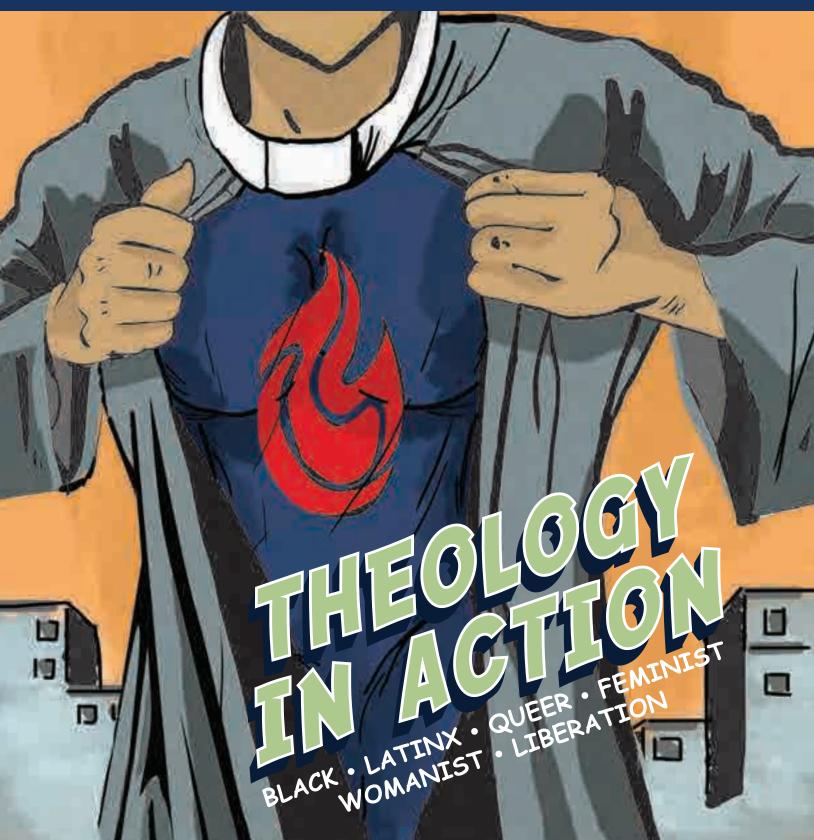
## Challenge Response

CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Academic Year 2016-2017



# President's Welcome

Donald C. Clark, Jr., Acting President & General Counsel



Chicago Theological Seminary has been blessed by the dynamic, transformational leadership of Rev. Dr. Alice Hunt for the past nine years. Her unwavering commitment to our students, alumni, faculty, staff, and mission was evident in every initiative she led. Alice's passion for theological education and for social justice has encouraged us to fully and boldly live into our commitments as an institution for higher learning and as a progressive seminary.

Alice's plans to retire in July 2018 surprised many in our community. From trustees, faculty, and staff present during her announcement at the February 9th board meeting to the students, alumni/ae, and wider community, Alice built personal relationships during her tenure as President. As Acting President and General Counsel, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on the seminary's strong position, forward momentum, and innovative people, programs, and practices resulting from Alice's vision and work.

Alice's leadership encouraged CTS to boldly adapt to the changing landscapes of theological education and the changing needs of faith communities. As an innovative leader, Alice led our seminary to remarkable heights. She inspired us to move beyond the traditional bounds of theological education, helping launch the first fully online Master of Divinity degree program accredited by the Association of Theological Schools at a progressive mainline seminary. Under her guidance, CTS attained record enrollment during a challenging period of decline for theological education. And always grounded in our commitments, Alice secured CTS as a leader in national conversations on theology and justice, especially in the areas of white privilege, racial justice, interreligious engagement, and gender equality.

The Board of Trustees will appoint a search committee for Alice's successor, and CTS will soon share plans for how we will honor and celebrate Alice's tenure, her many celebrated accomplishments, and what her leadership and friendship means to this community. Board Chair Norman Williams and I are fully confident in the faculty and staff of CTS during this transition. I am humbled by the faith the Board of Trustees

has placed in me to support the work, legacy, and scholarship of this institution and community.

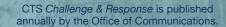
During my years serving CTS in a variety of roles, I have had the opportunity to meet hundreds of alums, friends, staff, faculty, and students. As I serve as Acting President, I am excited to deepen and expand these relationships.

I have long-held personal convictions that faith and theology should not be confined to the silos of churches and chapels. My faith and theology call me to respond in voice and action. And to me, CTS is an institution unafraid of putting theology in action. Students and faculty, alumni/ae and faith communities continue this legacy of leadership and activism today. They are the bold voices working for greater justice and mercy, actively transforming society.

In this issue of *Challenge & Response*, we offer a snapshot of the incredible work being done. I invite you to read these stories and be challenged and inspired. I invite you to explore and witness **THEOLOGY IN ACTION**.

Donald C. Clark, Jr. Acting President & General Counsel

Don Clark is a long-time member of the CTS community, serving as the Chair of the Board of Trustees between 2007 and 2013 and as General Counsel to the seminary since 2004. Clark has practiced law for over 35 years in Chicago. He also served as the General Counsel/Nationwide Special Counsel for The United Church of Christ for 15 years, working as the principal legal advisor to the General Minister and President, among numerous other officials and groups within the denomination. Clark's dedication and generosity has been recognized by CTS, which awarded him a Doctor of Letters in 2014. Clark is a graduate of Williams College and the Rutgers University School of Law, where he has received its Distinguished Alumni Award and was recently inducted into "Rutgers Finest."



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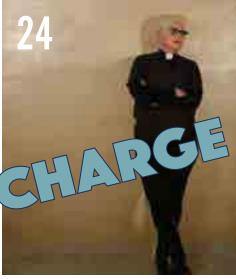
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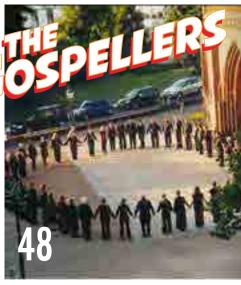
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# The FURE

Chad Schwickerath, Staff

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LUCE GIFT LAUNCHES INTERRELIGIOUS INSTITUTE



hicago Theological Seminary is pleased to announce that the Henry Luce Foundation has made a lead gift towards the \$3.4 million project of developing the InterReligious Institute (IRI) at CTS. The IRI aims to advance interreligious studies and engagement for more than just religious leaders and communities of faith. As interreligious studies and engagement grow in scope and sophistication, theological education must move beyond its insular nature toward engaging the public sphere and multi-faith society. "The theory and praxis of theological education must meet the demands of our changing world," says Dr. Ken Stone, Academic Dean and Professor of Bible, Culture, and Hermeneutics. "Interreligious engagement has never been more important than it is now. But in order for such engagement to have an impact on our society, seminaries must connect with diverse fields, institutions, and professions. Our work around religious difference needs to be understood in terms of its intersections with other types of diversities and social dynamics."

CTS occupies a unique space in the world of theological education, intersecting the academy with diverse communities of faith and activists, jointly committed to transforming the world towards greater justice and mercy. It is this particularity, as well as the rich legacy of CTS, that makes the IRI possible. "The IRI builds the legacy of CTS as a leader," comments Donald C. Clark, Jr., Acting President and General Counsel of CTS. Clark continues, "This is yet another example of CTS living into its ambitious mission and vision for a Church and society transformed." CTS recently welcomed back Rev. Lisa Noel Seiwert to head the new initiative as Project Director. As Clark's most recent hire, Seiwert is excited to begin the work of the Institute. "I am thrilled to return to CTS to head up this new initiative. I believe interreligious engagement is crucial as we strive toward a world rich in justice and mercy. I look forward to guiding the IRI from concept to reality and to fostering deeper opportunities to learn and grow across lines of difference."

For more than 160 years, CTS has been at the forefront of bold conversation and informed social action. The commitments to ongoing dialogue, academic research, and social activism are demonstrated time and time again throughout CTS' historic and present participation in rigorous theological education and social justice movements.

The IRI will build upon CTS' commitments to interreligious engagement and work towards full integration into academic and programmatic experience at seminary for both the students and the wider community. The MDiv program will see a number of minor-yet crucial-changes which will result in greater attention to understanding and collaborating within a multifaith society. "The IRI will offer comprehensive support for faculty to build this growing curriculum," remarks Clark. "There are also numerous opportunities to identify and engage with world-class talent in the field as well - CTS will be very well-equipped for this endeavor." New course offerings, additional travel opportunities, and expanding Field Education sites will support students as they learn and grow during their time at CTS. "The IRI promises to be a cutting-edge interfaith learning opportunity for students, community members, scholars, and activists of all backgrounds to acquire critically important skills for critically urgent times," said Dr. Rami Nashashibi, Visiting Assistant Professor in Sociology of Religion & Muslim Studies. Academics and student offerings are only one aspect, however. The IRI will also emphasize interreligious understanding and collaboration by supporting the development and use of new models of engagement in public discourse. "The capacity to navigate religious difference is essential in all walks of life," comments Rabbi Dr. Rachel S. Mikva, who occupies the Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman Chair in Jewish Studies. "CTS can engage people who work in law, government, medicine, and corporate settings to build skills for interreligious collaboration." Through the IRI, CTS becomes a premiere institution offering trainings and public seminars on religious difference and collaboration. The IRI will expand CTS' commitment of being a resource for these local and national conversations.

Throughout the next year, CTS will begin offering further information on ways in which you can become further involved. Watch the website (ctschicago.edu) for more information on public programming, other ways to engage, as well as the opportunity to make a transformational gift to support the growing mission and vision of CTS.



ocated in the college town of Ames, Iowa, Ames United Church of Christ—under the leadership of Rev. Eileen Gebbie (MDiv 2014)—is standing out among other churches of various denominations in the church's neighborhood.

Ames UCC, like many churches in the Midwest, was created to serve a growing population of European immigrants and was founded by three pastors who later attended CTS. This connection to CTS continues under the guidance and leadership of Rev. Eileen Gebbie.

Rev. Gebbie's journey to Ames UCC was not straightforward. After graduation, Rev. Gebbie as a gay woman, had to approach her job search both strategically and with an openess to all possibilities. Her first call was to a church in southern California, but that proved too far from home, so Rev. Gebbie and her wife decided to pursue a church in the Midwest.

Their criteria for the ideal church was simple: it had to be located in the Midwest, it had to be in a college town, and it had to be open and affirming. They knew finding such a church in certain areas of the Midwest would be difficult. Fortunately, Rev. Gebbie and her wife found Ames UCC, where Rev. Gebbie accepted the position of Senior Minister.

CTS helped prepare Rev. Gebbie for her role at Ames UCC in a variety of ways. One of these ways can be attributed to simple infrastructure. CTS' location gave Rev. Gebbie the opportunity to engage with a diverse community and take responsibility for her education.

"Because CTS is a commuter campus and because we are so diverse in our student body, we have to take really strong responsibility for being there, for showing up, for finding community, and for knowing where we need to go and getting ourselves there," Rev. Gebbie explained.

Rev. Gebbie also attributes her preparedness in ministry to advice from Professor Lee H. Butler, Jr.: "Know early on whom you are representing when you go into any room." In Rev. Gebbie's case, she represents a great variety of people at Ames UCC: academics, farmers, administrators, and people of all generations and political persuasions. Encouraging the congregation to work cohesively is not always easy, but congregants do have something important in common: their extraordinary generosity.

Ames UCC has a long-established reputation in lowa thanks to the congregation's commitment to one simple rule: when Ames UCC congregants raise money, it's never just for themselves. In the past year, Ames UCC's 202 congregants have raised \$80,000 for community organizations.

The congregation's extraordinary generosity and sense of community was fully evident in the aftermath of the Orlando shooting.

"We were the first group in lowa to provide a concrete response, and there we were, a Christian community doing it," Rev. Gebbie said." I called on my congregation to be at the doors, to greet all who might come. They responded quickly and without hesitation, filling the pews along with newcomers from Ames and counties all around Ames. People even drove up from Des Moines because we were the first ones to respond."

Rev. Gebbie's personal generosity goes well beyond her church. In addition to her pastoral leadership at Ames UCC, she serves on CTS' Board of Trustees. She also supports CTS' annual fund as an online fundraiser by reaching out to her personal network and encouraging others to be generous in supporting the mission and commitments of her alma mater.





# CASTING WASTING WASTING

### **RECRUITING & ADMISSIONS UPDATE**

Jason Frey, Staff

am thrilled to serve the mission, vision, and commitments of CTS as the new Director of Recruitment & Admission. I continue to believe the need for progressive theological education in transforming communities toward greater social justice in all contexts. Religion continues to be a major component in our society, and we need bold leaders who can navigate the diverse and complex terrain within their specific communities.

As Director, I'm excited to recruit students who are passionate about combining academic excellence with activism, belief with action, prayer with response. At CTS, we are in a unique position to equip religious leaders with the skills necessary to think creatively, act boldly, and build collaboration across difference. Because of our history and our ecology of diverse commitments, we continue to stand out among other seminaries and theological schools. As a result, I continue to meet prospective students who recognize that the world does not operate in silos. We need ministers who are activists, leaders who are involved in interreligious collaboration, and community organizers who work against racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia. When describing CTS to prospective students, I begin with the observation that CTS is not a learning community that merely responds to issues of injustice; instead, we actively seek them out, asking the question "What's next?" At CTS, we ask tough questions and seek forward-thinking answers in order to participate in forming a world where all can flourish. Many of our prospective and incoming students are innovative, bold, and ready to engage this beautifully diverse and complex world in intersectional ways. This is why CTS excites them and me.

I first came to CTS as a PhD student in theology, ethics, and LGBTQ studies. During my three years as a doctoral student, I had the privilege to serve CTS in many ways, including: researching and writing our student records retention policy,

serving as faculty assistant, participating in the writing of a major grant application for CTS, and editing Rev. Dr. Susan Thistlethwaite's newest book. Although I will be actively involved in the academic life of CTS and religious studies, while serving as Director I will be on a leave of absence from my doctoral program in order to serve the needs of our recruitment and admissions initiatives fully. I view my new role at CTS as a new privilege and opportunity to serve and help form a diverse learning community with which I am deeply connected.

I officially entered this role in the middle of August 2016, and together with the admissions team, have been strategizing recruitment initiatives for the upcoming year in order to continue building diverse, creative, and justice-seeking classes. In late September, we officially launched our first online viewbook, available at ctschicago.edu/ explore. This new resource allows us to digitize most of our recruitment materials and use video and visual imagery to communicate CTS' message. I invite you to explore our new online viewbook, check out the videos and photos, learn about our thought-leadership, and share the viewbook widely. It is designed primarily for prospective students, but it is also an excellent resource for alums and friends who want to share the vision and mission of CTS with others (especially prospective students). Our alumni/ae. current students, and friends still remain the top sources for recruitment, according to our incoming students. In other words, you are one of the main reasons the CTS student body remains so vibrant and bold.

The admissions team has an ambitious year ahead as we work hard traveling, recruiting, and journeying along with students throughout the process. I believe our complex and diverse world needs creative leaders who work at the intersections of justice and mercy, and I'm excited to serve CTS as we live into that reality together.







### INTRODUCING EXPLORE

Chicago Theological Seminary is proud to announce the launch of our new digital viewbook, an online experience that invites prospective students to explore the commitments, history, and learning community of CTS. By moving the viewbook online, the institution is honoring its efforts toward environmental sustainability, while also increasing the ability of prospective students to delve deeper into what makes CTS so unique.

The digital viewbook provides a clear and compelling message with direct links to our online application, main website, and visitor inquiry forms, leveraging our online presence by providing quick access to information regarding our degree programs, faculty.

and the application process. Highlighting the unique position of CTS, the viewbook describes our bold history, our commitments, and our exceptional thought leadership as well as our diverse, passionate, and creative student body and alumni/ae.

The digital viewbook walks prospective students through information about the school, our academic programs, and the overall admissions process. The *School* section invites students to tap into their passions and begin their journey towards theological education

Under *Academics*, prospective students can view our degree programs, read about our world-class faculty, and learn about our strong academics and field education com-

### THE NEW DIGITAL VIEWBOOK

ponent that are available to both online and face-to-face students.

Finally, the *Admission* section offers direct access to important information regarding the application and admissions process.

Our complex world needs leaders who are bold, passionate, and innovative to create change in their local communities and in the world. Our viewbook invites prospective students on a journey to explore their passions for justice, social transformation, and religious leadership, and to take their first step toward joining the CTS learning community.

ctschicago.edu/explore



### SUNHEE JUN

My reading of the Markan ending (Mark 16:1-8) focuses on how the resurrection of Jesus and the silence of the women at the tomb can be understood in a new way. This research is based on a postcolonial perspective that enables an ambivalent approach to the Markan text and inter-contextual dialogue that utilizes the concept of the Korean ghost to read the resurrection in Mark.

In common Korean belief, the dead with han (feeling of suffering) cannot enter into heaven. This is why ghosts appear in this world again: because they have something to say. From this Korean perspective, the resurrection of Jesus can be understood as the return of the dead with han. This return of Jesus challenges the Roman imperial order by negating the Roman death penalty. Furthermore, the resurrection is an ethical request to listen to the marginalized in a society, as the appearance of ghosts is an ethical request. Thus, Jesus's resurrection functions as an anti-imperial strategy in Mark. However, women's silence in Mark exposes a crack in this anti-imperial strategy. Women in Mark are represented by male characters and the narrator, not by their own voices. The silence of the women at the tomb signifies this status of women in the Markan narrative. Here is the contradiction of Mark: the news about the risen Jesus that must be heard and spread to become an anti-imperial strategy is given to women who have lost their voices in Mark. This contradiction urges us as readers to listen to the othered in our society more carefully.

### PhD Student Research

### MALENE JOHNSON



Originally conceived out of the "Yoruba Religions: Visible and Invisible in America" conference at CTS—developed and hosted by Professor Lee H. Butler, Jr.—this research builds upon the scholarship of Dr. Tracey E. Hucks by historicizing the phenomenon of multiple religious belonging or hybrid religiosity within Africana religion and Christianity. According to Dr. Hucks and Dr. Dianne Stewart, Africana refers to "Africans and their diaspora, including Africans"

convergence with the racial term 'black.'" It places emphasis on Africa in the study of African-American religion.

My specific research explores the notable absence of African-American religion from scholarship on interreligious/interfaith studies and multiple religious belonging, which I argue is rooted in what I define as the "Specters of the Enlightenment," the haunting ideologies and epistemologies that render African(a) religion and, by extension, African-American religion as "the most fundamental base manifestation of evil . . . the ultimate symbol of ungodliness and rebellion against the biblical deity." These Specters of the Enlightenment construct the Atlantic world with "racial alterity, religious supremacy and unrelenting supersessionism," according to Dr. Sylvester Johnson.

My research initiates a dialogue that deconstructs the epistemological Specters of the Enlightenment that dictate what is religious while also presenting religious epistemologies that are Africana in origin. This is didactic for interreligious and interfaith studies and multiple religious belonging, as it offers

the discipline an opportunity to divest itself from the Specters of the Enlightenment that continue to obfuscate Africana religions generally and African-American religions particularly. It presents a new paradigm for acknowledging and engaging with Africana religions.

### SHEA WATTS



Kanye West has been transformed and transfigured from a young rapper who represented the South Side of Chicago to an icon, a rap genius, a god. His persona has continually evolved since his arrival on the hip-hop scene, leading to his emergence as "Yeezus." On the surface, his music is uniquely creative, using various samples and setting trends for the hip-hop world. Below the surface, his music is sacred, serving as a theological reflection of his environment.

Incorporating godtalk and taking on a divine image, Yeezus challenges cultural norms of how society treats black bodies. Though Yeezus is a black god, he still encounters problems—mainly, his own paradoxes of living as a god in a black body. This struggle is embodied in his emergence as "Pablo." To understand Kanye's claims, it is important first to understand the experiential factors that shape them, because his theology reflects his reality. In my work, I aim to use a psychoanalytic lens with help from James Cone's ideas of "blackness," the realities of racism and oppression, and the philosophical notions of Paul Tillich to explore Kayne's conflicting claims to be Yeezus while simultaneously identifying as a "god," "new slave," and now "Pablo."



western neighbor of Chicago, Bensenville has been the subject of shifting demographics and corporate land-grabs for several years. Nestled among one of its many residential blocks is Faith Community United Church of Christ, an unusual church whose history of congregational shifts and difficulties with O'Hare International Airport exemplify Bensenville's struggles. Faith Community UCC, which recently welcomed CTS President Alice Hunt to preach during its Sunday service, is using its unique story for good under the guidance of the Reverend Catherine Balk (MDiv 1997).

In May 2016, Faith Community UCC introduced its St. John's, Immanuel, and Peace UCC Legacy Endowed Scholarship. The full-tuition, endowed scholarship supports the seminary education of CTS students who want to pursue ministry in the UCC.

"This generous gift will allow students to prepare for ministry without the tremendous burden of bearing tuition expense on their own, giving them the opportunity to be ready to step forward into bold ministry in the world."

The scholarship is a century in the making. Bensenville was once home to German farmers, and three churches established to support the community would eventually become St. John's UCC, Immanuel UCC, and Peace UCC. As O'Hare International Airport expanded, the land belonging to these churches was contested. Each church struggled on its own, and eventually their congre-

gations combined into a single church: Faith Community UCC. Soon thereafter, St. John's and Immanuel's properties were sold, but the money from the sales was not incorporated into Faith Community UCC's budget.

"The land was given to us in ministry, and now it has returned in cash," says Rev. Balk. "That cash is not ours, even as much as we could use it. It would solve our financial problems for a while, but we did not want to use this money to dribble away in our church operations. When the money was gathered together, we wanted to give at least one good gift to ministry that would go on."

### A Good Challenge

Merging the three congregations made Faith Community UCC unique, but joining congregations is never easy, even when the congregations are all part of the same denomination.

Susan Schmitz, president of Faith Community UCC, describes the merger as "difficult and challenging." Schmitz has been a member of Peace UCC for 35 years and experienced the merge firsthand. Uniting everyone from the different congregations, consolidating leadership roles, and changing who filled those roles in the new church were among the many challenges.

Another congregation president still participating at Faith Community UCC, Rita Cholewa, was a member of the

original Peace UCC church formed in 1971. She, too, describes the merger as a challenge but, more specifically, a "good challenge."

"It was a success, but it took a lot of time," Cholewa remarks. "It's a difficult thing to bring three congregations together, even though we were in the same town."

In the aftermath of the merger, Faith Community UCC looks forward to the future and to connecting with the greater Bensenville community. One outreach is the food pantry Faith Community UCC hosts in its building. This pantry has served the Bensenville community for nearly 50 years, and Faith Community UCC has emerged as its primary supporter. The church has also reached out to Bensenville youth with its Crossroads Kids Club, a Christian club that meets once per week at the local elementary school.

Mirroring Bensenville's demographics, the demographics of Faith Community UCC's congregation are shifting. What was once a Germanic community has become a largely Latino/a community. Rev. Balk notes that this is just one segment of Bensenville's diversity; people of Russian and Polish descent comprise another significant portion of the community's population.

Rev. Balk credits her theological education with preparing her to serve a diverse world. "I do think my experience at CTS helped prepare me for my ministry in Bensenville, where we have such a variety of people in our community," Rev. Balk says.

Though many of Faith Community UCC's parishioners were members of one of the three merged churches, new parishioners are always arriving. During a service last September, two newer church members were operating the audio/video system at the back of the

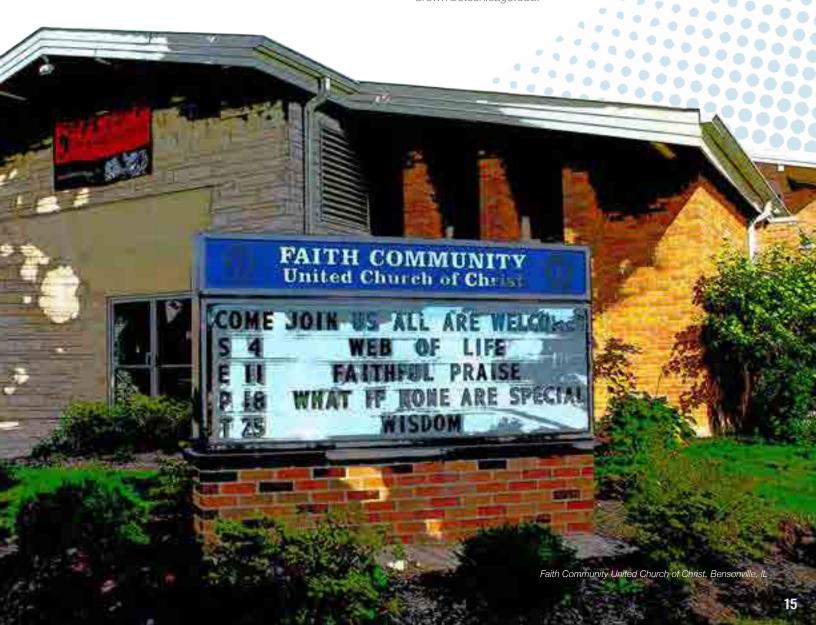
church. They were Leo Figueroa and his son, Frank. For three years, Leo and his wife, Columba, along with their daughter, Andrea, and Frank have been parishioners at Faith Community UCC. Columba admits that one reason the family was drawn to the church was its location: They live across the street. But in Bensenville, where there are several churches, geographical convenience is not a primary concern. A conversation Leo had with his manager at work convinced him to give the church a try. That first impression was strong, and the family has been part of the church ever since.

Columba says that because of "the welcome that people have given us here, we feel like part of a family. It's very rewarding."

If Faith Community UCC were an ordinary church, it might have used the money from the sale of St. John's and Immanuel's properties to pay for the consolidated church's operations. But Faith Community UCC is not an ordinary church. It chose to build upon the legacies of St. John's UCC, Immanuel UCC, and Peace UCC to provide opportunities for future minsters. This commitment is reflected in Rev. Balk's advice for new CTS students.

"The ministry that you and your congregation will be called to do relates completely to the community you're in," Rev. Balk explains. "What works for one place doesn't work someplace else necessarily. What was in your congregation before isn't necessarily what's needed now. The ministry within and the ministry outside need to tell the same story."

Faith Community UCC hosts weekly services at 10:00 a.m. on Sundays. If you or your congregation wish to create a legacy endowed scholarship at CTS, please contact Rhonda K. Brown, at rhonda. brown@ctschicago.edu.



# Center for the FACULTY REFLECTIONS



### LEE H. BUTLER, JR.

Distinguished Service Professor of Theology and Psychology, and Founder, Center for the Study of Black Faith & Life

The Center for the Study of Black Faith & Life was an initiative birthed out of our African American faculty's passions and commitments for ministerial service within the African American community. I gathered a group of leaders from inside and outside the CTS community (Lee Butler, Jr., CTS faculty; JoAnne Terrell, CTS fac-

ulty; Julia Speller, CTS faculty; Susan Thistlethwaite, then CTS president; Vanessa Lovelace, CTS Ph.D. student; Terri Owens, Dean of Students, U of C Divinity School; Roy Holmes, Bishop of the AMEZ Church and CTS alumnus; Edward Davis, UCC pastor and CTS alumnus; Barbara Ragland, Lydia Group president and Executive with Northern Trust, Chicago) to gestate the CSBFL. Unlike other theological education programs that focus on African American religiosity, I did not want the CSBFL to be a "Black Church studies" program. African American religious experience is broader than Christianity. And African American spirituality includes social, political, and communal activities. On the evening the Center was born, we unveiled its logo, which is a newborn baby. For the Center's first public event, we inaugurated the C. Shelby Rooks Lecture. Honoring former CTS president, C. Shelby

Rooks meant honoring his commitments to Church and academy, to ministry and scholarship. The work of the Center has sought to host conversations on the Nation of Islam, Father Divine's Peace Mission Movement, Yoruba religion in America, and the like, while the Rooks lecturers have been theological educators, women and men representing the many disciplinary fields, committed to working within the Black Church and academy to liberate America. For 10 years, Rooks lecturers have brought the challenge to join the fight against the forces of dehumanization.

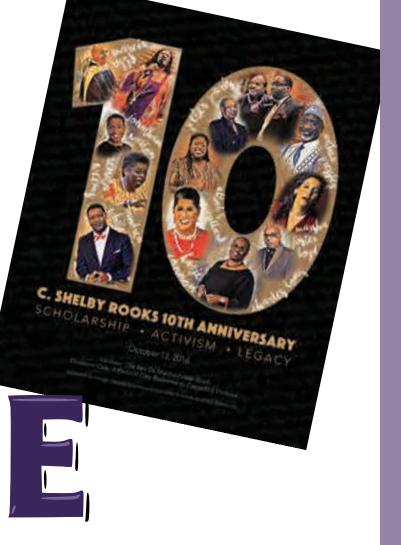


### JULIA M. SPELLER

Kenneth B. Smith Professor of Public Ministry, and Associate Professor of American Religious History & Culture

Over the past ten years the Center for the Study of Black Faith & Life has worked hard to bring together the voices and commitments of the seminary and the community to address and celebrate the whole of Black Faith. It has been intentional about expanding beyond the

Black Church to include various expressions of Africana faith traditions and it will continue to provide opportunities for ongoing engagement as we live into our institutional commitments of justice through dialogue and critical engagement.





### STEPHANIE BUCKHANON CROWDER

Assistant Professor of Theological Field Education & New Testament

The study of Blackness on any level is not solely a "Black" matter. It is awareness, education, and celebration for the entire community. The strength of any society lies in its ability to honor diversity and dif-

ference as exemplified in the folkways and mores of all its people. The Center for the Study of Black Faith and Life at CTS honors the convergence of Divine-Talk with Human-Walk through the lens of Black-Being. Such an endeavor is an invitation to relish the flowing waters of this people's cultural, sociological, political and religious history.

As a scholar of womanist maternal thought, the CSB-FL provides a forum to engage racist roadblocks, sexist speedbumps, and classist construction zones through the framework of motherhood. Such an interpretive mode does not maintain that Black motherhood is monolithic. However, in the true spirit of the CSBFL, it offers a path for recognition, recontextualization, remembering, and renewal. This is a Black matter. This is a Maternal matter.

## SISTERS

In April 2016, CTS invited some of the most influential theologians and scholars together to address violence experienced in African American communities.

The Sisters With Sons conference was organized by Rev. Dr. Lee H. Butler, Jr. with the assistance of CTS students Quincy James Rineheart and Rev. Teresa L. Smallwood, JD. The participating theologians and scholars included:

ANGELA SIMS, PhD, Saint Paul School of Theology

**PAMELA LIGHTSEY**, PhD, Boston University School of Theology

**VANESSA LOVELACE**, PhD, Interdenominational Theological Center

**CARROLL WATKINS ALI, PhD, Greater Denver Interfaith**Alliance

**ANGELA PARKER**, PhD, (CTS, 2015) The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology

RANDALL BAILEY, PhD, (retired), Interdenominational Theological Center

STEPHEN RAY, PhD, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary

**CEDRIC JOHNSON**, PhD, Wesley Theological Seminary

**REGGIE WILLIAMS, PhD, McCormick Theological Seminary** 

**DAVID DANIELS**, PhD, McCormick Theological Seminary

This conference was made possible by a generous grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and the CTS Center for the Study of Black Faith & Life.



hicago Theological Seminary is continuing to bring its commitments to the international stage. This winter, CTS

students and faculty went on a journey to Haiti for the first time, led by Rev. Dr. JoAnne Marie Terrell and Dr. Emily Vogt.

In 2010, a devastating earthquake claimed over 150,000 Haitian lives, and the infrastructural destruction earthquake, there have been many efforts to help bring Haiti back from devastation, and individual have been part of these efforts.

In 2014, Dr. Terrell joined a mission trip to visit a Haitian orphanage. During her stay, Dr. Terrell met with

several children and adults. The love that she received during her stay left an important impression on Dr. Terrell and helped pave

"My whole experience of Haiti was of people who had absolutely

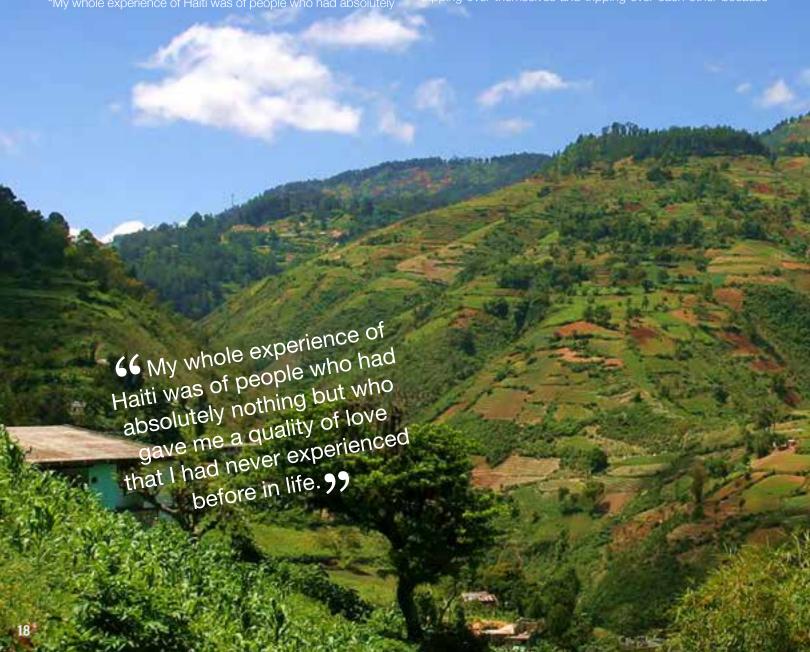
nothing but who gave me a quality of love that I had never experienced before in life," Dr. Terrell explained. "It was an

> intangible embrace of my whole being. I got a feeling that I can't quite name but [as] just pure love."

> This intangible love manifests itself in many ways in Haiti, which liberated itself from colonialism in 1804. Haiti plays a crucial role in the Western narrative and the history of liberation activity, but its geopolitical exclusion has hindered the country's economic success. In the aftermath of the earthquake, Haiti has emerged as the nongovernmental organization (NGO) capital of the world. Dr. Terrell's goal for the student participants

helping people through benevolence and helping them through empowerment are two very different actions.

tripping over themselves and tripping over each other because



they're not understanding deeply the entrenched problems of Haiti, the entrenched problem of not having been included, the entrenched problem of [the] colonial mindset regarding race and economics," Dr. Terrell said.

Dr. Terrell approached Dr. Vogt to help guide students on this journey because of Vogt's research experience in the French Caribbean. For CTS students who travelled to Haiti, Dr. Terrell encouraged them to consider four questions:

How do the Haitian people empower themselves?

What is the source of the resilience of the Haitian people?

How does art factor into that resilience?

What is the spiritual experience of the people of Haiti?

These questions helped guide students to see the beauty, history, and complexity of Haiti. They also showed students how closely related their own theology and faith could be to that of the people living in this small Caribbean country.

"All forms of human liberation are bound with other forms of human liberation," Dr. Terrell said. "Our obligation is to resist all forms of oppression and to not contribute to that oppression by our ignorance or by our misguided benevolence that doesn't seek also to empower those with whom we engage with around

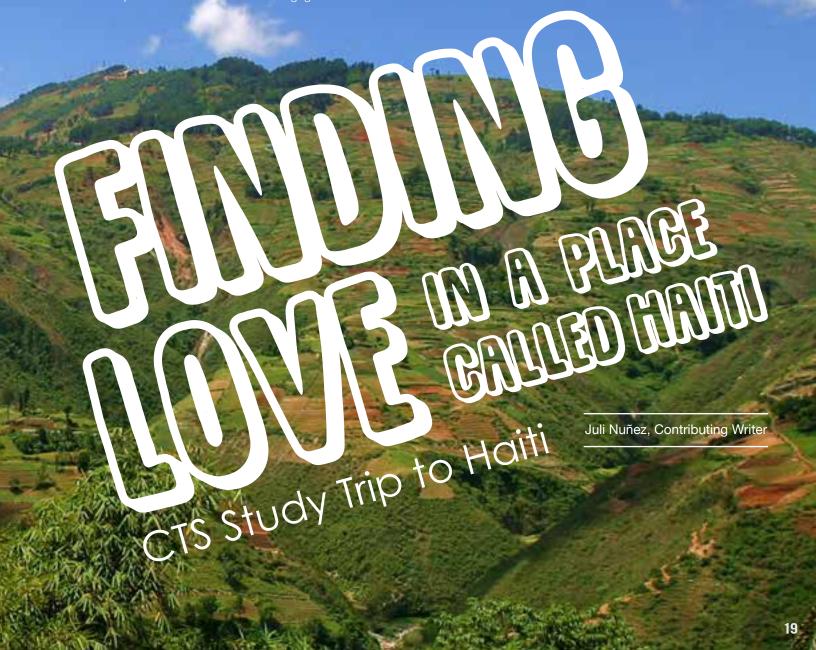
the world."

"Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas, despite being a major recipient of foreign aid and the object of much goodwill," Dr. Vogt said. "This trip looked critically on why some charity is not actually helping while looking at successful stories for examples of what works."

Haiti was not CTS' first international foray. For several years, CTS and the Center for Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Studies have led study trips to Israel and Palestine, giving students the opportunity to observe the ongoing conflict and prepare them for future discussion and advocacy. These international journeys have one thing in common: students are never the same when they return.

"Haiti is a beautiful country, and we opened our eyes not just to see the immiseration of the populace but the natural beauty in which they are trying to navigate their resistance, and perhaps even that is a source of their resilience," Dr. Terrell said.

The Haiti trip took place January 9-16. To read more about students' experiences on past international trips, visit the CTS Journeys blog at ctschicago.edu/about/blogs/journeys.



### STEPHANIE BUCKHANON CROWDER

Asst. Prof. of Theological Field Education & New Testament



There are not many votes taken in theological field education. Well, students serving in field placement could, perchance, witness a board voting process or two. For the most part, there is little to no exercise of "aye" or "no." However, the endeavor to merge theology with praxis at CTS is rooted in "i's"—identity, imagination, and integrity.

Through 400 hours of clinical pastoral education (CPE) and 400 hours of field placement at a congregation, social service agency, university, college, or prison, face-to-face and online students are forced to

wrestle with and respond to questions related to who they are, what they see, and how they are called to live. Persons in these practical experiences must examine:

- Pastoral Identity: Who am I as a minister or religious leader?
   Whether I am called to ordination or a different form of religious service and leadership, how will I live into this role?
- Pastoral Imagination: What is ministry? How do I understand shared vocation? What do I think ministry encompasses? How do I creatively offer religious leadership that is guided by my sense of pastoral possibilities?
- Personal/Professional Integrity: How do I serve and lead with authenticity, consistency, honesty, and wholeness? How does classroom learning meet ministry outside of the classroom? How does my own self-awareness relate to professional competence and skill? How do I lead with strength without abusing or alienating those whom I serve?

This year, students from Connecticut to California are learning and serving in places such as MetroSquash, Reconciling Ministries Network, and Episcopal City Mission. In these and various congregational settings, students will further come to terms with their individual work in communal spaces. Such practical engagement helps students love the Divine more dearly, follow more nearly, and, yes, see more clearly.

In essence, "eyes" have not seen nor have ears heard what is in store through theological field education.

### JOY JOHNSON Online MDiv Student

I am splitting my field education between the Mecklenburg County Jail and Wedgewood United Church of Christ in Charlotte, North Carolina. I am strongly called to prison ministry, but I am not sure what form that will take. I am not sure if it will be as a chaplain, working with people in prison, working with them after they get out, or working with them as part of a general parish ministry. Working with the chaplain at the jail has given me the opportunity to experience firsthand what it is like to be a chaplain in a jail. I spend the day working with the chaplain, observing classes, and interacting with the inmates and staff. My field education work has also allowed for interfaith involvement.

I also wanted experience in general parish ministry, since most of my ministry experience so far has consisted of working with those in prison or in jail. I chose to work at the Wedgewood United Church of Christ, since I am called to peace and justice ministries, as well. At Wedgewood, I lead an interfaith initiative to fellowship and show solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters. We meet



about once a month with a group of Muslim women for an interfaith study, and we share meals and discussions with Muslim peace activists. In addition, I teach Sunday School, participate in worship, and preach sermons.

So far, both experiences have been extremely fulfilling and complemented each other well. Regardless of what form my ministry takes in the future, I know that it will involve helping those in prison as well as other forms of social justice and peace work. The interfaith work that I am doing at Wedgewood will be valuable if I choose the chaplain route; if I choose general parish ministry, I will be reaching out to prisoners and focusing on social justice issues, so either way my service at both places will help me discern my future calling, and I am open to whatever path God chooses for me.

### SHERRIE PHILIPS JOHNSON MDiv Student

I have always been interested in prison ministry and have worked in different constructions of prison ministry in the places where I have worshipped over the last ten years. I have been passionate about the emotional, mental, and spiritual states of those who find

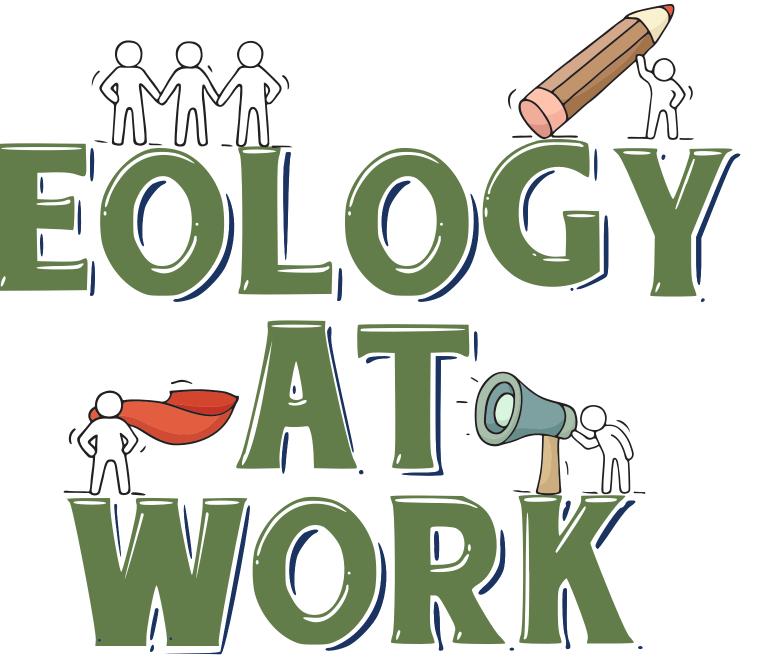
themselves incarcerated, since my own brother went to prison some forty years ago. Unfortunately, he remains a victim of "Three Strikes, You're Out" legislation. I was totally petrified when I went to see him for the first time in the late 1970s. It was heartbreaking to see a sea of so many faces of humans who should have been in another place and having other positive experiences instead of being incarcerated, many for the proliferation of drugs. It was within this huge body of humanity that I witnessed a lost sense of dignity, hope, and self-worth.

It is perhaps not so ironic that I find myself in this place today, given that there has been so much dialogue around the subject of mass incarceration and the challenges it has produced for many people, specifically people of color. It is here that I believe God is allowing me to use my classroom knowledge and

gifts in practical, community-based praxis, getting hands-on experience in building my specific ministry at the Federal Bureau of Prisons Metropolitan Correctional Center in downtown Chicago. This facility houses approximately 576 males and 22 female inmates.

What I appreciate and find most helpful is how it is shaping my





### THEOLOGICAL FIELD EDUCATION REFLECTIONS

call to chaplaincy and pastoral care ministry. Furthermore, I feel very fortunate to be at this particular institution. It is a national satellite training facility (based on its ability to provide a healthy environment) that teaches prospective wardens across the country how to run these institutions more effectively, more humanly. There are two chaplains—one Christian and one Jewish—assigned to this facility. This has opened the door for honoring religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue not only among the chaplains and other administrators but also among the inmates.

The environment has been one that promotes tolerance, respect, and dignity for self and others. It is demonstrated on a daily basis both by chaplains and other administrators within the facility. I have visited just about every unit in the building and find that most



inmates have an excellent relationship with and a very high regard for the head chaplain supervisor, who is also my field supervisor. This environment permeates throughout the facility, as there is a shared effort to instill in all prisoners a high level of dignity and respect. Inmates reciprocate those same attitudes and behaviors. What I am most excited about is that I have been given the opportunity to work with the small group of female inmates to develop programs that will be most helpful to them. Because of their separation and small numbers, they do not benefit as much from programs geared toward the male population. Ultimately, this experience provides for me ongoing reflections about how I can best serve all of God's creation.

(cont.)

### FRED WEZEMAN MDiv Student

My field education experience has been an enriching opportunity to do ministry in the setting of higher education. My choice of the site reflects my sense of calling and has been a personally gratifying undertaking in specialized ministry. I chose campus ministry under the supervision of Trinity Christian College's Dean of Spiritual Development and Chaplain, who is both my mentor and supervisor at the institution. Trinity Christian College is an independent faith-based institution of approximately 1,000 students situated in a southwest suburb of Chicago.



At Trinity Christian College, my weekly schedule on campus consumes approximately 10-15 hours per week to which is added time for reading and preparation, response to the online course requirements, and preparation for campus group discussions and presentations. Weekly meetings revolve around student ministry groups, peer ministry leader groups, faculty and staff sessions, and weekly chapel services. Additionally, the Chaplain's Office serves the counseling needs of students in conjunction with the office of Student Affairs. Meetings with individual students for one-on-one discussions and for spiritual direction are a regular time commitment.

Challenges for a chaplain on a college campus are abundant. Over the span of 4-5 years while they are in college, young adults mature, explore, and develop interpersonal skills, become educated, focus on careers, and engage in a significant amount of self-identification and spiritual development. It is challenging for a chaplain to engage students on many levels in all these areas. A chaplain is similar to but not the same as a faculty member; as authority figures, they are unique, and their leadership skills are different from those used by faculty and college administrators. Students appreciate the caring and compassionate approaches used by college chaplains; the settings in which discussions of spiritual development occur and testimonies are given reflect the openness students feel in the presence of a chaplain.

Rewards in this field of ministry are also abundant. Over time, one can see the development of maturity and Christian character in the ways that students relate to peers and others. It is rewarding to hear them speak of their faith in an open and unashamed way and about the moments of challenge they encounter when their faith is tested. Becoming people of faith matters greatly to them in a world of stress and constant challenge; it is rewarding to see their spiritual development over time in this setting.

My past career was spent in medical education, and my presence on an undergraduate campus in my new role as a campus chaplain has been an affirmation of my calling to campus ministry. By no longer being a faculty member, I can focus on other dimensions of student life—namely, their spiritual development. My background is an added benefit to my current seminary education, and both enrich each other for the purpose of sharing life histories and my personal faith walk with young adults.

### FRIENDS OF FIELD EDUCATION

CTS' Friends of Field Education program offers another opportunity for alumni/ae to connect with the seminary. The program gathers alumni/ae who wish to support out-of-state field education students and assist in providing field placement feedback.

If you are ready to get started, visit ctschicago.edu and click on the Academics Tab and select Field Education, or contact Rev. Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder, PhD, Asst. Professor of Theological Field Education & New Testament, Director, ACTS DMin in Preaching Program, at sbcrowder@ctschicago.edu.





Susan Cusick, Staff

n February 9th, CTS President, the Reverend Dr. Alice W. Hunt announced her decision to retire effective July 1, 2018. This closes the chapter on an amazing, decade-long run of transformation and growth at CTS.

One of the most respected and innovative theological leaders in the country, Hunt's work helped secure CTS' place as a leader in national conversations on theology and justice, especially in the areas of white privilege, racial justice, interreligious engagement, and gender equality.

Hunt announced her decision at the February meeting of the Board of Trustees in Chicago. "While it was difficult to come to this decision," she explained, "it is even harder to share this news with the vibrant, dedicated CTS community of friends and colleagues who are so dear to me."

Norman Williams, Chair of the Board of Trustees, praised Hunt's leadership and vision and acknowledged the strength of the seminary as a testament to Hunt herself. "While this is a transition, Alice's leadership over the last ten years has prepared us well," said Williams, "I have full faith in our strong faculty, dedi-

cated and engaged Board of Trustees, and dynamic community to continue our leadership in theological education. We stand on a foundation of academic excellence and financial strength." Williams also affirmed the Board's faith in Acting President and General Counsel Donald C. Clark, Jr., who will lead the seminary during this transition. Clark assumed the role of Acting President on January 1, 2017, when Hunt began her academic sabbatical.

Clark, a member of the search committee that hired Hunt, expressed his admiration, saying, "Alice's unwavering commitment to our students, alums, faculty, staff, and mission was evident in every initiative she led." Regarding the seminary's next steps, Clark said, "we will soon share plans for how we will honor and celebrate Alice's tenure, her many celebrated accomplishments, and what her leadership and friendship means to this community." The seminary will share information on the celebration honoring President Hunt as soon as plans are set.

Before leaving for her well-deserved sabbatical, President Hunt penned a "Charge" for the CTS Community (see page 24).

And, in places of ruin, you and those coming after you will rebuild for eternity you will raise their foundations for many generations; you will be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of liveable neighborhoods.

Isaiah 58:12

What now? We live, move, and have our being in an unprecedented time and place. What now? What are we for? How do we be #LeadersForTheNext? I ask you, what would you do, here and now, if you knew you would not fail? However you answer that question – *that* is exactly what you are to be about. Live the life you were created to live. Love beyond the limits of your prejudices.¹ Be repairers of the breach.

We hear all around us about fear. And fear is real right now. Many accomplishments we worked hard to bring about stand to be undone. Fear is real. The work to bring

We are called to be human shields. Men speak out, loudly and often, against sexism. White people - speak out, loudly and often, against white supremacy. Cisgendered people - speak out, loudly and often, against cis-normativity. Straight people - speak out, loudly and often, against heteronormativity. Documented persons - speak out, loudly and often, for equal treatment for undocumented persons and refugees. People with access to resources - speak out, loudly and often, for those who do not have access to resources while at the same time sharing your own resources. Every single person - speak out, loudly and often, about the rapidly descending climate calamity. We know this; we share these values plainly in our CTS Commitments Statement. Now is the time when we need to understand that these values cannot be separated; they intersect; they are interconnected; they are interdependent.

I have heard some people worry that if we live out of an understanding that these commitments intersect, their own oppressions will be diluted and/or forgotten. I contend working solely on a single

This leads me to call on us in another demanding way. It is well and good for us to spend time with and work with people with whom we share values and commitments. And, we should do that some of the time - for good reasons because we can accomplish more together than we can apart – because we need time for renewal and rejuvenation - because we need inspiration - because we need comfort. BUT, we are called to love beyond the limits of our prejudices; we are called to love all of God's creation; we are called to see humanity in every person. And so, sometimes we need to move outside our CTS bubble to spend time with and work with people who do not share our values. Our newest faculty member, Rev. Dr. Zachary Moon, talks about this in his powerful, provocative, and even convicting, convocation address entitled Making Enemies: Moral Anguish in Breached Places which he delivered early last fall. It is well worth listening to the entire address which vou can find on our CTS YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/CTSchicagoHD). In this address, Dr. Moon says, "We need to



about equality and fairness and love for those who have long been othered may be reversed. Fear is real. We fear the violence of white supremacy. We fear the loss of healthcare for those with no access. We fear environmental calamity. We fear for the lives of our transgendered and genderqueer friends. We fear the brutality of homophobia. We fear for the lives of undocumented persons, for those living without access to resources. We fear. And yet we must not live in that fear. We must not allow fear to divide us. We must bring these issues together. We must not let our own oppressions keep us from attending to all oppression. If each oppression is a stick, each oppression can be easily broken. If we allow singular focus only on our own oppression, fear wins. Sticks bundled together will not break. We are called to be collaborators and allies.

oppression will not succeed in lessening that oppression. You know the adage – If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten. Now is the time for the oppressions to be bundled. We must refuse to allow any justice issue to be diluted. We are in a time of "all or nothing."

And, we need to work across traditional boundaries. CTS trustee, Rev. Traci Blackmon, describes her understanding of an ally as being someone who is against the same thing I am against as opposed to being someone who is for the same things I am for. In other words, you and I do not have to agree on everything in order to take a stand against something we are both against. She encourages us to disavow "us vs. them."

spend less time with our easy friends and more time with our easy enemies."

When we reach out to be with and work with those with whom we disagree, we need to practice generous listening. "But," you say, "I don't want to listen to those people." Well, tough. Those people are part of God's creation too. If we do not get in there and work with and listen to those people, things will remain the same. Generous listening is not necessarily easy; generous listening means enacting a combination of two things: 1) assuming that the person to whom you are listening has good intentions in the world, and 2) listening to hear what that person is saying rather than listening in speak. When I practice generous listening (which I do not do all the time) and the person to whom I am listening says something that

is astounding to me or something revolting to me, I say to them "Help me see what you see." As I said, generous listening is not easy. It is actually quite challenging. It is being a repairer of the breach. It is truly an enactment of love – radical love.

How does all this manifest in each of our lives? It will be different for each of us, according to our calling. Find your unique expression of leadership: what would you do if you knew you would not fail? For the faculty at CTS and in the words of our senior faculty member and Distinguished Service Chair, Rev. Dr. Lee H. Butler, Jr., "What now?... We must teach resistance. We must teach activism. We must teach love is more powerful than hate and death. We must teach the meaning of human beingness." For me, as I have just begun my sabbatical, I am dedicating my thoughts, research, and work toward how we might most effectively stand for love. How will this manifest for you?

May the peace of Christ disrupt you.

A CALL TO ACTION

Blessings,

Alice

Alice Hunt, President

## A LOOK BA





Erica Weathers, MDiv student and Rev. Ayanna Garrett, Assoc. Dir. of Recruitment, perform liturgical dance during Community Chapel



President Alice Hunt speaking during President's Chapel



Attendees of the 2016 Castañeda Lecture, including Rev. Stephen Thurston and Rev. Dr. Walter Fluker (CSBFL Visiting Scholar)









Rev. Stephen Thurston (center) and Rev. Dr. Walter E. Fluker (right), enjoy the 10th Annual C. Shelby Rooks Lecture with a friend

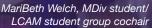
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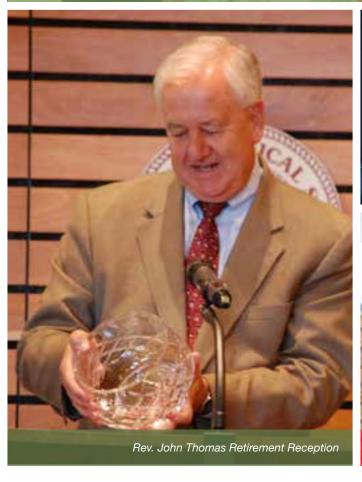






















# LEADERS FOR THE REAT Alumni/ae Profiles





### **TYLER TULLY**

Tyler Tully took his CTS education to the international level after he was accepted to the University of Oxford and was awarded the Arthur Peacocke Graduate Studentship in Theology Award.

Tully graduated from CTS in 2016 with a Master of Divinity degree. He was primarily an online student, taking full advantage of the online coursework provided by his alma mater. His research involved trauma theory, specifically from the perspective of child-abuse survivors. To explore the power dynamics, Tully analyzed the role animals played in the Hebrew Bible. This power dynamic consists of a dichotomy of sorts: those in power lord it over those who are not in power, and this power imbalance becomes enhanced when those with less power are compared to animals.

"There's something that's buried very deep within us as human beings that connects us to non-human animals and already puts us into conversation with them as to what it means to be human."

Tully's research interests are at the intersection of critical theories on race, animality, trauma, affect, postcolonialism, and power.

### REV. BIANCA DAVIS-LOVELACE

Rev. Bianca Davis-Lovelace is the Pastor of Eastgate United Church of Christ in Bellevue, Washington. Rev. Davis-Lovelace is a proud CTS legacy-she is the fourth person in her family to graduate from the seminary. Since her graduation (MDiv 2013), Rev. Davis-Lovelace has made it her mission to bring ministry forth in communities. She worked as the Pastor for Millennials at God Can Ministries UCC. where she engaged the youth of her church in social activism, performing arts, and the theology of hip-hop music. Her connection to young adults and millennials only grew stronger when she and her husband founded Progressive Millennials for Action, where they work to empower the voices of the millennial generation. Now, Rev. Davis-Lovelace is bringing her experience and ministry to the Northwest United States, but she has not forgotten about the influence her CTS education had on her motivation for becoming a CTS student.

"I picked CTS not necessarily because my parents and grandfather went there. It wasn't the fact that it was a family legacy. I was drawn to the CTS legacy, period," Rev. Davis-Lovelace says. It was "the fact that Martin Luther King was associated with CTS and Rev. Jesse Jackson was associated with CTS, the fact that CTS was not afraid to go there—and when I say 'go there,' I mean go and talk about the hard issues."

### **JASON CARSON WILSON**

Jason Carson Wilson is not afraid to bring his beliefs to the center stage. He arrived at CTS after a career in journalism. After graduation, Wilson was selected to serve as a two-year fellow with the United Church of Christ for the UCC Justice and Peace Fellowship. Wilson resides in Washinton, D.C., leading faith-based policy work and lobbying efforts.

Since beginning this appointment, Wilson has written several articles about important issues, such as the Dakota Access Pipeline protest, gun violence, and coverage of the 2016 presidential elections. His recent writing focuses on the peril of the Affordable Care Act.

"I value my [CTS] educational experience, because not only did I learn valuable information, but it also challenged my perception of myself, challenged me to understand that I am capable of theological reflection, writing, and research. It helped me to be able to call myself a theologian."

Wilson graduated from CTS with a Master of Divinity in 2016.

To read our full profiles of Rev. Bianca Davis-Lovelace, Tyler Tully, and Jason Carson Wilson, go to ctschicago.edu/ students/student-profiles.



### SCADING SCADING IOLENCE

### 10th Annual C. Shelby Rooks Lecture with Rev. Dr. Marsha Foster Boyd

Jess Peacock, PhD Student

his country was founded violently, so it's a part of the American legacy," Rev. Dr. Marsha Foster Boyd shared on a chilly autumn afternoon, just hours before serving as the featured speaker for the 2016 C. Shelby Rooks Lecture at Chicago Theological Seminary. "How do we address that? How can we heal? How can we thrive in spite of the violence that we are facing?"

These questions served as the focal point for Rev. Dr. Boyd's Rooks lecture, which marked the tenth anniversary of the event honoring former CTS president, Rev. Dr. C. Shelby Rooks, the first African American to serve as president of a predominantly white theological school. This annual event serves as a catalyst for clergy, scholars, and lay people alike to engage in religious and theological reflection on issues relevant to African American faith, freedom, and justice.

In her lecture, Rev. Dr. Boyd addressed what she termed "cascading violence" within the black community, that is, "The multiple types of violence experienced cumulatively by black people, both in the past and in the present. Violence with racism embedded at its very core." She went on to state, "Cascading violence has plagued African-Americans over the centuries, manifested in many varied forms until this present day."

Using the imagery of the overwhelming intensity and power of a waterfall, Rev. Dr. Boyd explained the horrendous effects of this violence within the black community. "This is the force and the sound of the cries of young black men today whose beautiful black

bodies lie in city streets. We can see a horrific pattern that has developed like the water cascading over the falls for centuries, continuously digging a groove that normalizes its flow."

For Rev. Dr. Boyd, her current mission as a speaker and writer is, in her own words, "trying to develop ways we can address violence in small communities and families rather than being continually overwhelmed, immobilized, and disempowered. How can we empower one another as we face violence?" She views the Rooks Lecture as one avenue where this discussion and process of empowerment can take place. "It's an honor to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Rooks Lecture, as well as to honor Dr. Rooks himself, his work, and to be a part of the lineage of the work he did, and what he stood for in terms of church and community interaction."



Save the Date for the 11th Annual C. Shelby Rooks Lecture on October 12, 2017. Our guest speaker is Rev. Raphael G. Warnock, PhD, Senior Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta, GA.



Yasmine Abou-El-Kheir – Director of our Lapp Learning Commons: Ms. Abou-El-Kheir (pictured above) earned her MS in Library and Information Services from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a Master Online Teacher Certificate from the University of Illinois at Springfield, and a BA in Political Science from Carleton University. She is also pursuing a MA in Religious Studies. She came to us from the Illinois College of Optometry, where she worked as the Collection Management Librarian. Prior to her education in library science, she had a career in health and human services and worked as a journalist in Egypt.

Rev. Dr. Zachary Moon – Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology and Care: A 2010 graduate of the CTS MDiv program, Dr. Moon completed his PhD in the joint doctoral program in Religion at Iliff School of Theology and University of Denver last year. He is ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a Licensed Minister in the Religious Society of Friends, and a commissioned chaplain with the US Navy. He has published Coming Home: Ministry That Matters with Veteran and Military Families (Chalice Press, 2015), and he speaks frequently on such topics as moral injury and recovery for veterans and their families. Already, Dr. Moon's influence is being seen at CTS through his advocacy for a concentration in Chaplaincy Studies, which will be offered in several of our degree programs.

Jason Frey – Director of Recruitment and Admission: Mr. Frey was studying at CTS as a PhD student, but he is taking a leave of absence from his doctoral studies to serve as Director. Jason previously earned his MDiv at Princeton Theological Seminary and his Bachelor of Arts at Bluffton University.

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Jason Frey Admission: PhD student from his do Jason previ Theological Bluffton Uni

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Ken Stone, Faculty





Because of the retirement of several CTS faculty members over the past few years—with the addition of new professors to the faculty, and in the context of our self-study for the Association of Theological Schools—the CTS PhD faculty decided last year that it was time for a thorough review of our PhD curriculum. Supported in part by a grant from the Forum for Theological Exploration, and with much work from Rev. Dr. Dr. Lee H. Butler, Jr. (Interim Academic Dean in fall 2015) and Dr. Emily Vogt (Assistant Dean and Director of our PhD program), a significant program revision was undertaken, and the new program structure was implemented this fall.

The most significant change to the PhD program was the elimination of the two concentrations—Bible, Culture, and Hermeneutics and Theology, Ethics, and Culture—that it had offered in the past. Doctoral students are now entering a single interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary program that emphasizes cultural criticism and textual hermeneutics oriented toward social justice. Students in the program have multiple areas of inquiry around which they can focus their studies, including Sacred Texts and Hermeneutical Strategies, America as an African Diaspora, Womanist Religious Studies, World Feminisms, Interreligious Studies, LGBTG Studies, and Theology and Cultural Criticism. These areas of inquiry mirror the strengths of the faculty and provide a space for creative intellectual possibilities for doctoral work that can receive full institutional support.

New course requirements include a course on Pedagogies as well as the previously required course Contemporary Hermeneutical Strategies and a new yearlong Professional Development Workshop Series. These workshops cover topics such as writing conference papers, joining professional organizations, attending conferences and presenting conference papers, grant writing, dissertation writing strategies and tips, CV writing, job letter writing and coaching about the job application process as well as advice for alternative career paths and self-care. On top of critical intellectual engagement, the new program offers robust and thorough preparation for doctoral students and their professional lives after graduation.

Greetings from the Dean's Office, where we are in the middle of another busy and productive year at CTS! As Academic Dean, I would like to draw your attention to some of the individuals and curricular events that are shaping academic life at CTS this year. If you have any questions about the announcements found on this page, or if you have any other questions about academics at CTS, please feel free to contact me (kstone@ctschicago.edu) or the Assistant Dean, Dr. Emily Vogt (evogt@ctschicago.edu), or drop by my office, located next to the President's office on the first floor of our building.



Alpesh Bhatt, who has previously cotaught with President Alice Hunt, is teaching the online course Personal, Interpersonal, and Social Leadership Development: An Interreligious Inquiry. He is the Principal and Founder of the Center for Leadership Studies and teaches at the University of New Haven.

**Dr. Wil Brant** is teaching the online section of the yearlong *MA/STM Thesis Seminar*. He earned his PhD in Theology, Ethics, and Human Sciences from CTS in 2006.

Rev. Dr. Sharon Ellis Davis is teaching the DMin Theological Reflection Seminar during the January Term. She received her PhD from CTS in 2006 and is currently a Trainer at Faith Trust Institute and serving as Affiliate Faculty at McCormick Theological Seminary.

Jason Frey and Rev. Melanie Jones are co-teaching the online course *Living Into Our Commitments* in the spring. Melanie is a current PhD student at CTS, and Jason is CTS' Director of Recruitment and Admission.

**Dr. Giseok Joo** (pictured above) graduated with a PhD from CTS in spring of 2016 and is teaching Global Sensitivity in Ministry in the fall and Bonhoeffer's Theology during the January Term

Zach Mills is teaching Preaching the Headlines online this fall. Zach is a PhD candidate in Rhetoric and Culture at Northwestern University and earned his MDiv at Vanderbilt Divinity School.

**Eugene Muhammad** is teaching *Theology, Ethics, and World Religions*. He is a PhD candidate (ABD) at CTS in Theology, Ethics, and Culture.

**Dr. Jennifer Pope** teaches the yearlong *MA/STM Thesis Seminar*. She received her PhD from CTS in 2013 in Theology, Ethics, and Human Sciences and is presently working as Associate Director of Student Affairs at Adler University.

**Rev. Dr. Robert Shore-Goss** is teaching the online course *Greening the Church: Theological and Practical Foundations* in the spring. He is Pastor of MCC in the Valley and holds a ThD in Comparative Religion from Harvard University.

Rev. Teresa L. Smallwood, JD is teaching the online section of *Religion in North America* during the spring semester. She is a PhD student at CTS in Theology, Ethics, and



**Dr. Fran Snyder** is teaching the online course *Giving Voice to Biblical Women* in the spring. She has a PhD in Midrash and Scriptural Interpretation from the Graduate School of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and is presently serving as Assistant Professor at Eugene Lang College of Liberal Arts at The New School

John Thomas recently retired from his position as Senior Advisor to the President at CTS but is maintaining strong connections to the CTS community by teaching the online course Leading Congregations in the fall and History and Polity of the United Church of Christ during the January Term and online during the spring semester.

**Dr. Karl Villarmea** completed his PhD at CTS in 2016 and has been teaching the online sections of *Global Sensitivity in Ministry* during the fall semester. He is currently Assistant Professor at Silliman University in the Philippines.

**Dr. Emily Vogt,** (pictured above) the Assistant Dean and Director of the PhD Program at CTS, is leading the yearlong *Professional Development Workshop Series* and is co-teaching the *Haiti Study Trip* with Professor JoAnne Terrell during the January Term and *Theology and Anthropology* with Professor Bo Myung Seo during the spring semester. She has a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Chicago.



Rev. Dr. Patrick Cheng, Affiliated Associate Professor of Theology, is teaching *Queer Theologies* online this fall. He has a PhD from Union Theological Seminary and a JD from Harvard and was a widely published tenured professor at Episcopal Divinity School before leaving to work fulltime for the Episcopal Church in New York City.

**Rev. Dr. Michael Montgomery**, Affiliated Assistant Professor of Church Ministries and Sociology of Religion, taught our *DMin Research Methods Seminar* in August and is teaching *DMin Thesis Seminar* during the January Term. Dr. Montgomery received his PhD from CTS and teaches several courses here in the DMin program.

**Dr. Cynthia Stewart**, Affiliated Assistant Professor of Church History, is teaching the online sections of History of Christian Thought in both fall and spring. Her PhD is in the *History of Christian Thought* from Vanderbilt University, where she wrote her dissertation on Medieval Heresies and Women's Freedoms.

Rabbi Dr. Jay Michaelson, (pictured above) Affiliated Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, is teaching the online course, *Religious Liberty and LGBTQ Equality* in the spring. He earned his PhD in Jewish Thought and his MA in Comparative Religion from Hebrew University of Jerusalem as well as a JD from Yale Law School. In addition to authoring multiple books, Dr. Michaelson maintains an active presence in social media and online journalism, writing frequent columns for such publications as the *Daily Beast, Religion Dispatches*, and *Forward*. Michaelson will also be our Castañeda Lecturer in spring 2017.

**Dr. Manuel Villalobos Mendoza**, Affiliated Assistant Professor of New Testament, is teaching the online section of Interpreting the Epistles this spring. He earned his PhD from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. His dissertation was published as a book titled Abject Bodies in the Gospel of Mark. He is also the author of When Men Were Not Men: Masculinity and Otherness in the Pastoral Epistles.



### **WOMEN'S VOICES EXCEPTIONAL CONVERSATIONS:** A Podcast Series Debut

This past December, CTS introduced a new event series called RIOTconversations. These dynamic digital and face-to-face conversations will continue the exploration of these urgent issues ahead of RIOTcon: Climates of Change, to be held April 20-21, 2018. Podcast episodes are available on CTS' Soundcloud page (soundcloud. com/ctschicago) or on CTS' website. For information about upcoming RIOTconversations, go to ctschicago.edu/about/events.

Sponsored by the Center for Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Studies (JCIS) at CTS, the five episodes feature women from diverse faith backgrounds who are engaged in profound dialogue that is designed to address the intersections of gender, religion, and social-justice issues.

EPISODE 1: Host: Susan Thistlethwaite, Former CTS President & current Professor of Theology

Guest: Judith Plaskow, Jewish feminist and author of the classic book Standing Again at Sinai.

EPISODE 2: Host: Susan Thistlethwaite, Former CTS President & current Professor of Theology

Guest: Manal Omar, Associate Vice-President for the Center for the Middle East and Africa at the United States Institute of Peace, who was named as one of the 500 most influential Muslims in the world.

EPISODE 3: Host: Rabbi Dr. Rachel Mikva, CTS Rabbi Herman E. Schaalman Associate Professor of Jewish Studies & Director of the Center for Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Studies

Guests: Susannah Heschel, Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies & Chair of the Jewish Studies Program at Dartmouth College, Yavilah McCoy, teacher, writer, diversity consultant, and gifted performer, & Fawzia Mirza, film and television actress, writer, producer, and comedian.

**EPISODE 4:** Host: Carolyn Roncolato, Interfaith Youth Core Campus **Engagement Manager** 

Guests: Jerusha Lamptey, Assistant Professor of Islam and Ministry & Director of the Islam, Social Justice, and Interreligious Engagement Program at Union Theological Seminary, Monica Coleman, Professor of Constructive Theology and African American Religions at Claremont School of Theology.

**EPISODE 5:** Host: Najeeba Syeed, Associate Professor of Interreligious Education & the founder and Director of the Center for Global Peacebuilding at Claremont Graduate University

Guests: Kathleen Moore, Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California-Santa Barbara, & Jane Iwamura, Associate Professor and Chair of Religious Studies at the University of the West.



### OF TODAY Tyler Tully, MDiv 2016

hen folks think of "seminary," many images may come to mind. Perhaps one imagines a cloister of robed monks or an outdated religious institution from a bygone era. Given the extinction of so many seminaries over the last past decade, some might wonder whether the need for such an institution has already passed.

However, not all seminaries are the same. Some lead by rising to the occasion, while others are frozen in the past. CTS has long been an historical institution of firsts. whether in our pioneering work for integrating field study into seminarian training or in being the first Christian seminary to endow a chair in Jewish Studies. "Firsts" never happen in a vacuum. Rather, they are always already born out from their own necessary contexts. It is appropriate, then, that our annual magazine is titled Challenge & Response, for it assumes that while God is still speaking now, we must listen and respond as a community.

array of activists, community organizers, ministers, poets, and agents of change working toward manifesting justice and mercy. In this way, RIOTcon cultivates intersectional cross-pollinations for architects of action beyond the halls of academia.

ganizers, ministers, artists, poets, and agents of change working toward manifesting justice and mercy. In this way, RIOTcon cultivates intersectional cross-pollinations for architects of action beyond the halls of academia. As CTS expands and engages this larger community of which we are a part, conference participants begin to better understand the spiritual and moral questions developed within our seminary that are so intimately connected to our deepest spiritual realities.

Civil rights activist, author, and renowned legal scholar Michelle Alexander was one of the first keynote speakers for RIOTcon. During a recent interview, Alexander elucidated the reasons why she decided to leave her law professorship to train future seminarians. She writes, "At its core, America's journey from slavery to Jim Crow to mass incarceration raises profound moral and spiritual questions about who we are, individually and collectively, who we aim to become, and what we are willing to do now. I have found that these questions are generally not asked or answered in law schools or policy roundtables." As anyone can see from the list of participants at each year's RIOTcon, those working toward legal and political change are often counted in the

**ISSUES** 

Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, leading author on racial justice

Today, the pressures of history provide peril and possibility for those who would rise to the occasion. News of closures from our nation's oldest established seminaries are much too common and too close for comfort. In such a time as this, institutions of faith face a crisis of identity. Yet in the midst of such pressures, CTS has responded, for we know who we are and what is at stake. In an era of seminary extinction, CTS is bucking the trend. We are investing in and creating a space beyond the ends of our own noses. We are hiring agents of change rather than laying them off. We are building up rather than closing down.

Since 2015, RIOTcon has been a part of our response to God's calling in the world. Rather than an academically insulated conference concerned mostly with itself, RIOTcon brings together a diverse array of activists, community or-

ranks. It is not that such avenues are less meaningful, contends Alexander. In fact, they must continue to be pursued. "But I also know there is something much greater at

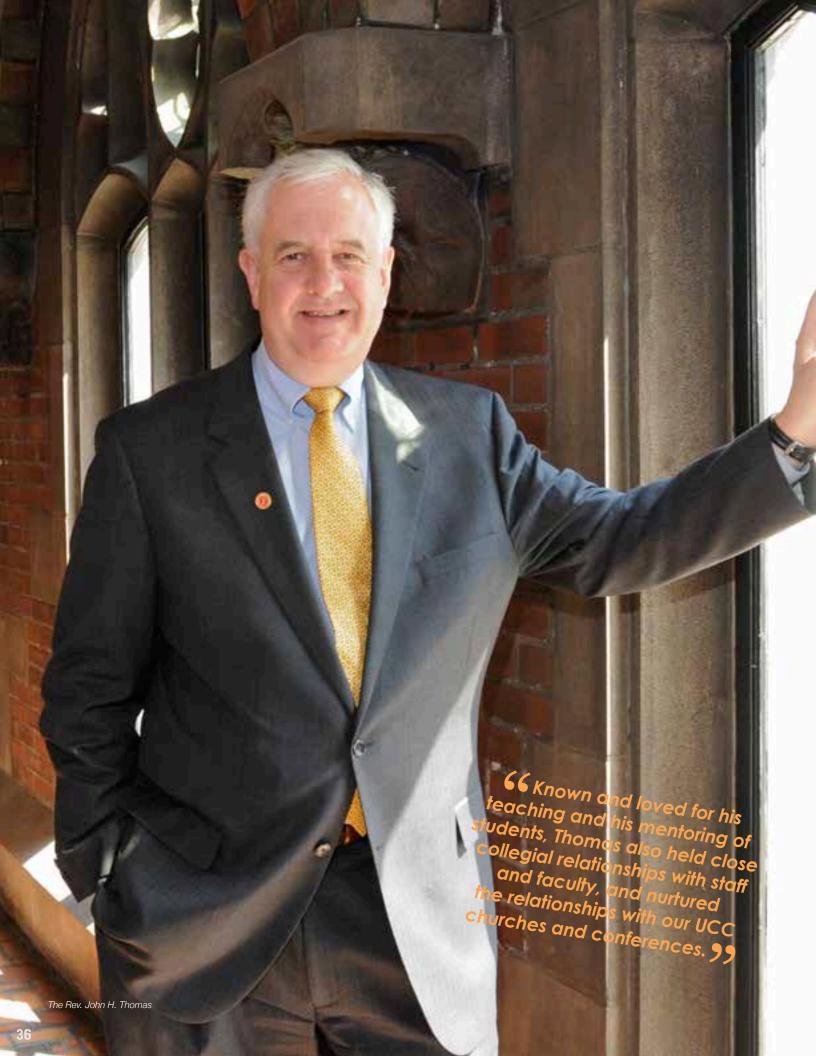
stake in justice work than we often acknowledge . . .... Without a moral or spiritual awakening, we will remain forever trapped in political games fueled by fear, greed and the hunger for power."

More than ever, we need seminarians who are trained as *whole* people at seminary, where one's personal experiences and lived realities meet the rich reservoir of the Church's spiritual and prophetic tradition. We

need communities of faith that stimulate real talk and real action. While some want to build walls, we need seminarians who grow

oots.

Save the date for RIOTcon 2018: *Climates of Change* scheduled for April 20-21, 2018 at CTS.





### THE MAN RETIRES, HIS SPIRIT DOES NOT

Susan Cusick, Staff

n August, Rev. John Thomas, former General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ, retired from his position of Visiting Professor of Church Ministries and Senior Advisor to the President at Chicago Theological Seminary. On September 27, the CTS community celebrated Thomas' service to the mission of CTS, his service to the wider world, and to express our gratitude that he is part of the CTS family.

CTS used the opportunity of Thomas' retirement to continue his support of CTS students and theological education by distributing the *Reverend John H. Thomas Leadership Fund* to general student scholarship.

It is our pleasure to announce that three students have been selected to receive a onetime scholarship in the name of Rev. John H. Thomas.

# Diane Weible (DMin), MariBeth Welch (MDiv) and Ember Kelley (MDiv)

Remaining funds support the CTS general scholarship fund, available to all incoming students.

Thomas joined CTS in 2009 and his presence has added much to our work. Known and loved for his teaching and his mentoring of students, Thomas also held close collegial relationships with staff and faculty, and nurtured the relationships with our UCC churches and conferences. The perspective he brought to the institution is missed. CTS is grateful for his service, and shares the good news that Thomas will continue to teach classes at CTS\* and plans to stay in Chicago.

\*Leading Congregations, Online, Fall 2017

\*History & Polity of the UCC, Online, Spring 2018, Face-to-Face, J-Term 2018

# 

e're supposed to present our current research at these Convocation addresses. Since I'm still writing the same Dangerous Religious Ideas book I discussed after my last sabbatical, I'm going to focus on some of the articles I've been writing on interreligious studies. This work relates to our living laboratory of ECOmmunity—our cohort of students working at the intersections of interreligious engagement, theological education, social justice and sustainability.

"Live and learn." The idiom suggests that if you pay attention, you'll be able to avoid previous mistakes, but I've repeated my share. Having been involved in interreligious teaching and activism for many years now, I can't think of one endeavor that completely avoided the trouble spots. Instead, we learn to notice them, name them, work at them-and try to turn the deficits into assets through our shared struggle. Although we can often point to missteps, most of the problems emerge from the context of interreligious work itself. Like all the most compelling challenges, they're intractable—but that doesn't mean that they're hopeless.

The rabbis of Late Antiquity used a particular formula to introduce stories of events that spoke to the issue before them: מעשה שה'ה, it once happened. I suspect that the warp and woof of memory sometimes reshaped details for pedagogic purposes, but the tales became part of the fabric of learning. The story was generally a simple one, plainly told, while its unpacking revealed a complex of interrelated issues, none with a simple answer.

#### **Christian Privilege**

Thus "it once happened" that I was invited to participate in a multifaith academic consortium on Just Peace. Hosted by a United Methodist theological school, they gathered Muslim, Christian and Jewish scholars to talk together about the textual and theological roots of Just Peace practices, as well as real-world implications. Dr. Susan Thistlethwaite was on the planning committee, and noted that the first draft of the schedule began with a cocktail reception. No, she politely insisted, we can't do that. Some of the Muslim participants cannot be present if alcohol is served.

It simply seemed "normal" to the organiz-

ers to begin that way, and struck some as gauche not to offer spirits in a social setting. The cultural assumptions that informed the norm, they realized, were most closely tied to the Christian cohort. While it was fairly simple to excise the alcohol in this case, it flagged other issues of Christian privilege. Like so many interreligious efforts in North America today (including ours), the hosting organization was Christian. What symbols and structures does that impose and, more importantly, what power does that convey? It impacts who controls the agenda, who gets funding from foundations, who is best

represented and whose opinion carries weiaht. Christian voicfrequently dominate interreligious space, explained their religions to each Christian questions shape comparative religious discourse, Christian representation have grown only experience still stands at the "center."

The Just Peace paradigm and the just war theory to which it poses a contrary vision, for example, had been developed by Christian scholars, with a Christian theological framework, speaking within the context of western culture. Similarly, the "theology of religions" that stands as the foundation for much interreligious discourse still revolves around a three-fold pluralist-inclusivist-exclusivist model that flows from Christian questions about salvation. Subsequent revisions don't yet account for lifestances that have different questions, or that have no need to create a theological explanation for religious others.

Closer to home: What do our secular humanists do with the curriculum's focus on sacred texts... or theonormativity? How does pastoral care (note the language) change in a Zen Buddhist context? What does a Jew do here, when recognized religious leadership in the Jewish community has been associated with training in a rabbinic academy for over a millennium? From the institutional calendar to rhythms of worship to curricular standards and cultural assumptions, Christian privilege abides.

It used to be that faiths were judged to have value to the extent that they parallel the Christian "norm." That's no longer the case, but there is still a tendency to focus on traditions that are theistic, scriptural, global; communities that have recognizable hierarchies, clergy, and organizational structures. Old Anti-Jewish tropes still sneak into discussion of universalism and particularism, law and grace, spirit and letter. Feminist theology's assault on perceived gender discrimination in Islam revives Orientalist ste-

66'Interfaith work' in the United

States was generally populated

by white male clergy who

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reotypes and inadvertently plays into the promotion of western hegemony. There is suppleness to social power.

Much work is other. While the problems of this being work to address these biases. But there are no neutral spaces in which interreligious

conversation and study can occur, because the broader context still systematically advantages Christians. Go on the "metrosexual" website and check out its signs of religious privilege – seeing people of your own tradition in leadership, television and other visible roles; not having everything you do viewed through the lens of religious identity; not encountering discrimination in employment, social settings, adoption, media or housing on account of your faith. Sound familiar? InterFaith is Harder Than it Looks.

#### **Politics of Representation**

When I first arrived at the conference, I conducted the customary scan of the room to see who was there. What lifestances are represented, with what sort of balance? What sort of intra-religious diversity is there in terms of denominations? How about gender and sexuality? How about race, ethnicity or nationality?

For a time, "interfaith work" in the United States was generally populated by white male clergy who explained their religions to each other. While the problems of this model are clear, the politics of representation have grown only more complicated.

# GARDERTHAN

# Convocation Address given by Rabbi Dr. Rachel S. Mikva on October 14, 2016

The common focus on Judaism, Christianity and Islam isn't adequate to address the burgeoning religious diversity of Americaincluding not only Eastern traditions, but also new religious movements, historically marginalized religious and ethnic communities (e.g., Dalit, Yazidi, Romani), and small indigenous cultures that are still overlooked. Plus: Secular humanism has recently begun to be recognized as part of the conversation, but we still linguistically account for secular lifestances by what they are not (i.e. non-religious), and they still have to fight for inclusion, for campus funding, for moral authority. Also, with a growing number of individuals who identify as spiritual but not religious or as interspiritual (alternatively, "multiple religious belonging"), it's misleading to presume that everyone comes to the interreligious table attached to a single, defined faith community.

The politics of representation also force us to ask: Who determines the boundaries of a religious community, and who has a voice? Should Roman Catholic Womenpriests be counted as Catholics even though they've been excommunicated? Why don't the Israelite movements get explored in discussions of Jewish diversity? Which form(s) of Yoruba tradition are described as authentic expressions? It's attractive to imagine that these queries can be readily resolved in inclusive fashion, favoring people's self-definition, but boundaries are not designed merely to exclude; they help to define and support.

Power dynamics here can be complex. For example: Academic culture privileges historical critical study of sacred texts, but there aren't very many Muslim scholars who view Qur'an through this lens. If the perspectives of the few who do are favored in interreligious scholarship, some will raise concerns of the "native informant"—ostensibly marginalized individuals drawn to support marginalizing ideologies because of cultural oppression. Yet others will object

to that epithet, saying it denigrates Muslim scholars who dare to articulate internally unpopular opinions. Who gets to say what is in the group's "interest?"

Interreligious Studies has itself developed a dominant culture, in which progressive outlooks may exclude some voices. While religious conservatives were originally reluctant to become involved in interfaith, that's changing. But it's not easy. "Active seeking of understanding across lines of religious difference" doesn't necessarily require theological pluralism that affirms the value and sufficiency of diverse faiths. But we often expect it in US interfaith work, presented as the objective standard rather than a subjective voice in a co-formative public discourse.

Intersectionality

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of intersectionality. Race, class, gender, sexual orientation, politics and religious lifestance—our diversity of identities press upon each other. Religions have particular teachings about gender and sexuality, religious communities have particular histories regarding race, etc. We try to resist the Oppression Olympics here, and focus instead on individuals' unique intersectional experiences.

I'll soon be recording a podcast with a queer Muslim woman and a Jew of color—

be because we recognize the importance

each grappling with having been rendered invisible by many who speak for their faith communities, before they can even get to the interfaith part. I have an African-American Christian friend who talks about how she feels her race more keenly than her religion in interfaith projects. Working to prevent violence against women, she constantly has to explain to white colleagues the particular social history of black women's bodies in America (how category of "woman" changes when you are black). After that, maybe the particular social history of the black church in America. Then she has to remind them that not all

> Rabbi Dr. Rachel S. Mikva delivering her Convocation Add<mark>ress</mark>

African-Americans are Christian. Then... (you get the idea). *Inter-Faith is Harder Than It Looks.* 

#### The World Weighs Heavy

One of the conference participants protested that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict took up too much "space" in the discussion, as it always does in peace-oriented projects among Jews, Christians and Muslims. Given the number of conflicts around the world that involve or address religion, and the number of people impacted, he felt there should be more balanced attention.

It's happening again as working with the Movement for Black Lives just got more complicated for many white Jews and Jews of color, after the platform was published with a plank condemning Israel – and the rest of the platform hardly got reported. That's just the tip of the iceberg as the world impinges upon the work of interreligious studies and engagement. Current events such as the continuing scourge of Islamophobia or the rise of ISIS occupy the space of interreligious encounter even if they are not on the agenda or the syllabus. Current movements such as women's empowerment, LGBTQ equality and post-colonial critique raise particular

kinds of questions. Events need not be ripped from the headlines to have an impact. As Faulkner wrote, the past is never dead; it's not even past.

In community engagement efforts, hot-button issues often become the proverbial "elephant in the room." If the group declines to discuss them, some will claim the encounter is inauthentic and others will stay away; they can't agree to bracket a matter so urgent, or can't sit down with people who do not stand with them. When groups do decide to address issues they have trouble avoiding, it often consumes all the air in the room. The individuals involved may not have adequate information or time to deal with the complexities. Leaders may not be adept in facilitating difficult conversations. If there's no "container" for the problem, it can derail the project

and undermine the building of relationship or trust. Often, participants walk smack into the elephant without meaning to.

Accountability

Last (although the list could be far longer), I want to talk about Accountability. For an opening ritual of the Just Peace conference, three people were asked to present an object of religious significance. A Christian presenter discussed a jar of soil from a sacred spot. A Jewish presenter explicated the intricate symbolism wrapped into the tzitzit (fringes) of the prayer shawl. A Muslim presenter arose to explain that Muslims can't equate any object with Allah, that it was shirk—a particularly serious violation of Islamic theological commitments. I remember thinking that it might be a brilliant cover for forgetting his assignment and thus having no object in hand, but it also implicated the other presenters. Had he just suggested, by accident of course, that their words bordered on idolatry? He could have brought prayer beads, a picture of the kab'ah stone or any number of other objects with religious meaning—since no one had suggested they stood in for the Divine.

Our religious stories implicate each other. Sacred texts often portray religious others, not always in the best light, and there's a temptation to discuss our own tradition in its ideal form while in "mixed" company even if others admit the lived messiness of their own communities. Power intervenes again here; it is easier for privileged religious voices to admit the ugly stuff.

Every detail we elect to share suggests something about what other religions are or are not. Comparison is a continuous activity, explicit and implicit, conscious and subconscious, shaping the way we think about our own lifestance as well as that of others. What does it mean to be accountable in the co-formative space of interreligious encounter?

Francis Clooney, a Jesuit theologian, emphasizes learning from, not only about. He notes how the Hindu Divine name of Narayana enriches his own articulation of God's manifest qualities, how Hindu goddess worship helps him understand what it means to en-gender God (either way), how he now hears the passion of the hymns to Mary in a whole new way.

Interreligious studies must also examine, however, why we emphasize certain parts of other people's traditions, why we understand them as we do, and how they compare to the self-understanding of individuals who stand inside the community.

The challenge of accountability means that we must resist meeting religious difference for the sole purpose of deepening our own spiritual capacities. Problems of erasure were deeply embedded

in early exploration of Jesus as a Jew, for example; although it had the potential to counter centuries of anti-Jewish teaching and kindle learning about Jews and Judaism, many scholars and lay-people were primarily interested in what it could reveal of Christian origins. Judaism was an "object," while accountability requires an intersubjective lens for learning.

It also requires that we resist essentializing. Despite the experience and sophistication of the scholars at the Just Peace conference, we resorted hundreds of times to expressions such as "Judaism says..., Christianity teaches..., Islam believes..."—as if these multivocal, robust traditions were singular, static entities for which we could speak with complete authority. But how do you say anything about

anything without essentializing? – Without downplaying intragroup diversity, or ignoring the ways in which lived tradition is not fully represented in texts and formal religious teachings?

Accountability also raises new questions about appropriation and ownership. Krister Stendahl spoke of "holy envy," acknowledging a profound appreciation for other traditions without attempting to adapt or adopt them. His caution against appropriation remains fundamentally important. Yet the history of mutual influence is evident in the ongoing co-formation of traditions, and interspiritual movements also challenge our easy assumptions about "borrowing", insisting that we recognize the struggle of those who don't fit into tidy categories, or can't be "admitted" to the community of their spiritual longing.

We can develop strategies for these challenges. That's part of what we do here, and we continue to learn from experience. The Just Peace conference was not an example of failed engagement. We shared learning of substance, raised critical issues for reflection, and established relationships based on our common commitments. It's harder than it looks... but impossible if we don't try. In this spirit, I'll close with the refrain from Leonard Cohen's "Anthem."

Ring the bells that still can ring - Forget your perfect offering There is a crack in everything - That's how the light gets in.



Join us for Chicago Theological Seminary's Annual Commencement Week Celebrations. Join us for Cnicago ineological Seminary's Annual Commencement Week Celebrations.

Graduates and their families, friends, and alumni/ae are invited to join the CTS community

Graduates and their families, friends, and alumni/ae are invited to join the Commencement Ceremony:

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s and Their Tamilies, Trienas, and alumnitae are invited to Join The CID CC at the following events leading up to Friday's Commencement Ceremony:

GRADUATE CHAPEL & COMMUNITY LUNCH



Join us for community worship and celebration of our 2017 Leaders for the Next. Family and of our 2017 Leavers for the Next, Family and friends welcome! This service is available via LIVE enus welcome: mile service is available via LIV STREAM on CTS YouTube CTSChicagoHD.

ALUMNI/AE LUNCHEON



Graduates, their families, and members of the CTS community are invited to celebrate the achievements of the graduates and the recipients ements of the graduates and the rec of the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Spring Fest is our annual end of the academic-year family celebration. Food, music, dancing, karaoke, and a children's play area. Bring your family and celebrate with your CTS Community.

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS



The 2017 CTS Commencement will be held at Trinity United Church of Christ. The ceremony will introduce a new generation of t. The ceremony will introduce a new yelleration of the ceremony will introduce a new yelleration of the conditions and leaders for dynamic religious scholars, activists and leaders for dynamic religious scholars, activists and all are dynamic religious scholars. religious scriviais, activists and libacists of the next. The ceremony is free and all are



Dr. Reza Aslan will deliver the address to the graduating class. Aslan, or. Heza Asian will deliver the address to the graduating class, Asian, a CTS Trustee, is an internationally renowned writer, commentator, a CTS Trustee, is an internationally renowned. a UTS Trustee, is an internationally renowned writer, commentator, including his professor, producer, and scholar of religions. His books, including his professor, producer, and scholar of religions. The Life and Times of Legic Ht New York Times Restealler Taglot: The Life and Times of Legic professor, producer, and scholar of religions. His books, including his #1 New York Times Bestseller, Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus #1 New York Times Bestseller, Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus

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For more information, please contact Chad Schwickerath, onnacon, picase contact Onau schwickeram, Manager, Annual Fund & Alumni Relations, at ו, אוווטמון טווט פי אוטווווון וופומוטיוס, מנ chad.schwickerath@ctschicago.edu



good idea; it was a God idea."

However, Moon became concerned by what he felt was a dangerous "us vs. them" dynamic embedded in his work. "I loved the people I was with. We were working on important things, but I became worried that the way in which we were talking about folks on the other side of the issues was problematic," Moon says. "So I thought to myself, who are the people, in my estimation, who would be strangers or enemies, in a gospel sense?"

For Moon—the self-described nice, Quaker, pacifist kid who shook his fist at Empire—the answer became clear: "The folks whom I really know the least are people who are serving in the military."

The decision to become a military chaplain was not an easy one, considering the history and perception of their role in war. "Military chaplaincy became notorious for the political left during the Vietnam War when some high-profile anecdotes emerged about chaplains using their religious authority to sacramentalize military function—blessing bombs, blessing guns-the image of which even now makes me deeply unsettled. The his-

> torical legacy of such stories' impact within mainline and progressive religious communities was marked by our reacting in judgment and withdrawing from these ministries with the military."

> > Moon was determined to straddle the somewhat ineffable realm between his deeply held commitments and the needs of those to whom he felt called to minister. "Doing chaplaincy work is all about working in a pluralistic environment, providing care and support, inhabiting public spaces with people who believe very

gathered there.

The direct action, which was spearheaded by Wesley Clark Jr. - a military veteran and the son of Wesley Clark Sr., formerly NATO's Supreme Allied Commander-attempted to leverage the national myth around military service for a specific reason-namely, to generate broad ideological interest in the plight of Standing Rock.

"Indigenous communities for hundreds of years have been marginalized, brutalized, raped, robbed, murdered, and displaced, and the majority of America has more or less been able to rationalize and normalize that,"

Moon explains. "I think trying to get a majority of Americans to look at military veterans being on the receiving end of the kind of brutality seen at Standing Rock, potentially having hoses turned on them in freezing conditions, would have been jarring to our national hero myths."

His experience as a military chaplain complexified his understanding of confrontation taking place at Standing Rock. "I was particularly mindful of the fact that the coalition of security forces defending the drill site were a mixture of the National Guard, who are current military, the local sheriff's department, probably most of whom were military veterans, and private security, the majority of whom are probably military veterans. So what does it mean for military bodies to be pitted against each other? What kind of moral crisis could be generated as

As a chaplain, Moon believed that his role was to inhabit this un-negotiated space between the water protectors and the security forces who sought their removal. "We weren't there to be protestors or water protectors," he said of the unofficial chaplaincy corps that formed at Standing Rock. "We were there to be chaplains. We wanted to inhabit a space between the sides that had be-



OFILE

Jess Peacock, PhD Student

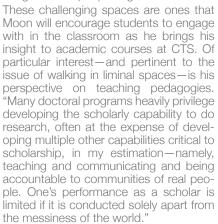
come polarized and antagonistic toward each other. The hope is that by putting our bodies in this fractured space, folks on both sides could someday reenter into a healthy relationship with one another."

During the weekend when Moon and thousands of other veterans gathered at Standing Rock, the Army Corps of Engineers denied the required permit for continued pipeline construction. "There was a pivot moment in terms of the negotiations. The easement had been denied, and, at the very least, further drilling has been substantially delayed," he explains. The denial "was sudden and unexpected for most people."

Although considered a victory, the move created its own share of challenges for Moon and the thirty other chaplains at the site. "Thousands of veterans had come prepared to get hurt, and there were a lot of folks who had a hard time shifting gears," he says. "It was our job as chaplains to come alongside those people who might be having a hard time, those who were expecting to engage in a certain way."

In the end, the direct action by military veterans at Standing Rock offered a number of challenges and opportunities for Moon. "I've rarely been in a space where all generations and all branches of the armed services and political ideologies of

military veterans were in the same space together. There are very few things that bring all those people together."



Moving forward, Moon will be introducing several new courses to CTS' students.

"There is so much trauma literature out there that it makes it pertinent to think about how we do theology," he explains of his "Trauma and Theology" class. "How do we read the interdisciplinary canon of trauma literature from a theological perspective?"

Moon will also bring his unique experience as a scholar and military chaplain to the classroom with "Pastoral Care with Veterans and Military Families," a course "to equip folks to interface with military personnel and their families. This will be a framework to think about how to engage in those relational encounters that are beneficial to all involved." Having written Coming Home: Ministry That Matters with Veterans and Military Families (Chalice Press, 2015), Dr. Moon has invested considerable time and research into how faith communities can be "receptive and restorative" in engaging with military members and their families.

Rev. Dr. Moon is not afraid to ask and explore difficult questions about engaging the other and existing in unsettled spaces.

"People have hard questions," he says, "but when we're asking those questions with sincerity and generosity, those hard questions are generative. To me, that is animating and energizing. If it were easy for these worlds to speak to each other, I could have a different job."

### CTS OFFERS CERTIFICATE IN CHAPLAINCY

Today, ministry is being engaged in public spaces far beyond the walls of churches. Chaplains are rooted and accountable to their religious tradition, but they serve people and communities who may have different religious backgrounds or have no religious affiliation. Various contexts, including hospital, military, prison, campus, and hospice, need highly trained chaplains who can faithfully serve the spiritual needs of all of God's children. Chicago Theological Seminary's unique course offerings, faculty expertise, and inter-religious engagement support students' vocational discernment and equip them for professional success.

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me."

Matthew 25: 35-36--

# COURSES

- Introduction to Chaplaincy Studies (required)
- Trauma and Theology
- Short-Term Pastoral Counseling Strategies
- Ministries with Veterans and Military Families
- Moral Injury and Recovery
- Exploring the American Muslim Experience
- Loss and Healing in the Bible and in Rabbinic Literature



# In Memoriam

**REV. GEORGE MILLS HOUSER** (coursework, 1942) died August 19, 2015. Rev. Houser was a pacifist and civil-rights activist who advocated for racial equality and justice. As a white Methodist minister, he helped organize the interracial bus trips across the segregated South in 1947 that later became known as the Freedom Rides.

REV. DR. VERSIA STARR MCKINNEY (MDiv 2000) died December 23, 2015.

**REV. MARIA DANCING HEART HOAGLUND** (MDiv 1984) died April 22, 2016. The author of two publications, Rev. Dancing Heart Hoaglund provided resources and counseling in death and dying.

**REV. SUZANNE "SAM" KOUNS** (MDiv 1988) died May 27, 2016. Serving as minister and interim minster in Illinois, Rev. Kouns had a passion for music and singing in her churches' choirs and playing handbells for over 40 years.

**REV. MORAY LORING KIEHL** (MA 1943) died September 2, 2016. With a passion for the church and social justice, Rev. Kiehl was instrumental in the formation of Christian education and child-development programs in the congregations she served.

**REV. DR. RICHARD GREENWOOD** (BD 1969, Doctor of Religion 1970) died September 17, 2016. Rev. Dr. Greenwood served UCC congregations in Grand Rapids, St. Joseph, and Lowell, Michigan.

**REV. GARY HICKOK** (BD 1963) died August 6, 2016. Rev. Hickok was known for his gifts in storytelling, the ways he encouraged others, and his selflessness.

**REV. MARGARET BURKEY** (MA 1951) died September 1, 2016. Rev. Burkey was a leader in the Presbyterian Church at a time when relatively few women held leadership roles. She organized youth groups and served as a Synod of the Living Waters representative to the Presbyterian Self-Development of People Committee, traveling to several countries to oversee clean water and improvement projects.

**NICHOLAS ALLEN PAGE** (MDiv 1972) died February 5, 2016. Page was a professional jazz musician, playing both saxophone and clarinet.

**REV. DR. IVER YEAGER** (MA 1948) died July 21, 2016. Rev. Dr. Yeager served as Dean of the College and Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Illinois College in Jacksonville, IL from 1958 until 1970. From then until his retirement in 1988, Rev. Dr. Yeager devoted himself fully to his faculty position at Illinois College.

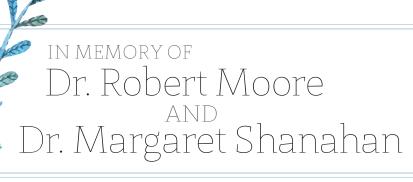
RT. REV. JAMES CRUICKSHANK (Doctor of Religion 1970) died December 30, 2015. Cruickshank was ordained

as a priest in 1963 in the Diocese of Cariboo. He was elected as the 7th Bishop of Cariboo in 1992. Throughout his career and well into his retirement, Cruickshank taught pastoral theology at Vancouver School of Theology.

**REV. DR. PEGGY ANN WAY** (BD 1959) died July 9, 2016. Receiving a PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary, Way's areas of expertise included pastoral theology and counseling, personality theory, family dynamics and pastoral practice, human sexuality, multicultural counseling, feminist theology, group counseling dynamics, ethics in counseling, and gender studies. Way served as a tenured professor at Vanderbilt Divinity School and Eden Theological Seminary.

REV. PROF. BONGANJALO C. GOBA (PhD 1979) died September 22, 2016. Prof. Goba was an ordained minister of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA). As a highly respected liberation theologian, he served several churches in South Africa and the U.S. and served as the Area Executive of the Africa Office for the Division of Overseas Ministries. Prof. Goba was a signatory of the "Kairos Document," a theological statement that not only declared apartheid a heresy but further provided a convincing theological argument against it. Prof. Goba also served twice as vice-chancellor at Durban University of Technology. As the UCCSA Chairperson, Prof. Goba led the church in a prophetic, pastorally caring, and professional manner through challenging periods of history. Prof. Goba served as Dean of Faculty of Theology (UDW) and lectured in theology and ethics at Lancaster Theological Seminary and Chicago University. Prof. Goba dedicated his life to uplifting others and creating a society that exhibits justice and mercy for all.

JOSEPHINE "JO" MEANS (Life Trustee) died September 2, 2016. Jo and her husband, Ken, were active and generous supporters of CTS and the United Church of Christ. They were both members of First Congregational Church of Western Springs. Jo's commitment to her community knew no bounds. Jo served as moderator, Women's Society President, Sunday School teacher, and a member of the Bell Choir at First Congregational Church of Western Spring. Outside of the congregation, Jo served on the Boards of the Western Springs Historical Society and the Community Family Service and Mental Health Center. Jo's exemplary commitment to her community led to her receiving an Outstanding Citizen award from the American Association of University Women. Jo and her husband also served as co-chairs of the Western Springs Bicentennial Commission. Jo's life was an example of how one shares interests and values with a community. Jo was not just a member of the Western Springs and CTS communities; she was a pillar of strength.





Rev. Dr. Robert Moore and Dr. Margaret Shanahan died June 18, 2016. Moore served as faculty at Chicago Theological Seminary from 1977 until his retirement in 2013. As Professor of Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Spirituality, Moore was a leader in the field of psychology and religion. In the academy, Moore is most celebrated for his contributions to Structural Analysis and Men's Movement, specifically identifying masculine archetypes of Warrior, Magician, Lover, and King. To students, Moore was more than a brilliant professor. His pedagogy intersected the roles of professor, counselor, mentor, and friend.

Members of the CTS community gathered in Clark Chapel honoring the memory of Moore and Shanahan, celebrating the beauty of their lives, and holding close the grief and heartache felt in their passing.

# IN MEMORY OF Rev. Dr. Neil Gerdes

On November 6, 2016, CTS lost a dear friend and colleague – The Reverend Dr. Neil Gerdes. Dr. Gerdes dedicated his life to theological education, becoming library director and professor at CTS. In doing so, he helped inspired us all and formed life-long friendships with students, faculty, and staff.

Neil's relationships with students and faculty were profound. His life was full of the type of intellectual curiosity students and faculty hope to emulate. His absence will be felt throughout the seminary, but the impact he left will never be forgotten. Neil was a leader in theological education.

He is survived by four sisters, Eleanor Lohf, Bettendorf, Marlene (Mel Sr.) Saad, Erie, Reta (Bob) Morrissey, Lombard, Ill., Marjorie Wiseley (Steve) Carpenter, Erie; a sister-in-law, Barbara Gerdes, St. Louis, Mo.; 18 nieces and nephews, and many great- and great-great-nieces and -nephews. He was preceded in death by both parents; brother, Keith Gerdes; sister, Eloise Johnson; nephew, John Johnson; and brothers-in-law, Ed Lohf and Terry Wiseley.

Dr. Gerdes' scholarly credentials include degrees from University of Illinois, Harvard University, University of Chicago, and the University of St. Mary of the Lake. He worked as a professor and library director at Chicago Theological Seminary and Meadville Lombard Theological School. Dr. Gerdes was also an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister and was a member of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago and St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church.



# Rabbi Herman Schaalman

Rabbi Herman Schaalman, the oldest living Reform Rabbi and longtime leader in the Reform movement died on February 2, 2017 at 100 years old. He's remembered as a giant

in Chicago's religious community from his work as senior Rabbi at Emanuel Congregation from 1956 to 1988. Schaalman was born in Munich, Germany in 1916. When that country inched closer to a new world war, Schaalman and four other German rabbinic students lives were saved by a scholarship to Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1935. Schaalman came to CTS as an adjunct professor in 1987 and taught classes at the seminary until 2009.

The Schaalman Chair in Jewish Studies was established in 2005 and remains the only chair in Jewish Studies at a freestanding Protestant seminary. Herman Schaalman's legacy will continue to bring scholars of all faiths to CTS furthering CTS' mission and gathering people of different faiths together under one roof.



# DR. RAMI NASHASHIBI JOINS REV. BLACK ON PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL

nother member of the Chicago Theological Seminary community was nationally recognized for religious leadership this past fall, when Visiting Assistant Professor in Sociology of Religion & Muslim Studies, Dr. Rami Nashashibi was appointed by former President Barack Obama to serve on the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Dr. Nashashibi was not the only CTS affiliate on the President's Council, CTS Trustee, Rev. Traci Blackmon had been serving as a member since 2015. Rev. Blackmon is the Executive Minister of Justice and Witness Ministries for the United Church of Christ. She is a well known community leader, preacher, and pastor of Christ The King UCC, in Florissant, MO. When Blackmon was selected for her role in the UCC, General Minister and President, Rev. John Dorhauer called her, "a visionary who sees things before anyone else does... an organizer who empowers others to build

movements she sees as both possible and essential for the work of justice."

Dr. Nashashibi's courses at CTS cover sociology, interreligious engagement, and community organizing. He is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Inner-City Muslim Action Network, a Chicago-based community activism group that operates a community health center and provides transitional housing and job training on the city's southwest side.

As a member of the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Rev. Blackmon and Dr. Nashashibi worked with leaders and experts in their fields to help the Obama Administration make informed decisions about community engagement. The first council was formed in 2010 and went on to help former President Obama's Administration address interreligious cooperation, environmental issues and climate change, and global poverty and development.

"This has been a truly extraordinary opportunity for Traci and Rami," CTS President Alice Hunt said. "At Chicago Theological Seminary, Rami and Traci serve as examples for our students, showing them how their theological education can make them informed community activists. This type of engagement is crucial to our mission, and we were proud and excited that two CTS leaders were invited to have a voice at this level."

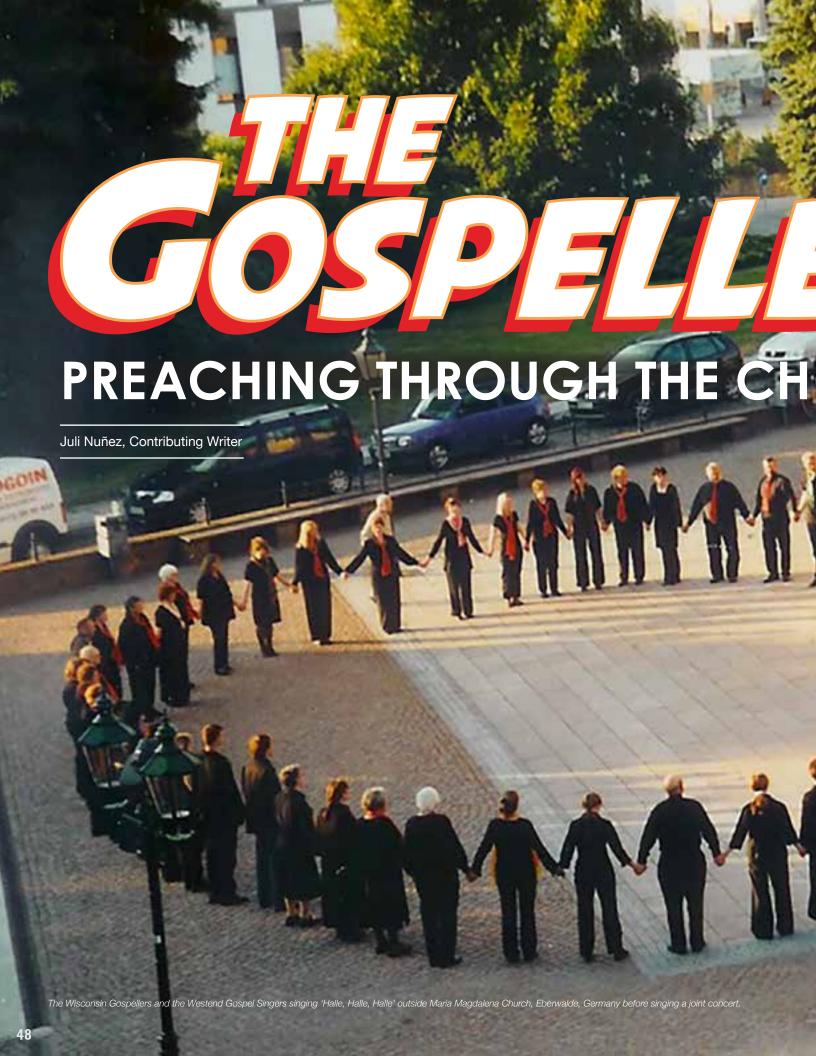
CTS' work has never been confined within the walls of the seminary. Students, faculty, and trustees alike use their extraordinary passion and commitment to shine a light on today's most difficult issues and to promote CTS' commitment to greater justice and mercy. We thank Rev. Blackmon and Dr. Nashashibi for their service and leadership, and for their continued contributions to our CTS community and the wider world.

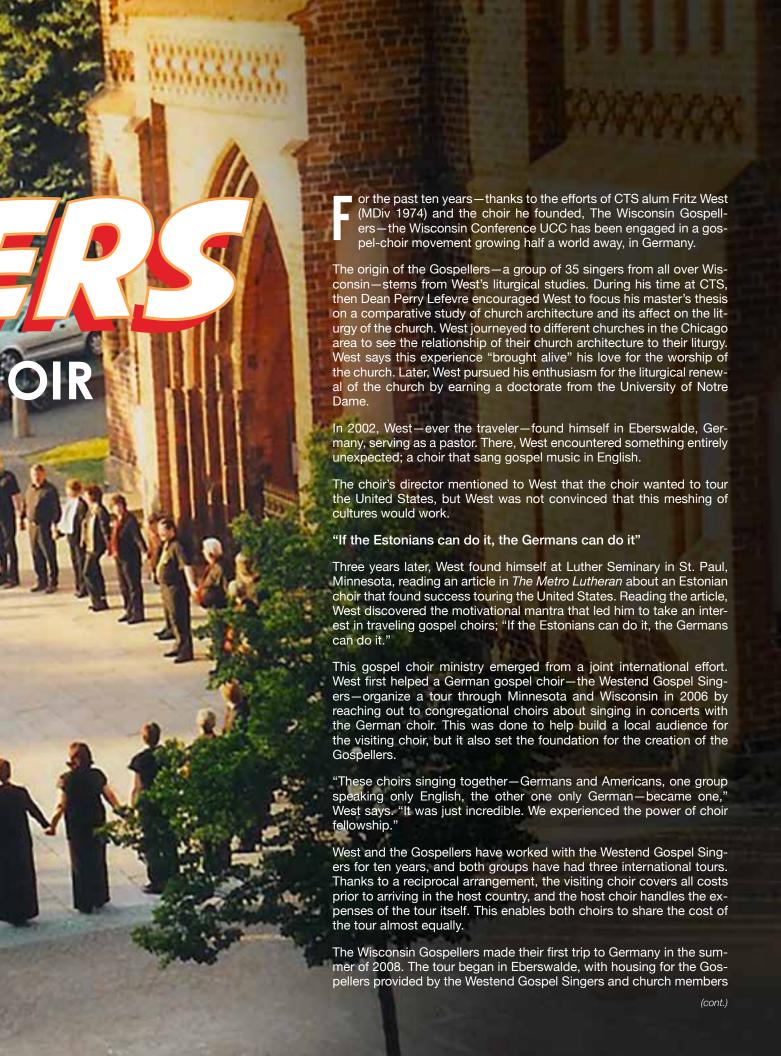
MON

Susan Cusick, Staff

confined within the walls of the seminary. Students, faculty, and passion and commitment to shine a light on today's most difficult issues to greater justice and mercy.







in four locations in Brandenburg, formerly part of East Germany.

"We have often been the first non-family member ever to stay in a home, and certainly the first person from abroad, and certainly the first American," West notes. "The interactions we've had with some of the families," West says, have "been astounding." The Gospellers toured Germany as recently as July 2016.

Over the years, that mutuality has strengthened the sense of community and trust," West says. "We're staying in homes, we're singing in congregations, we're singing in old folks' homes—a great variety."

For West and the Gospellers, gospel music has become a universal language that opens the door to communities that would otherwise have been inaccessible.

"What's interesting is that gospel music itself overcomes boundaries," West observes. "It overcomes boundaries between performer and audience, professional and amateur, choreography and music. The Western idea that written musical notation can capture melody and rhythm is also set aside. Singing gospel music is a kinesthetic, physical, physiological event organized around music. The experience of breaking through these boundaries is incredibly stimulating."

The Wisconsin Gospellers is not just a hobby for West and the choir's singers. The choir also has the support of the UCC. It is rooted in the relationship of

Kirchengemeinschaft (full church communion), which the UCC in the United States and the Union of Evangelical Churches in Germany declared in 1981. For more than thirty years, the Wisconsin Conference UCC has actively participated in this partnership, including through this gospel-choir exchange.

#### A New Church

One particular moment in the history of the relationship between these gospel choirs that stands out to West is a concert in Fürstenwalde, a small city outside of Berlin. The Wisconsin Gospellers were singing with the Westend Gospel Singers and another German gospel choir. West admits that there were low expectations regarding concert attendance on that lovely Sunday afternoon,

but a surprise awaited the three choir groups.

"The church was packed, actually packed," West recalls. "As we started to sing, people were getting up in the pews and clapping and swaving. A gentleman danced in the aisle."

The gospel choir movement and these exchanges are examples of church-in-action. By overcoming language barriers through

song, West and the Wisconsin Gospellers have been able to bring worship and joy to a variety of communities in Germany and beyond. For the singers, these tours provide a powerful cultural encounter, fellowship, friendships, and a new vision of church.

For West, "gospel choirs have informed my ministry by showing that there are forms of church defined by song and deed just as legitimate as those defined by doctrine or ritual or order."

As a student at CTS in 1965, West learned about the necessity of ministerial outreach by making the journey to Selma, Alabama, to participate in the civil-rights marches there, where songs such as "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" and "We Shall Not Be Moved" encouraged marchers' spirits and solidarity.

Today, CTS students continue this tradition of activism and ministry both near and far in various ways, by participating in community and national demonstrations, sharing in song during CTS' weekly Chapel gathering, practic-

ing outreach work through field education, and participating in international service and educational trips.

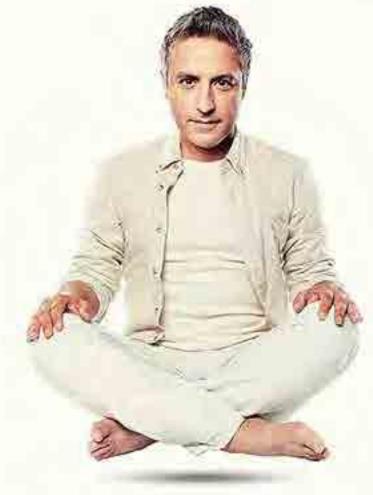
West's commitment to the Gospellers and the group's international relationship is an extension of the commitments taught to CTS students every year. CTS faculty share a deep commitment to helping students realize the extensive potential of their ministry and that ministry is not confined within the walls of churches.

Videos of the Wisconsin Gospellers' latest tour in Germany, along with information about how to support the Gospellers, can be found online at www.wisconsingospellers.org.



George For West and the Gospellers, gospel music has become a universal language that opens the door to communities that would otherwise have been inaccessible. 99





#### Susan Cusick, Staff

ver 250 guests filled the 4th floor chapel at Chicago Theological Seminary on February 20, 2017, when CTS trustee, Reza Aslan, stopped by to tell us about his new spiritual travel series, *Believer with Reza Aslan*.

The seminary, in partnership with CNN Original Series and the CTS special event Host Committee, hosted a special advance screening of the series. The screening was followed by a discussion with Aslan and CTS Assistant Professor of Theological Field Education and New Testament, Rev. Dr. Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder. Aslan also hosted a private on-on-one conversation and screening for CTS students prior to the public events.

Believer with Reza Aslan is a new CNN Original Series that follows the best-selling author and scholar of religions as he immerses himself in customs and faith rituals around the globe. In the six-part spiritual adventures series, Aslan explores Ultra-Orthodox Judaism in Israel, Scientology in the U.S., Hindu asceticism in India, Vodou in Haiti, Santa Muerte in Mexico, and an apocalyptic doomsday cult in Hawaii. The hour-long series, produced by Whalerock Industries with executive producers Aslan, Lloyd Braun, Liz Bronstein and Chris Cowan, debuted on March 5 on CNN.

Chicago Theological Seminary graciously thanks CNN Original Series for their partnership, and our CTS special event Host Committee for their leadership.

#### About Reza Aslan, CTS Trustee

Aslan joined the CTS Board of Trustees in 2014, and serves on the board's Academic and Student Affairs Committee. As a producer for television and film, Aslan's credits include Consulting Producer on HBO's *The Leftovers* and Executive Producer (and Host) of

a wonderful, unique talk show series that ran on Ovation earlier this year. Titled *Rough Draft*, it featured in-depth interviews with premiere writers and show creators, including Norman Lear, Jill Soloway (*Transparent, Six Feet Under*), Mike White (*Enlightened, Chuck and Buck*), Damon Lindelof (*Lost*), Tim Kring (*Heroes*) and Gideon Raff (*Homeland*). He also has a pilot in development at ABC.

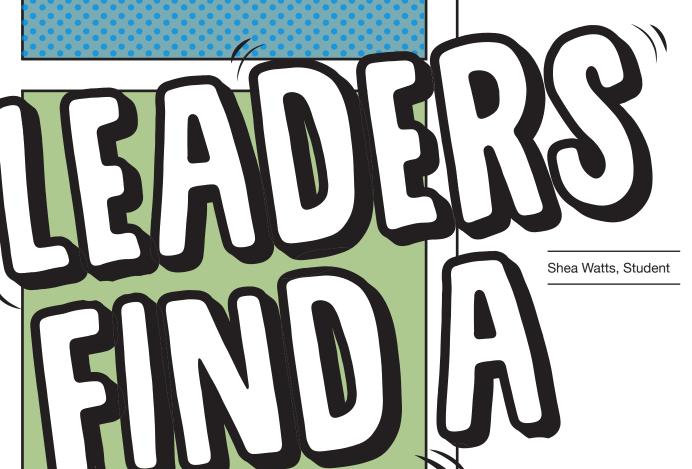
Aslan heads a media company called Boomgen, which he cofounded in 2006. Boomgen provides an array of targeted services ranging from strategic messaging to grassroots marketing to publicity and social media outreach to producers, studios, and filmmakers for creative content from and about the Middle East. Projects have included Jon Stewart's Rosewater, Netflix's The Square, Disney's Aladdin on Broadway and Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time, The Weinstein Company's Miral, Discovery and TLC's All American Muslim, and National Geographic's Amreeka.

### CTS extends our gratitude and deepest thanks to our CTS special event Host Committee:

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STUDENTS COMBAT INJUSTICE THROUGH

BLOGGING

f the vitriolic rhetoric of the 2016 presidential election has taught American people of faith one thing: it is the dangers of bifurcating faith and politics and seeking to differentiate between public and private theology. Fortunately, Chicago Theological Seminary prepares *Leaders for the Next* who stand up and speak out for justice and mercy, in the pulpit and streets alike. *Leaders for the Next* realize that there is no separation between faith and politics, because all theology is public theology. The spiritual and the social, like faith and politics, are inseparably intertwined.

In the Jewish imagination, there is an idea, tikkun olam, in which humanity partners with God in bringing about the healing and repairing of the world. This work of reparative justice and healing has been the focus and aim of the class, Public Theology — a class that underscores the ways in which theology influences and affects the public and vice versa. Like the prophets and ancestors of the Abrahamic faith traditions, it is imperative that religious leaders speak truth to systems of power — systems that oppress, marginalize, persecute, murder, steal, cheat, and get away with it.

The students in Public Theology are challenged, weekly, to consider an issue and compose a blog that: 1) addresses an issue in a relevant context 2) speaks truth and justice into the issue 3) looks for ways in which God is at work. The challenge is great, but the students have shown their compassion and commitment to God's justice in the world. *Tikkun olam.* 



Below are excerpts from some of the exceptional work produced by Public Theology students:

In her blog, "God is a Young Black Women who Hasn't Shown Credentials," Bethany Joy Winn writes: "The image of God is always a subversion of human expectations, so those who look like they belong in power probably don't. When the world says that a doctor looks like an older white man, then the young Black female doctor is God among us. When the world tells us that cisgender, heterosexual, older white men are somehow more godly, then they are who ought to be considered more skeptically. Not that God cannot or does not manifest in bodies of privilege, it's just more likely that God will work to show up elsewhere first." (Follow Bethany at banishingursula. wordpress.com)

Jessica Townsley, in her blog, "God's Bully? Trump and the Christian Right," writes: "Jesus chose women to follow him (Luke 8:1-3) and as the first to witness his resurrection. (John 20:10-18) The Christian Right pretends that bullying women is biblical and God-sanctioned. As a woman of faith and seminarian, I'll stick with Jesus." (Follow Jessica at jessicatownsley.wordpress.com)

In the blog, "Love Naturally," Kathy Schuen writes, "Paul, fiery 1st century evangelist and follower of Jesus, was wrong about same-gender relationships. It's no sin to be wrong – the sin belongs to those who use Paul's 1st century words to abuse others today." (Read more at allgodsbusiness.wordpress.com)

In "Extremist Ideas Slaughter the Innocent," Tony Beyer writes: "This is what tyrants fear most. Tyrants fear the Kingdom of God, the wonderful reign of hope in human hearts that we can live justly and in peace. Children are targets because they represent hope. This is why they must be protected: they are hope of the world."

These are but a few examples of the important, justice-seeking work being done every week in Public Theology. It is not just work being written, these words are transforming hearts and moving bodies into God's work of justice and mercy. Chicago Theological Seminary is raising up *Leaders for the Next*, bringing about *tikkun olam* in the world.

# More Alumni/ae, Faculty, and Student blogs to follow:

#### REV. DR. SUSAN THISTLETHWAITE

huffingtonpost.com/author/rev-dr-susan-brooks-this-tlethwaite

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huffingtonpost.com/author/swatts-728

# 2016 DONOR



CTS Community,

Like the majority of educational institutions, Chicago Theological Seminary relies upon the incredible generosity of individuals, congregations, and organizations for support. Financial gifts of all sizes make an impact for students, faculty and program at CTS. On behalf of our community, I thank you—our donors. We are grateful to the individuals and congregations who have made it a priority to continue investing in the success of our students and faculty. Your steadfast support allows CTS to continue its mission of equipping students for the next generation of transformative leadership.

Yet fundraising for an institution is not without its challenges. Fundraising for the necessary financial resources for day-to-day operating costs is not "sexy", so to speak. It doesn't offer the same excitement or glitz of new programming or new scholarship opportunities. Yet, raising support for the annual fund—the general operating expenditures—for CTS is essential.

1.) The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) predicts a significant shift in the fundraising landscape of seminaries over the next five years. We see this most evidently in the cost of student tuition. Where tuition used to cover the full

cost of education, this is no longer the case for most seminaries. And as the cost of education continues to rise, seminaries will have a greater reliance on fundraising to subsidize student tuition. CTS firmly believes rising student debt hampers a graduate's ability to fully-pursue their vocation. It is import that CTS is able to offset the price of tuition so that student do not graduate with immense student load debt.

2.) CTS has always maintained its prominence by predicting "what's next"—and this is what I, personally, find most compelling about CTS. Our faculty and students participated in the abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad prior to the Civil War. In 1902, CTS was the first seminary to award a degree in divinity to a woman. We were the first seminary in the United States to award the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree for his activism in the Civil Rights movement. And in 2009, CTS became the only free-standing Protestant seminary to endow a chair in Jewish Studies, advancing interfaith engagement and multi-faith education. CTS is an institution which has time and time again worked for justice. Your support is needed to keep CTS a leading voice and partner in this work.

CTS is an institution of social transformation. With world-class faculty, the students are equipped with the skills needed for a variety of ministries and careers. **The mission and vision of CTS move beyond the classroom as we participate as an active partner in the work for justice.** Your on-going support is needed to meet the growing demands for transformation in a world which thirst for justice.

Rhonda K. Brown
Vice President for Advancement

#### SPECIAL THANKS TO IMPACT CHALLENGE DONORS!

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Friends,

As this issue of Challenge & Response puts forward themes of superheroines and heroes in social justice and ministry. It is equally important to recognize and celebrate the generous efforts of those who dared to take on Impact Challenge at CTS.

In September 2016, CTS had the incredible fortune of receiving a gift which would serve as a matching challenge gift. The anonymous donor, passionate about the vitality and the future of CTS contributed so that CTS might grow and strengthen is community of financial supports. From mid-September through the end of December, all first-time gifts as well as those gifts of higher amounts were matched in part by this leading challenge gift.

This momentous philanthropic challenge set the stage for what would become an incredible fall fundraising effort and response. By the end of

December, new and increased donations has passed levels previously seen at CTS. Those individuals and congregations with Impact Challenge qualifying gifts are denoted within the Donor Role.

As the Association of Theological Schools continues to paint a dire future for seminaries. The results of our fall campaign tell a different story for CTS. We are growing. CTS continues to attract financial support from new individuals and sources. We are developing opportunities to engage with current donors in exciting and diverse ways. And CTS will continue to be a bold voice for social justice, preparing leaders in faith, theology, and action.

Chyh

Chad Schwickerath

Annual Fund & Alumni Relations Manager



We know that at the heart of your support is a love for CTS and a belief in the Leaders for the Next CTS prepares every year.

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- Melanie E. Huml
- Seok Jin In\*
- Bruce O. Inglis\* and Jean W. Inglis
- Paul E. Irion\* and Mary J. Irion
- Renee C. Jackson\* and

- Dennis Jackson
- Robert W. Jais\*
- Canielia Jarrell
- Elizabeth M. Jeep\*
- Betty L. Jefferson
- Delores V. Johnson\*
- Tishaura O. Jones
- Steve Jungling
- . . . . . . .
- Leah Kabira\*
- Jonathan KadetKurt W. Katzmar\* and
- Marcia Katzmar

  Katelyn A. Keller\*
- Tamera Keller Love\* and Rebecca Keller Love
- Kristin G. Kellv
- James B. Ketcham\* and Jan M. Curtis
- Alberta B. Kimbrough
- Sue Kina
- Kirk A. Laubenstein\* and Tracie Klusek
- Marge Kovatch\* and Steve Kovatch
- Terry E. Krouskoupf\* and Joyce L. Krouskoupf
- Gia Kubik
- Damien J. Lake\* and Susanne M. Lake
- Harold G. Lambertson\* and Kate A. Lambertson
- Andrea Lasticly
- Jane LeFlore
- Glenn M. Lehman\* and Dorcas M. Lehman
- Allison Levine
- Gary A. Lickfelt
- David Lindsey\*
- Velda Love\*
- Vanessa Lovelace\* and Wilfred T. Bentley
- Campbell Lovett
- Karen J. Ludwig\* and Catherine McConnell
- Donald G. Martin\* and Evelyn I. Martin
- Ned H. Martin\* and Helen
   D. Martin
- Lynda Martin-McCormick
- Moses E. Mason\*
- H. Scott Matheney
- Donald McAvoy
- Townley B. McGiffert\*
- Helen R. Mehler
- Roger A. Meiller\*
- Daniel Mulhauser\*
- Sarah Nash
- David M. Neff\*
- John A. Nelson\* and Angela Lomanto
- Sharon Nix
- John O. H. Noer\* and Dorothy M. Noer
- Car Notorangelo\*
- Nancy H. Nyberg\* and

- Dennis Nyberg
- Ensie M. Oyakawa\* and Helen H. Oyakawa
- Marilyn Pagán-Banks\* and Corey Pagán-Banks
- Angela N. Parker\*
- Elisabeth Patz\*
- Thomas Payton
- Cedric E. Pearson\*
- Marsha Peeler
- Christine L. Pifer-Foote\* and William A. Pifer-Foote\*
- Jennifer Pitts
- Curt Plummer and Sue Plummer
- Tina A. Porterfield
- Richard F. Pulling\* and Rebekah Pulling
- Kathy Read
- Jonathan Reinink
- Leah K. Robberts-Mosser\* and David G. Robberts-Mosser\*
- Samuel A. Roberts\*
- Christopher Robinson-Easley
- Joseph Rodil
- Emma Rodil
- George Rogers
- Stephen Rogers-SmithClark N. Ross\* and
- Lynette C. Ross
- Kim Ruff
- Duana Russell ThomasTanya Sadagopan and
- Sriram SadagopanSaint Paul's UCC,
- Wheatland, IA
  Elizabeth Salsich
- Marilyn Sargent
- Donald D. Schierling\*
- Thomas V. SchraderGordon D. Schreiber and
- Niki J. Schreiber
- Chad Schubert
- Cheryl Schwickerath
- Timothy Seamans\*Lisa N. Seiwert\*
- Kerry Sheehan
- Paul H. Sherry\* and Mary L. Sherry
- Kristine Shields
- Natalie Shiras
- Beth A. Sholly\*
- Douglas K. Showalter\*
- Kent SiladiJoshua J. Simon\*
- Chantel SingletonNicolette L. Siragusa\* and
- Regina B. Calcagno

  Greg S. Skiba\*
- Ruth Slaughter
- Abigail Smith
- Jefferson Smith

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- Joan M. Snyder-Budz\*
- J. Michael Solberg and Janine S. Solberg
- Jennie Sowers
- Robert P. Speer\*
- · Katharine A. Spencer
- · Beatrice U. Starke
- Joshua H. Steward\*
- Elsie Stiffler
- Joseph Stone
- Peter D. Strening\* and Dorothy M. Deroche Strening
- Lois N. Sundeen\*
- · Vicki Swyers
- Eric Templeton
- Lucky Thompson\*
- Susan J. Thorne\*
- Phyllis B. Toback\*
- Mark A. Toole\*
- Violet J. Tully
- Michael Tully
- Tyler M. Tully\*
- Patricia L. Turner
- Keesha Tyler
- Consuela Vanderford
- Omega V. Varma\* and Elsie R. Sabbithi-Varma\*
- Emily Vogt
- Shelley R. Wagener\* and Lori A. Ensign
- Thomas J. Walker\* and Ellyn V. Walker
- Avena A. Ward\* and Thomas Corbett
- Welton Warkentin\*
- Marsha H. Warren
- Valerie Washington
- R. Shea Watts\*
- Jacob A. Waybright\*
- Gregory K. Webb and Juliet C. Webb
- Patrick Webster
- Karin L. Wells\*
- Dana Weston
- Kimberlee Whisler-Vasko\*
- Amber Wicker
- Lisa Goods-Williams
- Lisa Williams
- Jason C. Wilson\*
- Bonnie Wilson
- Douglas E. Wingeier and Carol A. Wingeier
- Mark T. Winters\* and Jessica L. Winters
- Jean M. Winther\*
- Carl Wolfsohn
- Clarence J. Wright\*
- Charles S. Yoak\*
- Brian Zakem\*
- David D. Zaworski\*
- Jerry W. Zumalt\* and Jacquelyn R. Zumalt





Unless otherwise indicated, events will take place at CTS.

### THE VICTOR OBENHAUS LECTURESHIP SERIES

Thursday, March 28 and Thursday, April 25, 2017 5:15-6:30pm [LIVE STREAMED]

This lecture series, named for Christian scholar and former interim CTS president, Victor Obenhaus, welcomes Rev. Teresa L. Smallwood, JD on March 28 & author Jean Murphy on April 25. Sponsored by the CTS PhD program.

## MISCHLINGE EXPOSE WITH CAROLYN ENGER

Friday, April 28, 2017 12:00pm

This chapel service will feature a thought-provoking multimedia performance dealing with the concept of mixed-religious German during the Holocaust. *In observance of Yom haShoah.* 

# CASTANEDA

Annual Lecture, "Queering Jewish Theology" with Dr. Jay Michaelson

Thursday, May 4, 2017, 5:15pm Reception, 6:30pm Lecture

Each year CTS's Castañeda Lecture & Award recognizes an outstanding student and a leading scholar in the area of LGBTQ & Gender studies. Castañeda provides financial support for LGBTQ+ identified students. Dr. Jay Michaelson will keynote the event. Michaelson's research is at the intersection of law, activism, and queer theory. To register, visit ctschicago.edu or the CTS Facebook Page @CTS\_chicago.

#### GRADUATE CHAPEL

Wednesday, May 10, 2017 12:00pm Chapel, 1:00pm Lunch [LIVE STREAMED]

Celebrating our 2017 graduates

#### **SPRINGFEST**

Thursday, May 11, 2017 4:00-8:00pm

Bring your family and celebrate the annual end of the academicyear with CTS. Enjoy food, music, dancing, karaoke, and a children's play area.

#### DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD LUNCHEON

Thursday, May 11, 12:00pm

Join CTS as we celebrate the achievements of our graduates and the recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Award. Registration and ticket information will be sent out

#### COMMENCEMENT

Friday, May 12, 2017, 2:00pm [LIVE STREAMED]

Our 2017 Commencement Speaker is Reza Aslan. The ceremony will be held at Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, Illinois

For more information on our upcoming events visit ctschicago.edu or follow us on





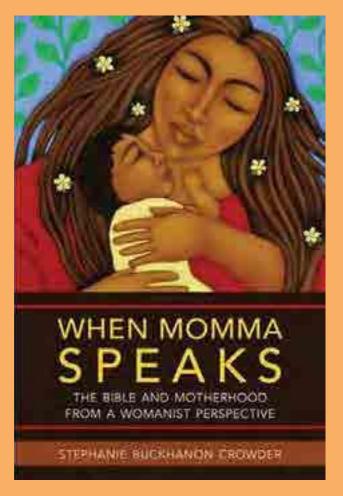








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### FACULTYBOOKSHELF

#### **BOOK RECOMENDATIONS**

For CTS students, learning happens both inside the classroom and outside the classroom. CTS professors recommend the following books for extending learning beyond classroom walls:

#### LEE H. BUTLER, JR.

- Albert Cleage Jr. & the Black Madonna & Child, edited by Jawanza Eric Clark
- Postcolonializing God: An African Practical Theology, by Emmanuel Y. Lartey

#### **KEN STONE**

- Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, & Power, by Donovan O. Schaefer
- The Question of the Animal & Religion: Theoretical Stakes, Practical Implications, by Aaron S. Gross
- An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation, by Nyasha Junior

#### RACHEL MIKVA

- Interfaith Leadership, by Eboo Patel
- The Family Flamboyant: Race Politics, Queer Families, Jewish Lives, by Marla Brettschneider
- The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis or Moses: A Human Life, by Avivah Gottleib Zornberg
- · Here I Am, by Jonathan Safran Foer

#### STEPHANIE BUCKHANON CROWDER

 When Momma Speaks: The Bible & Motherhood from a Womanist Perspective, by Stephanie Buckhanon Crowder

#### **JOANNE MARIE TERRELL**

 An Unbroken Agony: Haiti, from Revolution to the Kidnapping of a President, by Randall Robinson