

Challenge & Response

CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Summer 2014



Leaders for the Next.

President's Welcome

Alice Hunt, President



A seminary's value lies in the quality of leadership its graduates exhibit in a host of religious, secular, and academic vocations. While the many hundreds of transcripts on file at Chicago Theological Seminary tell interesting stories about the time our students have spent here, the most important record is the narrative of their professional and personal journeys after they have left CTS.

As we prepare *Leaders for the Next*, the question we keep asking is, "What's next in the church, the synagogue, the mosque, the world, the academy where our graduates will do their work?" Listening to voices beyond our current community is crucial for an institution that is preparing transformative religious leaders.

This spring, a number of guests were at CTS to help us listen. Our faculty spent an afternoon in March with the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III (D.Min, 2012), Pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ, and the Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, Conference Minister of the Southwest Conference of the UCC. Together, we discussed the emerging religious landscape in which our graduates will serve. At our Spring Leadership Conference, Lutheran pastor and author the Rev. Nadia Bolz Weber, spoke about the religious passions and hopes of millennials, while the Rev. Dr. Shanta Premawardhana, President of the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education,

described the missional implications of the vast and growing economic inequities that will confront today's religious leaders. At our Spring Community-wide Colloquium, Center for the Study of Black Faith and Life Visiting Scholar Rev. Dr. Stephen Ray, offered a profound theological interpretation of the epidemic of violence engulfing our communities. And in April, the Rev. Dr. Jesse Jackson, Sr. (M.Div., 2000), visited with faculty, staff, and students about the issues our graduates must address as they respond to the demands of justice.

This issue of *Challenge and Response* includes many stories of our graduates who are using their CTS education to make a difference. These stories also help us listen to what is happening in a number of institutional, geographic, and cultural contexts. These accounts are not only inspiring, but they are also invaluable as we at CTS shape our curriculum for the next generation of religious leaders.

As always, know how much I appreciate your ongoing support for CTS. Please visit us. Write to us. Tell us what you've learned since leaving CTS and what it was about your time here that helped you shape the world toward greater justice and mercy. Help us listen!

A handwritten signature in white ink, which appears to be "A. Hunt", written in a cursive style.

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Keep the Flame a

SCHOLARSHIP INITIATIVE

Chuck Wildman, Trustee

As you enter the front door of Chicago Theological Seminary, you pass by words from the Gospel of Matthew. On the surface, they stand as a charge to those who enter this space, but I think there is a deeper meaning. I believe this passage stands as an exhortation to support those who have heard God's call as they seek access to quality, rigorous theological education.

Students today face an ever-increasing burden when it comes to educational debt. This burden deters potential students from following God's call and limits future ministerial choices. In the fall of 2013, CTS welcomed a new class of students. Although we were blessed with nearly sixty new seminarians, twelve students who had made it through the application process were unable to begin their studies because they lacked the necessary financial resources.

There is a critical need to expand support for students. In an effort to address this imperative, the Trustees of Chicago Theological Seminary have created the Leaders for the Next Scholarship Initiative in Ministry. This initiative will award annual merit scholarships to the highest qualified Masters of Divinity and Masters of Arts in Religious Leadership students entering each year.

To launch the effort, we have set a goal to raise \$200,000 a year in each of the next three years. The church of the future is evolving and organic, and we must support those called by God as they travel the path of discernment. Together, we will prepare future leaders for whatever is *Next*.



Second-year M.Div. student and current merit scholar Deidre L. Jones reflects on the importance of her merit award:

“I wanted and needed a school where social justice meant something in a concrete way. I wanted to have flexibility to raise my sons and do the ministry I am called to. I’ve grown so much while I have been here. I’ve been exposed to great theologians in books and great leaders in person, while being mentored by amazing professors who encourage me and believe in my work. I can’t thank you enough!”

Students are waiting. The future of the church is waiting. I pray that those who have heard God’s challenge to bring more justice and mercy to the world may be welcomed to this home of learning. We hope you will be a part of the Leaders for the Next Scholarship Initiative in Ministry.

To learn more, contact Megan Davis-Ochi at 773.896.2431 or mdavis-ochi@ctschicago.edu.

live

IN MINISTRY



A portrait of a man with short brown hair, a beard, and black-rimmed glasses. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt under a grey blazer. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is plain white.

TH MAD

“We normally think of free will as the crowning glory of human dignity, the only possibility of authentic relationships with God and with each other. Yet in the theological tradition, free will also has a dark side.”

E DEVIL E ME DO IT

Adam Kotsko, Adjunct Faculty

Teaching Theology & Politics of the Devil

I finished my dissertation in 2009, but I've since found that it apparently wasn't finished with me. The work began as an investigation of the various ways patristic and medieval thinkers answered the question of why God needed to become human, die, and rise from the death in order to save humanity.

It is a question that—whether despite or because of its obvious centrality—has never received a definitive answer, and some of the answers were surprising. Patristic thinkers in particular present us with a very unfamiliar story in which humanity is held captive by Satan, and Christ's death is a non-violent way of tricking him into releasing us.

I was fascinated by the patristic narrative, to the point that my dissertation was threatening to become a study of the devil's role in salvation, rather than Christ's. In the years that have followed, I wrote on various topics in philosophy and popular culture, but in my mind, my “real” research topic was always the devil—after nearly taking over my entire dissertation, he clearly deserved his own study.

Now that I am getting ready to begin writing the manuscript, I'm very excited to return to the scene of the crime and teach a course at CTS as well. I'll be engaging with some materials that are very familiar to CTS students, such as political theology and feminist theology, but the bulk of the course will focus on patristic, medieval, and early modern texts, including Dante's *Inferno* and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

For me, however, this is not a merely historical project. I start from the assumption that theologians at their best are grappling with the same kind of urgent questions that we are. I don't believe their texts are a repository of answers for us today. Indeed, their answers often seem foreign, bizarre, or even repellent to our modern eyes, but the way they approach their questions can often jar us into new and unexpected ways of seeing and thinking.

Getting at that productive strangeness, though, requires a strange perspective, such as reading the theological tradition from the devil's point of view. One major theological

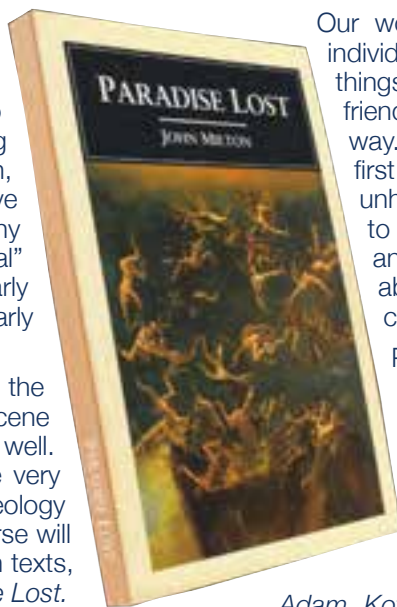
theme that appears in a completely different light in this approach is free will. We normally think of free will as the crowning glory of human dignity, the only possibility of authentic relationships with God and with each other.

Yet in the theological tradition, free will also has a dark side. The devil's free will does not enhance his dignity or bring him closer to God. Instead, it serves to keep God from taking the blame for the existence of evil (since God created the devil as a good being and freely turned away)—and it also means that God is justified in punishing the devil eternally.

Our world is increasingly structured around individual choices, and it strikes me how often things like organic food or environmentally friendly consumer goods function in a similar way. Why are we offered an option in the first place? If certain types of farming are unhealthy or unethical, wouldn't it be better to eliminate them altogether through laws and regulations? And why should choices about the environment—an inherently collective concern—be left to individuals?

Perhaps the reason the powers that be offer us these choices is precisely so they don't have to take responsibility for the outcome. They, like God, get to wash their hands of responsibility for the collective good and blame all of us poor devils for making the wrong choices.

Adam Kotsko (Ph.D. 2009, M.A. 2005) is an American writer, theologian, religious scholar, and translator, working chiefly in the field of political theology. As of 2013, he is an Assistant Professor of Humanities at Shimer College in Chicago. He is especially known for his interpretative work on Slavoj Žižek and Giorgio Agamben, as well as his writing on American popular culture. Kotsko's better-known works include “Why We Love Sociopaths,” “Awkwardness,” and “Žižek and Theology.” He has published three translations of works by Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. Kotsko posts chiefly on a group blog titled “An und für sich,” but continues to maintain his original blog, titled simply “The Weblog.”



CTS ONLINE

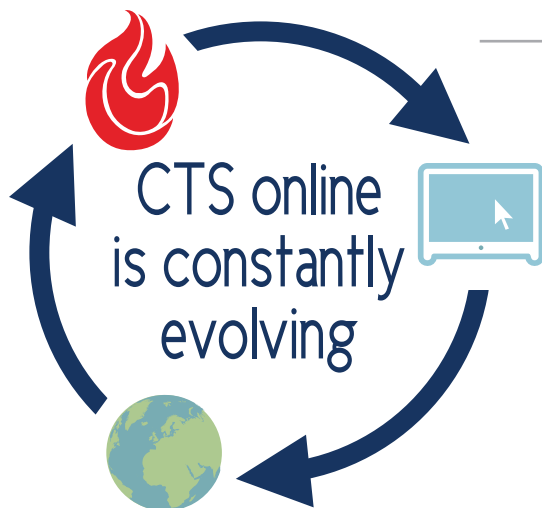
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You don't have to come here

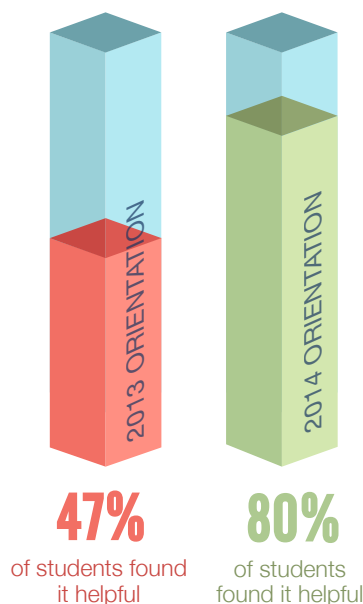
to go here.

The map and chart to the right show the top 10 places where CTS Online students are logging into Moodle, our student online portal. In addition to these US locations, we also have students who take our online courses in Hawaii, France, Australia and Canada. The diverse locations tell us students are accessing their online courses on the go, whether at home or on the road.

We are happy to see that CTS Online has taken a firm hold across the US and internationally. Wherever our students are, teaching, learning, and engagement continue seamlessly.



Our new technology orientation is just one of many new ways our online program has evolved. Our students are finding it even more helpful than our previous orientations!



Engagement is key

CTS Connect, our social and academic networking platform, has seen a significant increase in adoption rates this spring.



February # of users



March # of users



April # of users

= 10 PEOPLE

Be Transformed

A Recruitment Update



Lisa Seiwert, Staff

A caller recently began our conversation with a confession. She said:

“I’m probably not qualified and I don’t even know if I’m called, but I can’t stop thinking about CTS.”

In that one sentence, she summed up much of what I hear from people discerning their way to theological studies. Most people I talk to worry about their qualifications. They worry they’re too old. Or too non-conforming. Or not “religious” enough. Or if they’ve really been called.

But overall, most people I talk to can’t stop thinking about seminary, about CTS, about our courses, about our commitments. They find themselves on our website when they should be working. They read our literature, watch our videos, follow us on Facebook, and can’t stop imagining themselves as a part of our community.

A CTS education is transformative. We begin our studies knowing we will not be the same when we leave. And while each story is unique, we all begin our journey here feeling in many ways unsure and unqualified, yet unable to resist.

If you are thinking about attending CTS, know that you are not the first person to have doubts about your vocational path. As the amazing work of our graduates attests, we will not leave you in the midst of those doubts and worries. Our

programs equip students to become religious leaders in a wide range of settings and vocations who are agents for change and for healing, mercy, and justice.

If you are thinking about CTS, I encourage you to set down your worries and pick up the phone. I look forward to our conversation.

Lisa Seiwert is the Director of Recruitment and Admission. For enrollment questions, please contact her at lseiwert@ctschicago.edu or call her at 773.896.2413.

**BE
TRANSFORMED
LIKE
WATER INTO
WINE**
(really good wine)

Leaders for

Alumni profiles

DON THOMAS

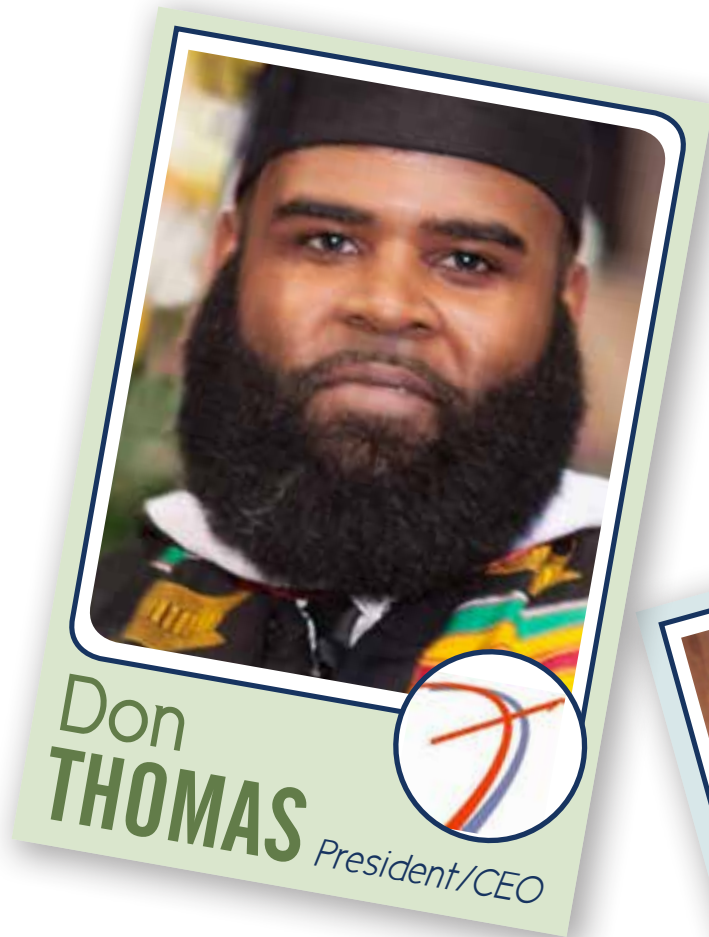
Melanie Jones, Ph.D. Student

The Rev. Don Thomas is a 2013 graduate of CTS, where he received a Master's of Religious Leadership degree with a concentration in Social Transformation. Don currently serves as the President/CEO of FINISHERS Inc., an empowerment group dedicated to helping propel young people toward fulfilled purpose.

Don is also a youth empowerment consultant and education advocate working with youth on the margins; he is certified in advanced youth development and anti-racism training and organizing. Recently, Don has participated in consciousness-raising and justice-seeking activism with several organizations, including After School Matters, the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, UCAN Chicago, and the National Black Agenda Consortium.

In 2013, Don was named co-chair of A Black Education Congress (ABEC), where he organized young people in a nationwide mobilization effort around education. He also contributed to ABEC's twenty-five-year Education for Liberation Action Plan.

Don and his family are relocating to Charlotte, North Carolina, to join his father, Pastor Don Thomas, Sr., in a church plant, where he will lead the prison and youth outreach ministries. The path to transformation has only just begun for Don, as he strives to be a "solutionary" called to the front lines of liberation for God's people.



the Next.

LEAH & DAVID ROBBERTS- MOSSER

Melanie Jones, Ph.D. Student

The Rev. Leah K. Robberts-Mosser (M.Div. 2004) and the Rev. David G. Robberts-Mosser (M.Div. 2004) demonstrate the power of creative partnership as CTS alumni/ae who journeyed through seminary jointly and continue in ministry together.

In 2004, Leah was called as associate pastor to First Congregational Church (FCC) in Battle Creek, Michigan, while David began a CPE residency at Bronson Hospital in Kalamazoo. Upon completion of his CPE, David began serving as coordinator of pastoral care at FCC and as pastor of Salem UCC in Albion, Michigan.

David continues to demonstrate the skillful art of nurturing others as the stay-at-home parent with their girls, Chloe and Violet. He also provides pulpity supply in central Illinois.

In 2009, Leah became the pastor of Community UCC in Champaign, Illinois, a just-peace, progressive, and open and affirming congregation that intentionally practices radical hospitality in the heart of the University of Illinois campus.

Each Sunday, Leah welcomes people saying, “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here... We really mean it!” The embrace of the congregation is inextricably linked to Leah’s openness to listen to the stories of congregants and uncover the profound artistry of God’s story in the congregation.

Leah and David believe that transformation, care, and creativity are at the heart of ministry. Their gifts are demonstrated in the relational work of pastoring people, bringing the Word to life, and embodying passionate care.

Leah and David’s story reflects the beauty and balance of sharing talents and working together as members of the body of Christ.



David
ROBBERTS-
MOSSER

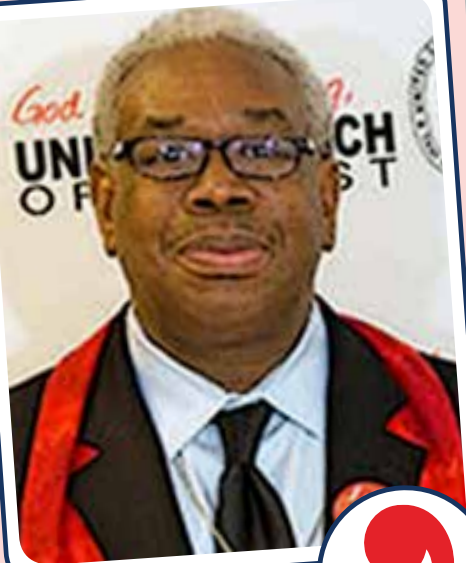


Leah
ROBBERTS-
MOSSER Pastor



THE DAVIS FAMILY

John Thomas, Visiting Faculty



Edward
DAVIS Minister

The Davis family's association with Chicago Theological Seminary stretches over twenty-five years, includes three M.Div. degrees and a Ph.D., and deeply reaches a number of communities.

Rev. Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis (M.Div. '88, Ph.D. '06) began her studies part time at CTS in the 1980s while also serving as a member of the Chicago Police Department. Her almost thirty years of ministry have included chaplaincy in the police department; congregational ministry at Peoples Church, South Shore Community Church, and Evergreen Park Ministries in the Chicagoland area; and serving as senior pastor of God Can Ministries (UCC) in Ford Heights.

In addition, she is adjunct professor and director of the Center for African American Ministries and Black Church Studies at McCormick Theological Seminary, as well as a trainer for the Faith Trust Institute in Seattle. Sharon is grateful to CTS for "pushing me to my limits so that I could become open to a gospel of inclusion and love." She says that her seminary education prepared her to be a "critical thinker, open to the other, an advocate for social justice, a womanist, and an ethicist."

Rev. Dr. Edward Davis (M.Div. '05) serves as conference minister of the Southern Conference of the UCC, which brings together white and African American members from three different traditions in the UCC, all in the challenging political environment of a region where voting rights, reproductive rights, the care of the environment, public education, and the needs of the poor are under assault.

Dr. Edward Davis combines degrees in business and finance from Roosevelt University, executive leadership training at Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern, and theological degrees at CTS and United Theological Seminary in Dayton, along with vocational experience in non-profits and congregations, to undergird a prophetic, bridge-building ministry that is "mission-minded and justice-hearted," inspired by a CTS professor who reminded him that "justice is not an elective, but a requirement."

Together, Sharon and Edward share a blended family of six children and fifteen grandchildren, including daughter Bianca Davis, a 2013 M.Div. graduate of CTS. At God Can Ministries where she provides spiritual guidance, pastoral care, and mentorship as associate pastor for children, youth, and young adults, Bianca uses her CTS experience to address the generation gap that exists in the church, engaging millennial young people with a radically inclusive Gospel that addresses the tough issues of violence, sexuality education, poverty, and our increasingly interfaith context. "CTS," she says, "was the place where I discovered my voice as a young, African American woman in ministry."

Perhaps Edward speaks for the family when he says, "Wherever I go, I carry CTS on my chest, my back, and especially in my heart."



Sharon
DAVIS Pastor



Bianca
DAVIS Associate Pastor



JIM KOLKMEIER

Jacob Scott, Alum

When Jim Kolkmeier, 72, applied to Chicago Theological Seminary's Master of Arts program in 2007, he was a retired aircraft dispatcher and a working cattle farmer. Graduate school seemed like a long shot. "I didn't think they'd accept me," Jim says, "I didn't have a BA." When he applied, Jim, a tall, imposing man who towers over most others and visibly carries years of hard work as he walks, was in his mid-sixties.

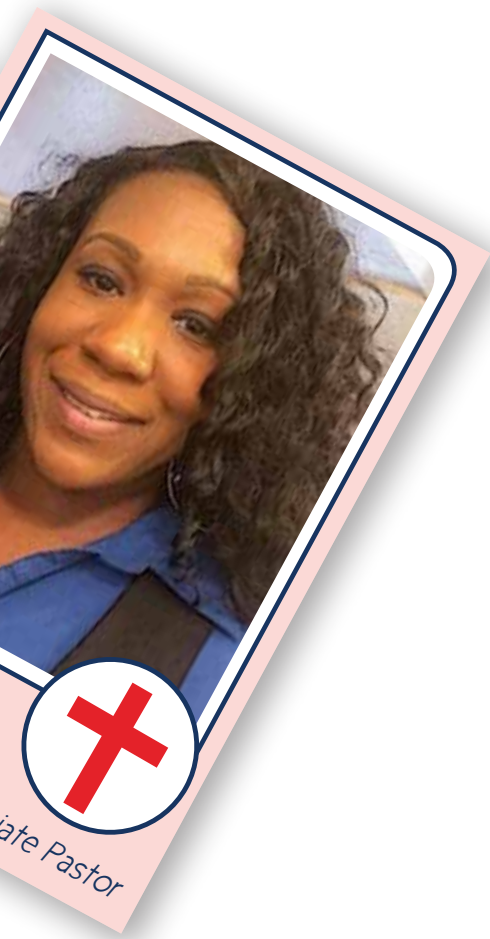
Of course, Jim shares his story a couple of years after graduating from CTS with two degrees, a Master of Arts earned in 2010 and a Master of Sacred Theology earned in 2012. And that bachelors' degree he didn't have? He graduated from Elmhurst College in 2010, completing a goal he began in 1959 and pursued off and on, before life pulled him toward a flight operations career with United Airlines. He'd intended to pursue a life in rural parish ministry.

In some ways, Jim's circuitous route to CTS is comparable to many of the school's students. Roughly a third of CTS students begin graduate studies immediately after completing an undergraduate degree. The sizeable majority acquire some measure of life and professional experience before jumping into graduate theological studies. For Jim, life led him to Dallas, Texas, where he raised cattle and furthered his career as an aircraft dispatcher with Southwest Airlines. But theology remained a consistent strand threaded throughout his entire life. "I had never given up theology," says Jim. "These thoughts were in my mind all the time," he adds.

By his own admission, such thoughts and questions were a source of both community and alienation. He sought the friendship of preachers and theologians, finding many of his professional colleagues disinterested in his philosophical and theological inquiries. "I was always interested in why and how things work, even the way my mind works—or my wife's, or my kids?" he says.

He retired and gave his full attention to his farm and his herd. It was then that Jim, who describes himself as not religious, experienced a shift. "That's when I become more spiritual," he says. While working the earth and rearing animals, Jim came to understand the ecological and genetic connections between himself, the human species, and the whole of creation.

These were the experiences Jim brought to CTS. "In many ways," he says, "CTS reaffirmed some of what I already knew, but it gave me a basis for what I believe, the structure that I needed." At CTS, Jim found an environment where he could push the limits of his own understanding. "I sought out people who could give me answers I didn't have or were asking questions I never considered asking," Jim says, adding that he continues to feed the monster of his own curiosity. He's currently neck deep in his own studies, researching the birth of human consciousness. "I am constantly in turmoil," Jim says with a laugh, referring to his theological and philosophical struggles.



YANG IN KOREA

Professor Yang Pursues Her Passions of Writing, Activism & Her Homeland

Seung Ai Yang, Faculty



I had three goals for my sabbatical semester: resting and recharging; connecting with Korean activists, especially theologians; and working on my writing project.

For resting and recharging, I chose nature as my partner. While staying in Korea, I visited mountains, forests, and the seaside, which brought back all kinds of memories of my childhood.

In Korea, I met many activists, including theologians and other scholars who live in solidarity with those suffering from injustice. I met them at various events, such as a weekly protest in front of the Japanese embassy, demanding justice for comfort women who were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese military during World War II. I also met them at a daily Catholic mass on the streets of central Seoul, where they demanded a resolution to the issue of SsangYong Motors's unjustifiable layoff of 43 percent of its factory workers in 2009, which resulted in the deaths of dozens of laid-off workers and their family members from suicide, aneurysm, heart attack, or other stress-related illnesses.

My writing project is a feminist commentary on Matthew, which is to be published in the Wisdom Commentary Series. For two months, I was able to work face-to-face with my co-author, Dr. Elaine Wainwright from New Zealand. We regularly exchanged drafts and met to discuss challenges we faced in our research and writing, share constructive criticism on each other's drafts, and plan our next tasks.

I am deeply grateful to CTS for granting me this sabbatical semester, in which I was able to rest, be connected to many activists and theologians in my home country, and finish several chapters of my book project.

Dr. Seung Ai Yang is the Associate Professor of New Testament.



Comfort women protest in front of Japanese embassy.

“I met many activists, including theologians and other scholars who live in solidarity with those suffering from injustice.”



Catholic Mass on the streets of central Seoul.

In Memoriam



MRS. JOYCE E. SKOOG

On January 24th of this year, CTS lost a dear friend, leader and champion – Joyce E. Skoog. Along with a career devoted to service, she gave of herself as the first woman to serve as Hinsdale's village president and winner of the Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award from the Illinois Humanities Council as well

as chairing the board for Ounce of Prevention. Joyce came to CTS inspired by our students and hoping to support their calls to ministry and social justice. As a devoted Trustee, she chaired the board's Advancement Committee and was the first chair of the Council for the Next – a group organized to continue the leadership of the Visiting Committee and to provide ongoing significant annual support. Joyce is survived by her husband of 54 years, Roy, and their children, Cheryl and her husband Peter Tague, Linda and her husband Jeffrey Sluman, Bradley A. Skoog, and Melissa and her husband John Christopher Dunagan and the joys of her life – her grandchildren William, Katie, Jack and Willa.

Joyce's family along with many friends have chosen to celebrate Joyce's life by establishing the *Joyce Skoog Endowed Scholarship* to fund a full scholarship to be awarded annually. Their generosity ensures that Joyce's passion to bring justice and mercy to the world will continue in perpetuity. CTS is so grateful to have shared in Joyce's life and hopes the *Joyce Skoog Memorial Scholarship* legacy will enable many future religious leaders to pursue their vocational calling.

THE REV. DOROTHY MARION MURDOCK HILL (M.A. 1942), 93, of Cave Creek, AZ, died on August 4, 2012. Born in Oklahoma, she served in ministry for more than 70 years in a variety of United Church of Christ/Congregational churches, as well as in childhood education.

THE REV. PAUL F. WEST (M. Div. '64), 74, Bedford, MA, died on November 21, 2012. He was

ordained to ministry in the United Church of Christ and worked at churches on Long Island and Cambridge, MA.

THE REV. ROBERT J. REA, JR. (M. Th. 1967, Rel. D. 1968), 73, of St. Petersburg, FL, died September 8, 2013. He was a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister, serving churches in Georgia, Missouri, and South Carolina. After retirement, he served as designated associate for Peace River Presbytery in North Port, FL.

THE REV. ROBERT F. DRALLE (B.D. 1964), 78, of Granger, IN, died on December 6, 2013. He served in the U.S. Air Force from 1953 until 1957. He was a member of the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge 599, AARP Elkhart Chapter, the Friendly Pioneers and Pleasant Valley United Church of Christ in Osceola. He worked as a minister for 20 years and most recently worked as a substance abuse therapist.

THE REV. ELEANOR S. MORRISON, 92, of Okemos, MI, died on February 12, 2014. She was an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and was a former visiting professor at CTS. She received awards from the Chicago City Council, NAACP, and Conference of Christians and Jews recognizing her work in promoting interfaith and interracial justice.

THE REV. DR. ALFRED S. DALE, JR. (Rel. D. 1970), 87, Bellingham, WA, died on March 3, 2014. He was a member of Kiwanis, the Methodist Federation for Social Action, Veterans for Peace, and First Congregational UCC, and was a founding member of Bellingham Friends of Cuba. He also served as a United Methodist minister in Illinois, California, and Washington, as well as missionary to Poland and Fiji. He was provost of Central YMCA Community College in Chicago, a U.S. Army paratrooper and a chaplain.

THE REV. JOHN B. CULVER (M. Div. 1972), 75, of San Antonio, TX died on March 29, 2014. He taught high school social studies in Lima, Peru. Upon returning to the United States to teach, he contracted tuberculosis. During that time he had a healing experience in which he was filled with the power of the Holy Spirit and was called to go into the ministry. After he completed his, M. Div., he went on to pastor at churches in Wisconsin and Texas.

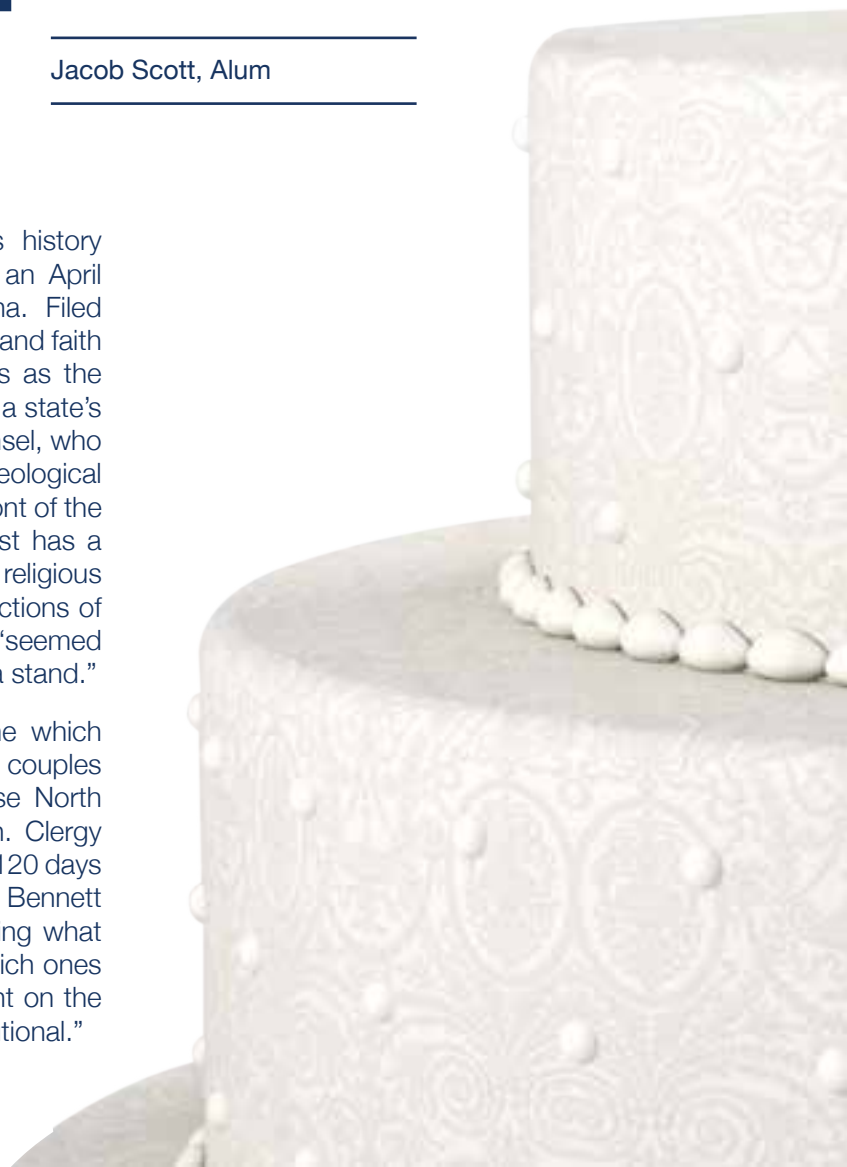
AMENDMENT ONE VS. FIRST AMENDMENT

CTS and UCC
leaders head lawsuit
against North Carolina

Jacob Scott, Alum

The United Church of Christ continued its history of challenging injustice and inequality with an April lawsuit against the state of North Carolina. Filed alongside plaintiffs from other denominations and faith traditions, the lawsuit grabbed national headlines as the first by a major Christian denomination to oppose a state's marriage laws. Don Clark, the UCC's general counsel, who recently completed his term as Chair of Chicago Theological Seminary's Board of Trustees, stands at the forefront of the unprecedented suit. "The United Church of Christ has a long history of supporting the free exercise of all religious believers and of also translating God's love into actions of justice." Clark said the situation in North Carolina "seemed to cry out for the United Church of Christ to take a stand."

The suit challenges the state's Amendment One which makes it a misdemeanor for ministers to wed couples lacking a state-issued marriage license, a license North Carolina same-sex couples cannot legally obtain. Clergy charged with violating the law face fines and up to 120 days in jail. Alumnus and UCC Executive Minister Rev. J. Bennett Guess (D.Min. 2001) said, "The state is prescribing what types of religious services are permissible and which ones are not and we hold that is clearly an infringement on the free exercise of religion and therefore is unconstitutional."





“We did not file this lawsuit in an effort to make others conform to our beliefs regarding marriage equality, but rather to vindicate the rights of all believers to freely exercise their religious beliefs.”

Clark and Guess firmly tie CTS and its commitments to social justice to this landmark case. “This [lawsuit] is in keeping with the long trajectory of the United Church of Christ,” said Guess. “We think our stance for justice aligns perfectly with the ministry of Jesus who went to great extremes to live in the margins of his society in his day and calls us to follow him in doing the same things today.”

For UCC officials this lawsuit demonstrates concern for the equality of gay and lesbian people but particularly North Carolina parishioners and clergy seeking or performing same-sex nuptials. “We have a lot of gay and lesbian families in our congregations and we want them to be fully members of our churches and receive the same pastoral care and religious services that we would provide to any other member,” Guess said.

Though partly motivated by their support for marriage equality, UCC officials say the lawsuit’s intent to guard against infringements on religious expression is an effort any American should back. “We did not file this lawsuit in an effort to make others conform to our beliefs regarding marriage equality, but rather to vindicate the rights of all believers to freely exercise their religious beliefs,” said Clark.

UCC General Minister and President Rev. Geoffrey Black reaffirmed such sentiments, saying, “[Amendment One] would have implications for any of us, and particularly our right to practice freely our religion.”

Black said he hopes his denomination’s lawsuit will halt the momentum of similar legislation in other states.

Still the uniqueness of the suit remains, challenging wider perceptions of Christians and their positions on marriage equality, something Clark says aligns well with the mission of Jesus and the teachings of CTS. “I think that CTS both in its own history and in its teachings has emphasized the importance of our faith commitments not being tethered or confined to pulpits or podiums,” Clark said. “We have an obligation as faith leaders to take our commitments to the public square.”



Bennett
Guess



Don
Clark



Geoffrey
Black

*To learn more about the lawsuit and to offer your support, please visit:
<http://www.ucc.org/index.html>*

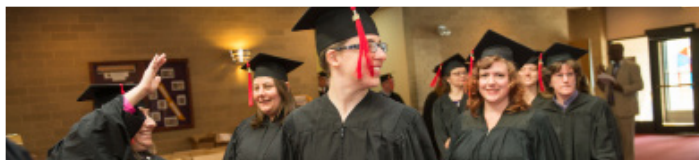
COMMENCE



Robyn Stellman, Scott Cunningham, Jeffrey Dobson, Esther Baruja, Christina Cataldo are proud to have received their hoods and degrees



Graduates Heidi Lindeman and Louie Bedar offer liturgy



CTS Graduates process in



MDiv graduate, Kooper Knebel



Dr. Dow Edgerton with MDiv graduates, Jeffrey & Ashley Dobson



Graduates take their position & ready themselves to walk across stage



Chairman Norm Williams, Professor Dow Edgerton, and honorary degree recipient, Don Clark enjoying Commencement with faculty.

MENT 2014



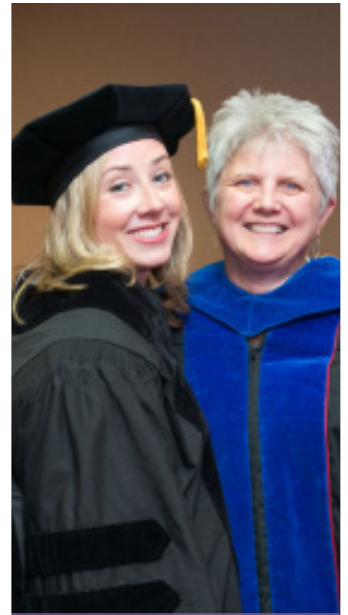
2014 CTS Graduating Class



Hoods lay waiting to be bestowed upon the CTS graduates



Graduates Jessica Palys & Judith Scott read scripture for the ceremony



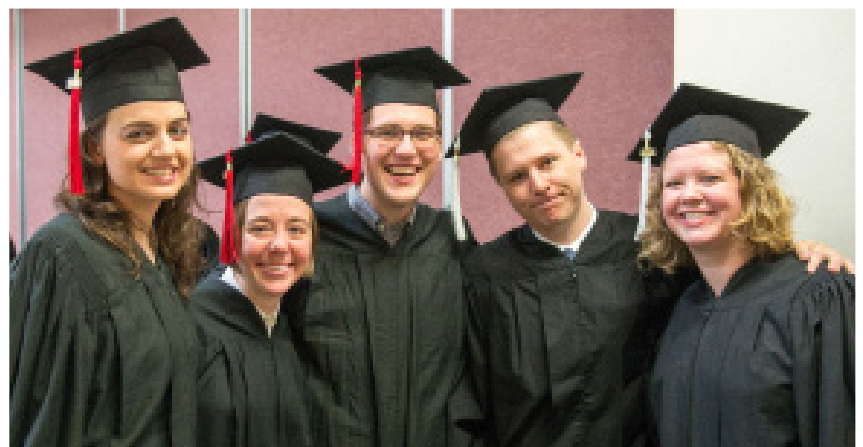
PhD recipient, Carolyn Roncolato, poses with advisor Dr. Laurel Schneider



President Alice Hunt takes a selfie with students after the ceremony



Dr. Lee Butler blesses the hands of the graduates



Amy Aschliman, Britt Cox, Nic Cable, Jake Scott, and Heather Loring-Albright before the ceremony

Talking Turkey

Sabbatical offers insights for teaching

Julia M. Speller, Faculty



The highlight of my 2013 sabbatical was traveling with eleven academic and clergy colleagues to Turkey, sponsored by the Niagara Foundation. Through its Center for Cultural Exchange and Interfaith Collaboration, we spent nine days in a dialogue-focused, intercultural experience that introduced us to the history and culture of Turkey.

Our travels began in Istanbul and Ankara, where we experienced a slice of Turkish culture as we engaged the local population in the marketplaces and dined on delicious food. We also encountered a merging of the old with the new as we listened to lectures about the Ottoman Empire, saw beautiful Byzantine architecture, and visited historic museums, mosques and other religious sites, while also witnessing the examples and implications of modern Turkey as an officially secular country.

We then traveled to Izmir, which is one of the oldest cities in Turkey. It was founded in 3000 BC by the Trojans and is thought to be the birthplace of Homer. Just outside of that city, we walked through the ruins of Ephesus and stood at the site of the Council of 431 that declared Mary the *Theotokos*, “the bearer of God.”

Whirling Dervishes in Istanbul, Turkey practice the famous whirling as a form of dhikr (remembrance of God), part of the formal Sama ceremony.



From there, we moved on to the region of Cappadocia and Central Anatolia, where decisive debates took place about Trinitarian theology. We glimpsed the early monastic dwellings that included underground cities, cave churches, and houses carved into rock.

After this trip, I have a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the undeniable relationship between the religions, history, and culture of this region and the development of Christian thought. I look forward to incorporating these insights into my teaching in the fall.

Dr. Julia M. Speller is Associate Professor of American Religious History & Culture and director of the D. Min. Program.

"I have a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the undeniable relationship between the religions, history, and culture of this region and the development of Christian thought."

GOOD GUESS

Rev. Dr. Bennett Guess Receives Distinguished Alumni Award

Joe Burt, Staff

The Rev. Dr. Bennett Guess (D.Min. 2011) received the 2014 Distinguished Alumni Award from President Alice Hunt on March 28. The following citation outlines Guess' long list of contributions and accomplishments:



Rev. Dr. Bennett Guess

J. Bennett Guess is a member of the Collegium of Officers of the United Church of Christ and serves as Executive Minister for Local Church Ministries in the UCC's denominational offices. He was elected to this national office in July 2011.

In a far-reaching career, Bennett Guess served as a local church pastor for twelve years. He helped create the Paff Haus Justice and Peace Center and co-founded the Kentucky Fairness Alliance. Guess received the UCC's Just Peace Award in 1997, in recognition of his life-long commitment to justice advocacy.

Guess has worked for the UCC's national setting since 2000, first as Justice and Witness Ministries' communications minister and, later, as editor of United Church News and the UCC's news director. In 2007, he was named the UCC's communication director. In March 2010, Rev. Guess was asked to oversee the creation of a new, cross-ministry department called Publishing,

Identity and Communication that successfully merged staff from the Office of General Ministries and Local Church Ministries and fostered more cooperative and strategic work for the whole national setting.

Chicago Theological Seminary is proud to present Rev. Dr. Bennett Guess with the 2014 Distinguished Alumni Award for his leadership in the church and for his prophetic witness to society.





CASTAÑEDA LECTURE

This year's Castañeda Lecture was given by Dr. Laurel Schneider, former Professor of Theology, Ethics, and Culture here at CTS. The Castañeda Lecture is an annual event that brings people together to engage in religious and theological reflection toward greater justice for LGBTQ individuals and communities.

Last summer, Dr. Schneider moved to Nashville to pursue new opportunities as Professor of Religious Studies at Vanderbilt University, with secondary appointments in Gender Studies and Philosophy. The move to Nashville allowed her to be with her spouse, Dr. Emilie Townes, who was inaugurated this year as the new Dean of the Vanderbilt Divinity School.

Dr. Schneider's work centers on the intersections of postcolonial theory, queer theory, race theory, and feminist theory, and she is interested in intersectional questions of identity, meaning, and divinity as they pertain to contemporary political and social questions of justice and liberation.

The title of her lecture was "Insiders Out!" and can be viewed on the CTS website or on our YouTube channel.



WELCOME TO OUR NEW STUDENTS

Every year, a number of students who are admitted during the Fall semester begin taking classes in January or February, rather than in September, which traditionally marks the beginning of an academic year. In the past, the number of students entering mid-year has been relatively small, normally around five or six. Last year, with the addition of multiple online courses, we saw that number jump to ten. This year, our numbers have taken another significant jump, and we have had more than twice the size of last year's mid-year entering class join us this spring. We welcomed twenty-four new students beginning their seminary programs this semester, with a significant majority taking most, or all, of their classes online.

To accommodate the increase in online students, we offered thirteen courses entirely online this semester, as well as one "hybrid" course (as compared to eight online courses and one hybrid course this time last year). Nine of those thirteen courses were taught or co-taught by residential faculty, and four online courses were taught by adjuncts.

Whether you encounter our newest students on campus or online, please join me in welcoming them to CTS!

THE DEAN'S DESK

Ken Stone, Faculty



Greetings at the close of another busy and eventful semester at Chicago Theological Seminary! As the Academic Dean, I would like to draw your attention to a number of things that have been going on at CTS this past semester. If you would like more information about the announcements found on this page, or if you have any other questions about academic life at CTS, please feel free to contact me (kstone@cts-chicago.edu) or the Assistant to the Academic Dean, Emily Vogt (evogt@cts-chicago.edu). If you are on campus, you are also welcome to drop by my office, located next to the President's office on the first floor of our building.



ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

At the end of the Fall semester, Dr. Neil Gerdes, the Director of our Robinson and Janet Lapp Learning Commons and Associate Professor of Bibliography, retired. Neil had been at CTS since 1980 and guided our library through many changes. Evan Boyd has taken on the job of Interim Director of the Learning Commons, and is working on a new strategic plan for our Learning Commons to help us ensure that CTS stays abreast of rapid changes taking place in libraries today.

As the Spring semester ends, we are also seeing the departure of both Rev. Deb Derylak, our Director of Theological Field Education, and Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, our Director of Community Life. Deb and Ayanna started working at CTS within a week of one another in 2009. Deb has left to pursue a career in library sciences, and will be working in the library at Erikson Institute in Chicago. Ayanna, who was married earlier this year, will be moving to Memphis, where her husband has accepted a new job. Deb and Ayanna have played important roles for us here over the last five years, and we will miss them both.

As we say goodbye to these colleagues, we are happy to welcome Dr. Rami Nashashibi, who will be joining us as Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology of Religion and Muslim Studies beginning in August 2014. Dr. Nashashibi's appointment is funded through a grant from the Luce Foundation to our Center for Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Studies. In addition to teaching more courses for us in Muslim Studies and Community Organizing, Dr. Nashashibi will be working with us to recruit a diverse cohort of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian students, particularly for the Interreligious Engagement and Social Transformation concentrations in our Master of Arts in Religious Leadership program.



CONVOCATIONS AND SABBATICALS

This spring we welcomed back Dr. Julia Speller, Associate Professor of American Religious History and Culture, and Dr. Seung Ai Yang, Associate Professor of New Testament, from their Fall semester sabbaticals.

In April, Dr. Yang spoke at our fourth Convocation of the year in a talk titled "Empowering Solidarity: Matthean Story of Mary and Magoi." The lecture was written from a postcolonial feminist perspective and told an inspiring story about politics of solidarity among different women in the Matthean narrative of Mary and magoi.

We also heard from Professor Bo Myung Seo, who spoke at our opening Spring Convocation in February. Professor Seo was away on a year-long research leave in 2012-13, and presented "Ralph Waldo Emerson as a Thinker of Religions."

If you missed attending the convocations in person, you can still catch them by viewing the archived recordings on our website or on the CTS YouTube channel.

While we have been happy to have those professors back among us, we have said goodbye to another faculty member this semester who went on sabbatical: Dr. JoAnne Terrell, Associate Professor of Ethics, Theology, and the Arts. We hope her semester has been both relaxing and productive.



ANTI-VIOLENCE COLLOQUIUM

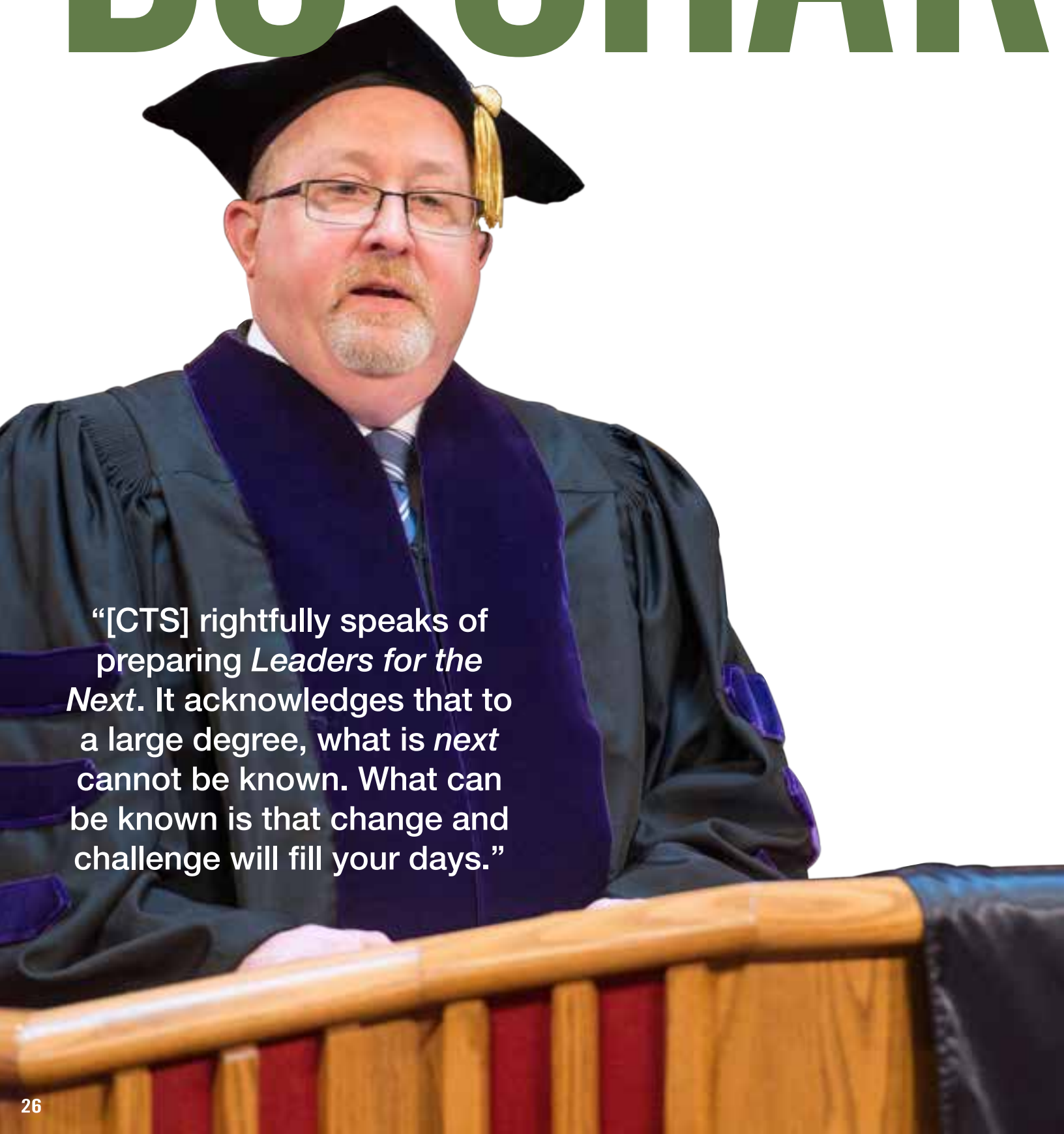
On Wednesday, April 9, CTS sponsored an all-seminary colloquium on the theme of "Violence." This is the second consecutive year in which the seminary has devoted a whole day to exploration of a single theme. This year's focus on violence was chosen to be in continuity with last year's colloquium on racism, while also moving in some new directions.

We began the day with an excellent plenary address by Dr. Stephen Ray. Dr. Ray, who is Professor of Systematic Theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary and a member of the UCC, is spending his sabbatical with us this semester as a visiting scholar. His address on violence against black bodies was thought-provoking and very well-received, and set our day off to an excellent start. Dr. Ray's address is also archived in our digital files.

Other highlights of the day included a public presentation by the Youth Empowerment Performance Project and an evening panel discussion sponsored by the Chicago Sunday Evening Club. This panel focused on a new documentary called "After Prison," which features, among others, our faculty members Lee Butler, Rachel Mikva, and JoAnne Terrell.

On the same day, classes that normally meet on Wednesdays focused on topics related to the colloquium's theme. The colloquium involved a lot of planning and hard work by many members of our community, including faculty members Dow Edgerton, Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, the Rev. Ayanna Johnson Watkins, our Director of Community Life, and several students and community partners.

DC CHAR



“[CTS] rightfully speaks of preparing *Leaders for the Next*. It acknowledges that to a large degree, what is *next* cannot be known. What can be known is that change and challenge will fill your days.”

GE

A COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Don Clark, Board Member

The excerpt is taken from the commencement address of former CTS Chairman, Donald Clark. The full address is available on www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvLewpF5dpA and serves as an inspiring charge to not only the 2014 graduates but to all those who share CTS' mission for justice and mercy.

As a church (United Church of Christ), we stand for fair treatment for all. We were an abolitionist church - one of the first in this country to stand against slavery - and were the first predominately white denomination to ordain an African American. We stood up for the rights of women and ordained the first female pastor. We were active in the civil rights demonstrations of this century, and we stood beside - and still stand beside - the fight for LGBT equality. In fact, we were the first denomination to ordain an openly gay pastor more than 40 years ago and the first mainline Christian denomination to support same-sex marriage.

We did not bring the (North Carolina) lawsuit to make others conform to our religious beliefs. We brought the lawsuit to vindicate the rights of all people to freely exercise their beliefs, and for the equal treatment under the law of all God's children.

And the time to take this stand was now.

Why am I telling you these stories about some of the times *when* and *how* I have tried to bring the faith forward?...Because it would be understandable on this day of accomplishment, for you to have some sense that you have "arrived," or at least that you will soon focus on where you will apply your new skills and learnings;...But I would encourage you not to focus so much on *who* you may become or *where* you may end up, but rather on how you will get there...If you are too focused on a destination in life - what your job, your title, or your status will be - you

may miss opportunities that are presented to you along the way...But once we know what our destination is . . . we too easily get trapped by desire. Holding our hopes tightly, intent on reaching our goal, working to implement the plan, to reach our dream - all this focus and dedication can place huge blinders on us. We may be diligent, but we're also dangerously myopic...



Brandon Ngo, Bethany Clark Ngo and Keira Ngo, Ellen and Don Clark, and Alex Clark

Chicago Theological Seminary has tried to listen attentively. It rightfully speaks of preparing "Leaders for the Next." It acknowledges that to a large degree, what is "next" cannot be known. What can be known is that change and challenge will fill your days. And thus as leaders you, the graduates of this class of 2014, will need:

- The ability to anticipate and respond to surprise & uncertainty
- The ability to anticipate and recognize change & lead transitions
- The ability to operate on intent through trust, empowerment, & understanding
- The ability to make ethical decisions
- The ability to think critically in the moment, wherever you may be

As I have said before, we need you to lead this way because the world needs CTS people.

There is a world out there that needs people to tell it that the way we are now is not all that we can hope to be.

There is a government out there that needs people to tell it that the hope of the world does not lie in war.

There is an environment out there that needs people to resurrect.

Yes, the world needs CTS people: brave, joyous, loud, at times misbehaving CTS people!



A CALL TO WOOD COUNTRY



Bishop George
Washington Carver
Walker, Sr.

Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us only one lot and one share to inherit, since we are a great people, in as much as the Lord has blessed us until now?"

So Joshua answered them, "If you are a great people, then go up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizites and the giants, if Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee."

Using as a theme: "The Challenges of the Wood Country" or "A Call to the Wood Country."

Moses is dead, and the leadership of the nation is now assigned to Joshua who finds himself face to face with the awesome responsibility of the day to day management of this great nation. The difficult task of presiding over the conquest of the land of Canaan, a land of promise to the Children of Israel (God's chosen people) a definite mission to which Joshua is specifically called. It is interesting to note, that God assigns leaders to specific responsibilities. God does not turn his leaders loose in the world to search for some cause to which they can give themselves. He assigns them to a specific mission. And charges them, as he did Joshua Chapter 1: vs7

"Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according

To all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from

It to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go."

Joshua is now dividing the land and his attention is suddenly drawn to this crowd, who are complaining and boasting; complaining that their lot was too small, and boasting that they were a great people!

So Joshua challenges them, "If you are truly a great people, then, what are you doing here? get up, to the Wood Country and cut down some trees! (And this is my challenge to you this evening.) You have finished your work here in the

"Seed-Bed" (Seminary) you have now been approved by this marvelous Institution to GO.

Now, the wood country can be a place, a condition, or a state of mind! It is where people are caught up in the "steel traps" of life, where Howard Thurman would describe as "Those who stand, at a moment in human history, with their backs against the wall". The disinherited, disenfranchised, the disenchanted! It is where men and women seek to escape the terrible and frightening moments of their existence by the use of drugs, alcohol, sex, crimes or other means.

The wood country, is where the fastest growing rate of HIV/AIDS are among the ages of 13-19, and where African Americans are 13% of the population in America, and yet make up 48% of the newly infected cases of HIV/AIDS. The Wood Country, is where only 48% of our children are completing High School, and the jails are being filled on a daily bases, and more of our children are going to jail than to college. Yes, get up to the Wood Country! It's where a wide gulf now, exist between what we expect of our children, and what they expect of themselves!

My wife and I spent a few hours this past Wednesday afternoon in the home of one of our childhood friends, and heard their daughter who is the mother of a 17 year old, tell us how hard it is to rear her son in this environment. She said, "I or his grandparents have to carry him everywhere he goes,(school, shopping, church,) at one time, the gangs respected each other, or at least they respected their leader" but now, they respect no one, because they trust no one! And what's worst, there is a brake down in communication. Each block has it's own culture! As they feed on "crack" and "guns" 14 year olds are given guns to solve their conflicts! (I am still shaking from that conversation!) But, we must find a way to get to the Wood Country!

The Wood Country, is where men are victimized and exploited, oppressed, and denied the rights to exist as human beings of worth and value, where they are crushed by the ruthless and brutalizing forces of our impersonal technological world, and the mingled spirits of men

are grinned by the rapid moving wheels of a materialistic society.

So what words of hope can we find for humankind up that is wrapped up in this insensitive society that seems to be on a fast track headed nowhere! Is there any word? Can we offer any Hope for the living of these days? May I advise you graduates, that you are called to the Wood Country, not to be served, but to serve! People are hurting out there! They don't want to hear how much you know; they want to know how much you care!

The number one trender on this evening's news is "Koch Brothers Exposed" The Road to OLIGARCH. ("Oligarch" is a term I was introduced to in my freshman year in college, in Sociology 101) it means, ruled or controlled by a few. This will be a documentary putting the spotlight on the many billionaires who are strategically spending millions to gain control of the government. (buying politicians). The number two trender, on the eve of observing 60 years after that landmark Supreme Court decision, "Brown vs The Board of Education", is that schools are rapidly being re-segregated! And the number three trender, is that 33 States have introduced 92 restrictive bills to suppress Voting Rights, and the Supreme Court has made it easier for some of them to do so by striking down a key provision of the Voting Rights Act.

In this narrative, I see at least three Imperatives that I need to leave you with as I go to my seat! It is absolutely necessary that you 1. Know who you are; 2. Have a clear understanding of what you are about; and 3. Know where you are going.

KNOW WHO YOU ARE:

So celebrate you Identity. You must know who you are. I appreciate Ephraim and Mannaseh because they recognized themselves as the children of Joseph. "This is not enough, to brag, by saying, "We are a great people".

If you don't know who you are, you will rely on others outside of you to tell you, and when they do, they will tell you who they want you to be! They will define you. Don't allow anyone to define you! Celebrate you Identity like Ephraim and

Mannaseh. We are the children of Joseph. The one who went from the Pit, to Potiphar's house, from the Prison to the Palace. The one who went from Persecution to Promotion, from Slavery to Success!

We need to celebrate who we are, We are the salt of the earth, we are the light of the world, we are the city that sits on the hill, we are a royal priesthood, a holy nation one who have been called from the darkness into God's marvelous light. Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine. Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of his spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story, this is my song praising my Savior all the daylong! Know who you are, and celebrate your Identity!

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT:

In other words, have a clear understanding of your Mission!

So claim your Inheritance. "Go cut Down the Wood" Clear out a place for yourself!

Joshua said, "If you are a great people, go out to the wood country and cut down some trees" If you are great, claim your inheritance! Don't wait for someone to do it for you.

Great people don't give up. Great people don't give in, great people don't linger around low places boasting and complaining. Great people are Trailblazers. Great people are pioneers, Great people, are leaders, Great people, are visionaries. Great people know how to chart their own course, Great people know how to build their own bridges, open their own doors. Train their own children, and elect those that will lift them and not put them down! If you are great, prove it! Get up to the wood country and cut down trees!

"In the fell clutch of circumstance, I have not winched not cried aloud, under the bludgeoning of chance, my head is bloody but unbowed. Beyond the place of wrath and tears looms but the harrow of the shade, and yet the menace of the years finds, and shall find me unafraid."

KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING!

Have a clear understanding of your destiny!

Have your sight set on your goals, stay focused! And let nothing distract you!

When Joshua challenged them to get up to the wood country, they knew exactly where they were going, they were going to the land of the Perizites and the Giants. They were but grasshoppers among those giants, but that did not deter them! Joshua reminded them, you have more power than they! You can take them on! Instead of looking around, look up. Don't look at them, look at Him!

For Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world. Look up! "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" Look up! And stay connected, If you are connected to Him, you will discover that he will bring you through! For, He is... Greater than the sand on the seashore – Greater than the stars in the sky – Greater than the flowers in the field – Greater than the fish in the sea – Greater than the planets in the universe – We can sing with new meaning,

O Lord My God, when I in awesome wonder, consider all the world thy hands has made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder. Thou power throughout the universe displayed. Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee, how great Thou art...

PFELICITATIONS

Father Michael Pfleger Receives Inaugural Community Servant Award

Susan Cusick, Staff



Fr. Michael Pfleger

On Friday, May 16, Chicago Theological Seminary along with its Center for the Study of Black Faith and Life bestowed its inaugural Community Servant Award to Father Michael Pfleger, pastor of the faith community of St. Sabina Catholic Church in the Auburn-Gresham neighborhood on the city's Southside. The Community Servant Award recognizes a person in congregational or public ministry who has given exemplary, on the ground, prophetic servant-leadership in the Chicagoland area.

Members of St. Sabina, Greater Walters African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, family, and friends joined the CTS community in honoring Father Pfleger. The keynote address was given by the Right Reverend Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr., retired Senior Bishop of the A. M. E. Zion Church.



Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr., Chairman Norm Williams, Father Michael Pfleger, Rev. Dr. JoAnne Terrell, Father Thulani Magwaza & Alice Hunt

Honorary Degrees

Don Clark & Reverend Bishop George Walker Received Honorary Degrees at the 2014 Commencement

Chicago Theological Seminary awarded honorary degrees to Donald C. Clark, Jr., Esq., General Counsel, United Church of Christ, and the Right Reverend Bishop George W. C. Walker, during our 2014 Commencement. Honorary degrees are awarded to individuals for their embodiment of the vision, mission, and commitments of Chicago Theological Seminary, and for their extraordinary commitment to fostering justice and mercy in the world.

The honorary degrees were awarded with the following citations given by President Alice Hunt and Rev. Dr. JoAnne Terrell.

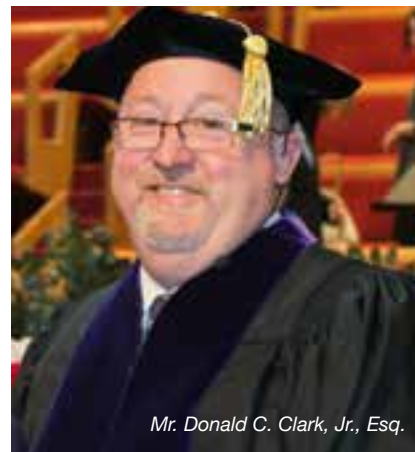
MR. DONALD C. CLARK, JR., ESQ.

Today, we honor one we know as a repairer of the breach, a restorer of justice so that people may survive and thrive: Donald Cameron Clark, Jr., one who has devoted his life to the service of the church, to excellence in theological education, and to the increase of justice and mercy throughout society.

After receiving his Juris Doctor from Rutgers-Camden Law School in 1979 where he was editor of the Rutgers Law Journal, Donald Cameron Clark served as a litigation partner in two of Chicago's largest law firms for nearly a decade. He then created and managed his own litigation boutique before answering the call to serve the United Church of Christ where he is now General Counsel advising the denomination of over one million members and over 5,000 churches. While he defends the interests of the United Church of Christ,

with diligence and skill, he also uses this position to advance larger causes of justice in the whole of society, most recently taking the lead role in filing, on behalf of the United Church of Christ, a lawsuit challenging the State of North Carolina's constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage on the grounds that it violates the right to free exercise of religion guaranteed in the 1st Amendment to the US Constitution, since UCC clergy who wish to perform marriage ceremonies for same-sex couples are unable to do so legally—a brilliant legal strategy that is vintage Clark.

Don also lends his gifts as a litigator generously beyond ecclesial disputes. For example, he successfully argued, pro bono, *Hamilton v. State of Alabama* and won the reversal of a wrongful capital murder conviction and death sentence, thereby saving a life. And his gifts extend beyond the legal realm. His



Mr. Donald C. Clark, Jr., Esq.

articles have appeared in legal journals, of course, but also in *The Christian Century*, where he reflected on sex abuse in the church. He speaks widely on church polity and governance, as well as legal issues for church and clergy. He even teaches graduate courses, such as his Legal Issues in Contemporary Parish Ministry, for our students here at Chicago Theological Seminary. He has held public office and served on numerous boards at institutions as diverse as the Adler Planetarium and Church World Service.

Of special importance to us, however, is his service as member and Chair of the Board of Trustees of Chicago Theological Seminary. At a crucial time in the life of our school, Donald Cameron Clark was called by God to use his many gifts to further our mission in the world. From fiercely negotiating the sale of our old building through the design of our beautiful new LEEDS Gold Certified, technologically capable building, to our ambitious move to offer a world-class online degree, Don has led CTS with aplomb, generosity, creativity, diligence, integrity, and love. Consistently challenging us to be all that we are called to be, he has demonstrated through his leadership what he has said many times: "The world needs CTS people."

Don is also, of course, a grandfather extraordinaire, a kilt-wearer, an avid Black-hawks fan, a connoisseur of scotch whiskey and steak, a rabble-rousing Republican in a sea of Democrats, and a curling champion. He loves to be told something cannot be done, because then he sets about doing it. He is a repairer of the breach, a restorer of streets on which people may live in peace.

For all these reasons, and more, Mr. Williams, Chair of the Board, it is my distinct pleasure and honor to present to you Donald Cameron Clark, Jr., for the degree of Doctor of Letters, honoris causa.

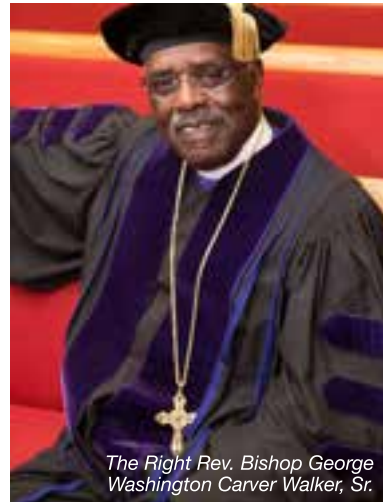
THE RIGHT REVEREND GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER WALKER, SR.

The Right Reverend George Washington Carver Walker, Sr., is the eighty-first bishop in succession of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. Elected at the 43rd General Conference of 1988, he presided over the areas now known as the Western and Southwestern Delta Episcopal Districts, as well as the North Eastern and Piedmont Episcopal Districts, until his retirement as Senior Bishop in 2012. Like the scientist whose name he carries, George Washington Carver Walker, Sr., is a man of vision, indomitable will, and impeccable grace to follow a vision through to manifestation.

Born in Montgomery, Alabama, to the Reverend Roosevelt Leon and Mrs. Lemon Louise Pace Walker, Bishop Walker is a graduate of Clinton Junior College, Benedict College, and Hood Theological Seminary. He was ordained a deacon and an elder in the Pee Dee

Conference under the late Bishop Daniel Pope. The then Reverend Walker married a teacher, the gifted, gracious, and lovely Geraldine Jackson, and they have four children: the Reverend Dr. Dwayne Walker, the Reverend George Walker, Jr., Cynthia Walker Carr, and Deborah Walker Richmond. Mrs. Walker very ably assisted her husband during his successive and successful pastoring of four churches in South Carolina before coming to Chicago and the Greater Walters A.M.E. Zion Church, where they served for sixteen years until his elevation to the episcopacy and her appointment as Missionary Supervisor. Since their retirement at the end of the last quadrennium, Bishop and Mrs. Walker have returned to their church family as active members.

Bishop Walker's love for the A.M.E. Zion Church is breathtaking, when we consider the great stewardship he has given to lift up its heritage and insure its ongoing viability and impact in the world. He is the immediate past chair of the Harriet Tubman Home, which the hero-



The Right Rev. Bishop George Washington Carver Walker, Sr.

Central Louisiana in 2006 and 2007, and led prayers for the family of the slain black youth, Trayvon Martin, of Sanford, Florida. His love for the people of God is ecumenical, inter-religious, and intercultural in scope. He participated in the Great Gathering of black Methodists in Columbia, South Carolina, in March 2010, and is an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Council of Churches, the World Methodist Council, and the World Council of Churches. Through his involvement in The Balm in Gilead, a non-profit organization dedicated to the healing of AIDS through prayer, edu-

cation, advocacy, and service, he has led the A.M.E. Zion Church in America and abroad in making a passionate, compassionate response to people with HIV/AIDS, as well as the families and loved ones affected by the pandemic.

To a world wracked with pain, Bishop Walker has brought the healing virtues of a loving Gospel.

To a world, seemingly given over to the thoughtless killers of youth and their dreams, Bishop Walker has given advocacy on behalf of those who suffer loss.

"In a world riven by racism," Bishop Walker has leaned into the prophetic traditions of Jesus Christ, by speaking nothing less than the truth in love, and by demanding justice, the antidote to oppression of any kind. In so doing, he lifted high and was lifted high by the spirit of Christ and the A.M.E. Zion Church's luminaries—Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and others too numerous to name here—and others too numerous to name here, who sought wisdom and fought for peace.

The prophet declares: "If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted ... then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday ... [then] shall you be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in" (Is 58:9b-10, 12b, NRSV, adapted).

President Hunt, it is my honor to present to you The Right Reverend George Washington Carver Walker, Sr., for the degree Doctor of Letters, honoris causa.

VIA DE LA

CRISTIAN DE LA ROSA ON HER CTS JOURNEY

John Thomas, Visiting Faculty

“At CTS, we didn’t just sit in class taking notes from a professor’s lecture, we walked into our classes for an encounter.”

*Rev. Dr. Cristian de la Rosa,
2012 Ph.D. graduate.*

That encounter included the expertise and experience of faculty members, but also engagement with the questions and concerns of fellow students. And for de la Rosa, who was born in Mexico and frequently found herself the only Latina in college and seminary classrooms, a particular gift at Chicago Theological Seminary was learning with students of color and from other parts of the globe.

Today, de la Rosa is Clinical Assistant Professor of Contextual Theology and Practice and Director of Contextual Education and Community Partnerships at Boston University School of Theology. Called to BU to help build bridges between the academy, the church, and the community, she works with master’s-level students in their field placements, with a focus on students who wish to explore vocations in the academy or non-parish settings of ministry and service.

An ordained elder of the United Methodist Church, de la Rosa is passionate about nurturing young leaders from the Hispanic community, a trait in evidence when she was a student at CTS. As her advisor Professor Ted Jennings recalls, “She was not only a fine student and scholar, she was (and is) a wonderful activist, educator, and church woman, working tirelessly in national programs for theological education for Hispanic pastors, laity, and youth.”

For ten years she has been a leader in the Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy (HYLA), a program that brings together high school and college-aged young people in college and seminary settings around the country to help them discern future vocational goals, assist them in college admissions, and accompany them through their higher education.

Dr. de la Rosa’s leadership development focus doesn’t stop with HYLA. She is a leader in the Association for Hispanic Theological Education and is one of the two national conveners of an emerging organization, the National Association of United Methodist Latina Clergy Women. This group now includes 200 clergy who look to each other for support and encouragement.

Dr. de la Rosa maintains her interest in scholarly research, continuing the work she began in her Ph.D. dissertation at CTS. Dr. Jennings describes her project as “a bold and creative appropriation of the symbol and story of the Virgin of Guadalupe (and her indigenous antecedents) for the liberation and empowerment of Hispanic women, whether religious or secular, Protestant or Catholic.” She has developed this work into a class taught at the Hispanic Summer Program and is planning travel seminars to Mexico for her BU students. Recent presentations in Latin American theological institutions have led to numerous invitations for her to speak and teach. How people gain agency in their lives was clearly not just a focus for her dissertation, but has become her life’s work.

With each new leadership challenge Dr. de la Rosa faces, she finds encouragement in words spoken to her Ph.D. classmates by Dr. Jennings: “You wouldn’t be here if we did not believe you could do this program.” CTS, for her, was a rigorous, demanding educational experience. But at its heart, she says, “It was about formation. It was accompaniment.”

ROSA



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REZA ASLAN

**Wednesday,
September 17, 2014**

Internationally acclaimed writer and scholar of religions, and author of the #1 New York Times Bestseller *Zealot: The Life and Time of Jesus of Nazareth*.

C. SHELBY ROOKS LECTURE

**Thursday,
October 9, 2014**

Rev. Dr. Renita J Weems: Biblical scholar, academic administrator, writer, blogger, ordained minister, & public intellectual. Co-Pastor Ray of Hope Community Church. Formerly, faculty of Vanderbilt University & William & Camille Cosby Visiting Professor at Spelman College.

SPRING CONFERENCE

**Friday, April 24 -
Saturday, April 25, 2015**

Selma 50 Years Later and the Contemporary Context of Civil Rights.

RACHEL ADLER

April 2015

Rabbi, Dr. Rachel Adler is the Rabbi David Ellenson Professor of Jewish Religious Thought & Professor of Modern Jewish Thought & Feminist Studies at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles.

GILBERTO CASTAÑEDA LECTURE

Thursday, May 7, 2015

Dr. Heather White: Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion at New College of Florida.



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