups before going out to any worksite. And with these kinds of assignments we often say things like, 'Your job is to make others feel welcome, comfortable and included.' But usually these kids are still a little nervous about interacting with this many total strangers. Sam ends up making THEM feel right at home — he lets them know that their gift of play is appreciated and valued.
- Another story that stands out happened a few years back in Asheville. There is a homeless

ministry on the west side of downtown that we go to every week and set out blankets under a big shade tree. We provide popsicles, checkers, and chess. We make bracelets with threads and beads. There was a young couple we saw a lot. I'll call them Audrey and Shane. They had young twin boys that were about 18-to-24 months old. This family had been homeless for several months and was living out of one of the local shelters. I had noticed for weeks that Audrey and Shane were very watchful and uptight when it came to the boys and their safety. They had good reasons. Homeless shelters and the streets can be dangerous places, especially for young ones. The twins were always sitting in their strollers and were never allowed to get out and run around because of their parents' concern for their safety. But after a few weeks of the family being with us under the tree, in a relaxed atmosphere with lots of baby sitter aged youth around who loved their kids, the parents started to relax a bit. Audrey started letting the boys out of the stroller when we were there. The twins would gnaw on popsicles, and the youth would make matching bracelets for them. You could see the parents relax, knowing their kids were in good hands for a bit, running around and playing with our youth. Shane would end up playing Jenga with us. Audrey started telling the AYM staff a little more about their situation. For an hour a week they got to feel like a regular family enjoying some outdoor playtime and less like worried parents surviving the streets with their toddlers.

- AYM has a longstanding relationship with Children First (CF) of Buncombe County. CF provides after-school programming and summer day camps for kids living in government and subsidized housing throughout the Asheville community. Every summer AYM provides recreation events for their campers. One of those events is hosting all the kids and the CF staff at Lake Powhatan, a recreation lake nearby. Our AYM youth groups plan and lead water games for the kids to play. The games often have a theme of team-building or solving problems as a group.

Every year there are stories that come back to us from the CF staff about how our water day or other recreation events made a big impact on a kid in their group. Sometimes it is about a shy kid who finally came out of her shell because of a day playing games with us at the lake. Sometimes it is a kid who had always been “too cool” to participate in anything, but seeing our AYM youth having so much fun caused him to decide he wanted to join in, too. A lot of these kids in CF programs are facing serious obstacles in their lives. But when they are with AYM, they get to leave all that behind and just play like any other kid. It reminds me of what Jesus said in Matthew’s gospel, “Come to me, you who are weary, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” These kids are carrying some serious burdens. But when they play with AYM, their burden is lightened for a while.

It is very likely that there are some in church and seminary communities that are skeptical about the relevance of recreation in ministry. Given your experience, how would you respond to that skepticism?

I have found that thriving church communities are ones that know how to enjoy fellowship and play together — whether that is a church dinner, church sports leagues, games at a church retreat; or throwing a party for the choir, the staff, or a Sunday School class. Recreation is more than “amusement” or “diversion,” it is all about breaking down barriers between us and creating community. When one of our youth is sitting down to play a game of chess with one of our friends from the streets, they are no longer “housed” and “homeless” or “poor” and

“rich.” They are just “mind” and “mind,” “person” and “person.” It reminds me a lot of what Paul said in Galatians, that we are no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female, for we are one in Christ. AYM providing a game of chess is a way of emphasizing that reality.

When our young people provide hospitality, inclusion, and a moment of fun for our sisters and brothers who are living in poverty or on the streets, it is a way of saying that they too are valued and worth including. It is a way of saying that regardless of economics, social status, or the challenges in their lives, they are still seen as full-fledged humans, just like everybody else. That kind of humanization makes a huge difference in all our lives. Once you see someone as fully human, as just like you but living with different circumstances, how can you let them continue to suffer from hunger and homelessness? You want to do something about it. So when many of our groups go back to their home contexts, they continue their mission and service work with agencies in their own communities. They spend the year raising money for local homeless missions, or they start scheduling mission projects to participate in once a month. It reminds me of Acts, when the early church would gather together their resources and then distribute them to those who had need. All of this... and it begins with a young person simply going up to a stranger and saying, ‘Hi! Would you like a popsicle? You wanna’ play a game with me?’ Ω

Bill Buchanan (M.A.C.E.’94) is a Christian educator and ordained minister. He is the executive director for Asheville Youth Mission (AYM) in Asheville, North Carolina. Raleigh Youth Mission (RYM) in Raleigh, North Carolina was founded in 2013 as an expansion of AYM. He grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina, and has worked in churches in Virginia and North Carolina engaging in ministry with youth and mission.

Neil Myer (M.A.C.E.’03) is director of discipleship at Eastminster Presbyterian Church in East Lansing, Michigan, and director of UKirk@MSU, a Presbyterian campus ministry serving students at Michigan State University. He enjoys finding new and creative ways for God’s children of all ages to be involved in the ministry of the church. He loves being part of the connectional nature of the PC(USA) and has served as a leader in a number of capacities including Montreat Youth Conference and Presbyterian Youth Triennium.

On your mark! Get Set!

by Lynn Turnage

ON YOUR MARK! ...GET SET! ...

We won! WE WON! WE WON!

You hear it at ball games and maybe in your den near the video games. You see it on TV and hear it at school or work the next morning after the big collegiate game the night before.

Competition, by Wiktionary's definition, is the action of competing or a contest or a prize or reward. There are many dissertations on the purpose, value, or challenges of competition and competing. So for most of this conversation about recreation and competition, I will assume that competition and competing are between two or more people, groups/teams, and/or institutions/organizations. An individual or group seeks to win and, therefore, someone else will lose.

There is value in having a goal and achieving it. It can give us direction and energy and help us figure out the steps it takes to get to the goal. The conversation can get theological when we look at the cost of the winning and losing. Winners can get the best or the most or the title. Losers lose. They aren't the best, don't have the most, or don't get the same recognition.

There is much that we compete with, or against, in our growing up years. I have seen children as young as two or three recognize and have some kind of response to someone getting something they don't have and want.

The second and third grade children with whom I work can explain "competition" and invariably it is something like 'when someone wins and someone loses.' Their examples often include schooling and sports. Remember "choosing teams" at recess? Remember that feeling of being chosen last or the look on a friend's face when they were chosen last? A third grader I know came running up to me saying, with great relief, "I got into Gifted and Talented! I got in! I got

in!" And it goes on from there: young people are prepared for mid-term and end-of-the-year tests and standards. There is pressure to be "the best" in whatever we do. This may not happen for those of us reading this journal, but the culture within which we live often assumes we are working for making the basketball team, being first chair in the orchestra, team captain, head cheerleader, in the top ten percent of the class, getting into the best school, getting the right job, making good money, buying a good house...it can go on and on.

Yes, some of this is arguable, but this is also our culture.

The mental image of competition and winning is a pyramid. With competition, we strive to be at the top of this pyramid. The Gospel doesn't work this way. As Christians we are called to Koinonia. We are called to live in community. Contrary to the pyramid, community is a circle. Everyone has something to share, be a part of, and give. The "running the race" is doing the best we can, not necessarily winning.

So when we experience recreation as Christians or in the church, what is it that drives us? What is the real goal? What is the purpose of this recreation?

Looking at scripture: we have "the first shall be last and the last will be first" (parable of the rich young man, Matthew 19; laborers in the vineyard, Matthew 20) versus Paul saying "run the race" (1 Corinthians 9:24; Hebrews 12:1). Paul also says "in our weakness, Christ is strong" (1 Corinthians 4:10ff). The Matthew passages instruct us on participating in the life that Jesus calls us to, no matter the reward. The 1 Corinthians passages indicate how we should participate—running as a winner

Loved into the community of faith: building community with children

Children are loved into the community of faith. We learn best about the love and grace of God by being a part of a faith community where we can experience that love and grace first-hand.

So how in the world can we make this happen in church when we probably do not see the same children every week? Knowing one another is the first and most critical piece. This takes time, energy, and intentionality. Playing and praying together are a huge part of building the bridges of connection. Once there is a connection between the children and adults, the connection to God can be built.

Knowing each other's names is key. Name tags and name games, using each other's names often and regularly are all important. Being silly together and working on remembering each other's names is worth every minute. Once the names are learned, finding common ground is another good starting place. What foods do different people enjoy, or have tried? What subjects in school are interesting or challenging? What hobbies or music do some enjoy? Keep looking for common ground and continue helping children see the connections in each other.

In our educational system full of testing and results and product, just being silly and playful becomes even more important. Play some every week. Let the children laugh, keep changing the point system, if there is one, so there is no way to keep score. This helps children learn that sometimes the point is just to have fun.

Help children see the connection between play, laughter, joy, and God's presence. This takes time and practice. God is in our play. When all are included, when no one is the object of a joke, when everyone is having fun, this is the moment when trust is built. It is a kingdom moment. God is there.

Lastly, ask the children for prayer concerns each week. Listen well, don't try to fix. Take each concern seriously and pray with humility for God to stay close to each child. Children of God of all ages need to know they are loved for who they are. The hope is with that love, they then reach out in love to others. Ω

Sophie Maness (M.A.'88) is the director of Christian education at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Tennessee. As a certified Christian educator, Sophie has enjoyed working with children and parents for over twenty years.

might, not necessarily to win. Cultural expectations can call us to win for our sakes and personal goals.

As Christians, we are called to live in community. In Scripture, it's not about being fast, strong, or first.

The children's book, *Hope For The Flowers*, illustrates this. The caterpillars, Stripe and Yellow, think they are to follow the crowd and climb to the top of the column. There is something up there to achieve or receive. But Yellow does not see the value of the climb, or the unknown, and climbs down. Yellow becomes a butterfly and comes back to show Stripe, who joins her. Life is not about getting to the top, it's about being who we are called to be.

It's our responsibility as Christians to help check the place and purpose of competition. If we can realign our culture's view of competition and winning, we can focus on the intangible, intrinsic rewards, the ultimate prize...being recreated as Children of God. Ω

Lynn Turnage (M.A.'82) is the director of children and family ministries at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. She holds a Doctorate of Educational Ministry (Columbia Theological Seminary) in children, families and worship. In addition to having served other churches, Turnage has been on staff at Montreat Conference Center. She has two daughters and her mother lives with them.

Cont. from page 18

variety of music experiences that all seem to point to the creative power of God. From dances Glenn Bannerman has led that formed new friendships for me, to gathering together with colleagues to form an iPad band for the youth conference, to simply hiking the Lookout mountain trail and singing a hymn together at the summit—all of these life-bearing moments point to a truth that I believe the Church should take greater pains to embrace.

Music has the power to harness the breath of God.

Whether it is breathing life into the memories of a person, breathing understanding into people with various educational backgrounds, breathing peace to a grieving crowd at a funeral, breathing joy at the celebration of a marriage, or breathing awkward enthusiasm to untrained dancing feet, God's activity can be visible in the rhythms and harmonies of this gift of music.

Philippians 4 invites us to frame our thinking in excellence. How much room is there for grace if the endgame is excellence or for things to be "right"? And who decides? I will admit my own bias against the current (so-called) Contemporary Christian Music industry and what I regard as a profound lack of representation for themes of justice or our responsibility in mercy, for example. Yet as Paul argues earlier in this same letter, perhaps a better attitude on my part would be to rejoice that "Christ is preached." Music should not be a place that divides or brings about death. Music should be a place that enriches, enlivens, and invigorates. If anything, music should be a bridge—not only to the power of God—but to the purpose of God to help us remember grace, and to connect with each other despite our barriers. Ω

David Ealy (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'01) is pastor and head of staff at Hawfields Presbyterian Church in Mebane, North Carolina.



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I look around the room and see small tight circles of adults, teens, children and toddlers with their hands in the air, a balloon bouncing above their heads and smiles on all their faces. If I were to describe what Intergenerational Recreation is, that would be it! This mix of people who are in this moment letting themselves just be. The great grandparents encouraging the children and the teenagers helping the toddlers. I find that what gives me the most joy is enabling all God's children — young and old alike— to discover the joy of play.

Intergenerational recreation ministry allows for me to work with a group of people who are varying in age and life experiences; who know each other on one level but through games, dancing, art and creative bible study, they begin to break down some of those walls and really get to know each other on a different level.

I have become increasingly aware of the value of intergenerational play over the past decade as the pace of our busy lives makes it more and more difficult to value play and to spend time in community-building relationships. Our society places such high value on grades, jobs, income, the right college and other ways of measuring who we are, but really what does that say about us? Is it how we define each other and is it helpful in how we build relationships? We have become a society where, on one hand, we stay connected through social media and, on the other hand, we have little time face-to-face to enjoy one another. Brene Brown puts it like this *"Laughter, song, and dance create emotional and spiritual connection; they remind us of the one thing that truly matters when we are searching for comfort, celebration, inspiration, or healing: We are not alone."*

When we begin to risk exposing ourselves to those times when in a moment of play we forget everything else and are just present in the moment, we become fully aware of God's grace and that we are fulfilling scripture by living an abundant life. Playing together opens doors for relational growth and the development of cohesive relationships that can only strengthen the faith community. What a calling it is then to bring people together through play!

I'll leave you with another image of the impact intergenerational play has had on my call as a recreation leader. The setting is a church-wide retreat at a place set apart. The group varies in ages from six-months-old to 88-years-old. It's Saturday

Intergenerational Play

by Beth Gunn

I have become increasingly aware of the value of intergenerational play over the past decade as the pace of our busy lives makes it more and more difficult to value play and to spend time in community-building relationships.

morning and I've been asked to present a session on play. We spend the morning—everyone, babies and all—playing games, dancing a little bit, sharing our stories in small groups. There's lots of laughter, lots of smiling, lots of shouts of joy. Finally, the small groups set about figuring out for themselves why we spent the morning playing. Discerning the value of all of this fun and games. But we don't do this with pen and paper. We do it with popsicle sticks. Each person in the small group takes a handful of colorful sticks and creates a picture or a word expressing how they felt during the time together. Even the littlest ones can participate and what each person brings to the group has value. Everyone has a chance to share their creation and then the groups each pray using their popsicle creations as their prayer of Thanksgiving. There are pictures of stars, sunshine, smiley faces, crosses, circles, churches, stick figures holding hands, hearts, the word LOVE – these are pictures of the Kingdom of God on Earth.

This is why I play! Ω

Beth Gunn is a recreation leader from Western North Carolina. She is the associate for youth for the Presbytery of Western North Carolina with a particular emphasis in the field of recreation ministry. She lives in the mountains of North Carolina with her husband and dog, and is the daughter of Glenn Bannerman (M.R.E.'57), Emeritus Professor of Recreation and Outdoor Education.

The



GARGOYLE speaks

“Time to Play”



E. Carson Brisson

The hum of event monitors.

Meals less eaten than eaten.

Bruised clouds in the window.

A Dragon Tree in one corner of the room.

Overhead lighting reflecting off perfectly polished floors.

Dappled time.

The faint scent of citrus.

Official touch.

Decisions that navigate by the stars, rising and setting, of personal choice, medical judgment, family systems, institutional protocols, liability, logic, fear, compassion, exhaustion, remembered regrets and recalled joys, frustration, insight, anxiety, and hope, to name a few.

The sound of words in search of their meanings.

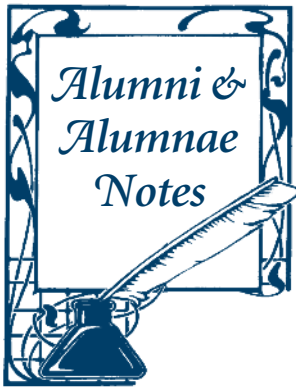
All of these are real, but they are not her world.

Her world is altogether other, one she creates, out of the depths of all else, from the random increments of strength that present themselves to her at her bedside, unseen, unheard, and unmonitored, rags of time in search of their purpose. With both hands she welcomes and gathers them. She calls them her own. She clothes them in the robes of her soul against the moments for which they have been sent, moments in which, of all last things, first she plays.

Such moments may come as a soft, unexpected respite from pain. They may come as clearly recollected words from an old friend's letter, and as memories of the dance that followed, or of why a dance did not follow. They may come in the form of holding a visiting hand one sweet second longer and tighter than it expected to be held. They may come as the sudden return and surprising rise of appetite and pleasure in response to a flawless peach. They may come as a spoken kindness, even if necessitating extra breaths, to someone who has long abandoned any expectation of tenderness. They may come as a cogent thought of firm resolve for those who are most hated, or as a prayer that moves heaven and earth for those who most hate.

On this day, they will come as the fifteen-minutes-at-most visit of a neighbor's children. In their visit she will play. She will call early in the morning for her blue gown, no other, whether it is easy to change into it or not. She will have her tiny mirror held before her as she combs her thick, surprisingly black hair, whether she can still see her image in the mirror or not. She will be the source of three servings of pudding (butter scotch) that appear at precisely the right instant, whether butter scotch pudding is on the hospital menu or not. She will hug and be hugged by, ask an ark full of questions to, and speak warm blessings upon her young guests, whether they and the doctors of medicine, law, and religion who care for and about her comprehend these sacraments or not.

And it is at such moments that event monitors, uneaten meals, bruised clouds, Dragon Trees in their corners, lights falling from above onto polished floors below, dappled time, scents of citrus, official touch, imperfect personal, professional, family, and institutional decisions, and the sound of words in search of their meanings, to name a few, may know that in their midst she has caused time to play. From this knowing they rise. In this knowing they grow voices. To this knowing they bear witness. By this knowing they are made glad. Ω



1950s

Richard L. Morgan (M.Div.'53; Th.M.'56; Ph.D.'66) served on the editorial board for, and contributed to, *Seasons of Caring: Meditations for Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregivers*, an interfaith book of meditations including original selections from faith leaders and care specialists.

1960s

C. Eric Mount, Jr. (B.D.'60) continues to serve on the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In May, Eric lectured at the Raleigh Area Theological Society and the Theology Forum at White Memorial Presbyterian Church, Raleigh, NC.

Matthew Whong (B.D.'63; D.Min.'80) and his wife, Dixie, recently went to Seoul, Korea to celebrate their golden anniversary. During their stay, Matthew preached at several churches including the Kum Ran Church, which is the largest Methodist Church in the world.

Richard J. Keever (M.Div.'67; D.Min.'80) was appointed pastor emeritus of Bayside Presbyterian Church, Virginia Beach, VA. He retired as Bayside's pastor in 2008 after serving the congregation for 26 years.

1970s

Charles M. "Charlie" Durham (D.Min.'75) and his wife, Sandy, were honored by First Presbyterian Church Tuscaloosa, AL, which named the youth outdoor chapel, Durham Chapel, in their honor.

Marilyn Hein (M.A.'75) is the 2015 recipient of the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) Life Achievement Award.

1980s

Laura Wells Holbrook (M.A.'80) is the interim director of Christian education at First Presbyterian Church, Lynchburg, VA.

John M. Scholer (D.Min.'80; Th.M.'81; Ph.D.'88) is the interim pastor for College Presbyterian Church on the campus of Hampden-Sydney College and the chaplain for Hampden-Sydney College, Farmville, VA.

Fred A. Holbrook (D.Min.'82) is the interim senior pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Lynchburg, VA.

Daniel W. Wiard (M.A.'82) is the director of Christian education at Salisbury Presbyterian Church, Midlothian, VA.

Barbara S. Chalfant (M.A.'87) is the associate presbyter for mission for the Presbytery of West Virginia.

1990s

Jeffrey Paschal (M.Div.'90) contributed homiletical perspective essays on Luke 23:50-56 and Luke 24:1-12, published in *Feasting on the Gospels: Luke, Volume 2*. He also participated in an interfaith (Christian, Jewish, Muslim) panel discussion at Guilford College, Greensboro, NC.

Grace E. Boyer (M.A.'92) is the transitional pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Hendersonville, NC.

Kathy L. Dawson (M.A.'92) is the 2015 Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE) Educator of the Year.

Tim Beach-Verhey (M.Div.'94) is assistant professor of religious studies at St. Andrews University, Laurinburg, NC.

Update your contact information. Have you moved? Changed your e-mail? Send us your news! **Digital photos are welcome!**

Please inform us at:

Alumnae Office
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3401 Brook Road
Richmond, VA 23227

Or e-mail:
Associate Vice President for Alumnae Development Lynn McClintock
lmcclintock@upsem.edu

Phone: 804-278-4382

This issue of Focus includes information received through June 21, 2015.

David J. Duquette (M.Div.'94) was elected moderator of Lehigh Presbytery in November 2014.

Louise E. "Lou" Pennebaker (M.A.'96) is the director of children and family ministries at First Presbyterian Church of Coeur d'Alene, ID.

Donna B. Coffman (M.Div.'97; M.A.'97) contributed to *Seasons of Caring: Meditations for Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregivers*, an interfaith book of meditations including original selections from faith leaders and care specialists.



Wendy Workman Duncan (M.A.C.E.'04) is director of adult education at First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro, NC.

Stefan Pomrenke (M.A.T.S.'05) and his wife, LeeAnn, welcomed their daughter, Margareta "Greta" Florence Pomrenke, born on October 1, 2014.

Michelle M. Hwang (M.A.C.E.'06) is the associate pastor at Central Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, GA.

Kate Fiedler Boswell (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'07) is associate pastor for adult ministries at University Presbyterian Church, Chapel Hill, NC.

Eugene H. LeCouteur, II (M.Div.'08) was ordained on December 6, 2014.

Dorothee Tripodi (M.Div.'08; Th.M.'10) was ordained at the Virginia Annual Conference in Roanoke, VA, on June 20. Dorothee continues to serve in extension ministry as associate director for

supervised ministry and vocational planning on Union's Richmond campus and as affiliate pastor at Westover Hills UMC, Richmond, VA.



Rachel Butler Greiner (M.Div.'10) is a staff chaplain at Memorial University Medical Center, Savannah, GA.

Gina Maio (M.Div.'10) is head of school at Church Hill Academy, Richmond, VA.

Giani Manieri (M.Div.'10) is pastor at Oakwood United Methodist Church, Columbia, VA.

Robin Teasley (M.Div.'10) is rector at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Blackstone, VA.

Denise Watkins (M.Div.'10) is pastor at Walmsley Boulevard United Methodist Church, Richmond, VA.

Naama Zahavi-Ely (Ph.D.'10) is a producer for the Opera in Williamsburg and adjunct professor of classical studies at The College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA.

Jason Callahan (M.Div.'11) married Erin Reichardt on November 1, 2014.

Michael Clang (M.Div.'11) is a chaplain at Good Samaritan Hospital, Lafayette, CO.

Jim Lunde (M.Div.'11) and his wife, Marie, welcomed their daughter, Clara Elizabeth, who was born on April 16, 2015.

Alumni/ae Giving Back

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Howard Dudley (M.Div.'12) and **Meg Lindsay Dudley** (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'12) welcomed their daughter, Lindsay Grace, born on April 11, 2015.

Jill Van De Water Isola (M.Div.'12) was installed and ordained as the associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Hartsville, SC, on January 25, 2015.

Rachel Mastin (M.Div./M.A.C.E.'12) is the pastoral assistant for Christian education and youth at Bon Air Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA.

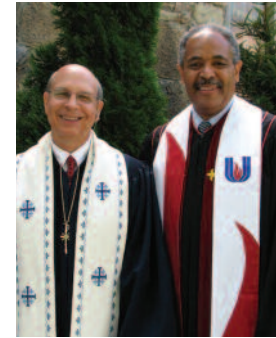
Merri Alexander (M.Div.'13) serves as the senior director for strategic partnership development at the Montreat Conference Center, Montreat, NC.

Inger Manchester (M.Div.'13) was installed and ordained as the pastor of Fieldstone Presbyterian Church, Mooresville, NC, on September 21, 2014.

Karen Witt (M.Div.'13) was ordained November 1, 2014 and is the covenant pastor of Providence Presbyterian Church, Gum Spring, VA.

Will Davis (M.Div.'14) was ordained and installed as the minister of Burgaw Presbyterian Church, Burgaw, NC.

Charles Freeman (M.Div.'14) was ordained and installed as pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church, Gainesville, FL, on February 8, 2014. Ω



President Brian K. Bount recently visited Banner Elk Presbyterian Church, Banner Elk, NC. He is shown above with Pastor **Feild Russell** (M.Div.'87).



On The Shelf

Recent books by Union Presbyterian Seminary alumni/ae

Richard L. Morgan (M.Div.'53; Th.M.'56; Ph.D.'66), *At the Edge of Life: Conversations When Death Is Near*, Nashville, Tennessee: Upper Room Books, 2014.

John B. Rogers, Jr. (B.D.'67; Th.M.'68; D.Min.'77), *With All Our Prayers: Walking with God through the Christian Year*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015.

Bill Caruso (M.A.'79), editor, *Appointed To Serve: 100 Years of Memories*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform 2014.

E. Perry Neel (M.Div.'82), *The One-Legged Barber*, Staunton, Virginia: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

Jeffrey P. Paschal (M.Div.'90), *Feasting on the Gospels—Luke, Volume 2: A Feasting on the Word Commentary*, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014.

Rita Boyer (M.A.C.E.'10), with Henry Simmons, Professor Emeritus of Christian Education, Union Presbyterian Seminary, *Bringing Good News: 40 Stories of Congregations and the Ministries that Transformed Them*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

1930 ■

Gordon Fleming Garlington, Jr. (B.D.'39) of Canoga Park, CA, died May 15, 2015. †

Marion McClelen Notestein (Diploma '39) of Bradenton, FL, died January 22, 2015. †

1940 ■

Jane Smith Shields (M.R.E.'41) of Staunton, VA, died October 25, 2014. †

Miriam Bedinger Williamson (M.R.E.'43) of Seymour, TN, died April 16, 2014. †

Mary Frances Ogden Foreman (M.R.E.'44) of Black Mountain, NC, died September 26, 2014. †

Margie Lee Shick (M.R.E.'44) of Belton, TX, died January 15, 2015. †

Kenneth Joseph Foreman, Jr. (B.D.'45) of Montreat, NC, died April 15, 2015. †

Edward Daniel McCreary (Th.M.'45; Th.D.'51) of Richmond, VA, died November 10, 2014. †

Roy Talmadge Sherrod, Jr. (B.D.'46; Th.M.'50) of Dallas, TX, died May 25, 2013. †

Charles Hobart Sides, Jr. (B.D.'46) of Clinton, SC, died May 10, 2015. †

Emily Lewis Dillard (M.R.E.'48) of Clinton, SC, died May 8, 2015. †

Harold Martin Fuss (UTS 1947-'48) of Chatham, VA, died September 17, 2014. †

Burney Hay Gardner (PSCE 1948) of Asheville, NC, died December 2, 2013. †

Ace L. Tubbs (M.Div.'48) of Black Mountain, NC, died February 8, 2015. †

Allison F. Williams (Th.M.'48) of Atlanta, GA, died December 13, 2014. †

Betty Jean Cannon (B.R.E.'49) of Willow Street, PA, died January 30, 2013. †

1950 ■

John Oscar Barksdale (B.D.'50; Th.M.'55; Th.D.'59) of Gordonsville, VA, died February 3, 2015. †

Mary Stuart Hatch Taylor (M.A.'50) of Easley, SC, died March 17, 2015. †

Herbert Petrie Mitchell (UTS 1950-'51) of Nashville, TN, died June 29, 2013. †

Katherine Ellen Boyer Moore (M.A.'51) of Black Mountain, NC, died November 7, 2014. †

William M. Clark (B.D.'52; Th.M.'54) of Southern Pines, NC, died April 10, 2015. †

John M. Coffin, Jr. (B.D.'52) of Austell, GA, died November 9, 2014. †

William Elbert Lytch (B.D.'52) of San Antonio, TX, died September 12, 2014. †

Norma Faye Brake Cook (M.A.'54) of Asheville, NC, died September 11, 2014. †

John S. Lyles (B.D.'54; Th.M.'58) of Davidson, NC, died May 23, 2015. †

Ann Stephenson Warmath (PSCE 1953-'54) of Greensboro, NC, died November 2, 2014. †

Richard E. Hildebrandt (M.Div.'55) of Hillsborough, NC, died January 27, 2015. †

Clifton E. Dixon, Jr. (M.Div.'57; Th.M.'58) of Russellville, KY, died December 6, 2014. †

Charles E. von Rosenberg (B.D.'58) of Rock Hill, SC, died April 26, 2015. †

David Charles Stover (B.D.'58) of Black Mountain, NC, died July 29, 2014. †

William Holt Terry (M.Div.'58; D.Min.'85) of Davidson, NC, died March 27, 2015. †

Donald Shelton Wilkinson (M.R.E.'58; UTS 1972-'73) of Harrisonburg, VA, died January 7, 2015. †

Kathleen Rausin Moses (M.C.E.'59) of Fayetteville, GA, died April 13, 2015. †

Nancy Cleveland White (UTS 1957-'59) of Lynchburg, VA, died November 4, 2014. †

1960 ■

Dolores Berry Gau (B.C.E.'60) of Richmond, VA, died April 18, 2015. †

William Forrest Ansell (B.D.'62; M.A.'70; D.Min.'73) of Elizabeth City, NC, died November 27, 2014. †

George M. Conn, Jr. (B.D.'62) of Louisville, KY, died October 4, 2014. †

Calvin Graham Reid, Jr. (B.D.'62) of Pawley's Island, SC, died October 1, 2014. †

Floyd G. Meredith (B.D.'65) of Riverside, NJ, died June 17, 2012. †

Jerry C. Vuncannon (M.Div.'66) of Sanford, NC, died October 1, 2014. †

Merlin P. Tiwari (M.C.E.'68) of Richmond, VA, died November 4, 2014. †

Aileen Shifflett Roberts Ballenger (PSCE 1969) of Gastonia, NC, died November 9, 2014. †

Jerry David Harrah (M.Div.'69) of Hurricane, WV, died April 11, 2015. †

Robert Anthony Young, Jr. (M.Div.'69; D.Min.'73) of Richmond, VA, died February 14, 2015. †

1970 ■

Chester Joseph Minarcik, Jr. (M.Div.'70) of Moorestown, NJ, died April 24, 2015. †

M. Ott Davis (D.Min.'73) of Chester, VA, died January 28, 2015. †

M. Dean Patton (D.Min.'73) of Warren, PA, died March 24, 2013. †

William LaClair Arthur (D.Min.'77) of Greenville, SC, died October 24, 2014. †

Doris A. Henderson (M.A.'77) of Fort Washington, MD, died June 16, 2014. †

1980 ■

Leon H. Matthias (M.A.'82) of Bronx, NY, died September 23, 2013. †

George B. Barnett (M.A.'84) of Pass Christian, MS, died January 19, 2014. †

Charles Thomas Llewellyn (PSCE 1984-'85) of Hammond, LA, died September 21, 2012. †

1990 ■

Faye Cinaka Rivers (M.A.'95) of Johns Island, SC, died December 25, 2014. †

Jeannette Ford Baggs (M.Div.'98) of Williamsburg, VA, died January 9, 2015. †

Timothy Frederick Simpson (Th.M.'99) of Jacksonville, FL, died April 7, 2015. †

2000 ■

Robert Allen Crump, Jr. (M.Div.'04) of Richmond, VA, died January 23, 2015. †

When you learn of the death of an alumnus or alumna of Union Presbyterian Seminary, please inform the Alumni/ae Office. Call 804-278-4382 or email lmclintock@upsem.edu.

This issue of Focus includes information received through June 21, 2015.

Faculty and Staff ■

Syngman Rhee (1931-2015), former Moderator of the PC(USA), served as Visiting Professor of Mission and Evangelism and director of the Asian American Ministry Center at Union Presbyterian Seminary from 1998 until his retirement in 2013. Dr. Rhee died January 14, 2015. †

Samuel K. Roberts (1944-2015), Professor Emeritus of Theology and Ethics, died February 24, 2015. He served as the Anne Borden and E. Hervey Evans Professor of Theology and Ethics at Union from 2000 until his retirement in 2014. †

Cont. from page 17

SOURCES FOR "PLAY: A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON RECREATIONAL MINISTRY" BY JOYCE MERCER:

Brown, Stuart with Christopher Vaughan (2009). *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. New York: Avery/Penguin.

Brueggemann, Walter (1979). "Covenanting as Human Vocation," *Interpretation* 33:2, April 1979.

DeCou, Jessica (2013). *Playful, Glad, and Free: Karl Barth and a Theology of Popular Culture*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Moltmann, Jürgen (1973). *Theology of Play*. London: SCM Press.

Neafsey, John P. (2006). *A Sacred Voice is Calling: Personal Vocation and Social Conscience*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.

Rahner, Hugo (1972). *Man at Play*. New York: Herder and Herder.

Joyce Ann Mercer is currently the Arthur Lee Kinsolving Professor in Pastoral Theology at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia. She completed her Ph.D. at Emory University in 1997, focusing on issues of faith, gender, and violence in the lives of adolescent girls. She is the author of Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood (Chalice Press, 2005), Lives to Offer: Accompanying Youth on Their Vocational Quests (co-authored with Dori Grinenko Baker, Pilgrim Press, 2007), and most recently, Girl Talk, God Talk: Why Faith Matters to Teenage Girls—and Their Parents (Jossey Bass, 2008).

Leadership Institute

Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences



September 17, 2015 – May 19, 2016 – Richmond campus **Church Business Administration seminars**

The entire core curriculum to meet the requirements of Church Business Administration with The Church Network. Featured in the fall is **Vonna Laue** leading the first seminar on Managing Financial Issues: Accounting. Seminars meet on four Thursdays in the fall and four in the spring.

September 26, 2015, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. — Richmond campus **Seminary for a Day**

Enjoy a full day of keynote addresses and workshops, connections with friends and colleagues, and a taste of seminary education. The day features the faculty of Union Presbyterian Seminary in Richmond.

October 1, 2015 — Richmond campus **Your IT Ministry Toolbox**

Class will identify and explain an array of tools available to church administrators to assist in managing your computer environment.

Hybrid class begins at home, September 8 — Richmond campus **Christian Educator Certification Course – Worship and Sacraments**

Course prepares educators for leadership in the church in the area of Reformed Christian worship including the sacraments. On-campus time is October 6-8, 2015, on the Richmond campus. Led by **Jane Rogers Vann**, Emerita Professor of Christian Education, Union Presbyterian Seminary.

October 19-21, 2015 — Richmond campus **Wealth and Poverty in the Bible and Today**

An examination of the biblical witness on wealth and poverty in both the Old and New Testaments. Led by **Samuel L. Adams**, associate professor of Old Testament at Union Presbyterian Seminary.

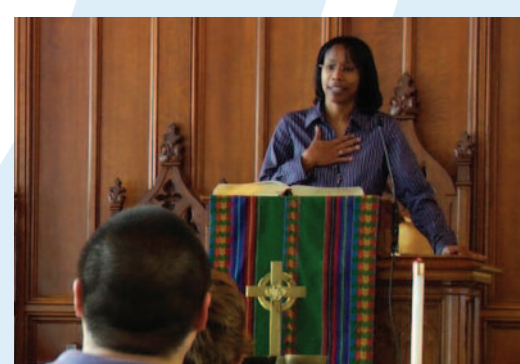
October 26-29, 2015 — Richmond campus **Finding a Way Forward, Personally and Congregationally**

Designed for leaders in various stages of ministry who wish to engage in practices of discernment and strategic thinking as they seek to find a way forward. Led by **Ken McFayden**, academic dean, Richmond campus, and professor of leadership development at Union Presbyterian Seminary.

November 16-20, 2015 — Charlotte campus **Interim Ministry Education Week I**

Training to enable pastors to enter into a congregation in transition with new skills and understanding of healthy processes. Led by **Hart Edmonds**, **Deborah Fortel**, **Ken McFayden**, and **Laura Sherwood**, all experienced practitioners and interim ministry trainers.

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M.Div. student Bruce McVey was one of many first year students attending Greek language school this summer.



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