

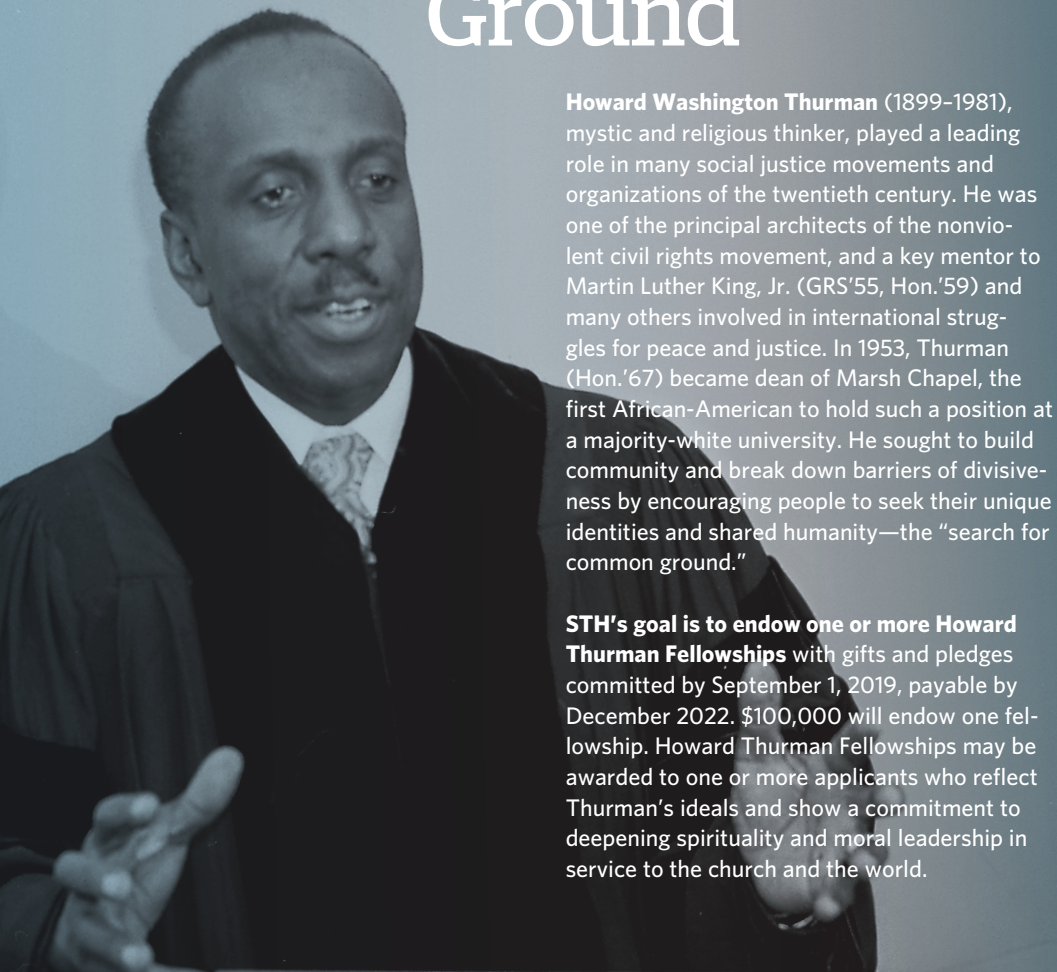
Inside:

Solidarity and the sanctuary movement
Moral injury reveals a nation's damaged soul
Savoring the bread of life's many varieties

DON'T LOOK AWAY

**How to break down partisan
barriers and transform conflict**

Finding Common Ground



Howard Washington Thurman (1899–1981), mystic and religious thinker, played a leading role in many social justice movements and organizations of the twentieth century. He was one of the principal architects of the nonviolent civil rights movement, and a key mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS'55, Hon.'59) and many others involved in international struggles for peace and justice. In 1953, Thurman (Hon.'67) became dean of Marsh Chapel, the first African-American to hold such a position at a majority-white university. He sought to build community and break down barriers of divisiveness by encouraging people to seek their unique identities and shared humanity—the “search for common ground.”

STH's goal is to endow one or more Howard Thurman Fellowships with gifts and pledges committed by September 1, 2019, payable by December 2022. \$100,000 will endow one fellowship. Howard Thurman Fellowships may be awarded to one or more applicants who reflect Thurman's ideals and show a commitment to deepening spirituality and moral leadership in service to the church and the world.

Your gift will help students exemplify
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Jackie Ricciardi



Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore

DEAN'S MESSAGE

DIGNITY—THE HEART OF HUMANITY

BY MARY ELIZABETH MOORE

“Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness’ . . . So God created humankind in his image.” (Genesis 1:26–27)¹

At the heart of humanity is dignity, and at the heart of human dignity is the startling realization that God created each person in God’s own image. In recent weeks, I have seen sparks of dignity at many turns: Walking a church neighborhood with a pastor who greeted neighbors by name; marveling at how the BU School of Theology Student Association and other student groups listen to STH’s heartbeat and respond with honest conversation and meaningful events and actions.

This issue of *focus* highlights three STH programs that also honor and embody dignity: religion and conflict transformation, faith and ecological justice, and the *semillero* for young Latinx church leaders, Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy.

We live in a season in which dignity is continually *dishonored*. Remember the people murdered in the Tree of Life Synagogue (Pittsburgh), two mosques (Christchurch, New Zealand), and in three churches celebrating Easter (Sri Lanka). Remember the February 2019 vote of the United Methodist Church against just and full inclusion for LGBTQIA persons, and the daily microaggressions against people who happen to be different in some way from oneself. The human family has

not yet learned to disagree on matters of perspective and opinion while honoring *everyone* with just care. Even in a difficult context, this year has seen many moments when the image of God shone through. Emilie Townes, dean of Vanderbilt Divinity School, honored dignity in her STH Lowell Lecture and sermon, “Shadowboxing the Ridiculous” and “Songs of Zion.” Mark D. Jordan, a professor at Harvard Divinity School, spoke to deep yearnings in his Lowell presentation and discussion, “Queer Callings.” Filmmaker Martin Doblmeier’s new documentary on Howard Thurman (Hon.’67), *Backs Against the Wall*, has awakened us to the power of one person who was present to the Spirit and to the fullness of the world.

During this year, the STH faculty and staff have sought to build their own respect for dignity through capacity-building workshops on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We have also had amazing events to stretch our knowledge and vision on wide-ranging subjects: mission and art; threats to democracy; ecological justice; women and institutional leadership; interfaith relationship building; gender identity, faith, and liberation; and Passover and Easter. In such moments, we awaken to human dignity, expanded to include the inherent worth of all creation, and we step closer toward our dream of building compassion and justice.

In both Jewish and Christian traditions, the image of God is central to being human; thus, people can experience God as they relate with others. The Jewish mystic Art Green says, “We encounter the

1. New Revised Standard Version.

2. Arthur Green, *Seek My Face: A Jewish Mystical Theology* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2003), 47.

3. *Ibid.*

Divine through relationship with another person.”² To describe people as created in the Divine image, we make a bold claim: “The person—each person—is an earthly replica or small repository of the fullness of divine energy and blessing.”³ When you and I recognize the image of God in others and ourselves, we can proclaim that God’s creativity is alive in the human family, and God’s aliveness calls forth responsibility to care for one another.

To live as persons created in God’s image is to encounter the world with wonder at God’s revelatory presence in ordinary human lives, and with the expectation that we can potentially live and love much better than we do. As this school year closes, I recall many STH encounters with wonder, some celebrative, some filled with lament, yet all drawing the community into soul-searching and the search for new life.

In the work of soul-searching and vision-building, our alums are an inspiration. Like STH students, they give themselves fully to daily encounters with the precious children of God. John L. McCullough (’79) focuses his daily ministry on the most vulnerable (page 12), Haksun Joo (’02) on persons with diverse abilities (page 16), and Shannon Karafanda (’18) on those who are vulnerable to physically or psychologically threatening realities (page 20). Many alums are also engaged with their communities in public ministries, such as Cedric Hughes Jones, Jr. (’92) and the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Philadelphia, which works with local leaders on health, economics, and education (page 18).

The essays in this issue of *focus* are also inspiring. Barbod Salimi names the importance of facing encounters, urging people to “see one another” (page 34). Shelly Rambo encourages people to attend to the often-invisible moral injuries of war, recognizing that “[w]ounds do not simply go away” (page 22). Rady Roldán-Figueroa (’05) wants people to seek solidarity with others, not as a favor, but as “a different way of knowing our common humanity” (page 26). He recalls the beginnings of the sanctuary movement in Boston when Menchú Tum asked her New England audience “to feel, think, and see as the Maya people of Guatemala and to experience indignation.” Together Salimi, Rambo, and Roldán-Figueroa center on dignity, enacted by *opening* to others, and receiving the stories they tell and the challenges they face.

Other authors reflect on intentional acts of encounter, whether in prayerful protest or sharing bread. Montague Williams (’18) describes his transformative pilgrimage with students to Ferguson, Mo., making connections between the injustices faced in Ferguson and Jesus’ own life, death, and resurrection (page 30). His story of communion on the street echoes Karen Coleman’s story of bread as a binding staff of life (page 38). Coleman reminds us of the gift of bread and its covenantal power: “Let us break bread together . . . when we encounter the other or one another daily in our journey.” As you read this issue, I hope you will encounter the overflowing wonder and deep yearnings of other people, created in God’s image and longing for relationships that nourish their lives. □

2019 CAMPAIGN UPDATE

LAST CHANCE TO BE A PART OF THIS HISTORIC MOMENT

Thanks to alums and friends, STH has surpassed its \$25 million campaign goal with \$27.6 million in gifts and pledges and is now stretching to reach \$30M.

"We are greatly indebted to our School of Theology alums and friends for your amazing and continuing generosity in supporting the school and ensuring a brilliant future," says Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore. "You have contributed to student scholarships for gifted leaders who represent many parts of the world, diverse cultures and communities, a wide range of life experiences, and deep faith commitments. You have supported our longstanding

centers and programs, and those that have been created more recently. You have also supported innovation and a sustainable future for our academic programs. Thank you! You are future-builders."

In the past year, donors have established an endowed scholarship fund for dual degree School of Theology and School of Social Work students, created a 2-for-1 challenge match of \$600,000 to endow the Anglican Episcopal Community of Learning, and given to many other initiatives.

It's not too late; gifts and pledges committed by September 1, 2019, and payable by December 2022 will go toward STH's overall campaign goal. On these pages are some of the funds available for support.



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GOAL

\$2.5M

OVERALL ENDOWMENT

GIFTS & PLEDGES

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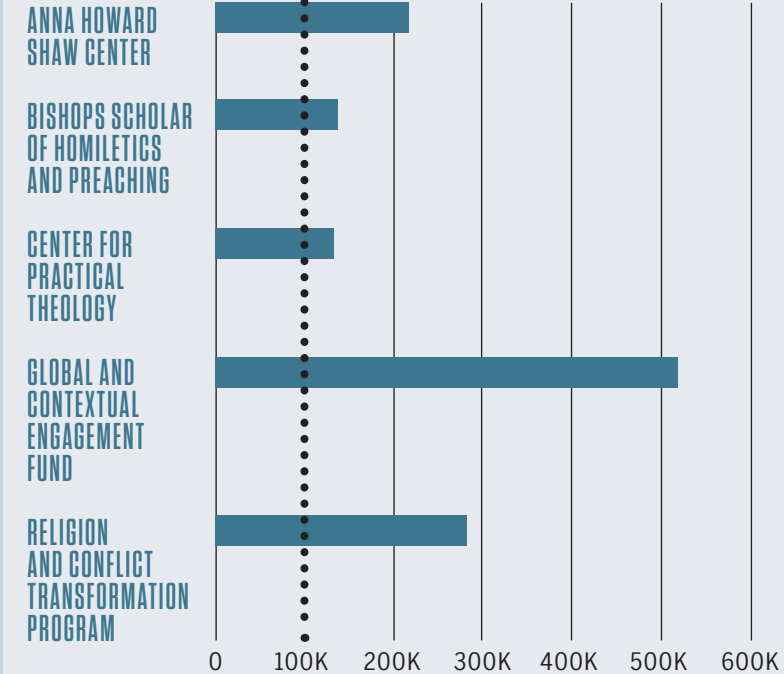
GOAL

\$10M

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CENTERS AND PROGRAMS: ENDOWED FUNDS

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FAITH AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

"If we're not equipping our future faith leaders to deal with environmental issues, we're not equipping them for the world we live in today," says Rebecca Copeland, an STH assistant professor. This spring, she's helping the school tackle that challenge with the launch of the Faith and Ecological Justice program.

Copeland scheduled a series of events for the program's first semester. It included an event focused on physical and psychological disaster response, paired with a training for disaster relief workers, a screening of the film *Climate Refugees*, and a retreat. Another event, a "toxic tour" of Dudley Square, a Boston neighborhood, involved visiting sites that an environmental justice organization has fought to clean up. Starting in the fall, the program will also include weekly gatherings for students to participate in community activities, film screenings, and possibly even protests, and then meet to discuss them.

Copeland, who was already teaching environmental justice and advising the student environmental group TheECOlogy—and has surveyed the STH community to gauge ecological literacy and attitudes—hopes the new program will reach a broader group of students.

"The point of these kinds of events is to introduce students to the many different facets of ecological justice and how that intersects with faith communities," Copeland says. "Our students are really passionate about a lot of issues—and, whatever you're passionate about, this interacts with it."—M.C. □

A SEMILLERO FOR LATINX CHURCH LEADERS

BY MARC CHALUFOUR

There’s a Spanish word for a fertile plot of land, the perfect spot to plant seeds and watch them grow: *semillero*. For Cristian De La Rosa, a clinical assistant professor and director of contextual education and community partnerships, the Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy (HYLA) is just that, a *semillero* in which young Latinx students can grow into leaders.

De La Rosa has been cultivating HYLA since she established the program at Southern Methodist University’s Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, Tex., more than 15 years ago. It began small, with a grant from the United Methodist Church (UMC) aimed at recruiting more Latinx clergy. “It was really clear they needed to reach out to younger people,” De La Rosa says.

The HYLA concept was simple: invite teens to college campuses and teach them leadership skills, foster identity formation, and introduce them to the theology, history, and church doctrine. The idea was to provide a stepping-stone on the way to seminary, while further engaging them in the church.

HYLA began with students from the South Central United States. By year three, it had a national reach. In year four, a college session was added to help undergraduate students move on to seminary.

De La Rosa brought HYLA to STH in 2012. When she saw demand from upper-level college and graduate students, she added a new program: Raíces

Latinas Leadership Institute, which uses the same structure to help students take another step toward seminary.

Today, up to 120 students participate in a variety of HYLA and Raíces Latinas sessions held at BU, Adrian College in Michigan, and Garrett-Evangelical Seminary in Chicago. In 2017, HYLA received a \$150,000 UMC grant to formalize and expand its structure.

So, for HYLA’s *quinceañera*, or 15th birthday, in 2018, STH planned a celebration complete with a banquet and convocation to assess the program’s future. HYLA and Raíces Latinas sessions gathered at the same time, and a session for pastors was put together for the first time as well.

From the convocation a plan emerged: an advisory board was established, and that group decided to register as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and establish an endowment. “Infrastructure means being clear with who we are and how we’re organized, rather than just being loosely connected academies,” De La Rosa says.



Cristian De La Rosa (far left), with a group of HYLA graduates, has organized the program for more than 15 years.

Demand for HYLA programs has long outpaced funding and De La Rosa has expanded selectively. Now, with more funding and administrative support in place, North Carolina and Washington, D.C., sessions have been created.

De La Rosa admits that measuring success is challenging for a program that aims to guide students from their teenage years all the way through seminary. Just seeing students graduate is gratifying, she says.

Beyond that, “success is retention within the church, because we lose so many young people. I’m beginning to see the fruits of this because we have a good number of Latinx pastors now.”

And she’s begun to appreciate HYLA’s broader impact. “Even if they leave the church, some are going to work with community organizations,” she says. “Everyone that I meet after they graduate is involved in some type of social justice issue or cause or organization.” □

CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

BY LARA EHRLICH

“Conflict transformation is deeply spiritual work,” says Thomas Porter, a lecturer and codirector of the Religion and Conflict Transformation Program at STH. As a lawyer and the cofounder and former director of the United Methodist Church’s JustPeace Center for Mediation and Conflict Transformation, he guides faith leaders and communities to address conflict so that it becomes constructive, builds community, and advances social justice.

In 2019, Porter is retiring from STH to pursue the next stage of his career: he’ll study at the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, N.M. Porter talked with *focus* about his path from trial lawyer to conflict mediator.

focus: How did you go from practicing law to practicing conflict transformation?

Porter: I was a minister in Paterson, N.J., and I did a lot of work with lawyers. It was the ’60s, and we were social change agents involved in housing and desegregation of schools and the trial of [boxer Rubin] “Hurricane” Carter, and I felt like if I had a law degree, I would be better equipped to be a transformative agent. I went to law school, created a firm, and practiced for 25 years as a trial lawyer. I loved the role of advocacy

and creating a community out of a law firm, but I had a lovers’ quarrel with the underlying system of resolving conflicts—the adversarial retributive system—and I knew there had to be a better way.

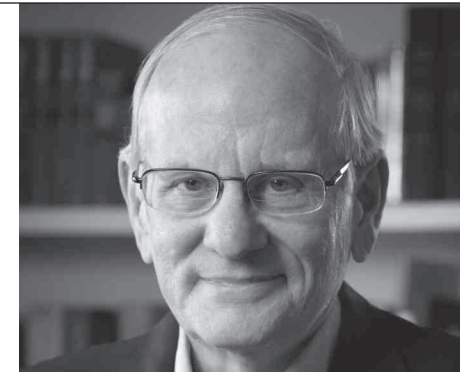
In 1997, I went to South Africa, which was a transformative moment in my life, to study with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I learned from Archbishop Desmond Tutu that there was another form of justice called restorative justice, which led me to study with Howard Zehr, the grandfather of restorative justice, at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va. I discovered it to be deeply spiritual work.

What is conflict transformation?

Conflict is a part of everyday life. What we want to do is transform it in such a way that it becomes constructive and not destructive. Constructive conflict is where the conflict is recognized and named, and the parties in conflict find a space where they can work to understand each other, come to a consensus that meets the interests of each party, and address the harm experienced. We need to work on seeing conflict as natural and necessary and constructive.

Can conflict transformation be scaled up?

It begins in our families, our communities, and in our workplaces and institutions—anywhere we find human beings struggling to live well together. It starts with individuals



Thomas Porter, lecturer and codirector of the Religion and Conflict Transformation Program, plans to retire from STH and begin studying at the Center for Action and Contemplation.

and is desperately needed all the way up to the system level.

Where do you see the most pressing need for conflict transformation today?

We have huge issues facing us, and at the heart of it is our inability to engage each other in simple, honest conversation. You get to the issues like climate change, immigration, poverty, and the hurt that’s not being addressed. I don’t think the leadership in Washington is doing anything to be constructive; in fact, I find it being very destructive of institutions and of our basic stability.

What do you do when one party is not willing to engage?

In Matthew 18, Jesus suggests that you first engage the other person directly, which means sit down at a table with them; and if that doesn’t work, you get a bigger table and bring somebody with you who can facilitate a good conversation. If that doesn’t work, you get the larger community involved at the table. □

A CONVERSATION ABOUT IMMIGRATION'S IMPACT

With reports of family separations at the US-Mexico border getting increasingly dire during the summer months of 2018, Shelly Rambo began talking with scholars and activists around the country about taking action.

"I started thinking about what we could do locally to respond," says Rambo, associate professor of theology. Recognizing that STH faculty and alums were already engaged with immigration issues in a number of ways, Rambo began piecing together what became Impacts of Immigration, a series of four events hosted by STH in October and November.

Rambo asked her colleague Rady Roldán-Figueroa to speak to her Trauma and Theology class about the origins of the sanctuary movement (for more on that topic, see page 26) and she invited Dilia De Jesús (COM'03, STH'15), director of strategic planning and development for Casa Esperanza, a behavioral health center focused on the Latinx community, to preach at Marsh Chapel.

The series' biggest event featured Laura Rambikur ('17, SSW'17), a social worker in Arizona and an adjunct instructor at STH. Rambikur, who coleads an STH travel seminar to the

US-Mexico border, discussed her work with a panel of STH and School of Social Work faculty members.

Rounding out the series was a lecture on New England women and the sanctuary movement by Melinda Lee, who worked with Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees to change US immigration policies in the 1980s.

For Rambo, the series was just a start.

"Our hope is to expand the conversation across different schools and disciplines," she says. "That's certainly something that we can do at BU. There's a lot of cross-fertilization."—M.C. □

IN MEMORIAM

HORACE T. ALLEN, JR., a professor emeritus at STH, passed away on February 5, 2019. He was part of the BU faculty for 25 years until his retirement in 2003.

"He was the first professor of worship here, and he taught in areas as broad as liturgy, music, architecture, and preaching," wrote Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore in her message to the STH community on Allen's passing. "Our alums have told me a multitude of appreciative comments and funny, touching stories about Horace. Some say that they are conscious every week of things they learned from Horace; others credit him with their love of liturgy."

EARL KENT BROWN ('53, GRS'56), a professor of church history for 33 years until his retirement in 1986, passed away on December 5, 2018.

Brown was born and raised in Ohio where his father also served the church, including the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Alliance, Ohio. Brown earned a bachelor of sacred theology from STH and a doctor of philosophy from the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. He was particularly known for his scholarship on the role of women in Methodism and was the author of *Women of Mr. Wesley's Methodism (Studies in Women & Religion)*. Donations in Brown's memory can be made to STH's Anna Howard Shaw Center (call 617-353-2349 or email sthdev@bu.edu).

SOLVING A NIGHTMARE SCENARIO

BY KAT J. MCALPINE

For people who don't experience recurring nightmares, "the hardest thing to grasp is the idea that recurring nightmares never lose their strength," says Wesley Wildman, a professor of philosophy, theology, and ethics and expert in artificial, computer-simulated environments. "It's a really painful problem to have."

So when Patrick McNamara asked for his help designing a study of the impacts of virtual reality on recurring nightmares, Wildman thought the idea was "genius-level intervention."

In the US, around half of children and 5 percent of adults have frequent nightmares. "Recurring nightmares are really significant predictors," says McNamara, a BU School of Medicine associate professor of neurology. "They foretell mental health trouble."

For children, that trouble can come in the form of adolescent and adult psychosis, including anxiety, depression, stress, and suicidal ideation. In adults, distressing nightmares can be a sign of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Research in the last decade has hinted that modern technology may enable a more tangible approach to treating nightmare disorders. Platforms like video games that exercise a person's ability to control and manipulate simulated imagery—rather than

imagery conjured up in their mind's eye—could have therapeutic benefits for people with nightmare disorders.

Virtual reality programs place users into artificial environments, immersing them in nightmarish imagery through interactive systems like Oculus Rift, where they experience and manipulate visuals that seemingly exist right in front of their own eyes.

Wildman and McNamara designed a pilot study to examine if virtual reality therapy could help people with recurring nightmares. They created moderately frightening virtual reality imagery—such as an underwater environment in which a great white shark seems to swim closer and closer to the virtual reality user—to elicit a manageable level of fear.

They enrolled 19 people who reported having frequent nightmares. Using joystick and gesture controls, participants were able to modify the threatening visuals to make them less scary. They could, for example, use a drawing tool to cover up the shark's teeth or a sizing tool to shrink it down. Afterward, they were also asked to write a narrative about their newly edited visual experience.

Over the course of a month, participants continued visiting McNamara's lab twice a week to use the Oculus headset and

its joystick controls to alter scary visuals and create new narratives. Each visit, they were monitored for anxiety, nightmare distress, and nightmare effects. By the

"The most exciting thing about this is the potential to bring this to kids suffering from nightmares. Kids are fantastic with adopting technology, and if we can treat their nightmares earlier, we might slow down or prevent conversion into psychosis. That could save lives."

— Patrick McNamara

conclusion of the study, participants reported significantly lower levels of all three. The results were published in the journal *Dreaming* in 2018.

"The most exciting thing about this is the potential to bring this to kids suffering from nightmares," McNamara says. "Kids are fantastic with adopting technology, and if we can treat their nightmares earlier, we might slow down or prevent conversion into psychosis. That could save lives." □

A PILGRIMAGE TO WESLEY'S HOMELAND

STUDENTS AND ALUMS EXPLORE METHODISM'S ROOTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

BY ANDREW THURSTON

The churches nestled in the rolling hills of the Peak District National Park in North West England have anchored their villages for hundreds of years. Just like rural churches across the United States, many have struggled to counter urbanization and falling attendance. But Lauren DeLano ('16), a pastor in Conway, Ark., who visited the region as part of a summer 2018 STH travel seminar, "The Wesleyan Tradition in 21st-Century Context," saw signs of hope.

For their final excursion on the two-week trip, a mix of study and contextual learning, DeLano and a group of STH students and alums toured three churches taking different approaches to remaining relevant: one only held six services a year, but had become an everyday refuge for hikers seeking quiet reflection; another had taken out its seats and—without an ordained minister—started rotating Sunday service duties among parishioners.

DeLano says such moves reminded her that "there are people who are seeing and feeling decline in the church, but they still have a glimmer of hope in their hearts that God is moving and we are meant to get swept up in that movement." Seeing the creativity



Members of the STH travel seminar "The Wesleyan Tradition in 21st-Century Context" visited three churches, including Castleton Methodist Church at the Peveril Centre (pictured), during their two-week trip.

used by the rural churches "challenged me to do a better job of empowering laypeople...to use their gifts for ministry."

This inspirational revelation is exactly the kind of outcome the seminar's organizer, Christopher H. Evans, a professor of history of Christianity and Methodist studies at STH, was hoping for. He says the goal of the trip was not just to "follow the historical path of the Wesleys and their time"—John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, was from the north of England—"but also to live that history in the context of what's going on in faith communities today." His aim was to help participants "renew a spark

or just feel a sense of excitement about what they're doing."

The five alums and three students on the trip, who were hosted by Nazarene Theological College in Manchester, United Kingdom, also visited urban churches in Manchester and London, a mosque, and the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester, one of the world's leading collections of Methodist materials.

Evans is planning a second Manchester travel seminar for 2020. Other recent and forthcoming STH travel seminar locations include Acadia National Park; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and the Arizona-Mexico border. Learn more at bu.edu/sth/travel-seminars. □

This page: courtesy Lauren DeLano; Facing page: David Rombough

Provide Financial Opportunities for Korean Students



The Korean Student Scholarship Fund needs your help to provide much-needed financial support for students from Korea and Korean-American students. Korean alums of the School of Theology have proven to be integral members of the church throughout the world: one is dean of a theological school in South Korea, another a renowned filmmaker, another a

metro Boston district superintendent in the United Methodist Church. The Korean Student Scholarship Fund was inspired by one such alum: it was founded in 2017 by a Korean bishop who had been taught by Boston University-educated professors. Future graduates will continue to make important impacts in communities around the world.

Your gift will help these students thrive at STH

The goal is to endow the fund with \$100,000 in gifts and pledges committed by September 1, 2019, and payable by December 2022, which will ensure Korean students continue the tradition of excellence through scholarship.

Email sthdev@bu.edu, call 617-353-2349, or visit bu.edu/sth/giving

A VOICE FOR THE “WORLD’S MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE”



John L. McCullough ('79), president and CEO of Church World Service, received the 2003 School of Theology Distinguished Alumni Award.

HOW JOHN L. MCCULLOUGH AND CHURCH WORLD SERVICE HELP REFUGEES RESETTLE AND RAISE THEIR VOICES

BY LARA EHRLICH

In fall 2018, a caravan of 5,000 Honduran migrants fleeing gang violence, repression, and poverty trekked 2,500 miles from Central America to the US-Mexico border to legally apply for asylum. The journey was perilous; along their route, migrants were assaulted, abducted, robbed, and raped. Mexican federal officers persecuted them. The Trump administration described them as “invaders” who, the president tweeted, included “stone-cold criminals.” US troops met the migrants—among them an estimated 2,300 children—at the Tijuana-San Ysidro port of entry and sprayed them with tear gas.

But they encountered kindness, too. In Santiago Niltepec, Mexico, residents offered them food and clean drinking water. And in Guatemala, the Guatemalan Conference of Evangelical Churches, aided by a grant from the global humanitarian agency Church World Service (CWS), provided emergency assistance. CWS also supported aid workers who accompanied the caravan through a stretch of Mexico known as the “route of death,” where hundreds of migrants have been kidnapped.

CWS put forth a different narrative about the caravan: they are asylum seekers and immigrant families, “the world’s most vulnerable people.”

“We are living in times in which the hearts of people are breaking,” says John L. McCullough ('79), president and chief executive officer of CWS. “Church World Service is trying to preserve the tradition of welcoming hospitality in the United States for people who are desperately seeking our refuge and asylum. I don’t think there is any other community that can speak more about hope than we can as the church.”

A MOUNTING CRISIS

CWS is a cooperative ministry of 37 Christian denominations and communions that, in alliance with humane organizations and grassroots agencies throughout the world, confronts pressing global challenges. The staff of approximately 1,000 fight hunger in West Timor, build water systems in South America, respond to natural disasters like the 2018 flooding in Kenya’s Tana River Valley, and train teachers in Central America to support children with incarcerated parents.

Today, McCullough identifies displacement as the organization’s most critical issue. It’s also the reason CWS was founded in 1946, to help the 60 million people displaced by World War II. The cumulative impact of current refugee crises around the world has grown to 68.5 million people, and continues to swell as more migrants and refugees embark upon life-threatening journeys.

Courtesy of Church World Service

Meanwhile, McCullough says, “our country is being led by an administration that apparently does not believe that the United States should be a place of refuge. They have begun systematically dismantling the infrastructure that enables the US to be a place of hope and safety and security for those in need.”

The Trump administration has enacted and proposed policies with far-reaching consequences for immigrants, including the “zero-tolerance” policy that separated children from their families at the border. It’s also made efforts to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which provides amnesty to undocumented immigrants who came to the US as children.

In a single executive order, which critics labeled the Muslim Ban, the administration imposed a travel restriction on people from seven Muslim-majority nations, paused the refugee admissions program, and suspended the resettlement of Syrian refugees. President Donald J. Trump then lowered the annual cap of refugees from 110,000 to 45,000. In September, he further slashed that number to 30,000 for fiscal year 2019. Of the 45,000 refugees covered by the cap in 2018, fewer than 22,500 were admitted.

“This country is comprised of people who have been on journeys to get here,” McCullough says. “The idea that the borders will be sealed and the invitation to come to the United States would be rescinded goes against the values of this country, the traditions that have been so central to who we are as a people.”

THE COURAGE TO SPEAK UP

McCullough can relate to those values—they led him to the ministry. His father

died when he was 13, leaving a wife and four children. They were among the only African American families in a working-class neighborhood of Newburyport, Mass., and while there were others who were less fortunate, McCullough says, he knew his mother was struggling.

“I was yearning for God’s protection for my family, and I felt that in order for that to be merited, it meant that I had to give something significant back in return. I decided the best way to do that would be to dedicate my life to public service, working on issues of inequality and poverty and vulnerability on a global scale.”

He intended to go to BU’s School of Law, but he just couldn’t bring himself to fill out the application. “I suspect that in my spirit, unknowingly, I was already beginning to discern the call to ministry,” he says. Instead of applying to law school, McCullough volunteered with the United Methodist Church in Action for Boston Community Development, an antipoverty and community development program. When he expressed interest in seminary, his pastor guided him to STH.

“I was stunned to learn that when I had gone to the campus the December beforehand, I had actually passed through the School of Theology to get to the School of Law,” he says. “That said to me that this calling was by God’s intent and I really needed to pay attention to it.”

While studying at STH and serving as an associate pastor at the Wilbraham United Church in Wilbraham, Mass., McCullough joined the CROP Hunger Walk, sponsored by CWS in support of ending hunger. That was his first exposure to the organization he would be invited to lead more than 10 years later, in 2000.

“We’re trying to help clergy talk [with their members] about a topic that is highly contentious and highly debated, but one for which we need to be able to find a construct upon which we can work together, despite our political differences.”

— John L. McCullough

Today, as president and CEO of Church World Service, he advances the organization’s mission, guides its financial and strategic direction, and encourages dialogue with ecumenical, denominational, and governmental leaders. Among his many on-the-ground efforts, he conducted shuttle diplomacy between the US Department of State and the government of Cuba that helped pave the way for President Barack Obama and former

Cuban President Raúl Castro to meet for the first time and re-establish diplomatic relations between the two nations.

McCullough also introduced the CWS Africa Initiative, which brought together Christians of different traditions and established an All Africa Conference of Churches Eminent Persons Ecumenical Programme, which supports the peacebuilding efforts of African churches. That initiative also inspired creation of the School Safe Zones program that helps children pursue educational development without interruption by civil chaos.

McCullough credits BU for preparing him for this work. At STH, McCullough says, “my faith was not just an intellectual exercise. I studied social ethics, which helped me to understand that there really is a dividing line between that which is right and that which is wrong, to have the courage to be able to name that which is

wrong, and to have the courage to speak up for that which is right.”

EMPOWERING THE VOICELESS

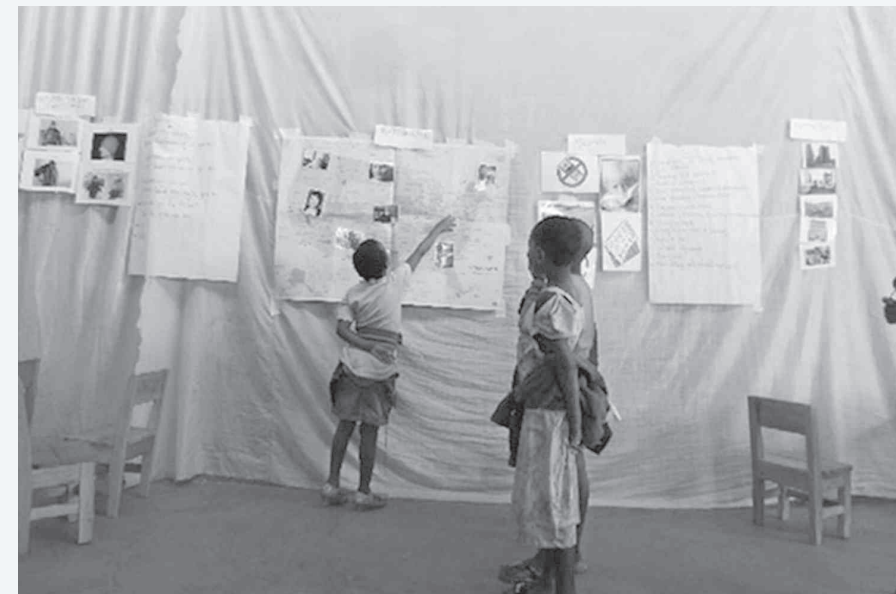
On the federal level, CWS is working to build bipartisan support for refugee programs and draw attention to the meager number of refugees admitted to the US in the last year. The organization is leading the #WhereAreTheRefugees campaign to inspire action from lawmakers and bolster support for raising the national cap. Regionally, McCullough says, CWS makes a direct impact on the lives of the refugees who are placed with the organization through the State Department. Since 1946, CWS has resettled more than one million people in the US, helping them find affordable housing, navigate social services, find employment, and integrate into their new communities. Between July 2017 and June 2018 alone, it resettled 2,314 refugees and 1,412 people with special immigrant visas. More than 1,100 congregations across the country have opened their facilities as safe havens.

CWS also trains congregations’ pastors to help their members grapple with immigration issues during “a time in which we recognize that congregational life is not exempt from the political polarities that we see unfolding in the country,” McCullough says. “We’re trying to help clergy talk about a topic that is highly contentious and highly debated, but one for which we need to be able to find a construct upon which we can work together, despite our political differences.”

Courtesy of Church World Service

McCullough acknowledges that political differences within congregations can be a roadblock. “There are people who struggle with what is perceived as the volume of people who may be coming into the country or their motives, and how that potentially changes the demographics of the nation,” he says. “It’s not for me to determine whether or not those issues are legitimate. What’s important is that we provide a foundation upon which we can have the conversation.”

The organization has mentored more than 600 refugee leaders throughout the US to direct those conversations in their communities, training them in grassroots advocacy, like drafting op-eds and organizing public events.



Refugee children participate in a cultural orientation program run by Church World Service through the US Department of State’s Resettlement Support Center for Africa.

One of these refugee leaders is Dauda Sesay, who arrived in the US in 2009 after fleeing the war in Sierra Leone and settled in Baton Rouge, La., where he serves as a delegate of the US Refugee Congress. He attended a CWS leadership training, which provided him with the skills he needed to cofound the Louisiana Organization for Refugees and Immigrants. They help immigrants and refugees become self-sufficient, Sesay says, and navigate life in the US.

Their first step was to “look at the disconnect in our city and our state,” Sesay says. “We have a large population of refugees, but we are not well represented.” Many refugees choose to be voiceless, he notes—they do not

apply for citizenship, for example—for fear of deportation.

“We empower them to have self-reliance so they are able to voice their concerns,” he says, “and to be confident to meet with leaders who are making decisions on their behalf.”

The organization hosts workshops on issues like citizenship and voters’ registration, and instructs refugees on what to do if approached by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, among other forms of outreach.

“We value most of the same things America values,” he says. “We want our family to be successful. We want to raise our kids in a safe and productive neighborhood. We aren’t criminals. We are human.” □

A MORE ACCESSIBLE CHURCH



Haksun Joo ('02)

HAKSUN JOO RECOGNIZED A NEED IN HIS SOUTH KOREAN COMMUNITY AND REMADE HIS CHURCH TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

BY MARC CHALUFOUR

One of Haksun Joo's first acts as senior pastor at Dongsoo Methodist Church was traveling door to door through the city of Incheon, on the western coast of South Korea, visiting each member of the church in their home. A theme from those conversations that stuck with the young reverend was the district's significant population of people with disabilities—and the lack of a spiritual home able to serve them.

Joo ('02) looked closer at the surrounding community and discovered five schools, all within three miles of his church, serving people with vision, hearing, neurological, and psychological disabilities. Joo was also getting information from another source: "My wife majored in special education at Boston College," he says. "She encouraged me to find a way to reach people with disabilities and help them. Her concern was a very good starting point of this ministry."

Higher education had a big influence on Joo as well. He had studied at a seminary in Korea prior to Boston University, and he quickly noticed a difference at STH. "BU opened my

thoughts and mind and helped me to see ministry as more inclusive and open to people who are different from me," he says. "STH is a community of many different people from many places, and also many different denominations." He recalls the diversity of his cohort fondly.

He credits STH with preparing him to assume his role at Dongsoo. "Boston

University's a very good place for challenging and changing leaders' minds," Joo says. He returned to South Korea with a vision for the church that he still has today: "We really want to be a true community, with inclusiveness and integration," he says.

Inspired after his initial tour of the

Incheon community, Joo traveled to the local schools to introduce himself, invited people to visit Dongsoo Methodist Church, and began hosting Sunday meals for people with disabilities. Joo wanted to provide these new members with access to everything going on at the church, from services to discipleship trainings. "Even in the church school we have children with disabilities," he says. "That's a very good aspect of our ministry—that's good for the education of our new generation."

"BU opened my thoughts and mind and helped me to see ministry as more inclusive and open to people who are different from me."

— Haksun Joo



On a 2016 trip to South Korea, Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore visited with Haksun Joo and his wife, Grace Hyeri Ko, in Incheon.

He also reached out to his existing congregation to build support. On several occasions, both to better understand the needs of people with disabilities and to empathize with their experiences, members of the church met to learn more about how people with disabilities might interact with the building's physical space—and some of the barriers in their way. "That was the first step to opening our church members' minds," Joo says. These efforts also highlighted a potential problem: "We found that our church facility is not friendly for people with disabilities," Joo says.

A major renovation followed, including installation of ramps, elevators, accessible bathrooms, and braille signs. They also invested in a wheelchair-accessible van to help people travel to and from the church. As word

of these efforts spread, church membership grew.

"The Dongsoo Methodist Church was more accessible to people of all abilities than any I've ever seen," says Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore, who visited the church in 2016. "The congregation included many people with disabilities who were known by name and were active participants in the relationships and ministries of the community. The sanctuary provided physically accessible seats in the front rows, as well as accommodations for people with special needs in seeing, hearing, and participating in the worship service. I was deeply impressed by this ministry of love."

Today, Dongsoo Methodist Church's congregation of 1,000 adults and 250 children includes more than 100 people with disabilities. "Without them we are not a truly whole community," Joo says. □

This page: Courtesy Haksun Joo; Facing page: Courtesy Mary Elizabeth Moore

ENGINEERING A MINISTRY



Cedric Hughes Jones, Jr. ('92)

PASTOR AND ENGINEER CEDRIC HUGHES JONES, JR. HAS LESSONS FOR THE CHURCH FROM THE CORPORATE WORLD—AND VICE VERSA

BY ANDREW THURSTON

As a worldwide vice president at Johnson & Johnson, Cedric Hughes Jones, Jr. was a corporate highflyer: he led and developed brands, negotiated licenses, and helped the company launch new businesses. But while he cut deals and managed staff, he was also serving God. Ordained as a Baptist minister in his early 20s, Jones ('92) preached regularly when he wasn't on the clock; he even officiated a colleague's wedding.

Ministry is no longer a part-time occupation for Jones—he left Johnson & Johnson in 2007 and is now the senior pastor at Mount Zion Baptist Church, Philadelphia. But there's still a dash of the top executive inside him: church budget talk is infused with thoughts on how to "lead in a disruptive age"; community programs offer, albeit with a knowing chuckle, a "win-win."

Having spent decades straddling two worlds, Jones has advice for helping the church solve problems by thinking like a nimble business and for corporations to lift up their employees by acting like a caring congregation.

Ministry was in Jones' family—his father was a deacon and his mother a church music director in Charlotte, N.C.—but, growing up, it never made his list of possible professions. His interest was in engineering, and in 1983 he earned an undergraduate degree

in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

After graduation, Jones joined consumer goods multinational Procter & Gamble, putting his engineering expertise to use in product research and packaging development. His initial plan had been to supplement his education with a dual graduate degree in law and business, but he heard the call to ministry and started on a different path. "I felt led to do an MDiv MBA," he says.

After two years at P&G, Jones left for an MBA at the University of Pennsylvania under a fellowship from pharmaceutical giant J&J. The deal was that he'd join the company after graduation, but he negotiated an extension that would allow him to go back to school again: for an MDiv at STH.

He started his theology degree just a few days after collecting his MBA. Jones says he selected STH because it had a focus not just on academics, but on the practical life of the church. And though he worked part time at J&J throughout, his eye was on the pulpit.

"Having been educated in a creative problem-solving tradition in engineering, I think what I took from BU were ways of thinking about issues theologically and from a strong biblical base," says Jones.

After STH, Jones returned full time to the corporate world, expecting to work for a couple of years, then switch to ministry.

He ended up spending 20 years with J&J, balancing his day job with preaching and other ministerial duties.

"That was not necessarily by plan or design, it was discernment," says Jones. "I had a pretty clear idea I would be engaged in full-time ministry at some point, it just happened later than I would have imagined, and not for anything other than, it's just the way it unfolded. My sense of being a called servant of God, a Christian minister of the Gospel, was there virtually throughout my entire career."

"One thing from the church life that was part of my corporate life was this capacity to listen without presuming an answer."

—Cedric Hughes Jones, Jr.

In 2009—after a stint consulting and taking on a doctor of ministry degree at what is now the United Lutheran Seminary, Philadelphia—he joined Mount Zion, becoming the fourth pastor in its more than 100-year history.

Given his background, Jones has brought an infusion of business wisdom to Mount Zion, including how to roll with changing times. As churches battle declining attendance and shrinking budgets, Jones says they need to become more adept at reacting to that disruption, exploring new ways of ministering or securing funding.

"The culture of business of expecting change, adapting to it, and trying to lead in that kind of disruptive age is something that churches can learn from," he says.

At Mount Zion, Jones is doing that through connections with local colleges. In 2010, he joined with a professor of physical therapy at University of the

Sciences to launch an exercise program to get seniors moving and, Jones says, "strengthen their own capacities for life." Led by students and researchers, it allows community members to benefit from cutting-edge exercise programs—and for the students to gain valuable real-world experience. It also fits with Mount Zion's commitment to crafting a public ministry focused on health, economics, and education.

"They reflect both the unique heritage of the church and my background," says Jones of Mount Zion's public ministry priorities. "In that respect, there's a nice alignment, and so we have been intentional about doing ministry with others, especially in those three areas."

Jones says the business world can learn from the church, too.

"One thing from the church life that was part of my corporate life was this capacity to listen and to listen without presuming an answer," he says. "In ministry, you get accustomed to listening to not only what is said, but also what is *felt*; I think in the corporate life, that lesson is not always there."

While business leaders' focus may be on increasing shareholder value, Jones says executives may find that's easier to achieve by better supporting staff, building them up and bringing them together as the best ministers do.

"The church does not come, at least congregations I'm familiar with, with some huge set of financial levers to solve problems; we have to solve problems with people—people who are inspired to do great things." □

Courtesy Mount Zion Baptist Church

A SAFE SPACE FOR ALL



Shannon Karafanda ('18)

TEACHING UMC'S SAFE SANCTUARIES POLICY IS A SMALL PART OF SHANNON KARAFANDA'S JOB—BUT IT HAS A BIG IMPACT

BY MARC CHALUFOUR

Shannon Karafanda already had a master of divinity from Emory University and an associate pastor position at Cornerstone United Methodist Church in Newnan, Ga., when a colleague urged her to continue her studies in a doctor of ministry program. “The church needs you to study this,” he told her. “It needs more people to study leadership.”

Karafanda ('18) began reading about STH and was drawn to its focus on transformational leadership. “That word, transformational, just stood out and kind of grabbed my heart and wouldn't let go,” she says. Now she's applying those transformational leadership skills as an executive pastor at Peachtree City United Methodist Church in Georgia, which has a congregation of nearly 600. A key piece of her job is the implementation of the United Methodist Church's Safe Sanctuaries policy—a set of guidelines adopted in 1996 to ensure that children will be safe from sexual abuse within the church.

“There are so many things that will keep kids from hearing the message of our mission,” Karafanda says. “This does not need to be one of them.” The policy formalizes a series of precautions for churches to take, including background checks and trainings for anyone working with youth or vulnerable adults. In recent years, the UMC has also expanded the guidelines to cover a broader range of potential threats, from

active shooter situations to cybercrime.

For Karafanda, responsibility for Safe Sanctuaries is, in part, an administrative role—conducting trainings and finding enough volunteers for youth events, for example—but the work has also broadened her understanding of “safety.”

“Sometimes we don't realize that what ‘safety’ means

to someone sitting in our congregation on a Sunday morning might be very different from what we think of,” she says. “Different age groups think about safety differently. People who are struggling either with anxiety or some sort of mental health trauma in their past will look at safety differently.”

“Sometimes we don't realize that what ‘safety’ means to someone sitting in our congregation on a Sunday morning might be very different from what we think of.”

—Shannon Karafanda

Photos courtesy of Peachtree City United Methodist Church



Karafanda takes a holistic approach to teaching the Safe Sanctuaries policy at Peachtree City UMC.

That means approaching the UMC policy in a holistic manner, looking beyond its specific recommendations to empathize with the unique needs of congregation members. “Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,” Karafanda says. “That message cannot get through if people don't feel safe.”

Karafanda recalls one Sunday when a fire alarm triggered the automatic shutdown of the church's elevators. Sunday school attendees who use wheelchairs and walkers had no way of getting off the third floor. Fortunately, it

was a false alarm. But it prompted Karafanda and her colleagues to reassign classrooms, moving those groups to the first floor where they would be able to exit easily in case of a real emergency. She realized that pastoral care doesn't need to be reserved for a tragedy. “Just thinking through what an emergency would be is important,” she says.

Karafanda's work at Peachtree City is a continuation of more than a decade of experience with the Safe Sanctuaries policy. She first studied with one of the policy's original authors, Joy Melton, and she still reaches out to Melton

when challenging questions arise. Increasingly, though, Karafanda is the expert who others seek advice from. She estimates she's trained 300 people, including members of her own congregation and those at churches where she's been invited to conduct trainings.

“There are times when people will come to me and say, ‘Thank you for doing this.’ And then they'll tell me a story about when they weren't safe, when something happened to them, when they were either physically or sexually abused as a child,” Karafanda says. “Just having a policy in place really calms the mind.” □



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WOUNDS OF CONSCIENCE

Why the nation shouldn't leave veterans to deal with moral injuries alone

BY SHELLY RAMBO

1. Shay names moral injury explicitly in *Odysseus in America*, but he identifies veteran wounds as moral in nature toward the end of *Achilles in Vietnam* when he begins to make proposals for treatment and prevention of combat trauma. Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York, NY: Scribner, 2002), 5; *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 187ff.

2. Brett T. Litz, Leslie Lebowitz, Matt J. Gray, and William Nash, *Adaptive Disclosure: A New Treatment for Military Trauma, Loss, and Moral Injury* (New York, NY: Guilford Press, 2016).

3. Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury After War* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2013).

Wounds do not simply go away. This is one of the central insights of my theological work, as it has been shaped by interdisciplinary studies of trauma. More recently, however, moral injury has emerged as distinct from trauma, to name a different kind of wound—a wound of conscience. Moral injury names what can happen when someone carries out or witnesses acts that violate their sense of right and wrong. When war psychiatrist Jonathan Shay first coined the term “moral injury,” he was speaking to those responsible for conducting war, especially to the military commanders ordering their subordinates to carry out acts of war.¹ Focusing on the authorities, Shay presents the wound of moral injury within the structures of military power. For Shay, moral injury involved a call to accountability for those within the highest ranks of the military.

Through the efforts of psychologist Brett Litz and a team of researchers from the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the concept of moral injury entered veteran-care settings, as a clinical category describing the mark left on veterans from acts performed or witnessed in war. Veterans may have symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, but the source of suffering comes from experiences in which combatants engage in actions that compromise their core values and ideals. Whereas trauma is framed as a stress disorder, the transgression of one's sense of fundamental goodness may have distinctive effects, wounding one's sense of identity and imprinting the experience on one's soul.

This soul wound enters the diagnostic arena.² Whereas religious leaders were once arbiters of the moral territory of human life, clinical responses to moral injury explore what it would mean for clinicians to facilitate processes of forgiveness and repentance independent of religious settings.

The significance of moral injury for religious professionals was quickly recognized by religious leaders working closely with military veterans and chaplains. Most notably, theologians Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini began to envision a coalition of religious leaders, military leaders, and mental health professionals providing public education and research around moral injury.³

Pamela Lightsey, former associate dean for community life and lifelong learning at STH, and I cotaught a course, *War and the Human*, when she arrived at STH in 2011. *(Continued)*

About the Author



The research of **Shelly Rambo**, associate professor of theology, reflects ongoing commitments to strengthening the capacities of religious leaders to respond to violence and trauma. Her book *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma*—“important and beautifully written,” according to *Reading Religion*—explores the significance of resurrection wounds within the Christian tradition.

Jackie Ricciardi

Lightsey’s testimony to moral injury, via her son’s war experience, was featured in Brock and Lettini’s *Soul Repair*. This amplified the support for trauma and military chaplaincy that was already present in STH’s Religion and Conflict Transformation Program. Barbod Salimi, an assistant professor of philosophical psychology, theological ethics, and peace studies, Joshua Pederson, an associate professor of humanities at the College of General Studies, and I hosted a fall 2017 event, which drew journalist David Wood, author of *What Have We Done: The Moral Injury of Our Longest Wars* (Little, Brown and Company, 2016), to campus, as well as military chaplains, theologians, and scholars from

Moral injury is not a private matter; it is a public one. The wound results from a betrayal of trust; this trust is not a generalized trust in the world, but a trust in the authorities in the military chain of command.

across the University. Most recently, I presented at the Soul Repair Center’s one-day conference focused on spiritual care for moral injury at Iliff School of Theology.

Many working on moral injury within theology want to retain something of Shay’s original definition. Moral injury is not a private matter; it is a public one. The wound results from a betrayal of trust; this trust is not a generalized trust in the world, but a trust in the author-

ities in the military chain of command. The larger militarized society is implicated. Placing moral injury within a clinical framework risks privatizing the wound, and thus viewing it as an individual injury, located and treated in the agent alone. While this work of addressing the impact of war on the individual is important, the locus of responsibility

is wider. One of the most common phrases, “Thank you for your service,” has been analyzed from many angles. While the intentions behind the expression are sincere, it can be experienced by the veteran as a gloss, and as an unwillingness for the public to see the lived impact of war. This almost perfunctory response can operate like a tidy map placed over

the more tortuous territory of reintegration. For those coming to terms with what they have done or witnessed, the external mapping that calls one’s service honorable or even heroic may block the process necessary for veterans to reckon with the moral tear in the fabric of their lives.

Casting moral injury more broadly, the nation that fights must wrestle with the state of its soul. Displacement of the injury onto the soldier may

serve to keep the national conscience clear. And this may enact yet another betrayal, of leaving the soldier to carry the weight of war on her or his shoulders. Wrestling with moral injury, a veteran experiences dissonance between who they understand themselves to be and the acts that they have committed or witnessed. This dissonance can be a sign that the conscience is intact and doing important work. To pathologize moral injury or approach it as a disability to be accommodated may miss the opportunity for taking a good look at the ethical dimensions of our lives. Some theologians invoke the significance of liturgies and communal practices to facilitate a path of moral healing. In the midst of a collective body, transgressions are acknowledged and brought to the surface, not for the sake of condemnation nor for the sake of simple absolution.

Veteran moral injury surfaces important truths about the social and political textures of the collective. My work, focused on sacred wounds in the Christian tradition, situates Christian readers at the site of wounds as they appear on the body of the resurrected Jesus in John 19. This Johannine sequence in the Upper Room situates the “disciples” on the surface-boundary between interior and exterior.⁴ The wounds of trauma

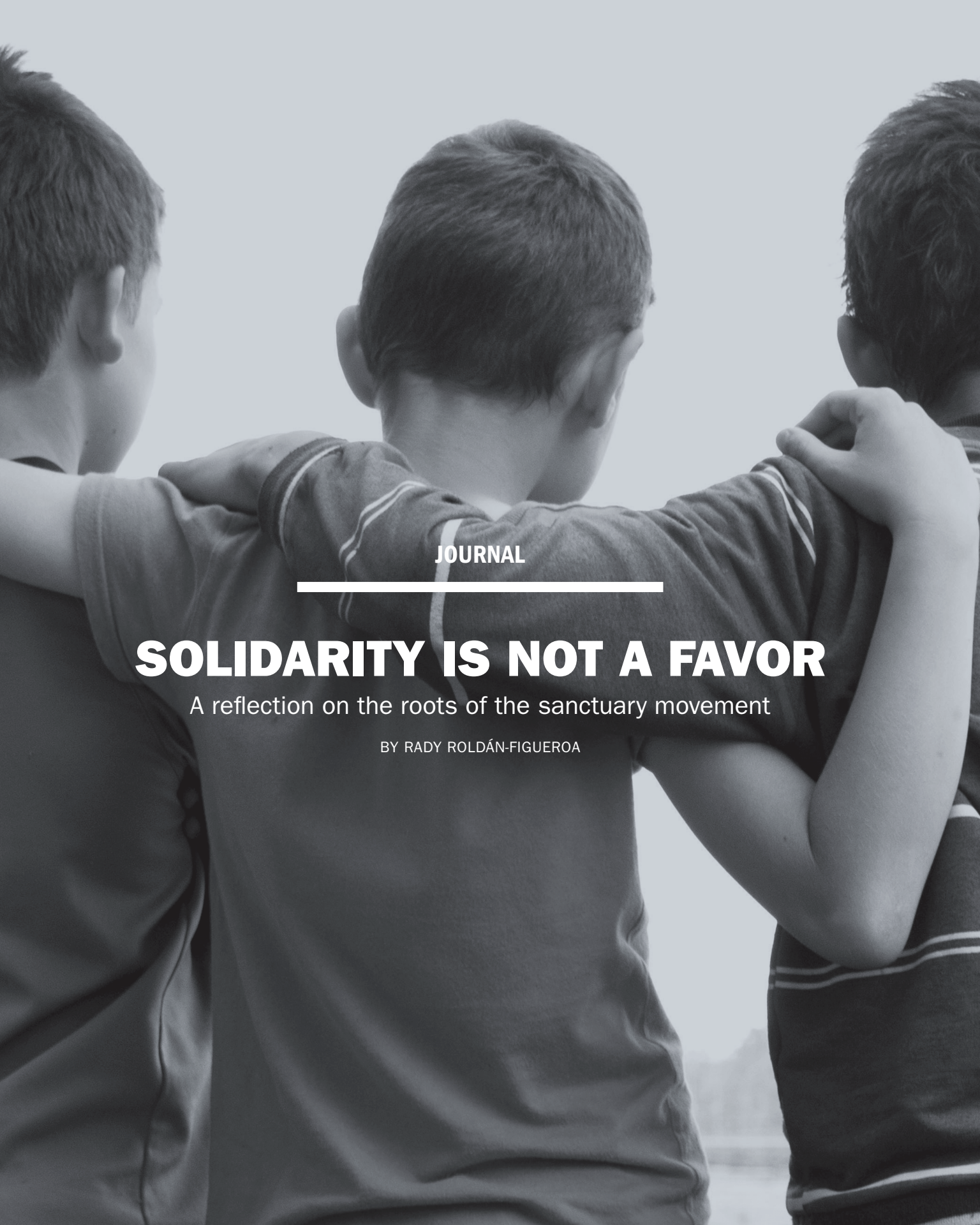
and moral injury often live below the surface of the skin. The wounds are there, but they are invisible when viewed from the outside. This outside is of great concern, both from the perspective of religious communities and the wider society. Religion scholar Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon argues that moral injury can reveal something important about the moral fiber of the collective that cannot—and should not—be simply folded into a treatment plan. He says that moral injury serves a prophetic function to signal that something has been lost, torn, and damaged in the soul of the fighting nation.⁵

The question for religious communities is whether this prophetic crying from the wound will be witnessed or whether it will be pushed below the surface. Can you see invisible wounds? Can you call them to the surface in order to bring the lost souls back to life? These questions are posed to modern inhabitants of the Upper Room. The wounds of trauma and moral injury require the cultivation of different ways of “seeing.” The spiritual exercises of prophetic communities involve seeing what others do not see and naming unpopular truths in the public marketplace. This is the terrain of prophets and prophetic communities. It is 21st-century soul work. □

To pathologize moral injury or approach it as a disability to be accommodated may miss the opportunity for taking a good look at the ethical dimensions of our lives.

4. Shelly Rambo, “Discovering Wounds: Veteran Healing and Resurrection in the Upper Room,” *Resurrecting Wounds: Living in the Afterlife of Trauma* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017).

5. Joseph Wiinikka-Lydon, “Moral Injury as Inherent Political Critique: The Prophetic Possibilities of a New Term,” *Political Theology*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 2017, 219-232.



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SOLIDARITY IS NOT A FAVOR

A reflection on the roots of the sanctuary movement

BY RADY ROLDÁN-FIGUEROA

1. Carolyn McDade and Bill Alberts, Sanctuary Planning Committee, Community Church of Boston, "Dear Friend," October 25, 1983, 2 pages, located at Community Church of Boston.

2. The extemporaneous speech was recorded on a cassette tape that is still kept at Community Church of Boston.

In 1984, the Maya activist Rigoberta Menchú Tum made a short visit to Community Church of Boston. She addressed a sympathetic audience of people concerned about the civil war in Guatemala and worried about the fate of Guatemalan refugees in the US. A year earlier, Community Church of Boston had declared itself a public sanctuary and in November of 1983, the congregation had welcomed "Manuel" to live in sanctuary in the church center at 565 Boylston Street. Manuel, who used the pseudonym in order to hide his true identity, came to the US illegally from his home country of Guatemala. He was a student, painter, and poet who left his country fearing for his life and seeking safety in the US. In Boston, he used his skills to call attention to the genocidal war taking place in Guatemala and to demand that asylum seekers in the US be treated fairly. Menchú Tum's visit to the Unitarian Universalist congregation was part of a public event organized by the Community Church of Boston's Sanctuary Planning Committee. That day and in that place, the two chief aims of the first sanctuary movement came together in the persons of Menchú Tum and Manuel.

Indeed, the sanctuary movement, which began in Arizona in 1982, sought to accomplish a twofold objective. Activists in the sanctuary movement intended to change US foreign policy toward Central America. In addition, they aspired to change US immigration policy. In the area of immigration, the sanctuary movement

specifically challenged the political process that governed the admission of refugees to the country as well as the level of protection granted or denied to people seeking asylum in the US. They saw a clear connection between the arrival in the US of asylum-seeking persons and US policy toward the ruling regimes of El Salvador and Guatemala. As Community Church of Boston's Sanctuary Planning Committee noted in their circular letter of October 25, 1983: "We are creating a new foreign policy, one in keeping with the values of respect for human dignity and self determination [sic]."¹

During her 1984 visit, Menchú Tum spoke through an interpreter for nearly an hour.² She mentioned how people who had been displaced by war endeavored to cope with their reality while preserving their identity and dignity. She described scenes of violence and cultural repression as well as the

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About the Author



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Philippa R. Mpunzwana



BU students protesting President Trump's January 2017 executive order on immigration.

resulting internal displacement of Maya people throughout the country and the region. She highlighted the work of Maya women in the preservation of rich cultural traditions. Then, at one important point, she stated in a deep, sober tone, “Solidaridad no es un favor.” Solidarity is not a favor.

Her succinct statement enclosed within it a grave truth to which we still need to pay attention in immigration-related activism today. Solidarity

Solidarity with immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, the undocumented, the “sans-papiers,” as well as the internally and internationally displaced people, is not a favor. We should not think of solidarity as an act of exceptional kindness. [It appeals] to the fundamental bond or tie that links all human persons.

with immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, the undocumented, the “sans-papiers,” as well as the internally and internationally displaced people, is not a favor. We should not think of solidarity as an act of exceptional kindness. Menchú Tum was not asking for kindness, friendly regard, or

goodwill. Instead, she was appealing to the fundamental bond or tie that links all human persons. She was thinking of the union of purpose, hopes, and

3. Martinez’s poem has been published in several collections. Here, I am citing from the poem as published in, “Poems by Demetria Martinez,” *The Pinnacle*, December 6, 1989.

4. The case was covered by the regional and national press; for a detailed journalistic overview see Alokparna Sarkar-Basu, “Martinez: The Voice of the Unfortunate,” *The Pinnacle*, December 6, 1989, 3.

5. “Poems by Demetria Martinez,” *The Pinnacle*, December 6, 1989, 10.

6. Robbie Davis-Floyd and Elizabeth Davis, “Intuition as Authoritative Knowledge in Midwifery and Homebirth,” in ed. Robbie Davis-Floyd and P. Sven Arvidson, *Intuition: The Inside Story. Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 145.

aspirations that the Maya people of Guatemala had with people in other places, including the US. She was asking her New England audience to feel, think, and see as the Maya people of Guatemala and to experience indignation.

The first sanctuary movement was national and activists throughout the country responded to the Central American refugee crisis with the kind of indignation that Menchú Tum was hoping to elicit in Boston. For instance, the New Mexico poet, journalist, and activist Demetria Martinez captured very vividly the real meaning of solidarity in her poem “Nativity: For Two Salvadoran Women, 1986–87.”³ She was one of the many advocates who sought to live in solidarity with the displaced people of El Salvador and Guatemala.

In 1986, Martinez traveled to the border, accompanying Glen Remer-Thamert, a retired minister, as he assisted two Salvadoran women in their journey to Albuquerque. In 1987, they were both indicted by the federal government under charges of conspiracy against the United States. The case against them was so ill-founded that they were acquitted in a matter of hours.⁴ “Nativity: For Two

Salvadoran Women” was inspired by the incident. The poem is built around a refrain that explains why the pregnant women left El Salvador: “It is impossible to raise a child in that country.”

Yet, the verses that best capture Martinez’s sense of solidarity are found in the last stanza:

*A North American reporter,
I smile, you tell me you are due
In December, we nod,
Knowing what women know...⁵*

Martinez experienced solidarity as a form of intuition. Midwifery experts Robbie Davis-Floyd and Elizabeth Davis described intuition as a form of “knowing that comes to us from the inside of our bodies, arising as a ‘gut feeling.’”⁶ Like Menchú Tum and the Salvadoran women, Martinez knew that solidarity is a different way

Martinez experienced solidarity as a form of intuition.... Like Menchú Tum and the Salvadoran women, Martinez knew that solidarity is a different way of knowing our common humanity. They also knew that solidarity is not a favor.

of knowing our common humanity. They also knew that solidarity is not a favor. Hopefully the new generation of sanctuary activists will be inspired by the examples of the first sanctuary movement. More important, however, is that we continue to grow in our global awareness in order to overcome the walls of nationalistic pride and ethnic and racial chauvinism. □

JOURNAL

RESPONDING TO TRAGEDY

Moving from “thoughts and prayers” to prayerful protest

BY MONTAGUE WILLIAMS

1. We emphasized a focus on “action” to communicate the ways this vigil would resist the commonly critiqued practices associated with prayer vigils.

2. Executive minister of justice and local church ministries for the United Church of Christ and senior pastor of Christ The King United Church of Christ in Florissant, Missouri.

The call for prayer amidst public tragedy and social injustice has been so frequent in recent years that many have asked, “What’s the point?” I noticed this perspective emerging a few years ago while serving as the chaplain of a small multicultural Christian college in Boston, as students wrestled with how to respond to national news stories of unarmed minoritized men and women dying at the hands and guns of police officers. Along with the angst of coming to terms with police brutality, several students wondered if there is anything more that Christians can do than offer thoughts and prayers. I worked with some students and fellow faculty to plan a “Prayer and Action Vigil” on our college campus in order to lament together and discern ways to address the glaring injustices in tangible ways.¹ However, because a public protest on Boston Common in response to the same injustices happened to be planned for the same time, many students felt torn about which event to attend—the prayer vigil or the protest.

This juxtaposition spoke volumes. Prayer vigil or protest? Must that be the question? I had participated in an STH-sponsored trip to the 2015 National Gathering of Black Scholars that took place during the one-year memorial for Michael Brown. There, I heard Traci Blackmon of the United Church of Christ talk about moving from concern about the protests to actively supporting and learning from the young people protesting. I worshipped in Wellspring Church alongside many who traveled from all over the country. And when I joined hundreds of people on Canfield Drive in the place where Michael

Brown’s body once lay, every groan that rumbled within me and through my body was an offering of prayer. Considering the way Jesus’ very life, death, and resurrection disrupted the political status quo, it would seem appropriate for protests to be central to Christian faith and community. Understanding this, however, remains difficult in light of the market-driven portrayals of protests (especially protests against racial injustice) as inherently violent. With the goal of helping students explore interconnections between Christian faith and the struggle for racial justice, I decided to lead a trip to Ferguson as one of the college’s 2017 service-learning trip options.

OUR FERGUSON PILGRIMAGE

This pilgrimage included nine undergraduate students from different racialized, gendered, and class-based experiences and identifications. The goal was to bring together students with different questions about the realities of

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About the Author



Montague Williams ('18) is an associate professor of church, culture, and society at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, Calif. Before that, he was a chaplain and associate professor in Quincy, Mass. Beyond his regular teaching life, he offers workshops on the intersection of theology and youth and young adult ministry.

racial injustice who could commit to deep listening and meaningful dialogue and discernment with each other. While other trips in the program focused on service projects, this one was framed through the lens of a pilgrimage.

I often talk about the trip as a pilgrimage *in* Ferguson rather than a pilgrimage to Ferguson because the destination was not simply Ferguson, but the site on Canfield Drive

where Brown was killed. This stretch of pavement has quickly become a landmark in both the history of racial injustice and the fight for racial justice in the United States, and I wanted the group to be able to visit the site with meaningful reflection on the layered stories of Brown's life and death, as well as familiarity with the

layered stories of racial justice advocates who protested in that space. We spent one week traveling to various sites in and around Ferguson to meet with pastors, activists, and other leaders who were part of the protests. We listened to their stories and reflected on the great deal of insight they shared regarding their work. At the end of each meeting, we prayed with the storyteller and thanked them for sharing. Throughout the week, we wrote a Eucharistic liturgy that weaved in the stories and insights from our many interactions. And toward the end of the week, we participated in that Eucharistic liturgy together on Canfield Drive. This culmi-

nating act of publicly gathering in this space to remember how Jesus lived, died, and was resurrected in solidarity with those whose blood has been and will be spilt and whose bodies are broken by the proponents of injustice transformed the pilgrimage to be one of prayerful protest.

It framed everything we did before that as a journey in and toward prayerful protest, and it framed the return home as a benedictory "sending out" to continue the work of prayerful protest in our various vocations and contexts.

[Remembering] how Jesus lived, died, and was resurrected in solidarity with those whose blood has been and will be spilt by the proponents of injustice transformed the pilgrimage to be one of prayerful protest.

PRAYERFUL PROTEST

All nine pilgrimage participants expressed that the trip contributed to their own sense of vocational clarity, and several students changed their major and/or postcollege plans

to embrace the intersection of Christian spirituality and racial justice. I've had the unique opportunity to share my experiences on this pilgrimage at several conferences and retreats over the last year. I have even seen the fruit spill over into the creative imagination of other leaders seeking to help young people in their own contexts find ways to embody prayer and protest together.

The temptation to place the church's prayer life in competition with the church's prophetic presence extends to a myriad of social issues. I was recently struck by the words of Susan Orfanos, the mother of Telemachus Orfanos, who

3. Isaac Stanley-Becker, "Thousand Oaks parents: 'I don't want prayers. I don't want thoughts. I want gun control.'" *Washington Post* ([washingtonpost.com/nation/2018/11/09/thousand-oaks-parents-i-dont-want-prayers-i-dont-want-thoughts-i-want-gun-control/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2018/11/09/thousand-oaks-parents-i-dont-want-prayers-i-dont-want-thoughts-i-want-gun-control/)). November 9, 2018.

tragically died in the 2018 mass-casualty shooting in Thousand Oaks, Calif. With a determined stance and passionate voice, she turned to her local news camera and declared, "I don't want prayers. I don't want thoughts. I want gun control.... And I hope to God nobody sends me any more prayers."³ Some may think she is dismissing prayer, but she "*hope[s]* to God nobody sends [her] any more prayers." Rather than a

mere partisan statement, her passionate plea was itself a prayer of lament about her son's death and supplication for the lives of others. I hear her words as begging God to move people of faith. Whether we are standing with protesters or casting a ballot, whether we are visiting the incarcerated or meeting with lawmakers, may we move from the juxtaposition of prayer and protest to embrace lives of prayerful protest. □





JOURNAL

DON'T LOOK AWAY

Seeking personal encounters in a partisan world

BY BARBOD SALIMI

“Look at me when I’m talking to you.” Despite its being uttered in a desperate and pleading tone, this was hardly a feeble request. On the contrary, it was a strong demand. Seconds later, another demand was delivered, seemingly motivated by the same intention. “Don’t look away from me.”

On the receiving end of these words was Senator Jeff Flake, the Arizona Republican. Flake—who was being confronted by two women identifying themselves as survivors of sexual assault, while heading to an elevator on his way back to the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Brett Kavanaugh’s Supreme Court nomination—immediately tried to sidestep the encounter. Interrupting the woman while nervously glancing at the elevator buttons, Flake insinuated that he had more important things to do than listen to her in that moment, responding, “I need to go. I need to go to the hearing.”

What makes this encounter one that captured the attention of so many is what ensued immediately after Flake’s futile attempt at a dodge and what happened later, when he eventually did return to the hearing. Immediately after this initial exchange, Flake was met with the above-mentioned demands. He wasn’t going to be let off easy—not by these women, not on that important and fateful day. He *had* to face them; that they made sure of. Moments later, he had apparently had a change of heart, reversing his previous indication that he’d go on to vote to confirm Kavanaugh. In the days following this powerful encounter, Flake was praised as an unlikely (or, at least, unexpected) hero in this painful chapter of

American history. Given Flake’s decision to ultimately approve Kavanaugh’s nomination, his hero status is certainly up for debate and discussion. Less questionable, however, is the heroism and courage displayed by the two women, whose names are Ana Maria Archila and Maria Gallagher.

For a moment, let’s attempt a virtually impossible thought experiment by detaching the usual partisan politics from the unfortunate circumstances in which we find ourselves. Let’s disregard the antagonism and divisiveness that have risen to such alarming levels in the wake of the 2016 presidential election. And let’s even try to set aside the pervasiveness of sexual assault, harassment, and trauma that have infected our society and culture for generations, culminating in encounters like this. Though it may seem absurd and irresponsible to engage in such a thought experiment, I submit that doing so may actually point us toward a deeper reality of what transpired in that elevator and, as a result, clue us in to invaluable ethical insights that can guide us to a better tomorrow. Pursuing this thought experiment brings us right back to the funda-

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About the Author



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Courtesy of Barbod Salimi

mental nature of this encounter, and the demands made within it. By insisting that Flake look at her as she spoke, Gallagher essentially evacuated the situation of ideology, rendering simple perspectives and concepts null and void. In other words, any preconceived notion or agenda that Flake may or may not have had about the matters at hand were in effect bypassed by Gallagher's demand. "Look at me when I'm talking to you" and "Don't look away from me" are not political statements.

They are not theoretical arguments or anecdotal stances. They are statements that beg for and press toward the recognition of humanity between two people, no matter the incommensurability of stances that they may hold. To look at someone, to truly see them, is not only to dignify them in a way devoid of pre-

conception and prejudice but also a means toward a type of transcendence, the likes of which promotes the abandonment of ego, the relinquishment of unjust power, and, ultimately, an appeal to something beyond the self, be it spiritually grounded or principled in ultimate ethics. Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas elegantly described this radical spiritual-interpersonal domain, asserting that "nothing is more direct than the face to face, which is straightforwardness itself."¹

In viewing the video footage of Flake's face-to-face encounter with Archila and Gallagher, one can't help but notice the

moment when the dynamic drastically changed, when Flake appeared to move beyond his prior stance and into a new terrain of humanizing the two women who stood before him. This was the moment when things became less about traditional procedure or legal prudence and more about, in Lévinas's terms, "straightforwardness itself." His demeanor shifted and he seemed to soften into a posture of receptivity, willing to straightforwardly be impacted by the human beings plead-

ing with him, rather than remain resolute in self-assuredness.

The spatial-material reality of the situation must not be neglected either. For several minutes, Flake was trapped with the elevator doors being blocked by Archila. He was unable to escape the difficulty of being overwhelmed by the will being imposed upon him.

Though this sort of entrapment is obviously nothing compared to that experienced by victims of sexual assault, the poetic nature of the optics is a force to be reckoned with.

Straightforwardness of this (interpersonal) sort rests at the heart of many religious and spiritual traditions. From the notion of karmic fruitfulness in Buddhism to *chesed* in Judaism, ethics that are based in, or informed by, a spiritual-religious dimension seem to emphasize the importance of pure goodness toward others, the likes of which should be rid of ideological predisposition. Such focus can serve to redirect

1. Emmanuel Lévinas. *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1961/1991), 78.

"Look at me when I'm talking to you" and "Don't look away from me" are not political statements.... They beg for and press toward the recognition of humanity between two people.

Our fundamental task and responsibility in times like these is to see one another, not to merely make up our minds. Our society's report card is not looking good in that regard.

our energies toward the transformation, rather than proliferation, of conflict.

So perhaps a way forward into a more ethical and just society, free of unnecessary violence and oppression of various sorts, sexual included, is not to double down on our politics or to reiterate the all-too-common polarizing methods of dialogue that collapse us into being interpersonally unaffected and ethically ineffective.

Maybe the first step toward repair is to actually do what is more fundamental, though vastly more difficult: to see one another as human beings, to honor each other with more face to face and less toe-to-toe. This may well capture the core contribution of spirituality and religion to the domain of human conflict, and the transformation thereof.

In the weeks after Christine Blasey Ford's testimony (Ford testified about her allegation that Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her in high school), many weighed in on the question "Do you believe her?" Implicit in that question is suspicion, polarization, and ideological baggage, some of which certainly has its place amidst allegations of this magnitude. But what if belief were construed in a different sense, one consisting of common humanity and acknowledgment, regardless of what one's political-ideological "position" is? It is often said that seeing is believing. We should think long and hard about what

that could mean in the web of human relations. My goal is not to downplay either the legitimacy of granting the benefit of the doubt to those who may need it or the legitimacy of a principle like *innocent until proven guilty*. The crux of what I'm suggesting rests not in the realm of guilt or innocence but rather in the realm of considering *how* we discuss such dire matters. Is our conduct ideological, or is it humanizing? We need less of the former and more of the latter.

And so the point here isn't to substantiate Blasey Ford's testimony. Nor is it wise to convict (or exonerate) Kavanaugh without appeal to due process and investigation. In putting those serious determinations aside, a key ethical takeaway remains: our fundamental task and responsibility in times like these is to see one another, not

to merely make up our minds. Our society's report card is not looking good in that regard. "Do you believe her?" ought to be replaced with sentiments like "Are we, collectively, seeing her?" To do otherwise is to slip into a sociocultural form of denial that brings about toxic and abhorrent consequences. Senator Flake couldn't bring himself to commit this sort of denial. He couldn't retreat into what he thought he already knew. He couldn't move on with his day, convinced that justice had been, or would be, achieved. In short, he couldn't look away. Someone made sure of that. □

SERMON

WE ARE THE BREAD OF LIFE

Sampling life's diverse flavors at the communal table

BY KAREN COLEMAN

When I was a child, my parents and I would drive out to my Great Aunt Jessie and Great Uncle Stewart's place "in the country." It was a place where my cousin and I were predictable in our actions. First, we would stop in the kitchen to see if Aunt Jessie was going to make peach ice cream, which also meant that we were going to take turns hand turning it on the front porch. On the counter, there was a large earthenware mixing bowl covered with a damp dish towel.

That was the indication we were having rolls with dinner. My cousin and I were then given instructions on what fresh vegetables to pick: Kentucky Wonder beans, corn, tomatoes, lettuce, to name a few. Returning from our outdoor farmers market, my cousin and I then took a walk down the dirt road to the house of Mr. and Mrs. Mack. The Macks had a real farm, complete with a barn and animals. Mr. Mack would let us feed the chickens, and Mrs. Mack would treat us to fresh-squeezed lemonade and homemade chocolate chip cookies. Satisfied, we would run back to the house to begin churning the ice cream. My father would take the sealed metal container of milk, cream, sugar, and peaches and secure it in the ice cream maker, surround it with ice and top it off with rock salt. I preferred to churn later in the process as what I really wanted to do was to punch down the dough for the rolls. I remember my Aunt Jessie saying, "Give it a good punch." My small hand got lost in the dough that surrounded it. She would take the back of a dinner knife and scrape the dough off my hand. I would

watch her intently knead the dough: she rolled the dough out on a wooden board on which she had spread flour, then she would cut circles of dough with a drinking glass to form the rolls. Each roll was placed carefully on a greased baking sheet, and the remaining dough was gathered and the process repeated until there were two full pans of rolls. Another rise, then brushed with melted butter and placed in the oven. The house smelled wonderful. It was as a young child that I learned that making bread is an act of love.

Over the years, I have made yeast breads, but nothing ever equaled my Aunt Jessie's rolls. But I continue to hold my truth that making bread is an act of love. I recall making a loaf of challah and my father and I sitting at the dining table, a warm loaf of bread and a plate of butter between us.

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About the Author



Karen Coleman is the associate chaplain for Episcopal Ministry at Marsh Chapel. She also is a spiritual director through the spiritual life office at STH. Coleman recently served as rector of St. James Episcopal Church, Somerville, from 2010 until October 2017. She was the first African American woman installed as a rector in the history of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

Cydney Scott

My current love for bread baking came from reading Michael Pollan's book *Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation* (Penguin, 2013).

Bread, as we have come to know it in the modern context, is the result of the advent of roller mills that made white flour widely available and of the commercialization of yeast in the 1880s. While this made life easier and made bread commercially available for purchase, it also took much of the nutrition out of bread. The staple of the dinner table in the '50s, '60s, and '70s was predictable in color and pretty tasteless.

Ask any serious current bread maker and they will tell you time and time again, making bread is an act of love. My friend Julie gifted me with starter yeast last year. Since then, I have tended, fed, and used the yeast to bake bread. That act of love hasn't been easy, and at many times it



In the same way that the focus on mass feeding has been on the miracle and not on the food itself, so, too, with today's proclamation that Jesus is the "bread of life," we usually focus our attention on Jesus, rather than on the bread.

appeared one-sided in the yeast's favor. Yeast has popped out of containers, moved in mysterious ways along the kitchen counter, and made its way onto the floor to continue expanding in the process. Julie says this means that I am doing it right. Baking bread is a gift of love and an abundant, life-giving, and sustaining gift.

So, when Jesus says "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35), are we looking at Jesus as boring factory-made bread? What comes to mind when we hear "I am the bread of life"?

Think of the bread that we use for communion. In most Episcopal and Anglican churches, we use the commu-

nion wafer. It's easy, convenient, and it comes in a resealable container of 500 and it has no resemblance to the taste of bread. Is this the "bread of life" to which Jesus likened himself?

John 6:35, 41–51, begins with Jesus' proclamation, "I am the bread of life." There's also the story from the Gospels that has come to be known as the feeding of the five thousand, where many hungry people were fed because there was love and sharing enough for all. The focus of this feeding story has been on the meal, with little attention paid to the bread itself and what it might signify. In the same way that the focus on mass feeding has been on the miracle and not on the food itself, so, too, with today's proclamation that Jesus is the "bread of life," we usually focus our attention on Jesus, rather than on the bread.

But how can we begin to understand what Jesus was saying about himself until we look more closely at the bread? When Jesus talks about the bread, he is looking at a community that is all-inclusive. All-inclusive means all-inclusive because if we don't include ALL, we place restrictions on the way that we live our life in this world. We get predictable bread.

The passage from John's Gospel is a lesson about love, belief, and abundance. It is difficult to associate

mass-produced bread with the actual kneading and baking of a loaf. We are accustomed to a huge aisle devoted to bread in our local market. Abundance, yes. Not so much anything else!

Our lives—our families and friends—are enriched with a diversity of likes and dislikes. Why not our bread? And to turn that around: When Jesus spoke of himself as bread, as the Bread of Life, is it possible that he was speaking of richness of texture, of boldness of flavor? That he was inviting us to a greater feast in our life of faith?

Jesus' ministry was built on the rich foundation of many stories of feeding and being fed. We have one example from the Hebrew Bible. In 1 Kings (Kings 19:4), Elijah sets out on a long journey sustained by the gift of the

angel of the Lord: food! Not just once does the angel feed him, but twice. The angel commands him: "Get up and eat!" This wasn't just any food, but bread. Elijah "got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God."

Jesus was well-acquainted with the Exodus story (Exodus 12:33–42), and would have known the tradition that the Lord God sustained the Israelites in the wilderness with manna—bread—from heaven.

When Jesus spoke of himself as bread, as the Bread of Life, is it possible that he was speaking of richness of texture, of boldness of flavor? That he was inviting us to a greater feast in our life of faith?



The Exodus theme permeates John's Gospel, setting up a tension between the manna given from heaven to feed the people in the wilderness, and the Eucharistic bread that feeds us in the wilderness of our souls.

Somewhere in the midst of that tension we find the bread of life: not manna from God, not the flesh of Christ, but the Bread of Life, the bread that brings life.

Now if we continue on with John 6:52 ("The Jews then disputed among themselves..."), we have those who aren't quite sure about Jesus' claim of who and whose he is. Now, bear with

To eat the bread of life in love is to check our privileges at the door and stop for a moment to let the Holy Spirit into our hearts and into our thoughts.

moved north for the promise and fulfillment of a good job at Ford Motor Company. The pay was good and steady and moved many African Americans into the middle class. My father's older brothers went to work at Ford; however, my father was pulled aside by a fellow autoworker who said, "Oliver, this work is not for you, go to college."

me one moment as I am going to change the context of some of the commentaries about this passage. I am going with the phrase "the crowd began to complain." In my own family, my grandfather

It was a few weeks later that my father fell off a scaffolding and was given the time and space to consider his career path. His choice to go to college was initially met with a community that wasn't sure how a college education was going to lead to steady employment and provide for a family. Many a neighbor said, "You know Wyatt and Christine's child...he's going to college, he thinks he's better, who does he think he is?"

My father received a PhD, encouraged his younger brothers to obtain a college degree, and started a STEM

program to encourage and educate youth to explore careers in computer science and engineering. We have all known a

person or two in our lives who said, "You know what so-and-so's child is doing..." Do we say that in disbelief or do we say that in amazement for blessings that have been given to that person? This is not an old conversation. The writer of John knew the people they were speaking to, and knew the questions on their hearts and minds.

Jesus was baking something new. He was creating the yeast that would break from the plastic container on the counter, flow onto the kitchen counter, onto the floor, and out the door to feed the people.

This vision of bread given to us in John's Gospel teaches us that we will be fed, that we are enough, we are loved, we are fed. What does this love look like for us?

To eat the bread of life in love means that communities come together to have conversations about their differences and support each other when forms of racial hatred are expressed in their communities. To eat the bread of life in love is to check our privileges at the door and stop for a moment to let the Holy Spirit into our hearts and into our thoughts.

To eat the bread of life and love is to have compassion for one another even under the most difficult of circumstances. To eat the bread of life means we struggle and wiggle in comfortable and uncomfortable conversation with the other of differing opinions and we stay present. To eat the bread of life means we don't discount, belittle, or shame the other, as we are all "the other" at times. To break real bread is messy—crumbs fall everywhere, but there is a joy and a love in the sharing with others. Breaking bread is beautiful and messy. Breaking bread is comforting. Breaking bread is an amazing act of love.

Let us break bread together on our knees, or at our table, or when we encounter the other or one another daily in our journey. Amen. □

This article was adapted from a sermon delivered at Marsh Chapel at Boston University on August 12, 2018.

To break real bread is messy—crumbs fall everywhere, but there is a joy and a love in the sharing with others.

CRISES OF FAITH



Anastasia E. B. Kidd ('04,'18) is STH's director of enrollment and ordained clergy in the United Church of Christ.

ARE SEMINARIES EQUIPPED TO ADDRESS THIS ALL-TOO-COMMON DILEMMA?

BY ANASTASIA E. B. KIDD ('04,'18)

"You'll lose your faith in seminary." This warning came from my pastor back home in Tennessee after I asked him for a reference for my application to STH. He suggested that I attend a series of Vacation Bible School planning sessions instead. I was a young woman with a seedling call toward ordination in a denomination that did not allow for such a thing. When I packed my bags for Boston, his words still rang in my ears. I vowed not to let seminary ruin my faith.

Ultimately, it did not. By wrestling with my own understanding of God, I was able to come to a much deeper and more honest faith from which I minister today. But my pastor was also right. I did lose the faith of my childhood when my coursework shook the foundations of my world view. That internal conflict—an existential "crisis of faith"—is something that I've seen replicated time after time with current seminarians.

Now, from my vantage point as STH's director of enrollment, I welcome students into my office each fall who tell me why enrolling was a bad idea. They say they can't cut it academically, don't like being away from home, or never knew this was what seminary would be like. I hear patterns of my own first months in seminary. With gentle prodding I often uncover that the students have begun to question their beliefs about God and the church, or about their own calling, and

they're pondering withdrawing rather than face these questions. A few do leave STH, but most stay. Years later, I smile when I watch them walk across the chancel in their red robes to graduate. Still, I wished for more resources to support students undergoing these crises of faith.

I graduated in 2018 with my doctor of ministry after examining how to address this issue in the absence of those resources. I conducted two surveys: of those surveyed, 76 percent of STH MDiv students reported having undergone a crisis of faith, and 93 percent of the student services professionals at other mainline Protestant seminaries had witnessed such a crisis. The students reconciled their crises of faith with persistent theological study, intentional faith formation, and personal supportive guidance. I identified with this. Participation in worship, choirs, and spiritual retreats helped me exercise my faith even when it felt nonexistent. And conversations with caring pastoral mentors, staff, and faculty about their own faith questions offered hope that one day I, too, could be reconciled.

I've become an evangelist for supporting students' crises of faith within seminary curricula. I am heartened that STH faculty instituted a formation sequence for incoming students in 2018. But one doesn't have to be faculty: anyone with a listening ear can support students having crises of faith. I invite those who know someone in theological education to ask them about the state of their spirits. □

Nina Levine



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Margaret O'Connor ('03), left, and her spouse Susan Cartmell, both pastors, have included a gift to STH in their estate plans.

“STH gave me the opportunity to explore my call to ministry in many ways, including financially, spiritually, and academically. In gratitude, I have spent my years in ministry endeavoring to share that spirit of generosity and openness to spiritual exploration with the churches I have served. I have also supported STH financially, hoping that it will help the school offer the same support I received to others seeking to pursue their callings.”

Margaret O'Connor ('03)

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