

Challenge & Response

CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

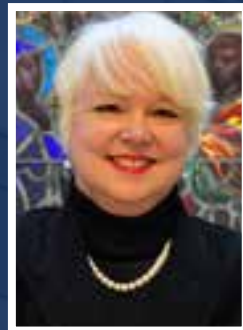
Winter 2014

*Faith on the Ground
in Ferguson.*



President's Welcome

Alice Hunt, President



At our upcoming Spring Leadership Conference (see page 17), the Chicago Theological Seminary community will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Selma marches, when then-President Howard Schomer, along with a number of students including Jesse Jackson, Sr., traveled to Alabama to add their public witness to the movement. This April, we will listen to keynote addresses by Rev. Jackson, founder and president of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition and Michelle Alexander, associate professor of law at Ohio State University and author of *The New Jim Crow*. Both speakers will ask us to reflect on the legacy of the civil rights movement for the challenges we face today.

As I write, the crisis in Ferguson continues. As residents and supporters struggle to make sense of the process leading to the grand jury's decision not to indict, the determination grows not to return to an "old normal" absent fundamental changes in how the justice system responds to the African American community, not just in Ferguson, but across the land.

Meanwhile, concern for the devastating impact of the Ebola epidemic waxes and wanes depending on the extent to which it seems to be contained in Africa, far from our own protected shores. And critics of the President rail against his decision to offer relief from deportation to millions of immigrants. All of this demonstrates a

pervasive desire by a predominantly white America to wall off the problems facing people of color, maintaining privilege through the illusion of protective walls of residential quarantine, militarized borders, and heavily armed policy presence.

The viruses of racism that infect the Fergusons of this country, along with the deadly viruses killing tens of thousands of Africans, are tolerated as long as they are contained. It is one thing to give a nod to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, eloquent words about all of us being "inextricably linked by a common fabric of humanity and garment of destiny." It is quite another to actively dismantle the walls of quarantine erected by centuries of white privilege and power.

Chicago Theological Seminary has long wrestled with these challenges in our society, in religious communities, and here at the seminary. It is hard work and it is sacred work. Our Spring Leadership Conference will return us again to these questions as we look back and look ahead. I hope you will join us either in person or through live-streaming. And I hope that the work we do here will continue to be a resource for you in your own march toward our shared liberation.

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Faith on the Front Lines

REFLECTIONS ON FERGUSON



Waltrina Middleton, M.Div. 2009

The day before Moral Monday, the day I was arrested, I sat in a packed auditorium in Ferguson, Missouri with young people. Some wept inconsolably. Others used profanity unapologetically to expel pent-up frustration and others poetically reclaimed the streets as “ours.” For many, this was the first time anyone had ever listened. They grew up just as I did, with rules of engagement for dealing with the police and the public.

Rule #1: Be seen and not heard. Do not challenge authority. Comply and don’t ask questions. You have no rights.

Rule #2: Inhibit all natural human emotions or sentiments of fear, anger or frustration. Internalize your emotions. You are not human.

Rule #3: Make sure those with the power and privilege feel safe and secure at all times. Keep your hands exposed, don’t make eye contact, sing, dance, and—most importantly—remember to laugh and smile.

These young people were unapologetically breaking the rules of engagement and exercising their right to be human—to be free. They were reclaiming the streets of Ferguson in this movement, a declaration of liberation.

These same young people looked into the crowd and found clergy, adults, elders, and asked simply, “Where have you been? Where were you when we were shot with rubber bullets and sprayed with tear gas? Where were you when the church house was

raided and our meeting places were ransacked by police? Where were you when we were on the front lines being abused, arrested, and slain?”

I drove to Ferguson to confess that I have been too silent and absent from the public square in protest of the sins against human rights and human dignity. I drove to Ferguson to bear witness to the bloodshed and lives stolen. I drove to Ferguson to confess my arrival was late and my activism tardy, and to share in the liturgical lament, “All lives matter.”

I came in response to Eric Garner’s proclamation, “It stops today,” a prophetic reminder that we must not rest until freedom comes for us all. We can’t quit until “this” stops... the militarization of communities as a methodic tool of intimidation and disenfranchisement.

This – the murder of children and babies, denying them the basic right to live, play, grow, go to college, and fulfill dreams.

This – the economic sanctions of a New Jim Crow that creates ghettos.

This – the disproportionate, racist, and biased sentencing of poor people of color.

This – the culture of violence and crime cultivating poverty and classism.

This – social apathy and normalization of racism.

This – must stop today.

My imprisonment was brief and hardly anything to claim as heroic. But my actions were inspired by

the courage and witness of those who came before me. I can only pray my witness will inspire someone else to come from out of the shadows and into the public square to be present, engaged, and empowered to disobey.

I am often asked, “So, how did it go in Ferguson?” How did it go? Well, it is still going. People are still in Ferguson demanding justice. People continue to suffer due to the triple evils of racism, militarism, and classism. Ferguson didn’t end when I was bailed out and returned home. The work remains and we must go to our Ferguson—wherever that may be—and push for accountability.

I won’t look back except to remember the on-going struggle for justice. I won’t look back except to recall those who hung from lynching trees as strange fruit. I will not look back except to recall the names of Emmitt Till, Amadou Diallo, Rekia Boyd, Trayvon Martin, Shereese Francis, Eric Garner, John Crawford, Michael Brown, Kendrec McDade, Daniel Tillison, Miriam Carey, Sean Bell, Timothy Russell, Malissa Williams, Tarika Wilson and her one-year-old-child, Aiyana Jones, and a score of others whose names remain unknown but who share a common lot of death by legalized racist policing, profiling, and militarized police force against civilians.

I chose civil disobedience in Ferguson because all lives matter, and because I can’t forget the pleas of “Don’t shoot,” or the piercing cry for help from a young man trying to return home after purchasing Skittles and iced tea. Nor can I erase the images of Eric Garner, breathless and gasping, shortly after declaring that this culture of violence, racism, and profiling must “end today.” I carried their last words with me as I drove home from Ferguson, my hands on the steering wheel in the posture of “Hands Up, Don’t Shoot,” surrendered to prayer.

Everyone is not called to cross the line. Everyone is not called to disobey. But we are all called to discern how to respond, act and be a vessel for justice and radical love.

Waltrina N. Middleton is a 2009 graduate of CTS (M. Div.) and Minister for Youth Advocacy and Leadership Formation for the United Church of Christ.



BLACK & BLUE

Violence Against Blacks

John Thomas, Faculty

At the April, 2014 colloquy for CTS students, faculty, and staff, visiting scholar Stephen Ray addressed the issue of violence against Black men. His provocative theological analysis challenged the dominant cultural discourse about young Black men in which they are identified as “a problem for their communities, for the larger society as a whole, and for themselves.” Dr. Ray argued that “Black bodies inhabit a culturally imagined space that does not extend an invitation to the experience of shared humanity, but rather an invitation to violence.” The address traces this dynamic from slavery through Jim Crow to more recent killings.

Within weeks Eric Garner, unarmed, was killed by New York City police in an illegal choke hold and Michael Brown lay on the street in Ferguson killed by local police. As the repercussions from these events unfold, Dr. Ray’s address takes on particular power and urgency.

Below are quotes taken from Dr. Ray’s lecture.

“Beginning with the theologized, monetized, commodified, and finally mundane psychic, spiritual, and physical violation of Black bodies

which was slavery; on through the era of Jim and Jane Crow; into the contemporary iterations, the routine violation of Black bodies has moved beyond the mundane to the expected . . . Put plainly, Black bodies invite violence.”

“I offer this challenge to the Church that is becoming. The first part of this challenge is to take seriously the particular opportunity that it has to create space, physical and spiritual, in which the bodies of young Black men can be reinterpreted . . . Likewise, the Church could uniquely be a humanizing discursive space . . . such that the shared vulnerability of these young Black men might be a generative space for the creative display of their humanity.”

Dr. Stephen Ray is the Neal F. and Ila A. Fisher Professor of Systematic Theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological School. Prior to coming to Garrett he taught at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He received his M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from Yale University. He is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. During the Spring, 2014 he was a visiting scholar at CTS.



“Precisely because of their vulnerability in our shared common life, they are uniquely able to display the power of God in the midst of hopelessness and despair.”

For the full text of Dr. Ray’s address, go to www.ctschicago.edu/about/cts-publications



GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Perspectives from four corners of the world

Bo Myung Seo

Jason Carson Wilson, M.Div. Student



Faculty at CTS expose students to a wide range of perspectives and opportunities to examine faith traditions in non-traditional ways.

Dr. Bo Myung Seo, Associate Professor of Theology & Cultural Criticism, offers his students a unique take on studying theology and culture, viewing them through a “non-western” lens.

“I didn’t come here as a student,” he said. “I came here as an immigrant.”

He grew up in a conservative Presbyterian church.

Seo, who emigrated from Korea to New Jersey, began studying theology while pursuing a bachelor’s degree in philosophy at Drew University in Madison, NJ, in what he stresses was purely an academic exercise.

However, certain theologians were speaking to him.

“All along, I had the influence of liberation theologians: James Cone, Gustavo Gutierrez, and Minjung theologians in Korea,” he said. “Somehow, I thought I could engage in philosophy and liberation theology at the same time. It was difficult because they were thought to be different and separate endeavors, but I have managed to keep them intact in how I think about things.”

That said, the two came together for Seo. “I



liked my training in philosophy and have felt there are some issues I wanted to pursue and be able to articulate,” he said, citing the relationship of twentieth-century philosophy and the phenomenology of European

philosophers Martin Heidegger and Emmanuel Levinas.

Seo brings new insights to his teaching, challenging the “conventional wisdom” that Christianity is the only religion and there’s only one kind of Christianity. Teaching Global Sensitivity in Ministry at CTS gives Seo that opportunity.

“It’s a great privilege to be able to introduce non-Western Christianity to people who grew up in this country,” he said.

Seo believes incorporating non-western wisdom and experience gives people new ways to understand and practice Christianity.

He uses his personal and professional journeys, like all CTS faculty, to provide students with various chances to gain knowledge about new and different concepts and perspectives.

Jason Carson (JC) Wilson, a native of Champaign, Ill., lives in Chicago. Wilson is a M. Div. candidate with a concentration in Black & Queer Liberation Theologies. He has an interest in community organizing. Wilson is the founding member and convener of the Bayard Rustin Society. He is a member and ministry intern at University Church in Hyde Park.

Jonah Salim

Susan Cusick, Staff



For many of us the genocide of Yazidie Kurds by ISIS is a surreal reality gleaned from news reports from far across the world. But Jonah Salim, a Ph.D. student at CTS, receives updates on the tragedy directly from Yazidie survivors through daily communication with Yazidie friends and relatives in Iraq. Although he is proud to be a U.S. citizen and Christian, Salim grew up as a Yazidie Kurd in a Kurdish village in Nineveh, Iraq (prophet Jonah's town) and offers a different perspective on the vicious genocide. His doctoral research is called *Trauma of Scapegoat: In the case of Yazidie Kurds*.

Salim raises the voice of these victims with students, scholars, faith communities, and the media. In August, on the second day of the most recent genocide attacks, he wrote directly to President Barack Obama, sharing his concerns and offering his assistance. In late October, President Obama responded to Salim's letter, in a personal email to Salim:

"Thank you for writing.ISIL [Islamic State of Iraq and Levant in Iraq and Syria] poses a threat to the Iraqi people, to the region, to the international community, and to our nation....Beyond partnership with Iraq, we formed a global coalition of more than 60 countries and partnersAt the same time, we are leading a diplomatic effort to work with Iraqi leaders and countries in the region to support stability."

Salim is currently working on a paper on the religious history, clashes, circumstances and politics that led up to and still impact these deadly events. Writing such a paper, drawing from deep theological study as well as significant personal experience has been difficult. Salim persists; keeping in mind his wish, "to contribute to the scholarship community with knowledge about the theology and trauma of Yazidie people; to raise awareness of the genocide that Yazidis face by ISIS."

Salim relates that this paper is his way of, "raising the voice of Yazidie women, including younger girls, thousands of whom were literally raped and sexually abused." Salim's sharing of his personal knowledge and study, "raises the voice of Yazidie children who have lost some or all of their families in the genocide, who are victims, often kidnaped, injured, or even buried alive by the terrorists." With his words, Salim aims, "to be the voice of Yazidie victims who have no voice here, in our community."

For Dr. Salim's full paper, go to www.ctschicago.edu/about/cts-publications

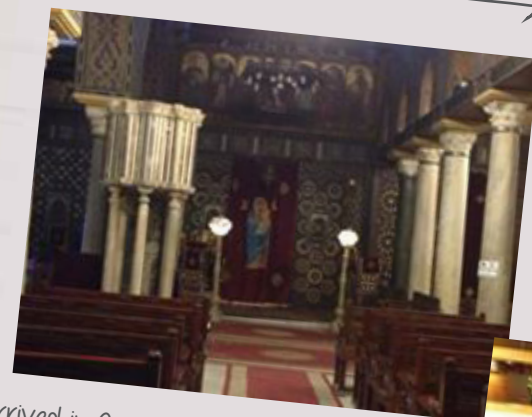
Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder

From September 20 to October 2, I traveled with a group of eight Disciples of Christ and United Church of Christ leaders for the purpose of visiting our ministry partners in Cairo, Egypt; Ammon, Jordan; Beirut, Lebanon; and Bethlehem and Jerusalem (Palestine/Israel). The trip included conversations with women and men in refugee camps, Evangelical (Protestant) church officials, seminary presidents, and yes, children.

Below are excerpts from my travel journal, detailing this life-changing experience.

9/22/14

A beautiful pic of Zurich from the plane. Just lovely and luscious!



Arrived in Cairo. Above is a picture of the Hanging Church. Christians believe this is place where Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fled into Egypt. Okay, Bible scholars, which Gospel records this?

We will be meeting with Dr. Atef Gendy, President of Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo. Students here complete three months of field education called compassionate care, mainly in social service agencies. The requirement is three months for three years each. Students earn six credits for each three-month period. During the uprising a few months ago, many students were so dedicated to placement that they refused to leave even when in danger. Their commitment and belief is strong! Wow!

The students said, "Don't leave people in difficult time." This is compassionate care.

9/23/14

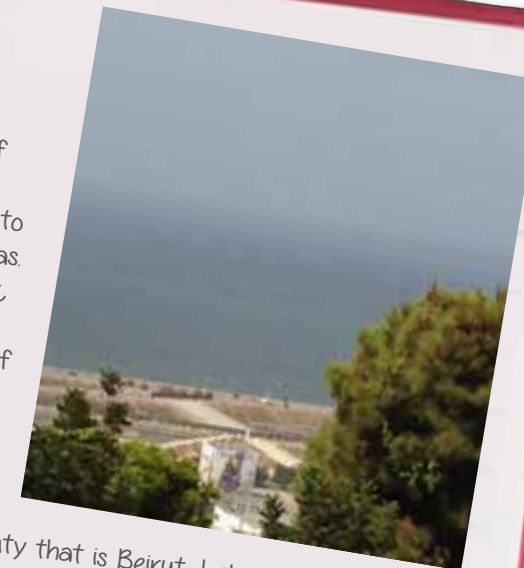
We started the morning visiting the sphinx, pyramids, and the Nile River. After touring, I met with the Rev. Andrea Zaki, PhD, General Director of the Coptic Evangelical Organization of Social Services (CEOSS).

Al-Azhar, the oldest continuous university in the world, is in Cairo.



9/26/14

Young people, because of their emotional and social vulnerability, are often the targets and objects of predatory, skewed religious thoughts and ideology. We must prepare them to recognize dangerous behavior and ideas. While America is striking from the air, radical, harmful teaching is occurring on the ground. Thank you, leadership of the National Evangelical (Protestant) Synod of Syria and Lebanon and the Union of Armenian Churches, for helping me on this day!



9/28/14

We met with Victor Makari, who works with Mitri Raheb at the Lutheran-Christmas Church in Bethlehem. Raheb's Diyar Consortium has a Palestinian university with 600 students. Makari and Raheb are in the third phase of their work on religion and state matters relating to the occupation. This phase will focus on university students, academicians, and professors, because extremists tend to target young people. Half of Palestine's population is twenty-five years old or younger. By the way, I have been traveling with Mitri Raheb's book, *Faith in the Face of Empire: The Bible through Palestinian Eyes*. I had no clue I would come close to him and his work. Coincidence? Divine Providence!

The beauty that is Beirut, Lebanon and the majesty of Mediterranean Sea! On to Jordan tomorrow.

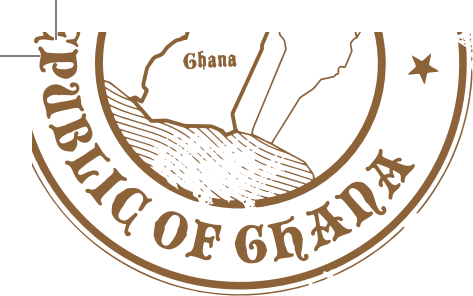
9/30/14

I visited the dividing wall in Bethlehem today after a profound meeting with Jean Zaru, Palestinian author of *Occupied by Nonviolence*. Zaru is a member of the Friends Society. One quote from her: "America acts as if it is an empire." Ouch!

Our time in the Middle East culminated with participation in the first YWCA of Palestine International Conference. In attendance were over 500 women from across the world who gathered to discuss matters related to peace, advocacy, family, and political rights and restitution. I am ever grateful for such a life-changing experience.

The dividing wall. Palestinian youth put graffiti on it as a sign of protest.





Melanie Jones

This past July, I attended the 2014 African & African Diasporan Women in Religion and Theology Conference at The Talitha Qumi Center home to the Institute of African Women in Religion & Culture in Legon, Ghana. The purpose of the conference was to engage critical issues concerning violence against African Diasporan women and girls and to strengthen collaboration of African and African Diasporan women scholars and activists in religion and theology. Entitled, "Texts of Terrors, Texts of Empowerment: Reimagining Sacred Canon in Africana Womanhood," the conference featured scholarly paper presentations and roundtables resisting disempowering interpretations of ancient sacred texts (including Bible and Quran) and oral traditional narratives while also reimagining empowering readings and interpretations of ancient sacred texts and embracing familiar writings within a broader sacred canon. Participants gathered from across Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Cote D'Ivoire, United States, and the Caribbean.

Liz Alexander, a CTS M.A.R.L. student, and I presented a paper entitled "When Caged Bodies Testify: African and African Diasporan Women's Memoir as Sacred Texts." The origin of this research developed from my coursework with CTS Professor Dow Edgerton on Reading Trauma and Theory this past Spring 2014 where I analyzed ways memoir and self-accounts embody release and recovery for those who have experienced trauma and open pathways for personal testimony and communal witness. Memoir, acts as a "living space" for the recognition of lived experience; serving as a platform for testimony, "the act of telling" one's story which enables African and

African Diasporan women to "love self... regardless" and reclaim the body.

One of my most memorable experiences of the trip to Ghana was our visit to the Elmina Castle on the Gold Coast of Ghana, which is believed to be the first European slave trading post in sub-Saharan Africa built by the Portuguese in 1482. This was a heavy day. A range of emotions filled the group of diverse women as we walked the corridors together. Some cried. Some kneeled. Some held the arms of others. Some listened for the cries of ancestors. Most of us were quiet. Elmina felt familiar to me because of the photographic introductions and lecture presentations from Professor Lee Butler in courses like *Religion, Terror & America* and *Intro to the Study of Black Faith & Life*. Yet and still, as I stood in the tiny, body-hugging opening of the Castle, known as the Door of No Return for many enslaved Africans who were shipped out into the Atlantic and never saw their homeland again, this place became more than a destination on a map. Elmina remains a historical marker of the devastation of human trafficking and devaluing of certain bodies.

In many ways, the trip to Ghana renewed my passion for the work of womanist theological ethics and my emphasis on Black women's body politics. Through dialogue with African women of Nigeria who shared insight on the status of Nigerian schoolgirls abducted earlier this year, I learned that violence against women and girls across continents is deliberate and ongoing. Moreover, systems of oppression have sought to discourage conversation and collaboration between African and African Diasporan women. This conference gave me the opportunity to listen and share stories with other women, to hear about the powerful work that is happening across the globe, and to become more aware of the work that needs to be done both at home and abroad. I

was pleased to locate CTS alum, Tiauna Boyd (M.Div. 2012) who is serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ajumako village located in central Ghana. For the past two years, Tiauna has worked to create better opportunities as it relates to technology in her village. Just this past September, Tiauna celebrated the opening of a computer lab in the village with a chief cutting ceremony. Tiauna's work demonstrates the extraordinary outcomes that are possible when we translate our CTS education toward greater justice and mercy in the world.



Throughout the conference, during heavy and light-hearted moments, the women gathered found a sense of our communal purpose in the refrain of one unity song, introduced by the African Muslim women present. I think the message of the chant speaks to the community of CTS today as we seek to create space for interdependence that recognizes difference, celebrates diversity, and cultivates harmony. Unity does not mean uniformity. Difference does not mean division. Meaningful work happens through sacred conversation and collaboration.

All Christian Women, we are all one.

All Muslim Women, we are all one.

All African Women, we are all one.

All American Women, we are all one.

It's U-N-I-T-Y, we are all one!

Melanie C. Jones, M.Div., is a Ph.D. student at CTS in Theology, Ethics, and Human Sciences. She serves as a licensed Associate Minister at South Suburban Missionary Baptist Church (SSMBC) in Harvey, IL where she leads the Women's Ministry and teaches in the Christian education department. She is also an adjunct professor (online) at American Baptist College in Nashville, TN. Her doctoral work utilizes critical inquiry to explore the theological and ethical complexity of Black women's body politics.

Transformative Coursework At CTS

Lisa N. Seiwert, Staff



My youngest daughter headed to college on the west coast this fall, making me – after twenty-four years with kids at home – an empty-nester. People were curious to see how I would fill my spare time. A new hobby, perhaps? Maybe a photography class? My kids were all hoping I'd try speed dating so they could be amused by stories of mismatches and awkward moments.

What they didn't expect me to do with my newfound free time is to enroll in a class at CTS. After all, I was a student here for four years – why would I sign up for yet another class? I know the hard work studying at CTS entails. I lived through years of feeling like I had to read during every spare moment of my day. I remember trying to find a way to keep books dry in the shower so as not to waste even one moment that could be study time! Why on earth would I devote a portion of this new freedom to *another* CTS class?

The problem started when I saw the title of Dr. Hunt's course, *Leadership for Transformation*. Leadership interests me, and transformation intrigues me. And thinking about those things under the tutelage of Dr. Hunt was absolutely enticing. When she showed me a preview of the syllabus, it sealed the deal.

So here I am in the midst of a wonderfully busy recruitment season spending a good chunk of my free time reading, writing, thinking, and engaging. And I'm loving it. This class is online, so my classmates come from as far away as Paris and Hawaii! When we meet for live video chats, the sun has set in Paris, I'm eating lunch and it's dawn in Hawaii. My classmates are insightful, challenging, prophetic, and humorous. Whether we're posting in forums or in the midst of a live discussion, they help me to take my learnings even further.

One of my classmates had this to say after a recent video conference:

"Wow. That may have been the best class, the best two hours, of anything I've ever been a part of. You could feel the entire team drawn into the conversation, and I couldn't stop writing down one 'breakthrough' item after another. It was incredible. It was so Spirit-driven as none of it could have been planned or orchestrated this way, and the harmonies it hit for me were just amazing. Is there a limit to how many aha moments one can have in 120 minutes? If so, I exceeded it!"

This class, like all my classes at CTS, has blown my expectations out of the water. Who knew we'd be reading Thich Naht Hanh as part of a course on leadership? I'm being challenged to put our course material in dialogue with my own particular context to discover my unique leadership potential.

This class, like all my classes at CTS, is relevant, pushy, and challenging. And, like all my CTS classes, it is nurturing me to grow as a scholar, a religious leader, and a human being.

We are in the midst of receiving applications for students starting in the spring, as well as for those planning to start next fall. I am excited for this growing group who will become students here in 2015. I know that their classes at CTS will be transformative, amazing, and beyond expectations.

If you think that CTS might be the place for you, give me a call. I'd love to hear your story and together imagine the possibilities. Perhaps you will soon be immersed in CTS classes yourself, as part of next year's new student cohort.

Lisa Seiwert is the Director of Recruitment & Admission. For enrollment questions please contact her at lseiwert@cts-chicago.edu or 773.896.2413.



From Hawaii with love

Kahu Abraham Akaka & his Legacy in Selma

John Thomas, Faculty



As morning classes begin in the Akaka Room on the second floor of the seminary, the light streams in from the Midway, a welcome greeting to the day in Chicago. The family of Kahu Abraham Akaka, (B.D., 1943)—daughters Sandra, Fenner, and Pualani, and son Jeffery—whose generosity in establishing the Kahu Abraham Akaka Ministries Foundation Scholarship at CTS is acknowledged in the naming of the classroom, had hoped that the classroom would provide a view toward the east and Lake Michigan so the students could experience the sun rising. It would be a reminder of the early mornings their father experienced as a young man while surfing at Waikiki, where the sun rises over the crest of Diamond Head.

Unfortunately, the eastern side of the building views the nearby windows of the University Press building, making the symbolism of an eastern exposure impossible. But the Spirit of Aloha, so central to Akaka's theology and ministry, is still experienced, and on summer days the sun can be traced as it traverses the city of Chicago from east to west.

Akaka served as pastor (kahu) of the historic Kawaiaha'o Church (United Church of Christ), the same church he had attended as a boy, from 1957 until 1984. Educated at Illinois Wesleyan University, Akaka attended the World Conference on Christian Youth in Amsterdam in 1939 and it was this experience that confirmed his call to ministry. He attended CTS from 1940 to 1943, earning the B.D. degree. Following graduation he served a number of Hawaiian congregations before his call to the Kawaiaha'o Church.

The Kawaiaha'o Church is known as the "Mother Church of Hawaii," dedicated in 1842 and constructed in downtown Honolulu from native lava stone. During the years of Hawaii's sovereignty, the royal family worshiped at the church; their portraits still adorn the upper gallery. In 1959, the Church hosted one of the major celebrations of Hawaii's statehood. It was at this service that Kahu Akaka



proposed "Aloha" as the state motto: "One of the first sentences I learned from my mother in my childhood was this from Holy Scripture," he wrote:

'Aloha ke Akua'—in other words, 'God is Aloha.' Aloha is the power of God seeking to unite what is separated in the world—the power that unites heart with heart, soul with soul, life with life, culture with culture, race with race, nation with nation. (Full speech can be found at atakakaoundation.org.)

In 1965, this spirit of Aloha became part of a historic national event with important ties to Chicago Theological Seminary. When Kahu Akaka learned that Howard Schomer, then President of CTS, and a number of students including the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., were participating in the March to Selma organized

by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders, he arranged for leis to be sent to the leaders of the march. Pictures of that historic event show King, Rabbi Heschel, and others at the head of the march, wearing the leis sent by the prominent CTS graduate.

On April 24 and 25, 2015, CTS will mark the fiftieth anniversary of our participation in the march with a conference featuring keynote addresses by Rev. Jackson and Professor Michelle Alexander, author of the influential book on mass incarceration, *The New Jim Crow*. The spirit of Aloha will again be celebrated as we recognize the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement for today's religious leaders.

#LeadersForTheNext50



Kahu Abraham Akaka's friendship with Martin Luther King, Jr., began when King spoke at a 1964 conference in Hawaii. Following this meeting, the two corresponded regularly. Upon hearing King's national appeal for support following the March 7 (Bloody Sunday) march, and the subsequent court rulings that made the third and successful march possible, Akaka shipped leis, a symbol of peace, to show his support for the efforts in Alabama.

Chicago Theological Seminary will honor and celebrate our many-layered involvement in the Selma marches during our April 24-25 **#LeadersForTheNext50** conference. On the fiftieth anniversary of the marches, we at the conference will be joined by Selma marchers as we remember our past and look ahead to our role in the next fifty years. Registration for the conference will be available online at www.ctschicago.edu in January.

In Memoriam



THOMAS M. FULTON, a CTS Life Trustee, died July 14, 2014, at St. George's Hospital in London. He was a resident of Flossmoor, IL, and after graduation from Dartmouth, he worked in the chemical industry. He was CEO of R.S. Landauer Company upon his retirement. Fulton lent his managerial expertise to the boards of several non-profit organizations, and his strong faith and belief in the value

of education prompted him to establish a Christian high school in Nuevo Vallarta, Mexico.

Fulton joined the Board of Chicago Theological Seminary in 1990, and was Chair from 1998 until 2000, during the early tenure of President Susan Thistlethwaite and at a financially difficult time for the Seminary. He was named Life Trustee in 2000.

"As you can imagine, he was a tough-love kind of Board chair, readily helping us (ok, sometimes forcing us) to look at the cold, hard facts," said President Alice Hunt at his funeral. "But Tom didn't just make a difference for CTS with his business prowess, he also supported our work as an ambassador. Every time he got the chance, he talked to whomever he could whenever he could about the difference Chicago Theological Seminary was making in the world. Tom had the heart and soul of a philanthropist who realized he could make the world a better place by investing in the preparation of compassionate religious leadership."

THE REV. GORDON J. BAKER HILL (B.D., 1943) died July 2, 2011. Following graduation, he was ordained in the Congregational Church in 1943. He served four congregations in California before retirement in 1981.

THE REV. BARBARA E. HOLLEROTH (B.D., 1952) was a minister in the Universalist Unitarian Church, pastoral counselor, chaplain, and author of *The Haunting House*, considered one of the best UU religious education curricula ever produced.

THE REV. LEON JOHNSON (B.D., 1959) died October 3, 2014, in Evanston, IL. Rev. Johnson served as Associate Pastor of Gloryland Mt Gillion Baptist Church, New Orleans, LA.; Associate Minister and Youth Pastor of Greater Bethesda Baptist Church, Chicago, IL.; Director of the United Christian Fellowship and University Minister at Central State University, Wilberforce, OH.; Interim Pastor and Associate Pastor, Second Baptist Church, Evanston, IL.; Associate Minister at Bethany Baptist Church, Evanston, IL.; Associate Minister at Fisher Memorial AME Zion Church, Evanston, IL.; and Associate Minister of Greater Garfield Park MBC. He was a founding director of Crystal Fountain Ministries, Inc.

COLLEEN SUE YODER HENRY (M.A., 1969) Colleen returned to God on October 10, 2014, at the age of 68, after a 9 year struggle with Multiple System Atrophy. An active church and community leader, Colleen was recognized by the Lincoln Park Mid-North Neighborhood Association and by the Lincoln Park Conservation Association for her commitment to education. She was the first president of the Local School Council at Lincoln Park High School and wrote a history of the School. Last year St. Pauls United Church of Christ and Lincoln Park High School joined in founding the Colleen Henry Writing Center at the High School, to help students develop the writing skills needed for going to college and living life.



At St. Pauls she was recently described as their "larger than life pastor partner." Colleen began the organization of the historically-significant archives of the 171 year old Church. In her research she uncovered information about the "Captain Santa" Schuenemann family at St. Pauls and Chicago's Christmas Tree Ship legend and was recognized by the Chicago maritime association for keeping this legend alive. Thanks to her work, a plaque installed at Clark and Wabash now commemorates this tradition. Colleen was also active in the church's renowned music program. She was especially instrumental in the *How Sweet the Sound* gospel music celebration. Throughout the congregation, Colleen was known for her hospitality in welcoming new members and watching out for those who were missing.

Colleen earned a B.A. from Kalamazoo College and a Master of Arts in Religious Education from Chicago Theological Seminary, where she met and married her husband, Tom. She is survived by her husband of 45 years, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Henry, pastor emeritus of St. Pauls; by a daughter, Anya (Tom) Kompare; a son Brendan (Corinne) Henry; two darling granddaughters, Colleen and Beatrix; and her mother, Mary Payne, two sisters, Nancy and Terrie, and a brother, John.

Gifts in Colleen's memory may be made to St. Pauls Church by mail or at spucc.org (designated for the Writing Center, the Historical Preservation Fund or the Hospitality Fund) or to the Multiple System Atrophy Coalition at multiplesystematrophy.org.

GOD, POWER AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

Dissertation On Power & Social Relations in Luke 18:1-30

Bridgett Green, Visiting Instructor

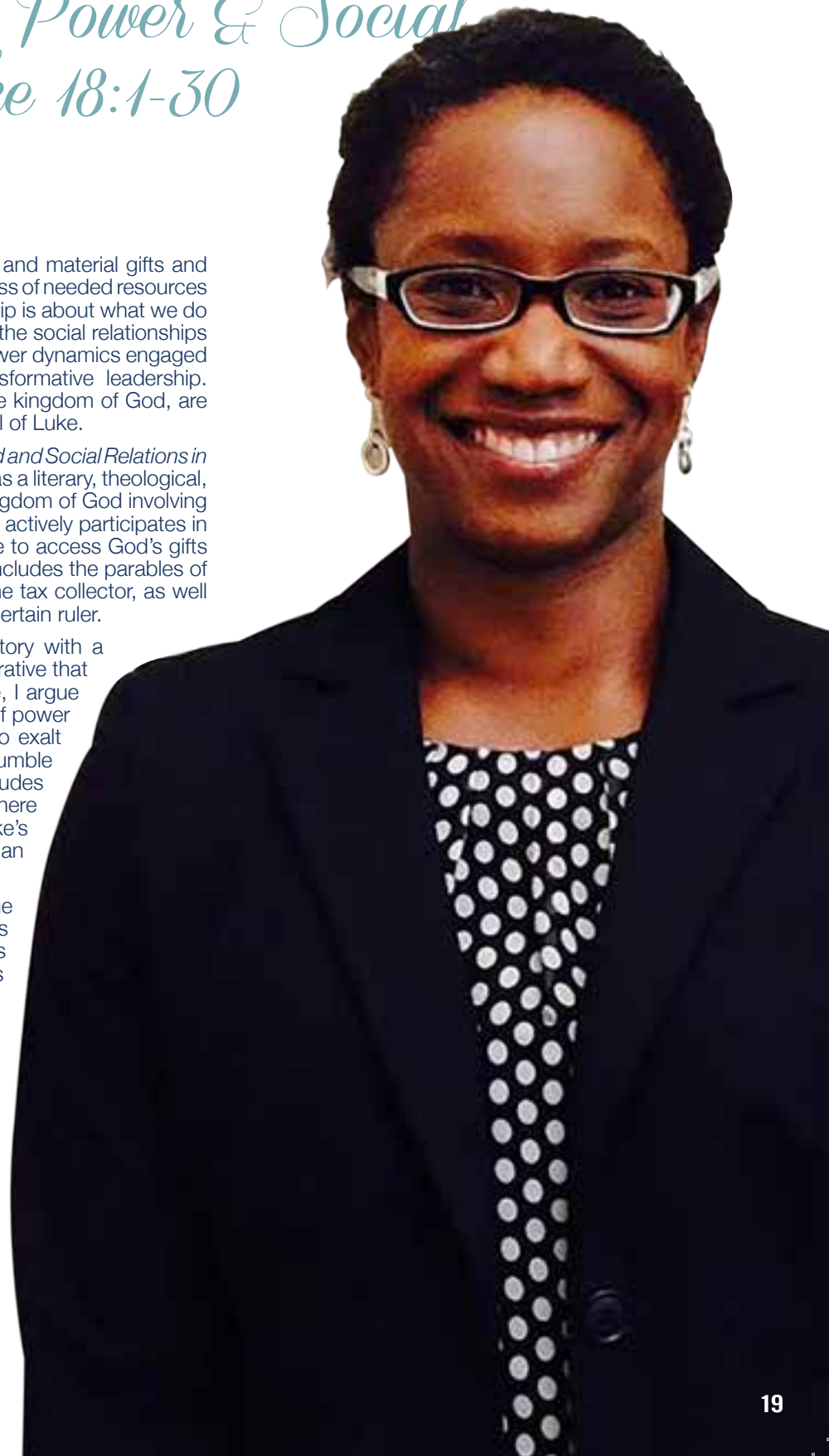
Great leaders use spiritual, intellectual, social, and material gifts and privileges to advance dignity, justice, and access of needed resources to various communities. As much as leadership is about what we do for one another, it is about how we do it and the social relationships we negotiate while doing it. Understanding the power dynamics engaged in socio-political relationships is critical to transformative leadership. Power dynamics, particularly among people in the kingdom of God, are one of my research interests as I study the Gospel of Luke.

Tentatively titled, *Luke 18:1-30: The Kingdom of God and Social Relations in Luke*, my dissertation argues that Luke 18:1-30—as a literary, theological, and ideological whole—envisions a multivalent kingdom of God involving a temporal and eternal realm in which all humanity actively participates in creating a society that equally privileges all people to access God's gifts of justice, dignity, and liberation. This Lukan text includes the parables of the widow and the judge and the Pharisee and the tax collector, as well as stories of Jesus blessing the children and the certain ruler.

By critically examining the characters in each story with a perspective that Luke craftily and subtly tells a narrative that subverts the colonial forces of the Roman regime, I argue that the kingdom of God is not merely a reversal of power and privilege for individuals, as in "For those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (18:14); rather, it includes a shared system of power in human relations, where reversal acts to balance power and privilege. Luke's polyvalent vision emphasizes just living in human relationships as a response to God's kingdom.

The aim of my dissertation is to show that the kingdom of God holds humanity accountable as participants in creating a world that reflects God's love and justice. As such, participants in God's realm including oppressed and the oppressor, the marginalized and the privileged, the last and the first share the onus in the struggle and work for social, economic, and spiritual liberation. As leaders in various faith communities, we must understand the mandates of the God's activity is equally about how we live with another as it is about what we do in our living with one another.

Bridgett A. Green is is a doctoral candidate in New Testament and Early Christianity and a fellow in the Program of Theology and Practice at Vanderbilt University. She holds a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and a bachelor's degree from Davidson College. Prior to her studies at Vanderbilt, Green was an associate for racial-ethnic women's ministries for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



Leaders for the Next.

CTS Alumni profiles

DAMON JONES

Michelle Johns, M.Div. Student

The Rev. Dr. Damon R. Jones (M.A. 2002, M.Div. 2005) describes himself as a “tri-vocational pastor,” explaining that he is ministering in the church, community, and academy. The desire to bring these three areas of ministry together has taken Damon to many places and to many people.

Damon is serving as Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church of Berwyn, IL, a multi-generational, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural congregation in a community that he describes as ever changing. There, he focuses on “fervent preaching and teaching, and a nurturing, welcoming atmosphere.”

Teaching and mentoring students is an important part of Damon’s call to ministry. He serves as a Dissertation Consultant/Examiner at United Theological Seminary, where he has also served as an adjunct professor for the Christian Education and Urban Development focus group. He has taught courses in philosophy, theology, sociology, and history at a number of colleges and universities. He is also the author of two books: *Constructing Theology: A Seminarian’s Experience* and *Reshaping the Conscious: Dispelling the Hamitic Curse*. Damon received his Doctor of Ministry from United Theological Seminary in Christian Education and Urban Ministries.

Serving the community allows Damon to bring together his passions and to share the gifts that he has developed as an academic and as a church pastor. He is a Senior Rehabilitation Counselor for the Illinois Department of Human Services, and has worked in the community for more than twenty years as a Certified Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Counselor (CADC). He is currently a board member for the mentoring organization Aspire to Greatness, Inc.

Damon recognizes CTS for assisting him in developing a ministry with a wide scope that includes church, community, and academy. The far reach of his ministry speaks to his concern that all God’s people be “holistically healthy and free.”

Michelle Johns is an MARL student with an interest in social transformation. She lives in Palatine, IL with her husband Charles and their three teen age children.



PAUL KITTLAUS

Michelle Johns, M.Div. Student

After forty years of full-time ministry, Paul Kittlaus (B.D. 1959) retired in 1999. Two days after his retirement celebration in Madison, WI, Paul moved with his wife to Claremont, CA, to live in community with other retired clergy and church professionals at Pilgrim Place.

Having served as a Senior Minister, Minister of Christian Education, Director of Theological Training, and Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Paul began the process of figuring out how he would now live out his call to ministry in this new context. He found himself with the unique advantage of being in a community that allowed him to ponder this question and live out the answer with others who were wondering the same thing.

Paul recalls waking up one morning to experience a “flash of freedom,” when he realized that his bank account had been credited with electronic funds from his pension and social security. His daily bread and daily work were no longer connected. His new home at Pilgrim Place and his ministry of the last forty years provided him with the ability to live a good and simple life and spend his days as he felt called.

This new found freedom moved Paul to further explore dreams and passions that before had been influenced by the reality of making a living. He has found retirement to be a time of expanding his identity and his call. Retirement has brought further clarification that his passion is for social change, what he calls the “prophetic ministry of the church.”

This passion led Paul to help found Progressive Christians Uniting, the Progressive Interfaith Partnership, and the Napier Project. He paints, writes, and collaborates with other clergy in his community to publish books on theological reflection. He regularly gathers with other community members in advocating for social justice and peace. Pilgrim Place has provided an ideal setting for Paul to exercise his new freedom in ways that have expanded his call to ministry and his sense of self.



JAQUELINE TYLER

Jason Carson Wilson, M.Div. Student



As an Elder within the Metropolitan Community Church of Greater Saint Louis (MCCGSL), Jaqueline Tyler has been on the ground in Ferguson, MO off and on since August. Jackie participates in marches, protests, and provides pastoral presence to the protestors. She has helped distribute food to the community, and spent hours listening to the stories of residents who have been victimized by the police and outside agitators.

"I thought the church had been on the ground, but our youth believe differently," says Jackie. "In fact, the youth of this movement have called out the churches for their silence and lack of presence in the protest movement against the militarization of police." Jackie believes the church and clergy have been called out for their lack of presence in the community, and only showing up when the national TV cameras were in Ferguson.

Jackie, agreeing with this assessment, participated in the Moral Monday protest on October 13th, joining Dr. Cornel West and others who went to jail because they confronted the Ferguson Police department. Dr. West spoke to all of us when he said, "you are part of a system that is responsible for the death of Michael Brown; you need to repent. We are open to hear your confession."

When Jackie is able, she still spends evenings in either Ferguson or the Shaw neighborhood to offer pastoral presence as a De-Escalator. She is quick to add, that, "we have had support from

Palestinian, Muslim, Jewish, and other groups who have helped broaden the struggle to bring about a global perspective to the issues of police brutality, LGBTQ discrimination, jobs, wars in the Middle East, and the public education crisis."

"Everyone of us should care about what is happening in Ferguson," emphasized Jackie. "Because there is a 'Ferguson' in every urban area that is dealing with issues of racial profiling, police brutality, and neighborhood gun violence. We need to have open honest dialogue about racism and the issues of white privilege both in the church and the community."

Jackie encourages and welcomes the involvement of the CTS community. "These are issues that affect us all, and as the body of Christ we must be able to have these in convent discussions to remove the stigma of racial disparity." She urged all of us to action, saying, "we are witnessing a revival in our city that is waking people up out of the coma of complacency and indifference." Jackie notes that while Eden seminary has been at the forefront of advocacy and protesting in Ferguson, our CTS community involvement would create a stronger voice and presence in this ongoing struggle for equality.

Jason Carson (JC) Wilson, a native of Champaign, Ill., lives in Chicago. Wilson is a M. Div. candidate with a concentration in Black and queer liberation theologies. He has an interest in community organizing. Wilson is the founding member and convener of the Bayard Rustin Society. He is a member and ministry intern at University Church in Hyde Park.

DANE COUNTY UNITED



WENDY COOPER

Michelle Johns, M.A.R.L. Student

Wendy Cooper (M.Div. 2012) describes her ministry as a publicly oriented endeavor, something evident in her work as a staff organizer for Dane County United in Madison, WI, where she works to rebuild an organization; train and develop leaders; identify issues of public concern and create change in the systems that perpetuate injustice.

Recognizing the necessity of relationships to affect change, Wendy has worked to get below the surface with others to cross barriers of race, class, and immigration to build relationships and make positive change in the areas of public transportation, mental health services, and gun violence.

Wendy was an integral part of a campaign called "Do Not Stand Idly By," successfully bringing together local residents, law enforcement, and elected leaders to reduce gun violence. Together, the group asked gun manufacturers, "What are you doing to further develop gun safety technology and bring it to the market place?"

This innovative and successful approach effectively reduced gun violence by targeting manufacturers and holding them responsible, rather than attempting to make changes through legislation.

Prior to accepting the position at Dane County United, Wendy worked as a social justice coordinator at the First Unitarian Society in Madison, where she first experienced church. She calls her initial service at First Unitarian Society as unlike anything she had ever experienced—she was struck by the dynamic between a leader speaking publicly from a pulpit and the intimacy she felt as the message spoke directly to the concerns of her heart and mind. She became a part of the congregation and then a lay minister. It was during this time that she first experienced a nudge toward seminary.

Wendy enrolled at Chicago Theological Seminary, where she found a "great foundation" to do the work she is called to do. The CTS community allows her to feel that she is not alone in living out her call to "make trouble, lovingly and healingly."

Today, Wendy is taking the steps toward ordination and looks forward to the pastoral privilege of facilitating the process of helping people to grow so that they can live out their faith and "be reminded of who it is we are called to be"—something that, for her, was a big part of her experience at CTS.

To learn more about upcoming events please visit:

The Metropolitan Congregations United St. Louis
Metropolitan Clergy Collation
prayingwithourfeet.org

Hands Up United
handsupunited.org

The Organization for Black Struggle
obs-onthefloor.org

FALL TERM 2014



President Alice Hunt, staff and students enjoying food and fellowship



Fall 2014 Orientation Participants



Visiting Assistant Professor Rami Nashishibi at weekly chapel



New CTS Trustee Reza Aslan speaking at CTS



Jolie Von Ogden and Faatimah Knight, students at chapel



Rev. Stephanie B. Crowder, Director of Field Education giving the sermon at a Wednesday chapel service



The 2014 Rooks Legacy Panel on "Battered Justice"



Justin Kim, Director of Online Learning, enjoying the Hoyes Exhibit



Rev. Lisa Goods, Interim Director of Community Life, with Alvaro Tuñon Batista, M.Div.



Professors JoAnne M. Terrell and Ted Jennings at Fall Convocation



Katie Miller, M.Div. student, leading songs in the FA@CTS chapel service



Students receiving pins at the Fall Field Education Commissioning Service



Shoshanna Nambi of the Abayudaya Jewish Community in Uganda speaking with Jerrolyn Eulinberg and Howard Wiley after a JCIS sponsored chapel service



Former President of the U.S. Jimmy Carter next to Prof. Susan Thistlethwaite on a panel at the Carter Center on "The Normalization of Violence and Impact of War on Women"

A GENTLE TOUCH *in a Rough World*

Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, Staff

AN EXCERPT FROM REV. DR. STEPHANIE BUCKHANON
CROWDER'S FIELD EDUCATION COMMISSIONING SERMON

Our world is full of beauty, grace, and goodness. But our world also has some edgy places, some rough areas. There is much beauty, grace, and goodness in us. Yet, we can be edgy and rough all around. Nonetheless the Creator calls us, beckons us even in our roughness to offer a gentle touch in a rough world.

During a period of uncertainty and sadness, the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord. What a good time to see God, when life is throwing you a curve ball. That's a good time to see God's face. When people are acting strange, and your money is even stranger, that's a good time to feel God's presence. When the economy is tight, financial aid is tenuous, assignments are piling up, and the class reading never ends, it's a good, good day to see the Lord. When businesses are going under, and folk are still having a hard time making it, that's a great time to see the Lord. When Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Renisha McBride, and Antonio Brown get shot down, and black lives are becoming expendable, it's an urgent time to see the Lord.

The core of field education is that it challenges us not only to make the grade in the classroom, but it also compels us to achieve outside of the academic environment. Many of us are so concerned about measuring up in our coursework, as we should be, that we neglect the praxis that must accompany the theory. We must pass the tests inside and outside of the walls of CTS.

Yes, Field Education students, go into this rough, rugged, crooked, crazy yet redeemable world. This world needs your gentle touch. It needs the gentle touch of the Night Ministry and Interfaith Worker Justice, the provocative touch of the Samuel Dewitt Proctor Conference, the mentoring touch of the Baldwin-Delaney Institute, and the loving touch of Kamp Kaleo. This world needs the gentle touch of your church, your synagogue, your organization, your congregation, your mosque, your temple.

Our world longs for a touch of love, security, healing, and

hope, affirmation and advocacy. Our government needs a touch of righteous indignation, righteous anger. This broken and fragmented world yearns for a touch of wholeness. On the contrary, even in our brokenness God calls, beckons us to speak to and touch the broken places in others.

The Creator touched Isaiah to prepare him for work in the world. The Divine touched Isaiah's rough edges so Isaiah could speak to the ruggedness of his people. God lovingly touched Isaiah, and Isaiah's task was to share God's love and message.

I realize that the Lord touched Isaiah with a coal. God put Isaiah in some heat in order to purify him, just to make him right. Every now and then, God puts us through a trial, a fire, some difficulty in order to be sanctified. Sometimes a little disease or discomfort will come to your door, walk on the job, or meet you in the classroom, but in the end we can better for it.

Let us thank God that we are not in the state we should be in, but God knows what to do to get us to where we should be. Be thankful that some things we experience make us whole. Thank the Creator for allowing us to witness glory and majesty. Thank the Divine for conscripting us to look at ourselves. Thank the Holy One for pushing us to look at the world that requires our service, commitment, and dedication.

Let us give thanks to the One who makes rough places plain and crooked places straight. God touches our rough places, so that we might touch the rough and rugged in our sisters and brothers.

Rev. Dr. Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder is Director of Theological Field Education for Chicago Theological Seminary. Rev. Dr. Crowder is an ordained National Baptist and Disciples of Christ minister and theological educator with a diverse set of pastoral, teaching, not-for-profit and organizational experiences. She earned her B.S. from Howard University; her M.Div. from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio; and her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in New Testament from Vanderbilt University.

"The core of field education is that it challenges us not only to make the grade in the classroom, but it also compels us to achieve outside of the academic environment."

STORIES from the FIELD

Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, Staff

As part of their degree programs at Chicago Theological Seminary, students are required to complete field placements at sites and in programs that interest them and are related to their ministry goals. This past summer, two students got out of the classroom and into the field, completing placements at two very different sites.

KRISTIN GORTON M.Div. Student

Kristin Gorton, a third-year M.Div. student at CTS, was placed this past summer at Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice (WVJ), where she served as an intern for inter-religious advocacy. Gorton says she was moved by her realization that “there are many intertwining conversations that I have had [during this experience] as my life paths intersect.”

“As I worked on my research project for my field placement at WVJ, gathering resources from a variety of faith based and secular advocacy groups, I visited the website for the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries. Reading through the advocacy information, I stumbled across a training program called Justice Leaders Engaging and Developing. This was a course that I was not previously familiar with through the UCC,” said Gorton.

The next day, working in her role as a youth group leader at the Great Lakes Regional Youth Event, Gorton noticed that one of the breakout sessions offered for the youth focused on advocacy and issues of economic justice. “I attended the discussion only to find out that it was led by the Coordinator for Youth Ministry for the Wisconsin Conference, Lisa Hart. Lisa has been a wonderful resource for me over the course of the past year as I jumped fully into youth ministry,” she said. Lisa is also a trained in Justice LED, Gorton learned.

“So now, instead of meeting with her under the umbrella of my role as a Director of Faith Formation for Lake Edge UCC (in Madison, WI), I have set up a time to meet with her as an intern at WVJ to talk about *Justice Leaders Engaging and Developing* (Justice LED.) Justice LED is a United Church of Christ program offering training, leadership skills, and support to people seeking tangible ways to move towards a more just, peaceful and compassionate world,” she said.

“In this same time frame, in the life of the church in which I serve, the Board of Christian Outreach has invited Dr. Edith Rasell from the UCC’s national staff to Madison to offer a discussion session on issues of economic justice. She is scheduled to visit in October. The lay leaders at Lake Edge UCC will work with Dr. Rasell on program development. They have also asked Rabbi Bonnie, my field supervisor at WVJ, to participate, and she is eager to do so.”



KATIE MILLER M.Div. Student



Katie Miller, also a third-year M.Div. student, also spent her summer working with youth from her home conference, although in a slightly different setting, working with young people at a camp in the Nebraska sandhills. Miller was on the Resource Team at Kamp Kaleo, a UCC/DOC camp in Burwell, Nebraska, about an hour and a half away from where she grew up. The Resource Team there is responsible for the care and safety of the campers and counselors who rotate through weekly, in addition to managing the recreational activities and the music for each camp.

Miller had worked in this same capacity at Kaleo before, but for her field placement this summer, she faced some extra challenges. “I took on some extra duties throughout the season, the

biggest of which was heading up the music section of Faith And Fine Arts camp (FAFA). The teenagers who attend FAFA choose between art, theatre, film-making, writing, and music as their main focus for the week. My task was to devise and implement a curriculum for the students who chose music, and at the end, the entire camp headed into the local UCC church for the final, public presentation of the projects they worked on all week.”

For her own project, Miller turned to the music of the Congo for inspiration. “Kamp Kaleo’s overarching mission project this past summer was an effort in the Congo to build wells, so I decided to focus on creating music that incorporated lots of drums and movement, based on Congolese worship music. There had been a certain amount of conflict at camp in the previous weeks, so to counteract that, I decided to highlight the communal element of music, both in places like the Congo and in churches all over. We ended up focusing on two song projects: one a completely made up song that was catchy so that the congregation could sing with us, and one an arrangement of an existing hymn everyone knew, to which we added drums and wrote a final verse.”

“The music group was a group of five truly awesome, diverse young people, and for their arrangement, they chose *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*. The arrangement we came up was quite rhythmic and involved African drums and an electric guitar, played by a small but mighty and very excited young girl who felt very cool to be playing the electric guitar. I had kids in this group who had been turned away from music in their school and kids who didn’t know anything about music, kids from all different walks of life and from good homes and very troubled, terrifying homes, and they formed a tight community and made some wonderful art together and it was positively amazing.”

Miller said, “The kids tend to get it. ‘Kaleo’ basically means ‘God’s calling,’ and God is calling in Kamp Kaleo, no question. In real, non-camp life, that kind of calling can be hard to see, but at places like Kaleo, it’s not hard at all, if you just sit back and allow yourself to listen.”



Clearly, CTS Field Placements can take students anywhere: from the Great Lakes Regional Youth Event to the great sandhills of Nebraska. Congratulations to Kristin and Katie, and thanks for sharing your experiences!

If you know of a community organization or religious institution that will help our students “encounter” theology in the global world, please contact the Director of Theological Field Education at sbcrowder@cts-chicago.edu or at 773.896.2423. Please help us as we prepare CTS students for the “Next.”



THE DEAN'S DESK

Ken Stone, Faculty

THE ECOMMUNITY PROJECT

This fall, CTS launched a multifaith educational and social justice initiative titled "ECommunit-y: The Ecology of Theological Education in a Religiously Pluralistic World." In support of the initiative, CTS, through our Center for Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Studies (JCIS), received a Henry Luce Foundation grant to train future leaders who can build bridges across religious and cultural difference to advance ecological sustainability and other critical justice issues. The program combines increased curricular offerings in diverse religious traditions, the recruitment of a multi-religious cohort of graduate students and instructors, dedicated workshops, flexible programs of study, and supervised field placements. Several members of our entering class will be participating in the first ECommunit-y cohort this year. We hope and believe that the project will have a significant impact on the ecology of our entire institution.

The ECommunit-y project builds on longstanding CTS commitments to interreligious engagement, progressive theological education, social transformation and environmental sustainability. Several faculty members played instrumental roles in the conceptualization of the project and will be engaged in its programming, including Dr. Rami Nashashibi, Visiting Assistant Professor in Sociology of Religion and Muslim Studies; Dr. Rachel Mikva, Rabbi Herman Schaalman Associate Professor of Jewish Studies; and Dr. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, Professor of Theology. Throughout the year CTS will host exciting events associated with the initiative.



It's been another exciting fall semester to another fall semester at Chicago Theological Seminary! As the Academic Dean, I would like to call your attention to a number of new faces and events at CTS this semester. If you have questions about any of the information above, or other academic matters at CTS, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Assistant to the Academic Dean, Dr. Emily Vogt. For other events and announcements, please consult Insight, our weekly electronic newsletter, as well as regular announcements from the Office of Community Life, on our website or Facebook page, or via CTS email.

GUEST LECTURES

Rev. Dr. Jeremiah Wright, Pastor Emeritus at Trinity United Church of Christ, spoke in September at our weekly community worship. Rev. Wright, a renowned speaker and preacher, earned his M.A. in the History of Religions at the University of Chicago and his D.Min. at United Theological Seminary. He is a long-time partner of CTS and teaches as an adjunct instructor at CTS and several other institutions.

Dr. Reza Aslan also spoke at CTS in September. He discussed the topic "The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith." Dr. Aslan's books include the #1 New York Times Bestseller *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*; *How to Win a Cosmic War: God, Globalization and the End of the War on Terror*; and *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam*. He is the founder of AslanMedia.com, an online journal for news and entertainment about the Middle East and the world, and co-founder and Chief Creative Officer of BoomGen Studios, a premier entertainment brand for creative content from and about the Greater Middle East.

This year's Rooks Lecturer was **Rev. Dr. Renita J. Weems**, who spoke in October on the topic, "Preacher, Prophet, Professor, Public Intellectual: Transgressing Boundaries." Dr. Weems is a biblical scholar, an academic administrator, a writer, a blogger, an ordained minister, and a public intellectual whose scholarly insights into modern faith, biblical texts, and the role of spirituality in everyday lives make her a much sought after writer and speaker. An ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Dr. Weems became the first African American woman to earn a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible when she received her doctorate from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1989. She is the author of many books, including *Battered Love: Marriage, Sex, and Violence in the Hebrew Prophets*, which has been used several times as a CTS textbook; *Just a Sister Away: Understanding the Timeless Connection Between Women of Today and Women in the Bible*; and *Listening for God: A Minister's Journey Through Silence and Doubt*.

WELCOME TO NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

The Rev. Dr. Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder joined us as Director of Theological Field Education. She is an ordained National Baptist and Disciples of Christ minister and theological educator with a diverse set of pastoral, teaching, not-for-profit, and organizational experiences. She earned her B.S. from Howard University; her M.Div. from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio; and her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in New Testament from Vanderbilt University. She brings to CTS a passion for integrating academic work, practical ministry, and theological education.

The Rev. Lisa Goods joined us as Interim Director of Community Life. The Rev. Goods currently serves as Associate Pastor of Outreach and Communications at Covenant United Church of Christ in South Holland, IL. In that capacity, she has been responsible for launching and managing Covenant's mobile app and social media presence, in addition to preaching, teaching Bible study classes, and leading various aspects of worship. The Rev. Goods earned her M.Div. at McCormick Theological Seminary after a corporate career in sales and finance.

We also welcome the **Rev. Bridgett A. Green** this year as Visiting Instructor. The Rev. Green is a Ph.D. candidate in New Testament at Vanderbilt University, and joins us as an extern in Vanderbilt's Theology and Practice Program. She earned her B.A. at Davidson College and her M.Div. at Princeton Theological Seminary, and is an ordained Teaching Elder in the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. This fall she taught a course on "Luke-Acts and the Kingdom of God."

Dr. Rami Nashashibi has joined us this fall as Visiting Assistant Professor of Sociology of Religion and Muslim Studies. His appointment is part of the ECommunit-y project. Dr. Nashashibi earned his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago, and has received multiple honors, including being named by the White House as a "Champion of Change" in 2011. Dr. Nashashibi is also Executive Director of the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), a community organization he co-founded in 1997. This fall, Dr. Nashashibi taught "Exploring the American Muslim Experience" at CTS, while also organizing several workshops as part of the ECommunit-y project.

FALL 2014 ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS

Dr. Umar Abd-Allah taught a course this semester on "Islamic Theology & the Muslim Worldview." After completing his undergraduate work at the University of Missouri and pursuing graduate studies in English Literature at Cornell University, he earned his Ph.D. in Arabic & Islamic Studies from the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He has taught at universities around the world. He is widely sought as a lecturer and has written several books (including *A Muslim in Victorian America: The Life of Alexander Russell Webb* and *Malik & Medina: Islamic Reasoning in the Formative Period*) and numerous scholarly articles.

Rev. Dr. Michael L. Cook taught our online course "Introduction to Pastoral Theology" as a sabbatical replacement for Prof. Lee Butler. He earned his Th.D. in Pastoral Counseling from Columbia Theological Seminary, and his M.Div. from Duke University Divinity School. His research interests include pastoral theology, black family studies, pastoral psychotherapy, adoption, fatherhood, and congregational and organizational care. He currently works as Director and Family Therapist at Micah Counseling Services.

Rev. Dr. Danjuma Gibson taught "Introduction to Pastoral Care" for us as a sabbatical replacement for Prof. Lee Butler. He received his Ph.D. from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, an M.A. in Christian Studies and an M.A. in Urban Ministries from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and an M.B.A. from DePaul University, where he has also been an adjunct instructor in the Religion Department. Dr. Gibson has worked as a psychotherapist at the Center for Religion and Psychotherapy of Chicago, and is Senior Pastor at Zion Faith Center Bible Church.

Rev. Dr. Julie Kilmer taught an online course on "Feminist & Womanist Theologies for Ministry." She earned her Ph.D. at CTS after receiving her M.Div. from Methodist Theological School and an M.A. in Educational Administration from Marshall University. An ordained United Church of Christ minister, Dr. Kilmer is currently Site Director and Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Her work combines academic and pastoral commitments.

Dr. Adam Kotsko is teaching "Theology & Politics of the Devil." After receiving his B.A. from Olivet Nazarene University, he earned his M.A. and Ph.D. at CTS. He is currently Assistant Professor of Humanities at Shimer College in Chicago. He has written several books (including *Žižek and Theology: The Politics of Redemption: The Social Logic of Salvation*; and *Why We Love Sociopaths: A Guide to Late Capitalist Television*) as well as numerous articles and essays, and has translated several works for English publication by such European philosophers as Giorgio Agamben and Jacques Derrida. His interests include political theology and popular culture.

Dr. Jay Michaelson taught "Evolving Dharma: Contemporary Meditation and Buddhist Modernism." He earned his Ph.D. in Jewish Thought and his M.A. in Comparative Religion from Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as well as a J.D. from Yale Law School. He is a visiting scholar at Brown University in the interdisciplinary Contemplative Studies program and has authored five books (including *Evolving Dharma: Meditation, Buddhism, and the Next Generation of Enlightenment*; *God vs. Gay? The Religious Case for Equality*; and *Everything is God: The Radical Path of Nondual Judaism*) and many articles,

ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS CONT.

essays, and other publications, including regular columns for Religion Dispatches, Huffington Post, Forward, and The Daily Beast. An ordained Rabbi, he has taught for Boston University Law School, Yale University, Harvard Divinity School, and City College of New York.

Rev. Dr. Michael Montgomery led our D.Min. Research Methods Seminar. After receiving his B.A. from Coe College, he earned his M.B.A. from the University of Chicago and his M.Div. and Ph.D. from CTS. He also studied at the London School of Economics. An ordained United Church of Christ minister, Dr. Montgomery is active as an interim and supply pastor and consultant to UCC churches. He is a Fellow of both the Ph.D. Center and the D.Min. program at CTS, and has taught several courses as an adjunct instructor.

Dr. Carolyn Roncolato taught both face-to-face and online sections of Constructive Theology this semester. After receiving her B.A. from Allegheny College, Roncolato earned her M.A. and Ph.D. from Chicago Theological Seminary. Her dissertation on women living in poverty in Appalachian Kentucky sought to develop tools of engagement for feminist and womanist theologians seeking to do accountable theology and build relationships with marginalized women. She has previously served as an adjunct instructor for CTS as well as the UCC Lay Academy in Wisconsin.

Dr. José A. Rosa is co-teaching the year-long "Leadership & Ministry in Context" course with the Rev. John Thomas. He is Senior Pastor of Primera Iglesia Congregacional de Chicago (First Congregational Church), which played a key role in the founding of CTS in 1855. He is ordained in both the UCC and the United Methodist Church. He has been pastoring for 40 years, and has served as District Superintendent for the United Methodist Church in Northern Illinois. His congregation was a partner in the Center for Community Transformation, a 10-year CTS project funded by the Lilly Foundation to bring together social justice work and theological and field education in local neighborhoods of Chicago. He received an honorary doctorate from CTS in 2009.

Ron Rude taught "Christian Narrative, Christian Ministry, Science and Sustainability." After receiving his M.Div. from Luther Theological Seminary, the Rev. Rude pastored churches in Colorado, New York, and Minnesota. He currently works for the University of Arizona, where he both teaches and serves as Pastor of Lutheran Campus Ministry. He has written two books on Christianity and sustainability, including *(Re)considering Christianity: An Expedition of Faith Joining Science, Ancient Wisdom, and Sustainability*.

Dr. Cynthia Stewart is teaching the online section of our year-long M.A./S.T.M. Master's thesis writing seminar. Dr. Stewart received her Ph.D. from Vanderbilt University, where she wrote her dissertation on medieval heresies and women's freedoms. She is the author of *The Catholic Church: A Brief Popular History*, which has been used by several schools as a textbook, and teaches world religions at the college level. She developed an adult religious education series called "Reading Sacred Texts," which has grown into a 52-week lectionary and 40-session adult religious education curriculum for use in Unitarian-Universalist churches.

EXPANDING THE DIALOGUE

A FALL LECTURE REVIEW

Dr. Reza Aslan

In the packed fourth-floor chapel, Dr. Reza Aslan, Chicago Theological Seminary Board Trustee and author of New York Times bestseller, *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, recently shared his thoughts on, “The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith.”

Aslan vividly remembers when he first discovered Jesus at an evangelical youth event in high school, a transformative moment that prompted him to convert to conservative Christianity from Islam. However, it wasn’t until he was attending Santa Clara University that he discovered another side of the Messiah.

“I was introduced to a completely different Jesus, the Jesus of history,” Aslan said. “I became absolutely fascinated with that Jesus.”

The Christ of history, said Aslan, is a “politically-conscious, revolutionary figure” who created a movement to launch the Kingdom of God and was executed by the Roman Empire for sedition.

In comparison, the Christ of faith, Aslan said, is “an infinitely malleable character. The Christ of faith can be whatever you want him to be. The Jesus of history is frozen in place.”

Richard McKinney, a CTS M.A. student, described the takeaways Aslan’s speech gave him.

“It provided great clarity and insight to the differentiation between Jesus and Christ,” McKinney said. “And, [it] offered a more holistic picture of what that looked like.”

Second-year M. Div. student Emily Davis also shared her reaction.

“Beyond explaining the differences between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith, [Aslan] helped the audience to understand the myriad cultural influences that work along with religious tenets to create the Christ of faith,” Davis said.

Dr. Aslan is the founder of AslanMedia.com, an online journal dedicated to covering the Middle East North Africa South Asia regions. He is also co-founder and Chief Creative Officer of BoomGen Studios, the premier entertainment brand for creative content from and about the Greater Middle East. In addition to *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, he is the author of *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* and *How to Win a Cosmic War: God, Globalization and the End of the War on Terror*.

Jason Carson (JC) Wilson, a native of Champaign, Ill., lives in Chicago. Wilson is a M. Div. candidate with a concentration in Black and queer liberation theologies. He has an interest in community organizing. Wilson is the founding member and convener of the Bayard Rustin Society. He is a member and ministry intern at University Church in Hyde Park.

(cont.)

Jason Carson Wilson, M.Div. Student

“The Christ of faith is an infinitely malleable character. The Christ of faith can be whatever you want him to be. The Jesus of history is frozen in place.”

“I had never heard anyone put their finger on the notion of, and importance of, struggle.”

Rev. Dr. Renita Weems

The Rev. Dr. Renita Weems—professor, public intellectual, prophet, and theologian—brought words of wisdom gleaned from her own personal and professional journey to Chicago Theological Seminary during the eighth annual Charles Shelby Rooks lecture on October 9.

Weems’ message was a thoughtful, at times humorous reminder that we don’t always know in the present what is really happening. It is only in looking back that we can see God at work in our lives. Weems’ reflected on the call and perils of the academy; a plan not clear to her, but God’s plan, messy yet so perfectly executed in the end. Weems’ message found a receptive hearing, particularly among students and emerging scholars uncertain about the path of their lives and careers. Live fully in the uncertainty of the moment, Weems told the audience, knowing that someday you will be able to look back and see meaning and purpose – the hand of God – woven throughout.

She went on, acknowledging this reality in her own life’s journey from Merrill Lynch to Princeton Theological Seminary to Vanderbilt University to Spelman College and, finally to American Baptist College where she currently serves as American Baptist College’s Academic Vice President and as Biblical Studies Professor. She’s an ordained African Methodist Episcopal Church Elder.

Weems credited her ability to wear four hats to her “working-class southern background.” As one of 12 children, she learned about the importance of having multiple jobs. That experience, “according to God’s divine plan,” prepared Weems for academic pressures.

“The academy, indeed, is a very jealous lover,” she said. “It does not appreciate you having multiple identities.”

Having more than one passion is frowned upon, too.

“It’s been a dangerous life,” Weems said. “Each one of the institutions...they’re all very demanding of your time and of your allegiance. It has...it will cost you, sometimes.”

The academy wasn’t necessarily her expected final destination. Growing up in Atlanta, Weems wanted to be a schoolteacher.

“I think that is, fundamentally, who I am...down to my spirit,” she said.

A series of “open doors” brought Weems to the classroom. Weems earned a bachelor’s degree in economics from Wellesley College and became a public accountant with Merrill Lynch. She lamented—on paper—about her job for eighteen months. That exercise breathed life into the writer within Weems.

“I went to Princeton thinking I was going to write the Great American Novel,” she said, noting theology was just going to be a side gig. “How hard could religion be?”

Hebrew Bible scholar Bernhard Anderson’s work and theology profoundly impacted Weems. Anderson, she said, left her feeling as amazed and overwhelmed as any other seminarian in their first Bible class.

“I was arrested,” Weems said. “I had never heard such talk...I had never heard anyone put their finger on the notion of, and importance of, struggle.”

Weems’ reminded us of how lovely and cohesive a journey can seem from the end-point; and what a discredit it is to gloss over the messier, unplanned moments. Weems encourages us to live our lives – let the plan unfold; to put one foot in front of the other – even if we don’t understand what is happening – to do what we are called to do. That it is ok for life to be messy.

Visit cts.chicago.edu/about/cts-videos to view this and past C. Shelby Rooks lectures



LET'S HEAR IT FOR THE HOYES

Jason Carson Wilson, M.Div. Student

This fall, students, faculty, staff, and visitors alike enjoyed artist Bernard Stanley Hoyes' "Revival" series as they graced Chicago Theological Seminary's halls. Thirty-six of the Jamaican-born artist's pieces were on exhibit at CTS through Oct. 23.

"We are delighted to have hosted the Hoyes exhibit at Chicago Theological Seminary," CTS President Alice Hunt said. "In many ways more powerful than words, his artwork speaks to each viewer."

Hunt expressed gratitude for the opportunity to have Hoyes and his wife, LaVera, visit CTS and become a part of its community. She was also thankful to learn about his creative process. Hoyes shared stories about his artistic and personal journeys during a C. Shelby Rooks Society Week discussion.

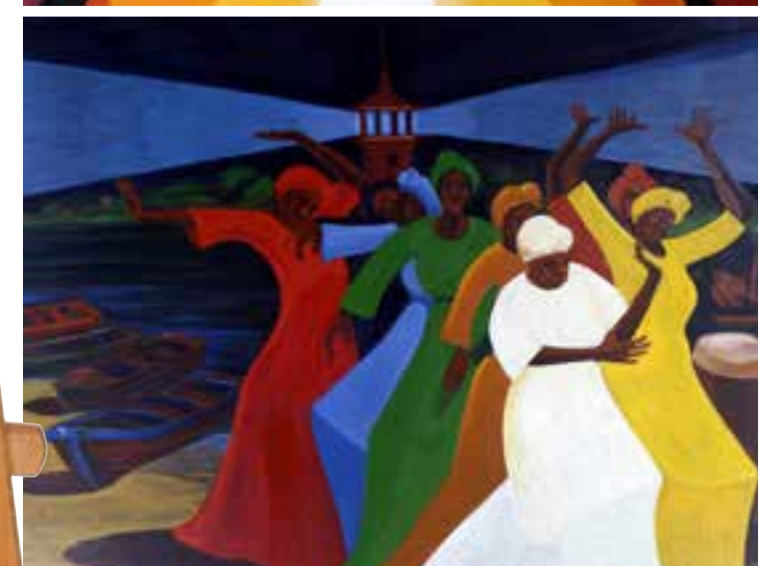
The "Revival" series, which Hoyes began creating in 1982, documents how African faith practices made it to the West and attached themselves to European doctrines in order to survive. "Wherever African descendants chose to worship, they brought African spirituality into that faith," Hoyes said. "I have been a creator of art, symbols of ancestral echoes since I was a child."

Hoyes explained, "The images I convey symbolize a culmination of these ancestral echoes brought in classical form. They are contemporary, eternal in spirit and stand as praise to our existence—past, present and future."

Hoyes marvels that the series sustains a strong connection to people from various faith traditions and denominations over its lifetime. "It shows there is hunger for spiritual conversation in the art world," he said. "It makes a spirituality a visual reality."

To see more of Hoyes' work, visit bernardhoyes.com

"[The series] shows there is a hunger for spiritual conversation in the art world. It makes a spirituality a visual reality."



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— Nelson Mandela

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Unless otherwise indicated, events will take place at CTS.

SPRING CONVOCATION

Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Rev. Dr. JoAnne Terrell

Wednesday, April 15, 2015

Rev. Dr. Lee H. Butler, Jr.

SPRING CONFERENCE: #LeadersForTheNext50

Friday, April 24 - Saturday, April 25, 2015

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Selma and explore the future challenges in the ongoing quest for civil justice. Keynote speakers include The Rev. Jesse Jackson, Sr., and Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*.

CTS CONTRIBUTION TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION: A PANEL

Wednesday, April 30, 2015

Reflections on Past, Present, & Future – Panelists: Professors Dow Edgerton, Ted Jennings, & Susan Thistlethwaite – Moderator: Professor Bo Myung Seo – Response: Professor JoAnne Marie Terrell

RACHEL ADLER

April 2015

Rabbi Dr. Rachel Adler, Jewish feminist scholar and activist to speak at CTS (Date TBD)

GILBERTO CASTAÑEDA LECTURE

Thursday, May 7, 2015

Dr. Heather White; Lecturer & Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion at New College of Florida.

COMMENCEMENT

Sunday, May 17, 2015



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