

focus

Boston University School of Theology Summer 2015

→ Inside:

A Call for Justice from NAACP President
Cornell William Brooks ('87, Hon.'15)

An Oasis for Young Latinos

175 Years of Bold Leadership at STH

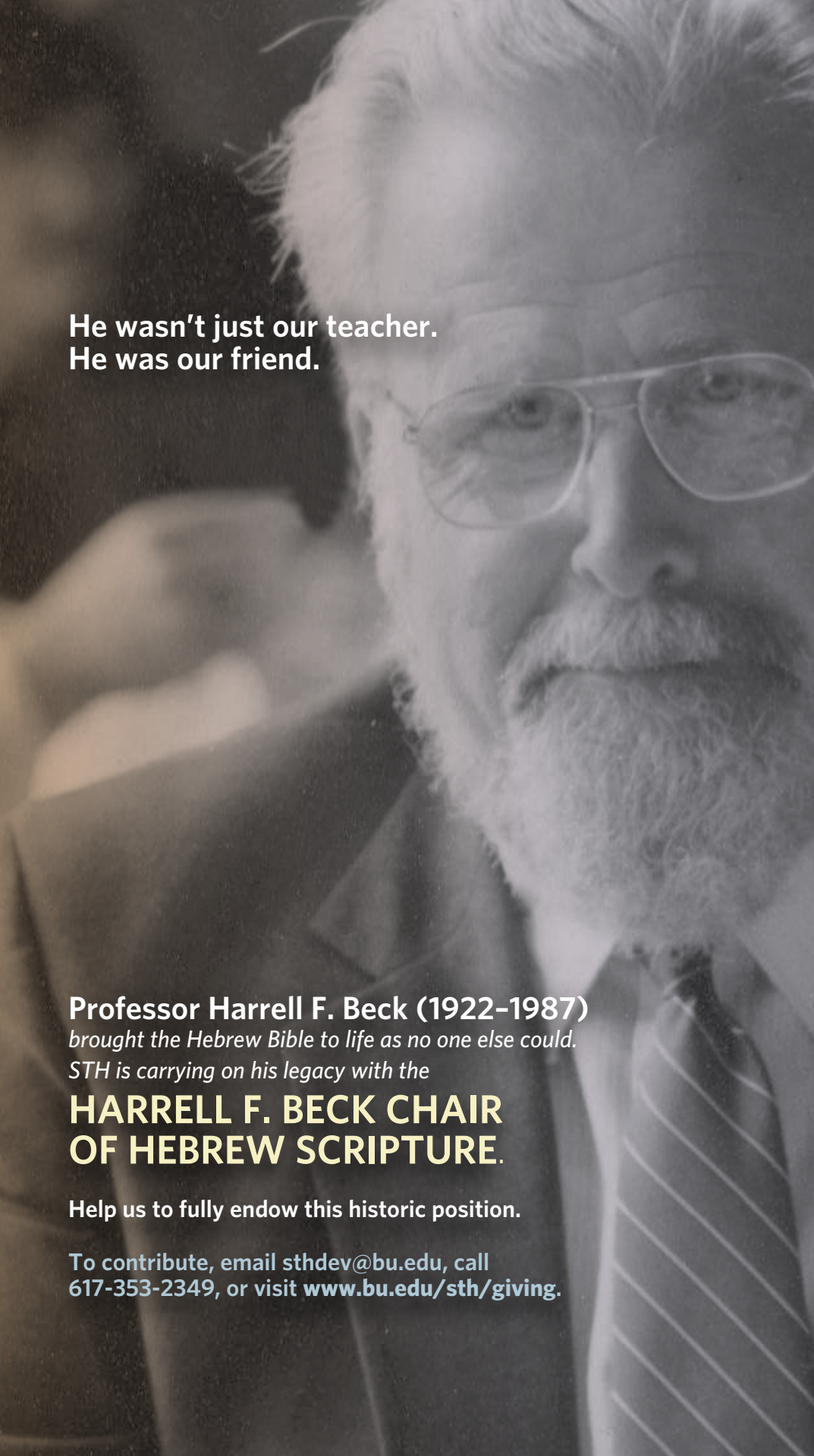
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Boston University
School of Theology

Summer 2015

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MARY ELIZABETH MOORE

Director of Development

RAY JOYCE (Questrom '91)

Alumni Relations Officer

JACLYN K. JONES ('06)

Editor

JULIE RATTEY

Journal Reviewer

NATHAN BIENIEK ('09)

Contributing Writers

LARA EHRLICH (UNF'03)

ANDREW THURSTON

Designer

SHOLA FRIEDENSOHN

Cover photo

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Opposite: Photo courtesy of the Beck family



Photo by BU Photography



Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore

DEAN'S MESSAGE

THE VIA TRANSFORMATIVA BY MARY ELIZABETH MOORE

This has been an academic year to remember. In 2014–2015, we celebrated the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Boston University School of Theology. We witnessed devastating racial violence at the same time that we commemorated the 50th anniversary of landmark legislative acts for voting and civil rights, social security, and elementary and secondary education. As this issue of *focus* went to press, 37 states allow gay marriage, and the US Supreme Court was scheduled to hear a milestone case on same-sex marriage. Political hallways and religious communities are torn asunder by diverse points of view, often expressed in ways that obliterate anyone who differs. Whatever your social and political views, you will recognize the urgency to stand face to face with human beings who are like you and different from you, and confront the human questions that challenge our global society.

Our alums and friends live in many different societies around the world, but we all share a deep longing for justice and peace. Our societies can come unraveled as people with varying perspectives argue their contrary goals and strategies to the point of stagnation. Similarly, we glimpse ecological devastation through a glass darkly, but continue to argue while climate extremes escalate and natural resources decline. Contention is vital if we are to hear all voices in the process of analyzing and strategizing;

however, contention is not an end in itself. The human family longs for transformation, yet we struggle to find pathways that promise life.

THE THREE PATHS TO PEACE

Religious bodies are seeking their voices in this fray. In its Tenth Assembly in Busan, Republic of Korea, the World Council of Churches (WCC) issued “An Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace,” challenging all people “to engage their God-given gifts in transforming actions.” It then called churches to be “communities of healing and compassion,” heralding the Good News and a vision of justice and peace.¹ The WCC statement identified three dimensions of this work: *via positiva*, for celebrating gifts; *via negativa*, for attending to wounds; and *via transformativa*, for transforming injustices. In describing the latter, the WCC urged both personal and social transformation.² All three pathways are important to a world aching for justice, peace, and ecological sustainability, and they all require transformative leadership.

Scholars of leadership have added their voices as well. Literature on this topic has multiplied since James MacGregor Burns wrote *Leadership* in 1978. Burns named the crucial leadership variable as “purpose,” a theme that persists.³ Even the idea of transformational leadership stretches back to those days when studies in this area were emerging. Burns described what he called

1. Central Committee (WCC), “An Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, Rev.,” Doc. #GEN05 rev, Geneva, Switzerland, July 2–8, 2014, 1. Access at: GEN05rev_APPROVED_InvitationPilgrimageJusticePeace.pdf.
2. *Ibid.*, 4.
3. James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2010, 1978), 19.
4. *Ibid.*, 19–20.
5. See, for example: Walter Fluker, *Ethical Leadership: The Quest for Character, Civility, and Community* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2009); Margaret Wheatley, *Finding Our Way: Leadership for an Uncertain Time* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2005); Ronald A. Heifetz, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Watertown, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2009); “Rendle Challenges Congregational Leaders to Think in New Ways,” Unitarian Universalist Association, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://www.uua.org/governance/leadership/uuu/2007/rendle-speech>.

transforming leadership, as distinct from transactional leadership (directing the simple exchange of goods and services). He said that transforming leadership “occurs when one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.”⁴ Purpose and transformation are complementary. When a community identifies a purpose but takes no steps toward achieving it, that purpose may lie dormant for years. When a community works toward transformation *without* purpose, or with a destructive aim, the results might be diffuse, demeaning, or even violent.

WAITING FOR ANOTHER MANDELA?

Purpose and transformative action are themselves not enough to enact positive change. Contemporary leadership theorists like Walter E. Fluker ('88, GRS'88), STH's Martin Luther King, Jr. Professor of Ethical Leadership, recognize the urgency of analyzing and responding to complicated social contexts, which are marked by cultural diversities, power structures, and systemic relationships.⁵ Much is required

of leaders and communities if they are to address the aches of our hurting world and transform racism and classism into relationships of dignity; sexual and gender disputes into causes for listening and inclusion; and differences in theological perspectives and religious practices into celebrations of difference.

A colleague in peacebuilding recently expressed the wish that a Nelson Mandela would arise in the Middle East, where multiple countries and peoples are torn by conflict. I also long for such a transformative leader—in the Middle East, the

conflict-ridden streets of the US, and beyond. Yet I recognize the greatness of the people I meet every day. I have the privilege to meet with many alums and friends of STH, and to walk the halls each day with amazing faculty, students, and administrators. These are great people doing great work. They are transformative leaders, and the articles in this issue give glimpses of their leadership. We have a long road ahead, and dreams of justice, peace, and sustainability yet to fulfill. *Viva the via transformativa!* □

Purpose and transformation are complementary. When a community identifies a purpose but takes no steps toward achieving it, that purpose may lie dormant for years. When a community works toward transformation without purpose, or with a destructive aim, the results might be diffuse, demeaning, or even violent.

Photo by Chitose Suzuki

STH TACKLES STUDENT DEBT

With an average salary of \$47,540, US clergy aren't raking in the dough—for comparison, BU Questrom School of Business MBA alums can expect to average about twice that figure in their first post-graduation jobs. To assist all of its students, pulpit-bound or otherwise, STH keeps its annual tuition relatively low: At \$18,176, it's less than half what BU undergrads pay. And thanks in part to numerous scholarships, fellowships, and assistantships, 44 percent of the School's Master of Divinity students graduate debt free. But the School wanted to do more. In fall 2014, with a three-year, \$250,000 grant from the Lilly

Endowment, STH launched the Stewardship Thinking, Economic Wellbeing, and Reduction of Debt (STEWARD) program to study and address student indebtedness.

STEWARD instills financial stewardship skills that students can apply whether they're taking out a student loan, balancing a budget, or managing church finances. STH requires all of its master's degree students who are receiving financial aid from BU—"which is almost all of them," Bryan Stone, associate dean for academic affairs, told *BU Today*—to take the seven-class program.

"What we're really after," says Stone, "is to provide some curricular training for students that will help them think about their finances early on, before they graduate."

To get an even clearer picture of its students' financial needs, and to step up job placement support, STH is researching students' debt profiles, conducting focus groups with alums about their financial health, and examining best job placement practices at other institutions. Learn how you can financially support STH students at www.bu.edu/sth (click "giving") or by calling the alumni office at 617-353-2349. □

PARTNERING AGAINST POVERTY

Ever since earning her doctorate in religion, Diana Swancutt has been seeking ways to make academics meaningful to civic life. Then she read about Paul Farmer, who cofounded Partners In Health, a nonprofit bringing health care to the world's most impoverished people. Swancutt decided "to use my education and contacts to attack poverty in the ways and fields I know best." In January 2014, she cofounded the Boston Poverty Consortium (BPC) as a "think tank and nationwide network of scholar-activists of religion; civic and religious leaders; and organizations working to

eliminate poverty and inequity in the United States."

A research associate professor of Bible, religion & global justice at STH, and BPC's executive director, Swancutt is offering talks,

More than 45 million people in the US live in poverty.

conferences, and civic events that will "bring together great thinkers and activists" to engage the BU community. She also hopes to encourage religious groups to place those in need at the center of their collective spiritual life. "Well over 1,500 biblical verses call for mate-

rial care of our neighbors," says Swancutt. "The call is central to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam." But while more than 45 million people in the US live in poverty, most churches spend the majority of their budgets on salaries. And according to the Bread for the World Institute, only 1 in every 20 bags of food assistance comes from a charitable organization; the government provides the rest.

Agreeing on the best means to tackle poverty may be challenging, but Swancutt says, "We thrive in solidarity, by embracing our interconnections. The religious call to solidarity is unequivocal, creating space for dialogue." Join the consortium at www.povertyconsortium.org. □

STH'S GOT TALENT



Beginning with their soulful audition featuring Keane's "Somewhere Only We Know," the quartet Sons of Serendip won over *America's Got Talent* audiences and judges, placing fourth in the television show's 2014 season. Lead vocalist Micah

Christian ('12) (center), harpist Mason Morton (CFA'12), cellist and vocalist Kendall Ramseur (CFA'12), and pianist and guitarist Cordaro Rodriguez (LAW'12) met as graduate students at BU. They formed the quartet to audition for the show.

"It was just really inspiring to see so much talent and hear so many beautiful stories of overcoming obstacles and persevering through tough times, and working hard to reach your goals," Christian told *BU Today*. Order the group's first album at www.sonsofserendip.com. □

Photo by Jackie Ricciardi

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

ON A MISSION WITH TWO YEARS TO GO...

Two fully funded professorships, an online doctor of ministry program, and a chaplaincy track are among the latest offerings at the School of Theology, thanks to its first-ever campaign. STH has surpassed its \$15 million goal and has until fall 2017 to meet its aspirational goal of \$25 million. Here's the latest news by the numbers.



ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS GOAL:

\$3.7M

RAISED:

\$2.05M

ASPIRATIONAL GOAL:

\$25M

RAISED:

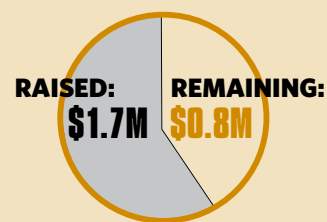
60%



RECORD NUMBER OF ALUMS WHO GAVE TO STH IN FISCAL YEAR 2014:

869

STUDENT HOUSING GOAL:
\$2.5M



GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT FELLOWSHIPS GOAL:

\$1M

RAISED:

\$500K



HARRELL F. BECK CHAIR OF HEBREW SCRIPTURE GOAL:

\$1M

RAISED:

\$846,000



Help support the campaign at www.bu.edu/sth/giving. All dollar figures are accurate as of May 2015.

WISDOM FOR 2024

STH gathered its 2014 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients for the panel, "What Are the Three Greatest Challenges Facing Us in the Next Decade?" on September 18. Here are some of their thoughts.



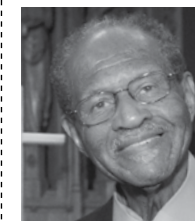
Counseling Center of Trinity Church in Boston, Massachusetts, about "a lack of understand-

ing of our cooperative power": "What if we believe... that all that our God has called us to do is possible? What would we do? How would we understand inertia as our past and forward movement as our progress?"



Titus Presler ('95), pastor, scholar, and missionary, on the fear of human differences and the

hostilities that result: "Living in the way of the Cross, we must be willing to be agents of reconciliation, servants of reconciliation, in the alienations of our age around difference."



Love Henry Whelchel, Jr. ('62), pastor, professor, and community activist, about threats to identity and self-respect: "If you are

oppressed... you must constantly aim to negate and correct the distorted image of your humanity

Zina Jacque ('97, '05), Illinois pastor and founder of the Pastoral

that the oppressor seeks to impose upon you."



Kyle Bozentko ('10), executive director of the Jefferson Center and Jefferson

Action in Saint Paul, Minnesota, about combating disengagement: "In my work, what we try to do is really provide tools and platforms for people to tap into their own sense of agency, by learning from one another, by being in a room with people whom they either disagree with or felt like they would never cross paths with in their daily life... to work together to create something they're proud of."

Watch the panel at www.livestream.com (search "2014 STH").

RELIGION AND THE ARTS: WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW

The delight of listening to a beautiful piece of music or contemplating a striking photograph can be spiritual experiences, but people may not recognize them as such, says Andrew Shenton, an associate professor of music. That might change thanks to Shenton's new Religion & the Arts Initiative (RAI), which he hopes will help BU community members "engage with the arts in any sort of way that will help mediate their relationship with God."

The RAI, which Shenton launched this academic year with financial support from STH, will publicize Boston-area events and programs that are at the intersection of spirituality and the arts. It will also help STH students find relevant courses among the University's thousands of offerings, such as College of Arts & Sciences classes covering religious art and architecture. Shenton, who believes that the number of

STH students "interested in doing creative, interdisciplinary, multimedia kinds of work is expanding," hopes the initiative will appeal to those seeking non-traditional angles in theological studies.

RAI's kickoff event was a religion-themed poetry competition for BU students, faculty, staff, and alums. Learn more at sites.bu.edu/religionandthearts.

Photos by Melissa Ostrow

“SOMOS POCOS, PERO HACEMOS RUIDO”

“WE’RE JUST A FEW, BUT WE’RE SO LOUD.” STH LATINOS ARE SPARKING CONVERSATION ON CAMPUS AND MAKING AN IMPACT WELL BEYOND COMM. AVE.

BY JULIE RATTEY

On any given day in the School of Theology’s Muelder Chapel, you might find someone engaged in quiet prayer. But on one fall Thursday, the room was awash in salsa music as students and faculty twirled and swayed at “Dance Salsa, Eat Salsa” for National Hispanic Heritage Month. “It was a fun moment, but it could also have been a sacred moment for a lot of people,” said Yara González-Justiniano (’14, ’19), who helped organize the event with the STH Hispanic/Latino Student Association (HLSA). “We were having our culture displayed in the church.”

In fall 2012, González-Justiniano was a new transfer student from Puerto Rico, working toward ordination in the Disciples of Christ Church and a career teaching in a Puerto Rican seminary or university. There were about 10 Latinos at STH at the time, she says, and they quickly bonded. At the suggestion of Clinical Assistant Professor Cristian De La Rosa, González-Justiniano and three other students formed HLSA to create community, share their culture with others, and address topics of concern to US Latinos.

The association has 17 members, including some non-Hispanic/Latino students. It organizes a Raíces Latinas’ (roughly, “Latin Roots”) Week every spring, featuring arts events and discussions on topics from immigration reform to Latino representation in academia. The public—Latino or otherwise—is welcome to partici-

González-Justiniano describes the STH Hispanic/Latino Student Association as an oasis and a family, a place to be with others who share the same language and understand the challenges of living in a different culture.

pate, and the discussions explore how Latino issues “impact not just us,” says González-Justiniano, “but the larger society.” Other projects include peer mentoring and counseling, partnerships with community organizations, and connecting members with resources including the Hispanic Theological Initiative, which spon-



Yara González-Justiniano

sors Hispanic doctoral students. Starting in 2014, the group began fundraising to sponsor tutoring for aspiring university students in Cuba—an outcropping of an STH travel seminar to the country.

González-Justiniano describes HLSA as an oasis and a family, a place to be with others who share the same language and understand the challenges of living in a different culture. “It lets you keep connected not just to the community in school, but to your roots.” González-Justiniano says people are always surprised by how much HLSA accomplishes for its size. “Somos pocos, pero hacemos ruido,” she always says. “We’re just a few, but we’re so loud.”

➔ Follow HLSA on Facebook (search “STH-Hispanic/Latin@ Student Association”).

Photo by Saul Miranda

STH LAUNCHES INSTITUTE FOR YOUNG LATINO CLERGY

The Latino community in the United States is growing: in 2013, Hispanics and Latinos made up 17.1 percent of the population, compared to 12.5 percent in 2000, according to the US Census Bureau. But after more than a decade of trying to plan ministries for this demographic, churches nationwide still aren’t keeping pace, says Cristian De La Rosa, a clinical assistant professor of contextual theology & practice. To identify and prepare young adult Latinos for leadership roles in their churches and communities, De La Rosa secured a \$100,000 Young Clergy Initiative Grant from the General Board of Higher Education & Ministry of the United Methodist Church (UMC).

“We’re looking at young Latinos as agents of transformation within the institutional church, within communities, wherever they serve.”

—Cristian De La Rosa

The three-year grant allowed STH to create and fund the Raíces Latinas (roughly, “Latin Roots”) Leadership Institute, geared for Latinos ages 19 to 35



In an off-campus excursion in summer 2014, STH’s Raíces Latinas Leadership Institute participants visited Harvard to hear Roberto Mata (center), a doctoral candidate at Harvard Divinity School, speak about his experiences in academia.

who are current or prospective Methodist clergy. (Though the institute shares a name with the STH Hispanic/Latino Student Association events, they are separate entities.) The institute’s 40 participants were recruited by STH from around the United States and its territories. Several are graduates of the Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy, a UMC initiative for high school and college youth.

The institute consists of 3 six-day sessions of worship, service learning, mentoring, workshops, and other activities. The curriculum, which De La Rosa created with a Methodist Latino advisory board of US religious leaders and members of the STH community, covers topics including dis-

cernment of call, leadership, and theological study. Participants also engage in service learning: through informational visits to community organizations, the students learn how Methodist Latino professionals apply theological training to secular leadership duties.

“We’re looking at young Latinos as agents of transformation within the institutional church, within communities, wherever they serve,” says De La Rosa. “We’re basically providing the space, the platform within which to talk and to build.”

➔ To learn more, email cdlrosa@bu.edu or call 617-353-3058.

Photo by Pedro Pillot

PEACE PRACTICE



Salma Kazmi
Med students have residencies. Law students have clerkships. But for students of Religion & Conflict Transformation (RCT), who are learning how to build peace and justice in communities, there's no equally established way to practice their skills. Thanks to the RCT Clinic, launched by STH in fall 2014 through a three-year, \$350,000 grant from the Henry

Luce Foundation, students now have that opportunity. The clinic will help connect students with congregations and organizations where they can gain practical experience, says Clinic Codirector Salma Kazmi. It will also encourage interreligious understanding by organizing visits to worship events such as a Jewish Shabbat dinner and Jumu'ah, the Muslim Friday prayer service.

The field of conflict transformation is relatively small: Kazmi says the program at STH is one of only about 25 among higher-

learning institutions in North America. But there's plenty of work to be done. "People realize that they're living in a world where they'll be working with neighbors of different faith traditions," says Kazmi. "Even within congregations, the incidents of interfaith marriage are increasing, and they're going to need to find ways to incorporate families of all types." Students realize, she says, that building communities in new ways will be "an integral part of their leadership as they move into ministry." □

PROGRAMS FOR TOMORROW'S TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS

God's call doesn't conform to one model. You might discover a desire to attend seminary as a college freshman or as a working parent in your forties. You could be called to preach from a suburban pulpit or counsel soldiers overseas. In fall 2014, with the help of distance-learning technologies, STH launched new and revised programs to better accommodate the diverse callings (and schedules) of prospective students.

Whether they're guiding congregations through tension-riddled mergers or building harmony in racially diverse neighborhoods, religious leaders are constantly called on to navigate change and transform communities. STH's new Doctor

of Ministry in Transformational Leadership helps religious leaders polish the skills they need for such tasks. The diverse character of the three-year program—participants hail from disciplines ranging from systematic theology to pastoral care—distinguishes it from many other programs in the country, says Anastasia Kidd ('04, '17), director of admissions.

Using their own professional experiences as case studies, students discuss not only how to transform communities, but themselves, whether that means confronting uncomfortable prejudices or developing practices of spiritual nourishment to sustain their leadership work. The program consists of four

online courses, four seminars in Boston, and a year of thesis work. Students attend full time or part time, must have at least three years of full-time professional ministry, and complete the program within five years.

The flexible new approach to learning—which has also fostered a new In-Service Master of Divinity program and a Chaplaincy Track—is attracting more students. The School typically admits 2 to 3 students annually into its doctor of ministry; fall 2014 alone brought in 11, including those from as far away as Ireland and Jamaica. "It's really exciting," says Kidd, "to see how God's 21st-century call is being lived out in a variety of ways." □

Photo by Sarah Khan

HELPING WITH HOMEWORK —AND HOUSEWORK



Sam Needham

A RESIDENT ASSISTANT ON THE PATH TO ORDINATION GUIDES HIS FELLOW STUDENTS IN EVERYTHING FROM DAILY DEVOTIONS TO DISHWASHING

BY LARA EHRLICH

By the end of their first day as residents of the School of Theology House, the 21 seminarians had already shared their dreams for the future: one is studying to be a chaplain, another plans to be a nonprofit administrator, and a third aspires "to be C.S. Lewis," says Sam Needham ('15). He advises them all as the resident assistant (RA) at Theology House, the historic brownstone where the seminarians live, work, cook, and study together as part of an intentional community.

"I love that we're called to be generalists" to serve a community of individuals with "diverse, multifaceted lives."

—Sam Needham

"We all make a commitment to discern in our vocation together," while pursuing independent paths, says Needham, who, like his advisees, is earning a master of divinity.

Needham embarked on his path to ordained ministry a few years ago while serving as director of resident life at K-State Wesley, a campus ministry of the United Methodist Church connected with Kansas State University. He was leading a theological discussion group when he realized that "I cared a lot about how the students connected their minds to the faith." He also cared about whether they were integrating all aspects of their

lives—physical, mental, social, emotional—into their relationship to God. "It was a turning point for me to say, 'I want to think deeply about theological issues—but in the service of living a whole life in my faith.'" Needham's holistic approach to religion draws on the teachings of John Wesley who "attached every sphere of life to following God's plan," Needham says.

Needham brings this perspective to Theology House, where he hosts weekly community dinners and monthly house meetings, as well as advises residents in all dimensions of their lives, from thinking critically about their studies to coordinating with housemates about cleaning the dishes. "I want my residents to feel equally confident coming to me with a concern about a roommate and a question about their vocation," says Needham, who is also president of the STH Student Association.

Needham considers his work at Theology House and the student association good training for the ministry. "As a pastor, chaplain, or youth minister, we are asked to have confidence in theology, elderly care, first aid, music, and even tax law for nonprofit organizations," he says. "I love that we're called to be generalists" to serve a community of individuals with "diverse, multifaceted lives." □

Photo by Pippa Mipuzwana

THE ENERGY OF ANCESTORS



Brandon Thomas Crowley

AT ONE OF NEW ENGLAND'S OLDEST BLACK CHURCHES—FOUNDED IN 1874 BY A FORMER SLAVE—A DOCTORAL STUDENT IS USING THE PAST TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

BY ANDREW THURSTON

In 1847, 29-year-old Edmond Kelley—born into slavery and property of the White family of Columbia, Tennessee—became a free man. His wife and four children, slaves of one J. Knox Walker, were not so fortunate. It would take four years for Kelley, a preacher and the future founder of Myrtle Baptist Church in West Newton, Massachusetts, to buy his family's freedom. In an era when the average New England mill-hand earned \$175 a year, Kelley had to raise \$2,800. He wrote fundraising circulars, penned ballads, sold letters—and incurred significant debt.

By the time of his death in 1894, Kelley had served the New England Missionary Baptist Convention and was said to have met with Presidents Lincoln and Jackson. He'd also founded Myrtle Baptist with the aim of bringing together suburban Newton's small black population—some 130 at the church's 1874 founding.

“Doors have been opened for us that our ancestors could've never dreamed of. It helps me realize some of the stuff I complain about really doesn't matter at all.”

—Brandon Thomas Crowley

“It gives me a charge, the energy I need to keep going forward,” says Myrtle's current senior pastor and STH doctoral student, Brandon Thomas Crowley ('12, '19), of the church's history. Crowley has helped open a small church museum that includes the freedom papers of early members and letters from Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS'55, Hon.'59), a frequent visitor to Myrtle during his time at BU. Walking through the museum allows Crowley to “feel the energy of these ancestors who built this church at a time in history when racism, segregation, degradation, and marginalization were so high.”

If they could open a church in that hostile atmosphere, says Crowley, there's a “greater calling on persons like myself who are in this present generation, who have been given all these resources—doors have been opened for us that our ancestors could've never dreamed of. It helps me realize some of the stuff I complain about really doesn't matter at all.”

A CALL TO LEAD

By church pastor standards, Crowley is young. He was interviewed for the job at Myrtle at age 21; he was 22 when the congregation voted to offer him the position.

“Growing up, all of the pastors in the Baptist churches were old and bald-headed,” jokes Crowley of his upbringing in Georgia. Those ruffled pastors were conservative, too. After a sermon on the likelihood of “gay people going to hell,” 11-year-old Crowley told his grandmother he didn't get it: God loves everyone, but gays are going to hell? “I said, ‘I think God's calling me to stand up for something.’” She “looked at me kind of strange”; later she'd wonder how her grandson's four theological degrees—two from BU, one from Morehouse, and one from Harvard—would enable him to make a living.

Since becoming senior pastor at Myrtle in 2009, Crowley's living has been revitalizing the storied institution, “not necessarily changing the theological motif of the church, but really accenting it and putting more focus on its liberal acceptance.” He has also launched a lecture series, and a youth ministry led by Carrington Moore ('14). The church says it's added 200 new members since Crowley took the pulpit.

MAKING OLD DREAMS NEW

Myrtle Baptist's home city is affluent—median household income in Newton is north of \$100,000. With lawyers, engineers, professors, and doctors lining the pews, Crowley says there's an obligation to “take those resources and answer questions and create solutions to what's happening in minority neighborhoods,” such as Roxbury,

Dorchester, and Mattapan in Boston. The church has partnered with BU to enroll incarcerated African Americans in degree programs and joined with Dorchester's Brookview House to help homeless women and children.

One of Crowley's biggest projects, however, is right across the street from the church. When he first joined Myrtle, Crowley was sorting through an old closet when he found a set of blueprints for church-backed affordable housing, a dream his predecessor had held close but never been able to bring fully to life. Crowley decided to make it happen. With a grant from the city, the church finalized plans for seven affordable housing units.

“We are changing and evolving into a very different church now,” says Crowley of Myrtle. “But you cannot change things without an appreciation of what once was.”

Today, the church has some 500 congregants to drive its many ministries. More than 140 years ago, just a decade after the passage of the 13th amendment, Myrtle Baptist consisted of 18 African Americans under the leadership of a onetime slave. When Crowley became pastor, his congregants voted for him; when his antecedent, Edmond Kelley, took on his first church in Tennessee, his Baptist association had to take a different approach: “It is important for this association to raise a fund, and purchase [Kelley] to preach to the colored population of this country, under the direction of this body.” □

Photo by Karin Dailey of KMD Photography and Digital Art

THE CULTURAL DETECTIVE



Grace Cajiuat

WHEN GOOD INTENTIONS ARE MISCONSTRUED AND TEMPERS FLARE, CHURCHES CALL ON GRACE CAJIUAT TO RESTORE THE PEACE

BY JULIE RATTEY

By the time Grace Cajiuat was called on the case, things had gotten pretty bad. The new Nigerian pastor felt disrespected; back home, no one would dare raise a voice to him in a church meeting. His Midwestern parishioners felt intruded upon: why was their pastor stopping by their workplaces unannounced to talk to them? Figuring out what went wrong, and why, is just the beginning of Cajiuat's job as a cultural detective for the United Methodist Church (UMC).

Cajiuat ('05, '06) is formally known as an intercultural competency trainer. She's skilled in methods including the Cultural Detective process, which trainers use to help organizations understand members' cultural differences, navigate conflict, and improve communication. "It's really about getting people to listen to each other and understand each other through the cultural lens," Cajiuat says of her job. But culture, as she points out, doesn't just refer to what country you come from or the color of your skin. It's about whether you're an East Coaster or a West Coaster, a boomer or a millennial, an executive with the corner office or the janitor vacuuming it.

"One of the most important characteristics for a culturally competent person to have is self-knowledge—to be aware of where you're coming from,

and what makes you tick and what ticks you off," says Cajiuat, who is also an ordained UMC minister. Cultural differences, she explains, affect what choices we make and how we interact with others. The trouble is, we're so steeped in our own culture that we don't always realize we've got one—and therein lies the conflict. "We talk past each other; we may say the same thing but really mean something else, because the motivation behind our words is so different."

"AHA" MOMENTS IN ADVERSITY

For those who get a headache dealing with their own congregation's squabbles, traveling the country to deal with everyone else's might sound as pleasant as a root canal. But Cajiuat speaks about her work with enthusiasm.

"What I like about intercultural communication is that we're forever learning," she says. "That's the fun part—the dynamic part—of this process. You never get there, but the journey itself is exciting. And actually, it's really life-giving." But, she adds, "It's hard."

As Cajiuat facilitated discussion between the Nigerian pastor and his congregation, each side came to better understand the other. But conflict continued, says Cajiuat, and the pastor's appointment was changed shortly thereafter. "People don't want to go through cultural competency training until it's a crisis," says Cajiuat, but "it's harder to

build trust and relationship when there is more hurt and pain than solidarity." When the next pastor, a Korean, was appointed, the parish brought in Cajiuat right away. She aided a conversation in which congregational leaders asked the new pastor about his preferences, including how they could welcome him. Learning that drinking tea was popular in Korea, they organized a get-to-know over afternoon tea at the parsonage.

"Those were the 'aha' moments that had to come from adversity," Cajiuat says. Three years later, Cajiuat hasn't received one call for help from the parish.

"People don't want to go through cultural competency training until it's a crisis, but it's harder to build trust and relationship when there is more hurt and pain than solidarity."

—Grace Cajiuat

FROM MUSIC TO MINISTRY

Cajiuat sought intercultural competency training in the late 2000s, when she was a new pastor bewildered by the "trauma, stress, and heartache" her fellow clergy of color reported while trying to navigate conflicts of language and communication style, leadership methods, and hierarchical structure in their churches. She was a native of the Philippines leading a white congregation in Wisconsin, but she hadn't encountered any crises. "I guess one of my gifts would be that I see things contextually, and I attribute that to my education in music," she says. A former conductor and music professor, Cajiuat believes that learning to perform different styles of music—and accommodate the communication

preferences of performers from all over the world—helped her recognize and respond to different points of view in everyday life.

Since 2010, she's taught intercultural competency across the United States and in the Philippines. From 2013 to 2014, she served as a training and development specialist for the General Committee on Religion & Race for the UMC's Wisconsin Annual Conference.

"Whenever a church received a racial, cross-cultural appointment, they would have to have a workshop with me," she says.

After sharing personal anecdotes to help people open up, Cajiuat helps participants recognize and understand their own identities and values: Why do I believe what I believe? Why do I do what I do? She then guides the reflection outward to the cultures and values of other individuals, the congregation or organization to which they belong, and finally, the Church and God. Hopefully, better relationships result. But empathy doesn't guarantee agreement—or even compromise. "Both parties need to do it voluntarily," she says, "and the environment needs to be optimal, and usually the environment isn't."

A church is like a family, says Cajiuat. And just as coping with family dynamics is an ongoing process, so is coping with cultural dynamics in a congregation. "This is not a single-day process," Cajiuat tells workshop participants. "This is just the beginning." □

Photo by Chris Herigstad

AWAKENING OF A NATION



Yap Kim Hao

SINGAPORE'S FIRST ASIAN METHODIST BISHOP HELPS HIS COUNTRY—AND THE CHURCH—BUILD A POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITY

BY LARA EHRLICH

At 15, Yap Kim Hao ('54, '68) was watching a documentary at a make-shift movie hall when an act of violence changed his life. It was 1944, and Japan's three-year occupation of Singapore was coming to an end, though the country was still under Japanese military rule. Out of nowhere, Yap says, a group of officers randomly assaulted him, breaking one of his legs. While he was recuperating at the hospital, several of Yap's high school friends, members of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, visited him, and their compassion brought him to the Church.

In his calling, there was "no blinding light, no mysterious vision appeared, and no sanctified voices were heard," he recalls in an article for the Ipoh ACS (Anglo-Chinese School) Alumni Association. "Just the simple act of compassion [from] a Christian led me to Christ." Compassion has been a constant in Yap's ministry ever since, from his work reconstructing Singapore's national identity after more than a century of colonial rule to advocating for the inclusion of Christians who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) in the Methodist Church.

Yap attended STH during the early years of the civil rights movement, when Martin Luther King, Jr. was a

doctoral student. "The leaders of the civil rights movement were nurtured in the Christian movement," Yap says. "They were willing to enter into the fray in spite of the brutality of the police. I befriended my fellow black students and encouraged them in their struggles." He carried his passion for religious change and social justice back to Singapore, which was involved in a struggle of its own.

RECONSTRUCTION OF A NATIONAL IDENTITY

Soon after Singapore was established as a British trading port in the early 1800s, European missionaries brought Christianity to its shores. Singapore remained under British rule—except when occupied by Japan during World War II—until the country achieved limited self-government in 1959. Likewise, Western missionaries had led the churches. When Yap took up his ministry in the late 1950s, he was at the forefront of the country's movement to establish itself as an independent nation. He was appointed the first full-time Asian pastor at Kuala Lumpur Wesley Church, and, in 1968, the first Asian bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia and Singapore.

The shift to local leadership involved "removing the Western influence on the Christian movement and promoting the Asian identity of our

churches," Yap says. "Christianity could no longer remain a Western religion parachuted onto Asian soil." He continued this mission as general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia, a position he held from 1973 to 1985. In this role, Yap encouraged Asian theologians to contribute to academia and helped develop indigenous music and liturgy, among other efforts to reconstruct Asian identity. It was this effort to bring the ministry to the marginalized that led Yap to the LGBTQ community.

YAP'S "WAY TO AFFIRMING GAYS"

Early in his ministry, Yap "didn't meet many gay people," he says. "They were fearful of being exposed because they faced great risk in terms of employment, social ostracism, and discrimination. They kept to themselves." The question of whether the LGBTQ community should have a place in the Church had not yet surfaced. Yap first encountered the issue in the early seventies when an acquaintance asked for his view on homosexuality. "I did not know anything about it, as it was not a concept in my educational development," he recalls. "Homosexuality was a closed subject until pried open only a few decades ago in the Church at large."

When LGBTQ people began to come out in Singapore in the late nineties, a gay member of Yap's parish introduced him to his gay and lesbian friends. As he spent time with the community, Yap found that "they are

people with the same desires and passion, hope and aspirations like you and me," he says in his essay, "My Way to Affirming Gays."

In a 2003 *Time* magazine interview, Singapore's prime minister declared the government would hire gays and lesbians, though the country's penal code still banned homosexuality. Yap published a letter in the *Straits Times* in support of the new policy. "In remaking Singapore, the government is taking a forward step in recognizing the rights of homosexuals," he wrote. "It is only right that we do not discriminate against anyone on account of race, religion, or sexual orientation." Upon reading this letter, the Free Community Church—the only officially gay-affirming Christian church in Singapore—invited Yap to join them as pastoral advisor, a position he still holds. In March 2014, Yap was honored at Singapore's first Asian Pink Awards, recognizing the individuals and organizations working toward an inclusive Asia.

Yap has broadened his ministry over the years to include sex education and women's rights. Among his many efforts on the front line, he promotes HIV/AIDS testing and affordable antiretroviral medication, supports inclusion for people with disabilities, and advocates for the rights of migrant workers. "One issue leads to another," he says. "We are trying to build not only an inclusive Church, but an inclusive society." □

Photo courtesy of Yap Kim Hao

TRANSFORMATION TIP #1

TO MOVE AHEAD, LOOK BEHIND



More than 175 years ago, STH began its work in transformational leadership. Today, the tradition continues.

BY MARY ELIZABETH MOORE

In 2014, on the 175th anniversary of Boston University School of Theology, the community paused to salute the amazing legacy we have inherited. Today, students and faculty are asking hard questions about race as many participate in non-violent demonstrations for justice in Ferguson, Missouri; Boston; and beyond. We are collaborating with church leaders about how to have difficult conversations on controversial matters that matter. Faculty are creating connections across cultural and ideological boundaries through initiatives such as a dual-narratives journey to Israel and Palestine; the *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*; the Raíces Latinas Leadership Institute for Latino/a young adults; and travel seminars to Mexico and the Arizona/Mexico border. And our spiritual practices are vibrant with weekly worship, morning prayer, intoning, retreats, and Buddhist meditation.

Beyond STH, our graduates are doing the same. In Hong Kong, they appealed to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., as they engaged in nonviolent protest for a more democratic society. And alums led a conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, to encourage the full inclusion of people across all sexual orientations.

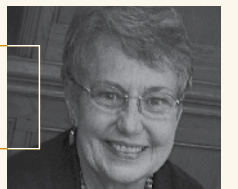
These are examples of our living legacy. The voices do not speak with

one mind, but they speak with one heart—a heart that cares for our fragile world.

A LEGACY TO CLAIM

Anniversaries are a time to pause: to look back and forward and ask critical questions. How can we better prepare people for service as religious leaders? How can we more fully embrace persons of all races, beliefs, sexual orientations, genders, classes, and life experiences? These questions invite an exploration of history. STH’s founders were abolitionists, pastors, and lay leaders who envisioned a school to carry the spiritually rich, socially transformative, leadership-forming legacy that centered their own lives.

About the Author



Mary Elizabeth Moore is the dean of the School of Theology and professor of theology & education. Her passion is to journey with others to cultivate deeper faith; compassionate humanity; and a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world. She has published numerous books and is working on a project to develop interreligious approaches to practical theology.

Photo by Vernon Doucette

STH was conceived by transformative visions and has been continually reshaped in response to changing social realities.

One early advocate for theological education in New England was La Roy Sunderland, who argued in 1834 for an educated clergy and a “school of the prophets,” tracing this tradition to the days of Samuel.¹ Sunderland cultivated the soil for Newbury Biblical Institute, founded in Newbury, Vermont, in 1839. Its founders were scholars, church leaders, and social activists. Osmon C. Baker was the first principal, and John Dempster became president when the school moved to Concord, New Hampshire, as the Methodist General Biblical Institute in 1847. From the beginning, the school focused on spiritual, intellectual, and physical development. The early leaders envisioned a holistic, interdisciplinary education for clergy and laity who would shape Church and society.

A new generation of visionaries developed Boston University from the seminary’s roots. William Fairfield Warren guided the move to Boston’s Beacon Hill and the renaming of the school to Boston Theological Seminary. Lee Claflin, Jacob Sleeper, and Isaac Rich led the incorporation of Boston University in 1869, and Boston Theological Seminary (the originator of BU) merged into the University in 1871, with Warren continuing as seminary president until he became BU’s president in 1873. When these leaders enacted their dreams, they launched a vision that has continued until today.

A LEGACY OF ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

STH is marked by a legacy of active engagement that has been embraced and reshaped by each generation:

Prophetic engagement with the world. One continuing thread is STH’s legacy as a school of the prophets. The term was part of STH’s founding vision, but took on new meaning in the late 1800s when faculty and students joined church leaders, especially the Women’s Home Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to establish settlement houses and respond to new immigrant communities. During and after this period, the “School of the Prophets” moniker was repeatedly affirmed. In 1910, it was featured in the “School of Theology Hymn.”² The chorus expresses concern for human life, drawing on imagery fitting the Beacon Hill location of that period:

*From ivied walls above the town
The Prophet’s School is looking
down
And list’ning to the human din
From marts and streets and homes
of men;
As Jesus viewed with yearning deep
Jerusalem from Olive’s steep.*

More recently, people have identified the sobriquet with Martin Luther King, Jr. Students, faculty, and graduates continue to challenge themselves by appealing to King and the “School of the Prophets” legacy. In addition to the recent witnesses in Hong Kong, Jakarta, and Ferguson, our graduates minister with the poor and work for just peace

1. La Roy Sunderland, “On a Theological Education,” *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*, Volume 16, New Series, Volume 5: 423.

2. The hymn was composed by Marcus and Edith Buell. Marcus Buell was professor of New Testament Greek and exegesis (1886–1923), serving also as dean during some of these years. Edith Buell founded the Edith Buell Club, originally for the wives of male seminarians but later including women students as well.

3. Academic Analytics rated the faculty in eighth place for scholarly productivity in the most recent Faculty Scholarly Productivity Index, reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in 2009.

4. “Mitchell, Hinckley Gilbert,” in *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*, ed. Nolan B. Harmon (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1974): 1649–1650. See also: www.bu.edu/sth-history and www.bu.edu/sth-history/prophets/hinckley-g-mitchell.

across the globe. The prophetic thread still illumines our common life.

Holistic education. From the Newbury Biblical Institute forward, faculty envisioned an education that included serious intellectual searching, vocational discernment, spiritual vitality, faithful service, and shared living. Alums consistently recall the faculty and courses as challenging and edifying. They also recall dorm life, Seminary Singers tours, and the Ping-Pong table in the old refectory.

Holistic education is actually brighter today than in some bygone days, embodied in diverse course offerings, robust community engagement, three intentional living communities, and lively student organizations. Contemporary students express appreciation for a genuine learning community. Faculty and administrators plan for richness: critical study of scripture and historical texts; travel seminars and boundary-crossing immersions; courses that pose daunting theological and ethical questions; worship and retreats; and internships in churches, justice ministries, and interreligious

settings. Never satisfied that we have “arrived,” our community also reflects critically on where we are and where we need to go. We seek continually to reconstruct the teaching-learning community and to nourish a full spiritual-intellectual-social-professional life.

Bold scholarship. Scholarship was a hallmark of STH’s earliest leaders, as it is for today’s. BU’s faculty in theology and religion rank eighth in publishing productivity,³ and they have often led intellectual movements, whether in Personalist philosophy, Boston Confucianism, pastoral psychology, practical theology, or social ethics. In recent decades, faculty have continued this pathbreaking tradition across an even wider range of theological disciplines, from theology and science to queer theology.

The tradition of asking bold questions and seeking bold responses has a long history at STH. One dramatic case is Hinckley Gilbert Mitchell, an STH graduate (1876) and later professor of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis (1883–1905).⁴ Mitchell was publically denounced for heresy in 1895, critiqued for his

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exegesis and theology. Drawing upon higher criticism in biblical interpretation, Mitchell argued that salvation was given through the whole of Jesus' life and God's work, not just through Jesus' crucifixion. The Methodist Episcopal Church sought to unseat Mitchell by giving bishops power to determine the theological fitness of professors. The bishops voted in 1904 not to confirm Mitchell's faculty appointment, but the BU trustees protested. The case ended when Mitchell accepted another position; however, protests continued and the Church removed this power from bishops in 1908, restoring the tradition of academic freedom for all schools of the Church.

Decades later, Robert L. Treese, a field education faculty member, was one of the first scholars to write a positive perspective on sexual orientation grounded in biblical reflection. In 1966, he stood out in the Church and in the School itself.⁵ STH faculty, students, and graduates have never been of one mind, but they have consistently encouraged the boldness of one another's voices.

Engaging tensions. STH has been courageous in addressing tensions, both in the Church and society and within the School. Early graduate J.W.E. Bowen (1885, 1887) became president of Gammon Theological Seminary. In 1906, he stepped into a riot initiated

by a white mob in Atlanta, offering Gammon as safe sanctuary for African Americans and subjecting himself to the crowd's brutality.⁶ Carrying on this tradition, some STH students joined the Selma march in March 1965, and in 1970, Dean Walter G. Muelder and other BU officials and students offered sanctuary in Marsh Chapel to Vietnam draft resisters. Today in Boston,

Ferguson, and Jakarta, faculty, students, and grads call for justice, mutual listening, and social reform.

STH has had internal tensions as well, often focused around gender, sexual orientation, race, or culture. Over the decades, students and faculty have taken risks to address these tensions—often without immediate

success, but always with creative determination to reconstruct the community. The Anna Howard Shaw Center has been a leading light in addressing issues of gender since its founding in 1978. The center follows in the steps of Shaw (1878) herself, STH's second woman graduate, an ordained pastor in the Methodist Protestant Church, and a fierce advocate for women's suffrage.

The School continues to engage tension, more and less boldly and more and less effectively, as it explores questions of justice and compassion across race, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, and all forms of difference, whether cultural, theological, economic, or religious. Much work remains, but the tradition has power

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5. Robert L. Treese, "Homosexuality: A Contemporary View of the Biblical Perspective," paper presented in Consultation on Theology and the Homosexual, San Francisco, August 22-24, 1966, www.lgbtran.org/Exhibits/CRH/ImageSet.aspx?AID=112&P=1 (accessed November 2, 2014).

6. Anneke Helen Stasson, "Bowen, John Wesley Edward (1855-1933)," www.bu.edu/sth-history/prophets/john-wesley-edward-bowen-1885.

7. Mary Elizabeth Moore, *Education for Continuity and Change: A New Model for Christian Religious Education* (Abingdon Press: Nashville, 1983).

to propel the School to act with courage and compassion for all peoples.

A LEGACY TO BUILD

STH's legacy points to the future as we claim the dynamic relationship between continuity and change. I argue that dichotomies between past and future, conservation and transformation, continuity and change are false.⁷ The past itself is marked by transformation. To be in continuity with the past is to be continually transformed as the world changes. The continuity-change dichotomy persists in common lingo; however, STH consistently values its past alongside critical analysis of the contemporary world, allowing *both* to open doors to a new future. These elements are contested within the School, as they should be, but they are all held with commitment.

In the spirit of hope, I pose six visions for a bold future, all grounded in STH's 175-year tradition.

Purposeful inquiry and action. A school identified as a school of the prophets can never rest. Every action and policy is measured by that claim, and we often fall short. Prophets are committed to learning, engaging the world, and acting with vision. Intellectual inquiry is valued for its own sake and also for its potential in healing a broken world. And so people engage ancient texts and traditions in dialogue with emerging questions and discoveries, seeking knowledge and hope for a compassionate, just, sustainable, and peace-filled world.

STH lives in this tradition. Our classes analyze violence and anti-Jewish

strains in the Bible; postcolonial and postmodern constructions of theology; transcultural approaches to mission; and aesthetics in ministry. We offer foci on sexuality, race, just peacebuilding, trauma, restorative justice, and civil rights. The Center for Global Christianity & Mission involves students and constituents in global inquiry and collaborative projects; the Center for Practical Theology sponsors programs in spiritual formation, congregational life, and poverty justice; the Religion & Conflict Transformation Clinic engages students and religious leaders in just peacebuilding; and our new Community Center is a green renovation (LEED Gold certified). These efforts are significant but not sufficient. We need to deepen our mutual learning across disciplines, cultures, and geopolitical boundaries. We need to engage more actively in difficult conversations infused with dignity. We need to ask hard intellectual questions and witness boldly to our knowledge, questions, and commitments in faith communities and in public venues.

Challenging degree programs. A second vision is to foster vibrant, vigorous degree programs that enrich the lives of students and foster their intellectual and professional readiness to serve as religious leaders in the world. We have reshaped all of our degrees in the past five years and will continue to do so. Most recently, we converted all research doctorates to PhDs, collaborating with BU's Graduate Division of Religious Studies for comprehensive, complementary offerings. We created a new Doctor of Ministry in Transformational Leadership, grounded in

cohort learning and faculty mentoring. We also developed an In-Service Master of Divinity, serving commuters.

These changes are not superficial. Each degree program needs to foster robust learning and broad competencies: comprehensive knowledge, contextual engagement, personal and spiritual growth, relating with diversity, and professional development. Such learning goals echo the holistic intentions of earlier generations, but with sharper definition and determination.

Excellent research and teaching. STH is an incubator for discovering and creating knowledge. Our tradition of

bold scholarship requires support for faculty research and openness to wide horizons of knowledge. Faculty and students need space to explore topics such as biblical interpretations informed by material culture and ancient languages and traditions, theologies of preaching, neuropsychology of religious experience, mysticism and practical theology, forgiveness in psychotherapy, and ethical leadership in public contexts. Such projects require support from colleagues, seed money for research, and communities of conversation.

Our faculty also values excellent teaching and mentorship. Continuing pedagogical growth requires good listening to students, collaboration with colleagues, and outside consultation. STH intends to provide this ongoing support.

Interreligious, intercultural engagement.

The next challenge echoes our legacy of engaging tensions. Our graduates will provide leadership in a world of unfathomable diversity. In the 19th century, STH already welcomed ethnic and gender diversity, and it was the first theological school to offer courses in comparative theology.

This intercultural, interreligious legacy has continued, unevenly at times. The present calls for even more extensive encounters with diversity in all forms.

We have increased the diversity of our faculty, student body, and course offerings, and we actively sponsor difficult conversations that cross boundaries of race; ethnicity; sexual orientation and gender identity; theological

perspectives; and religious traditions. We are also blessed by faculty who care deeply about transcultural friendship, interreligious relationships, culture appreciation, and paths to empathy. They advocate intercultural and interreligious competency, the demands of racial justice, and nonviolence in conflict transformation. Our community represents diverse Christian and religious traditions, a program in interfaith peace-building, and organizations and activities that highlight the unique gifts and challenges of diverse communities. Yet we need to offer more diversity in courses, programs, and human relationships, and we need to sharpen our determination to advocate justice and communicate with dignity. Everything we have done awakens us to all that lies ahead. Until we enlarge

We need to offer more diversity in courses, programs, and human relationships, and we need to sharpen our determination to advocate justice and communicate with dignity.

8. Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981, 1953): 28.

that diversity, open ourselves to deeper sharing and listening, and embody more fully the justice we proclaim, we cannot rest. As I look back at the progress we have made toward appreciating diversity, I celebrate. As I look ahead, I know we have miles yet to travel.

Life-giving community. Nothing is more valuable and more valued in STH than the quality of community life.

Incoming students consistently name community as one of their strongest reasons for choosing the School, and graduates name it as a highlight of their educational experience. Students appreciate the juxtaposed values of strong scholarship, professional preparation, and community life.

The challenge for the future is to build our vibrant community and not take it for granted. We need to expand our offerings in spiritual life, enhance our intentional living communities, and improve communications. We need to expand the diversity of our worship and music programs and maintain lively community lunches and events. Even more important is the need to “center down,” words borrowed from Howard Thurman.⁸ As much as we need to reach out to the broad diversity of our community, we need also to join together in centering and valuing the simple, precious moments of spiritual aliveness and genuine meeting, human to human.

International and contextual partnerships. The final challenge is to extend our international and contextual work in partnership with faith communities, schools, nonprofit organizations, and religious leaders. We have made great strides in recent years, having expanded our local and global partnerships, travel seminars, contextual education program, immersion experiences, and global opportunities.

All of our master’s programs involve contextual engagement. MDiv students participate in immersions, vocational placements, and optional internships. MTS students participate in clinical or research projects fitting their specializations. Many students also volunteer in advocacy and service.

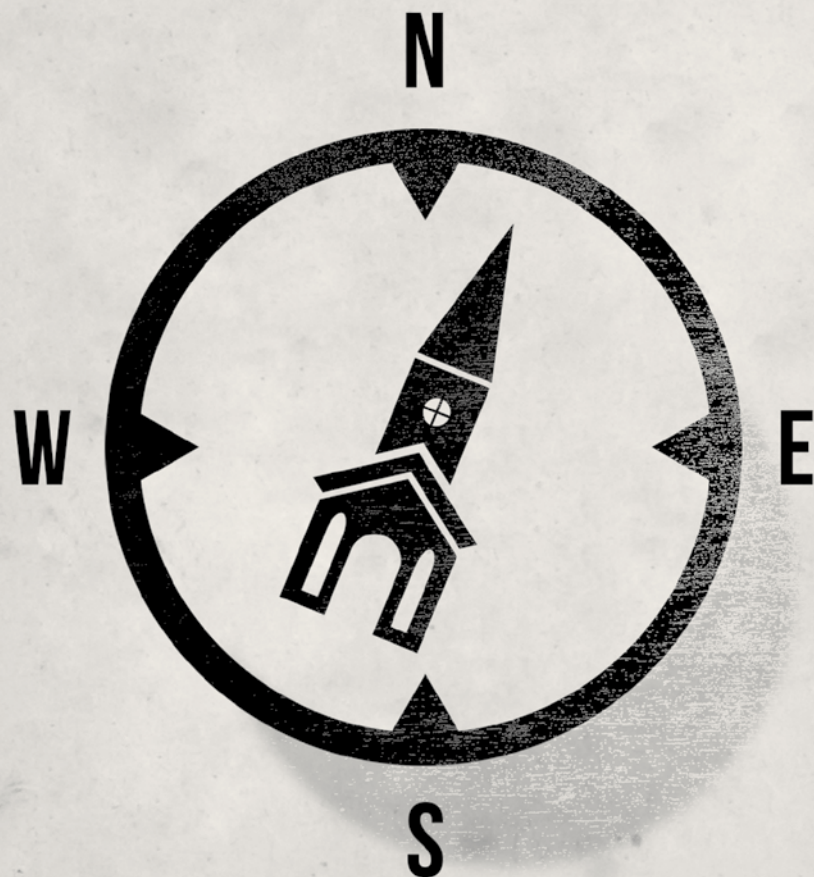
These experiences are critical to theological education. Our challenge is to integrate them more fully into our understandings of education and to build firm financial foundations so students will continually find opportunities to learn from and give to the larger community.

The visions offered in these pages are snapshots, but they point to creative opportunities. With the stunning faculty and students in STH, and with the educational richness of BU and our partners in faith communities and theological schools, we look forward to the next 175 years with hope. □

Nothing is more valuable and more valued in STH than the quality of community life. Incoming students consistently name community as one of their strongest reasons for choosing the School.

TRANSFORMATION TIP #2

**MAKE A RADICAL CHANGE.
IT'S WORTH THE STRUGGLE.**



1. “‘Nones’ on the Rise.” Pew Research Center, Washington, DC. www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise, accessed on November 26, 2014.

2. Ibid.

3. Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey. www12.statcan.gc.ca, accessed on December 15, 2014.

4. Statistics Canada, 2001 National Household Survey. www12.statcan.gc.ca, accessed on December 15, 2014.

Six keys to help churches around the world thrive in tough times

BY PAUL ('53, '61) AND INAGRACE DIETTERICH

North America has become a mission field. Its ecclesial scene has been changing since the late 1950s, and mainline Christianity no longer holds the influential role in society it once did. Both mainline and evangelical churches are losing members and dollars, and, especially in the Rust Belt, congregations are greying. Fewer adults choose to express their faith through organized religion. In 2012, the Pew Research Center’s Forum on Religion & Public Life revealed that 46 million people, or nearly 20 percent of the US public and one third of adults under age 30, are atheist, agnostic, or have no religious affiliation.¹ This is the highest percentage of religiously unaffiliated Americans in the center’s polling history.² In Canada, nearly 25 percent of the population had no religious affiliation in 2011³—up from roughly 16 percent a decade before.⁴ Clergy burnout, biblical illiteracy, conflicts, confusion about the Church’s calling and mission, and uncertainty about the role of the Church in North American culture are all signs that the context has changed. How are we to respond?

WHAT'S NOT WORKING

Their world was changing, parishioners realized. Cultural individualism was displacing the Gospel, and their church seemed to have lost its way. Members

and leaders made decisions with a win-lose mentality, and defined success in worldly terms. Communication had broken down, and parishioners depended too much on clergy and a minority of members to do all the work. What was their mission? Makiki Christian Church, a United Church of Christ (UCC) congregation in Honolulu, wasn’t sure anymore.

After a year of discussion, Makiki joined the Hawaii Conference UCC’s New Creation Initiative, during which they explored these problems and how to fix them. It took another two years of reflection and conversation, retreats and gatherings before 40 members of the congregation could begin designing a new church—one that under-

About the Authors



Paul Dietterich ('53, '61) served as codirector of the Center for Parish Development in Chicago from 1971 to 1975, and subsequently as executive director until his retirement in 2005. **Inagrace Dietterich** has served as director of theological research at the center since 1983. She is one of the authors of *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*.

Photos courtesy of Paul and Inagrace Dietterich

stood itself as a participant in God’s mission instead of a vendor of religious goods and services. “Makiki has begun to move away from an individualistic approach to faith and embrace the Bible’s call to be a faithful community,” says Pastor Wayne Ibara. “Cultivating a missional orientation is a process that never ends. Discernment is now a continuing process in key leadership meetings. Church unity and harmony are now key goals.”

Historically, the first impulse of churches facing dwindling congregations, internal strife, or other uncertainty was to try to recover what had been lost.

During the sixties and seventies, many churches adopted church growth methods in order to become more attractive. Congregations learned to be more welcoming and made their worship services more upbeat. To attract younger people, they replaced organs with rock bands and choirs with praise groups. These efforts did not really address the larger challenge. As churches like Makiki discovered, much more radical change was—and is—needed.

For much of the last 100 years, North American mainline churches have functioned within a particular ecclesial framework, a set of assumptions about the role and mission of the Church:

Individualism: The Church is primarily a personal sanctuary dedicated to a deeply inward and solitary religious experience for its members. Its resources of scripture, tradition, doctrine, worship, and sacraments are deemed useful only to the extent that they serve as functional guides for personal belief and morality.

Accommodation: The Church functions as society’s chaplain. It blesses

wars, adjusts to and defends economic systems and cultural practices, and accepts a role as a loyal institutional citizen, although occasionally criticizing some policies and procedures.

Consumerism: Clergy are professionals who offer religious goods and services to lay-people (consumers), who “go shopping” for a church that will meet their assumed wants and needs.

Clergy attempt to address those wants and needs.

Church-centered mission: The Church is an agent rather than the locus of mission. “Missions” is a program of the Church, which sends missionaries to places where the Gospel is not known.

It is this framing of the mission of the Church that requires transformation.

Clergy burnout, biblical illiteracy, conflicts, confusion about the Church’s calling and mission, and uncertainty about the role of the Church in North American culture are all signs that the context has changed. How are we to respond?

HOW FAR IS FAR ENOUGH?

Transformational changes are the most difficult kind to bring about. They are extreme, system-wide, and strategic. If the frame of reference is not bent, it isn’t transformation. But the majority of changes that most churches attempt occur within the inherited frame of reference. Introducing a new Christian education curriculum, learning a new hymn, and changing the order and style of worship do not go far enough. The solution the Church is seeking will not be found in method and problem solving because the challenges are much more deeply rooted. A new ecclesiology and a new missiology are required. Such theological changes go to the roots of people’s assumptions.

This process is challenging, difficult, and sometimes painful. But it is also renewing, growth-inspiring, and spiritually enriching. Church leaders and members prayerfully consider and fundamentally alter their understanding of the Church’s context, reshape its guiding vision, redefine its mission, modify its structure, and seek radically different ministry results from those they have sought in the past. Adopting *new ways of perceiving*, they grasp the cultural shifts of our time and implications for their church. They can describe how North American churches have been relocated from a privileged place to society’s margins—and why this

may be a good thing. They discover *new ways of thinking* about what it means to be God’s people, and *new ways of behaving* by becoming a sign, foretaste, and instrument of God’s kingdom.

SIX KEYS TO RADICAL CHANGE

How do we achieve this transformation? Since 1968, the Center for Parish Development in Chicago, an organization we have been deeply involved with, has been developing and testing processes that help North

American congregations start this kind of journey through “planned church transformation.” [Editor’s note: Paul Dietterich worked at the center from 1971 to 2005, in roles including executive director. Inagrace Dietterich has served as the center’s director

of theological research since 1983.] Through an initial three-year series of Bible studies, leadership and membership workshops, worship experiences, and coaching, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, congregations begin to explore and apply a missional ecclesiology. Here’s some of what we have learned in our work with many congregations:

1. Expect complications. Missional transformation is inherently messy and seldom goes as planned. It is highly political, involves conflicting demands, stimulates resistance, and can be sabo-

The solution the Church is seeking will not be found in method and problem solving because the challenges are much more deeply rooted. A new ecclesiology and a new missiology are required.

taged. There is a high rate of failure. It takes longer than anyone expects and calls for constant revision. But as Makiki Church demonstrates, it can be done.

2. Make your pastor your champion for change. The pastor must be the champion of the process, providing its theological rationale, encouraging those in leadership roles, demonstrating the quality of relationships of a missional church, participating actively with the transformation leadership team, and insisting on full discussion by the congregation of all possible alternatives under consideration. Many congregations stumble along the way. Some drop out. The pastor must therefore not only be a skilled interpreter of missional church thinking, but also a skilled diplomat in building and sustaining political support.

3. Build a transformational leadership team. Influential members join the pastor as a leadership team to design and guide the process. The team requires continuing training that includes Bible study, theological reflection, and building and managing an agenda for change.

4. Give it time. A congregation may require from 3 to 12 years or more to engage in a missional transformation process. There is no quick fix.

5. Keep learning. The congregation as a whole, as well as all leadership committees and groups, needs to participate in a variety of learning experiences—as described in these six tips—that introduce and integrate a new ecclesiology and missiology.

The pastor must be the champion of the process, providing its theological rationale, encouraging those in leadership roles, demonstrating the quality of relationships of a missional church, participating actively with the transformation leadership team, and insisting on full discussion by the congregation of all possible alternatives under consideration.

6. Join a peer support group. Much of the center's work has been done with clusters of congregations from a district, presbytery, diocese, or classis. Participating pastors meet to share their transformation stories, frustrations, and hopes. Similarly, leadership teams from congregations in the cluster gather for workshops to

share, learn, and plan together. Seven pastors in the Hawaii Conference UCC, whose congregations were part of the New Creation Initiative, continue to meet several times a year for mutual support and encouragement. Conducted in a setting of joyous worship, song, Bible study, and reflection, these workshops help people deepen commitment to their calling. □

SEE THE WORLD, CHANGE THE WORLD



// The STH seminar trip to Israel and Palestine provided an intensive lens through which to engage the histories of a diversity of world religions within a single area. It called upon us as students to broaden our horizons and learn by openly exploring tensions occurring in difference. Furthermore, it pushed our limits so we could listen more deeply to the human story in others. I am grateful for the transformations, subtle and deep, that occurred. //

—LAUREN ANDREA-LUCIA HOBLER ('16), center, in black

Photo by Kobi Skolnick

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TRANSFORMATION TIP #3

ADAPT TO CHANGING NEEDS



1. Kenneth Wyatt, *Bread and Good Times*. Copyright © 2001 Kenneth Wyatt Galleries.

R

ecognizing the power of Latino/a religious leadership can help the US Church evolve

BY CRISTIAN DE LA ROSA

A woman kneels on a beautiful tapestry. She wears a light blue shirt and a green skirt. In one hand she holds an ear of corn; in the other, she pulls kernels from the cob. On the ground are a grinding stone and a basket full of corn ears with husks. This painting¹ of a mestiza woman preparing to grind corn and knead dough is always visible on my desk; it has accompanied me through the last seven years as I have transitioned from ministry within the institutional Church to teaching at Boston University. I have shared printed versions of the image on cards to communicate words of encouragement, advice, appreciation, and wisdom. I have sent it to Latina women leaders, especially those within religious organizations facilitating survival and formation in marginalized communities. These are women I perceive as nurturers of *el pueblo* (descendants of colonized peoples), women struggling with questions of identity, justice, agency, and violence in institutions where their leadership and creativity are overlooked by dominant racist and sexist ideologies.

In depicting a strong, wise mestiza woman who literally embodies (in her body as a text) the history of conquest by the West and the survival of indigenous people of the Americas, this image affirms my identity as a woman of Nahuatl descent and my commitments

to justice ministries that work to sustain *el pueblo* and its indigenous leadership. The image also reminds me of the process for selecting and preparing the corn—grinding, mixing, and turning it into *masa* (dough) that can be used as the basis for many of the favorite foods prepared all over Latin America. The preparation for the process, the process itself, the type of corn, and the ingredients are similar, but never the same. There is so much flexibility in bringing everything together—the effort shaped by the hands of the person who picks and grinds the corn, by the community they’re in, and by the specific type of food for which they knead and mold the dough.

About the Author



Cristian De La Rosa is clinical assistant professor of contextual theology & practice, and director of contextual education and community partnerships, at STH. Originally from Mexico, she is an ordained elder with the United Methodist Church and holds leadership roles with organizations including the National Association of United Methodist Latina Clergy Women and the Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy.

Photo by Rommy Perry

*Amasamiento*² (grinding, mixing) is a powerful metaphor for the way *pueblos* (colonized peoples) around the world struggle for life and resist marginalization within postmodern discourse, globalization, and postcolonial theorizing. It represents *pueblos*' ongoing formation as leaders. Finally, *amasamiento* stands for the way in which *pueblos* have helped raise fundamental questions about power and knowledge by participating in "academic discourse and through social movements such as the Civil Rights movement, the Anti-Vietnam War movement, the second wave of feminism and widespread student unrest."³ These *pueblos* were nurtured by shifts in social theory and theology that challenged the imperial world's violent treatment of former colonies.⁴

In her critique of cultural, economic, and sociopolitical worldviews imposed by US colonialism, Gloria Anzaldúa explains how mestizos/as are *amasamientos*. They are kneaded into another culture along with new symbols from Spanish-Amerindian and Anglo cultural encounters:

Soy un amasamiento, *I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions*

of light and dark and gives them new meanings.

*We are the people who leap in the dark, we are the people on the knees of the gods. In our very flesh, [r]evolution works out the clash of cultures.*⁵

AN UNRESOLVED PAST

Indigenous and mestizo/a cultures have a way of seeing, understanding, and communicating about the world that contrasts with that of Western dominant culture. It also translates into a different approach to leadership and religious practice. These peoples' experiences of survival, and skills for building and rebuilding, are untapped resources for Christian ministry and religious leadership in the United States. They are adaptable and flexible—qualities that are necessary for the Church to meet the needs of diverse contexts and communities.

My own understanding of leadership formation in the particular context of Latino/a communities today is framed by unresolved issues of conquest and colonialism, specifically internal colonialism within the United States. As scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith notes in her research, it has taken more than 500 years—ever since the accidental landing

2. Gloria Anzaldúa asserts that mestiza women are the result of the mixing process of cultures and that they exist in a constant state of cultural tension and flux with a multiplicity of marginalities. See Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007): 103.

3. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: University of Otago Press, 2005): 165.

4. Ibid, 165.

5. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 103.

6. Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 28.

7. Gastón Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda, eds. *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5.

8. Catholic and Protestant religious leaders have come together to advocate on behalf of the Latino community. Together, they influenced Mexican American leaders like César Chávez, Reies López Tijerina, and Rodolfo Gonzalez (Chicano Movement leadership), and supported the election/appointments of the first generation of Latino bishops in different denominational bodies. See *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States*, 3–16.

9. This is a key concern noted by Jose de Souza Silva in "La Educación Latinoamericana en el Siglo XXI: Escenarios hacia las pedagogías de la alienación, domesticación y transformación," Instituto Internacional de Investigación sobre Políticas Alimentarias (IFPRI), 2004.

10. Church practitioners will best determine how to achieve this reframing within their unique contexts.

11. See *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States* for more information about the impact of Latino religious leadership in the United States.

of Christopher Columbus on the shores of this continent—for Western dominant culture to recognize its impact on the indigenous communities it colonized.⁶ Intellectual sectors of societies worldwide have accepted postmodern discourse and postcolonial theory, and that acceptance has impacted religious leadership formation.

In *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States*, a collection of essays that brings together 17 studies exploring 150 years of activism, editors Gastón Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda assert that "Latino religious ideology, institutions, leaders, and symbols have played a crucial role in Latino political, civic, and social action in the United States." Research suggests, they add, "that they have served as the ideological glue for some of the most important struggles" faced by Latino/a communities in the country.⁷ In their assessment and interpretation of the findings, the editors conclude that Latino/a religious leadership—among both clergy and laypeople, Catholics and Protestants—has made significant contributions across denominational, theological, and institutional boundaries, including in the organizing of political movements and the formation of community organizers and civil rights leaders.⁸ These contributions, I believe, became the roots for today's Latino/a transformational

leadership across social, political, and religious sectors.

A TIME FOR LATINO/A LEADERS

At this time of globalization, we constantly face contradictions produced by different and sometimes competing worldviews.⁹ Western religious institutions find themselves at the crossroads of a shift in Christianity, facing the critical need to reframe Christian points of reference, such as the historical role and function of the Church, in relation to indigenous peoples around the world.¹⁰

In the United States, the Latino/a population continues to grow in numbers, complexity, and power. The Church needs to recognize the power and influence of Latino/a

religious leadership in the United States, both past and present,¹¹ in order to facilitate contextual leadership formation. Latino/a leadership is a critical complement to the dominant leadership ethos with which it is in tension; learning and teaching emerge from questioning and reflection, critical debate, and committed practice. The Church tends to seek best practices that are prescriptions for fixed situations. But the people of the Church and the situations they encounter are never the same. To meet changing needs and diverse communities, the Church needs a multiplicity of ministerial approaches. □

The Church tends to seek best practices that are prescriptions for fixed situations. But the people of the Church and the situations they encounter are never the same.

TRANSFORMATION TIP #4

HARNESS THE POWER OF STORYTELLING



Writing about our spiritual journeys helps make us stronger

BY CLAIRE E. WOLFTEICH

The monasteries of Meteora in Greece perch on towering rock formations, standing apart from the villages below. The candles burn there in dim churches filled with the resplendent beauty of icons. Sitting in one of these churches, I was overwhelmed by a powerful sense of the spirituality of the ancient Greek Orthodox tradition, embodied in liturgy, art, and prayer.

It is easy for me to imagine monasteries as spaces of spiritual formation—in between worlds, dedicated to a committed life of prayer, work, and study in a Christian community. They seem a world apart from my classroom at the School of Theology, which is filled not with candles and icons but with a large table and chairs, blackboard, and PowerPoint technology. Yet spirituality is taught here also.

By advancing research that draws upon multiple disciplines, and by engaging the intellectual element of spiritual formation, the academy provides the necessary space, resources, and critical tools of scholarship to understand historical and contemporary forms of spirituality. How, then, can we create bridges between the academy and the Church as contexts for teaching spirituality, so that we do not operate in separate worlds but rather inform, critique, and enrich one another? How can we develop pedagogies that attend to practice, performance, action, prayer,

and liturgy—all essential to understanding spirituality—in a class that does not share any single spiritual tradition? How can we bring something of the beauty of religious icons into an academic teaching context—and what of spirituality is lost if we cannot? How do we nurture students' spiritual lives while helping them prepare to be transformative religious leaders?

As a way to open conversation about practical theological modes of teaching spirituality, I offer snapshots of two courses I teach.

SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

From Augustine to John Bunyan, Teresa of Ávila to Gandhi, spiritual autobiographies reveal the diverse

About the Author



Claire E. Wolfeich is associate professor of practical theology and spirituality studies at STH. She has served as president of the International Academy of Practical Theology and is president-elect of the Society for the Study of Christian Spirituality. Her most recent book project is the edited volume *Invitation to Practical Theology: Catholic Voices and Visions* (Paulist Press, 2014).

Photo by BU Photography



to share and reflect upon what they have written about themselves and their experiences. I invite students to incorporate the arts by illustrating or weaving their texts, combining music and text, and playing with diverse formats, including poetry. Works of secondary scholarship—for example, on autobiography and postmodernity, gender and autobiography, conversion and testimony—provide critical scholarly tools for analysis. In my experience, the textual study and the students’ own ventures in life-writing are mutually illuminating, providing questions and themes to trace, points of resonance and dissonance to be named.

Teaching spiritual autobiographies through both reading and writing also draws attention to the complexity of naming religious experience. Language both limits and opens up understanding.

Memory can be faulty or incomplete—yet it is essential in writing autobiography. Hence, our study of autobiographies leads us to examine the nature of spirituality and theological interpretation; the role of historical and cultural context in shaping faith; poetics, testimony, and spirituality; and the relationship between spirituality,

bodies, and religion. Through studying and writing spiritual autobiographies, students explore fundamental questions, including how to define “spiritual” or “spirituality.” Such seemingly dry meth-

paths of religious seekers, the crises and epiphanies that became focal points of meaning and revelation. They open up means of exploring significant spiritual questions: Who am I? How do I tell my story? What is the role of memory? How is my story situated in larger communal narratives? A course on spiritual autobiographies can open up traditions of spirituality in highly accessible and engaging ways, while inviting students to explore fundamental questions about faith, vocation, and religious leadership.

In my course on this subject, students study a diverse selection of texts and engage regularly in the practice of life-writing, working in small groups

Spiritual autobiographies open up means of exploring significant spiritual questions: Who am I? How do I tell my story? What is the role of memory? How is my story situated in larger communal narratives?

1. John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, Encyclical letter on Human Work on the ninetieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, September 14, 1981, Vatican website, www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens_en.html, sec. 1.

odological questions morph into lively existential issues when we are writing our own spiritual autobiography. What do we consider “spiritual” in our life experiences? What do we choose to include and omit in our spiritual narratives?

Issues of how spirituality relates to the Church today arise in powerful ways as students analyze historical texts alongside their own life-writing. Even for some preparing for ministry, it becomes apparent that their spiritual autobiographies include deeply painful experiences of alienation from the Church. Discussions of ecclesiology and spirituality can become animated and, if facilitated well, create significant moments for theological reflection, discernment, and growth. Students can also do research and/or construct practical theological projects around the use of spiritual autobiography in congregational ministry, spiritual direction, retreat facilitation, college chaplaincy, hospice care, and work with marginalized communities.

VOCATION, WORK, AND FAITH

In 2013, my students and I began a course in vocation, work, and faith in a nearby Episcopal monastery. For a weekend, our class was structured by

the rhythms of monastic life: the bell called us from classroom to chapel, and study was punctuated by prayer and song. Students, many in a monastery for the first time in their lives, adjusted their usual routines and rhythms.

The evening Great Silence and the practice of silence at meals offered a deep respite for some and an uncomfortable void for others. It was here we came to begin the study of vocation and work—not to prioritize the monastic vocation, but to immerse students in a context that integrates community, prayer, work, and study in ways unfamiliar to most. This space provided an apt

place to enter into questions such as: Who are we called to become? What is the meaning of our work? What is just work?

The course aims to respond to students’ deep questions about their own vocations while situating their vocational questions and narratives within larger socioeconomic, historical, and theological analysis. As John Paul II writes in the 1981 encyclical *Laborem exercens* (On Human Work), work is a key religious question that must be examined again and again in changing economic and social contexts.¹

Contextual learning expands in the course as we move from monastery to

For a weekend, our class was structured by the rhythms of monastic life: the bell called us from classroom to chapel, and study was punctuated by prayer and song. Students, many in a monastery for the first time in their lives, adjusted their usual routines and rhythms.

classroom to a Shabbat service to field visits in a range of sites, such as the Interfaith Worker Justice headquarters in Boston. Students engage with labor activists, immigrant hotel and restaurant workers, and a Franciscan monk active in the labor movement. Project-based learning allows students to relate the course to a variety of concrete contexts, for example: developing a prayer service for workers in a congregation, designing Sabbath education tools for children, and researching work conditions for migrant workers or professional athletes. Practical theological methods include action research,² and so students may study questions of spirituality and justice through participation in labor organizations and the development of constructive proposals for religion-labor partnerships.

SIX TIPS FOR TEACHING SPIRITUALITY

These snapshots point to some key insights I have gained through my work in teaching at the intersection of practical theology and spirituality:

- Practice is an essential component of learning in spirituality; we are shaped by what we do. To incorporate practice in an academic context, though, is quite complex, owing to religious pluralism, the power dynamics in a classroom, and the inherent risk of separating practices from their traditional, communal (ecclesial) contexts. I do not try to solve these problems so much as open them up with students.
- Incorporating practice in academic teaching is best done in an invita-

tional manner. Students should be aware that they are free to observe rather than participate in a spiritual practice.

- Awareness of the particularities of our teaching contexts is vital, as context shapes the appropriate methods of teaching spirituality. Moreover, recognizing that there are multiple contexts in which spirituality is taught can lead to fruitful pedagogical partnerships between academic and other communities or institutions.
- For the above reasons—and to relate spirituality to students’ vocational formation—contextual learning, field research, and practical theological project-based learning are significant components of the teaching of spirituality.
- Spirituality teaching is not only cognitive but also aesthetic and kinesthetic. Incorporating music, the arts, and movement enhances the teaching of spirituality. The physical layout of our classroom spaces also matters.
- To adequately access the range of disciplines that inform spirituality studies, we need to build teaching and research partnerships across universities. This is especially critical for doctoral training in spirituality studies, which is essential for training future teachers in the discipline. □

A version of this article originally appeared in the October 2014 edition of The Way (www.theway.org.uk). Adapted with permission.

2. See Elaine Graham, “Is Practical Theology a Form of ‘Action Research?’” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 17, no. 2 (2013): 148–178. See also Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, “Participatory Action Research,” in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 235–243; and Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, “Participatory Action Research: Practical Theology for Social Justice,” *Religious Education* 101, no. 3 (Summer 2006): 321–329.

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TRANSFORMATION TIP #5

**LEAD WITH YOUR HEAD.
AND YOUR HEART.**



In the quest for spiritual wisdom, book smarts can only take us partway

BY SUSANNAH HESCHEL

The following is adapted from Heschel's address at the School of Theology's 2014 Commencement ceremony.

There is a Jewish story of a student who comes before a rabbi and announces with great pride that he has gone through the whole Talmud three times. But, the rabbi asks him, what of the Talmud has gone through you?

Do we emerge from our theological studies solely as masters of a discipline, or have we also gained respect and delight for the diversity of creation and its gifts? Do our studies lead us to divine inspiration? What does scholarship contribute to our religious lives, and how can we as scholars benefit from our own spirituality?

For centuries, theologians—Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist—emphasized the importance of study. Medieval scholasticism was not simply a desiccated intellectual game, but a rich and complex conviction that study is a path to God. The medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides writes that human beings are “preordained for only one activity, for the sake of which we were created. . . . This sole task is to contemplate ideas in the soul and to come to know truth in itself.”¹ The longing to know God stems from the necessity of thinking; knowledge means participating in divine providence, and cultiva-

tion of the intellect is the prerequisite for receiving prophecy, Maimonides teaches. My late father, Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel, writes that “The Torah as given to Moses, an ancient rabbi maintains, is but an unripened fruit of the heavenly tree of wisdom. At the end of days, much that is concealed will be revealed. . . . Study is a pilgrimage of discovery of wisdom.”² The rabbinic theological doctrine “*dibra Torah k’lashon bnai adam*” (“the Torah speaks in human language”) came to provide a way for Jews, Christians, and Muslims to open revelation to human interpretation.

About the Author



Susannah Heschel is the Eli Black Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College. Her scholarship focuses on Jewish-Christian relations in Germany during the 19th and 20th centuries, the history of biblical scholarship, and the history of anti-Semitism. The recipient of numerous grants and awards, she is currently a Guggenheim Fellow and is writing a book on the history of European Jewish scholarship on Islam. She was the School of Theology's 2014 Commencement speaker.

1. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Maimonides: A Biography*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1983), 28.

2. Abraham Joshua Heschel, “No Religion Is an Island,” in: *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity: Essays of Abraham Joshua Heschel*, ed. Susannah Heschel (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 245.

Photo by James Aronson

Interreligious cooperation allows us to share insight and learning that strengthen us in our different faiths. My father forged deep friendships with Christians—Protestant and Catholic—after he escaped Nazi Europe and arrived in the United States in 1940. From him, I learned that the purpose of friendship between Christians and Jews is “to search in the wilderness for wellsprings of devotion, for treasures of stillness, for the power of love and care.” Indeed, he writes, we must “share insight and learning, cooperate in academic ventures on the highest scholarly level.”³

PASTORS OF THE CLASSROOM

Being a scholar, teacher, and pastor is not simply a job or a profession; it is a vocation requiring utter dedication of our time, mind, and heart. No scholar is ever satisfied; there are always too many books to read, too many ideas to absorb, too much to learn, write, analyze, and teach. For every pastor, there are innumerable souls in torment, anxious for a good word, a prayer, and an empathic heart.

The texts we study as scholars of religion are also anxious for our empathy. It is not enough for us to analyze critically; our texts also have souls, calling out to us for sensitivity, understanding, and appreciation, and we as scholars have to recognize the subjectivity of the texts we study.

Scholars have knowledge to convey, but a teacher, like a pastor, must also respect “the delicate sacred interiority of each student,” in the words of the late Frank O’Malley, the great professor of English at the University of Notre Dame.⁴ Teaching and preaching are a sacred trust, and for me, teaching is also pastoring.

In the Talmud, there is a debate between two rabbis, Rav and Shmuel, as to whether the world was created for the sake of Moses, so that he might receive the Torah, or for the sake of David, so that he might sing hymns and psalms in praise of God.⁵ The answer, of course, is that the world was created for the sake of both scripture and psalms, as Moses says in Deuteronomy 32:1: “Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; let the earth hear the words of my mouth.” The rabbis explain that at that moment, Moses stood in heaven and spoke to both heaven and Earth.⁶

We might ask a similar question about why scholarship was created: do we become scholars in order to receive and transmit our research findings, or do we become scholars in order to sing psalms—to inspire ourselves and others to become attuned to the wonder that is the beginning of wisdom? Are not both necessary? May you be blessed that your preaching and your teaching are heard on Earth as they are in heaven.

FROM DOUBT TO NEW DIRECTIONS

I’ve worked hard as a researcher, yet I never feel I have worked hard enough. There is always so much more to know, exciting new books to read, so many details to study that often reconfigure the larger picture. I worked in dozens and dozens of German archives for years, work that was laborious, often tedious, and always depressing. Based on those archives, I reconstructed the history of an anti-Semitic propaganda institute run by Protestant theologians during the Third Reich.⁷ I discovered all sorts of incriminating evidence about Christian theologians, both prominent and obscure,

3. Ibid, 249.

4. Cited in George McClancy, “The Inspired Teacher: Frank O’Malley,” *Notre Dame Magazine* (2001).

5. Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98b.

6. Midrash Deuteronomy Rabbah 10; cited by Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, trans. Gordon Tucker (New York: Continuum, 2007), 342.

7. Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

who supported Hitler. While there is a great satisfaction in gathering, analyzing, and publishing the data I discovered, I have to stop myself to ask, What is the ultimate significance of this scholarship? Have I simply exposed and brought condemnation to a group of wicked theologians? Is my study a pursuit of justice and an effort to prevent evil? How does this ugly topic fit into my life spiritually? Even more, how in the face of such a horrific story do I retain my humanity?

For me, my study of the terrible ways religion can be exploited for ugly political purposes, such as the effort to create a synthesis of Christianity and Nazism, made me sensitive to the experience of doubt that many religious people undergo at times. Doubt can plunge us into deep despair, disorient us from our own lives. I felt that way when writing on the Nazi theologians: in despair, disoriented, as though all of religion had become tainted for me. But we also know that doubt can be a gift from God that can lead us in new directions. The *Zohar* says a person is only whole when his heart is broken. The sadness of our soul may open a crevice in the wall that often seems to stand in front of us. I emerged from writing my book with greater clarity about wickedness, but also with longing for religion, and with a far greater appreciation for the extraordinary goodness, creativity, and inspiration that religion offers us. Only in religion, I believe, can the depths of all dimensions of our souls—from despair to joy—be experienced, given voice, and become tools for redeeming our world.

A PLACE FOR PASSION

The spiritual life, like the work of scholarship, is slow, careful, nurturing, and focused on discernment rather than quick information or rapid judgment. Prayer opens our hearts, makes us vulnerable, sensitive, and very honest, and then we bring those qualities to bear on our scholarly work. I recall how I trembled when I first held Nazi documents. Scholarship in religion is too often identified merely as a dry, historical-critical method; how might we expand that focus and try to recapture the religious experience suggested by the written words of texts? We bring the spiritual dimension to reading our texts to sense the poetry of the psalms, the passion of the prophets, the intensity of the scholastics, the emotions that give life to ideas.

To educate means to nurture the soul, not only the mind. This we do by cultivating empathy and reverence for others; by calling attention to the grandeur and mystery of all being, to the holy dimension of human existence; by teaching how to relate the common to the spiritual. The soul is discovered in response, in acts of transcending the self, in the awareness of ends that surpass one’s own interest and needs. Life is a dramatic opportunity.

“Stop and consider the wondrous works of God,” says Job (37:14). We human beings will not perish for lack of information, but we may perish for lack of appreciation. Appreciate your vocation: be aware that it bears ultimate significance. Intellectual truth is not sufficient, and the love taught by religion cannot stand without justice that we create; God is in need of us. □

TRANSFORMATION TIP #6

PUT YOUR BODY ON THE LINE



The NAACP president reminds the STH community that working for justice means putting our bodies where our beliefs are—even in the midst of danger

BY CORNELL WILLIAM BROOKS ('87, Hon.'15)

The following is adapted and condensed from Brooks's Lowell Lecture at Boston University's Marsh Chapel on November 6, 2014. Permission courtesy of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

Walking into NAACP headquarters on my first day as president and CEO of the nation's oldest grassroots civil rights organization, I felt the weight of history on my shoulders. Every room in that building is filled with compelling images of our American ideals in action: Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King, Jr., a boy of about 12 protesting the death of Trayvon Martin in Florida. I could not help but be moved. These transformative leaders—some well-known, some less known, some not known at all—call out to us.

We as a nation are transfixed by images, so much so that as a digital generation we try to capture ourselves in pixels. My moral curiosity prompts me to ask: what would happen if we took selfies of social justice in the United States? I believe you might caption these portraits "Income and Equality," "Criminal Justice," "Voting Rights," and "A Vision for America." And in each photograph, if you look closely, you will find transformational leaders who speak to us.

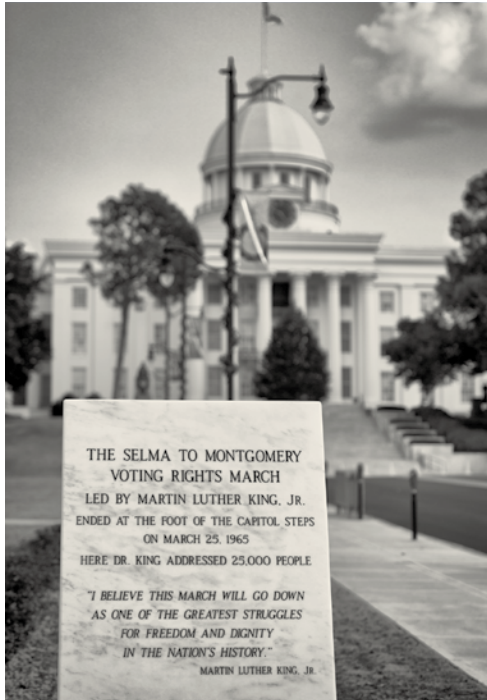
Were you to take a selfie captioned "Criminal Justice," you might find a multiethnic, multiracial mosaic of desperation representing 2.3 million Americans behind bars. The incarceration rate has quintupled over a generation. One out of every four adults, and one out of every three young people, are arrested by age 23. But if you look at that picture closely, you will note transformational leaders. I can think of two whose mug shots were found roughly 50 years after they generated criminal records for civil disobedience in Montgomery, Alabama: Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. These are leaders linked by history who were willing to put their ideals, reputation, and bodies on the line.

About the Author



Cornell William Brooks ('87, Hon.'15), an ordained minister, lawyer, and human rights activist, became the 18th president and CEO of the NAACP in 2014. In November 2014, in response to a grand jury's decision not to indict police officer Darren Wilson for killing 18-year-old Michael Brown, Jr., Brooks and the NAACP led a weeklong march from Ferguson, Missouri, to Jefferson City, calling for police reform.

Photo by Jackie Ricciardi



Monument dedicated to the Selma to Montgomery Voting Rights March on Dexter Avenue on December 3, 2014, in Montgomery, Alabama

It's not enough to say what we believe. We have to put our bodies where our beliefs are. Moving your lips when you're tempted to keep them closed can be an act of physical courage. Standing up when you would rather sit down can be an act of physical courage.

Our criminal justice system calls for that kind of courage. We have young men who are stigmatized by a criminal record, no matter how nonviolent, no matter how long ago. The NAACP has taken a strong stand on banning the question, "Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a crime?" on employment applications. When you check the box in the affirmative, if you're black,

your chances of getting any follow-up decrease by about 75 percent. If you're a white male, your chances decrease by 50 percent. And where you have, in certain instances, white males with a criminal record having a better chance of getting a job than a black man without a criminal record, we have a profound racial and criminal justice challenge. We at the NAACP believe that if a man has paid his debt to society with the hard currency of responsibility, he deserves a second chance—particularly if he never had much of a first chance.

TO LEAD ON YOUR FEET, SERVE ON YOUR KNEES

If you took a selfie of social justice, you might caption it "Voting Rights." After two historic presidential elections in which young people and African Americans participated at unprecedented levels, we find ourselves in a season of disenfranchisement. Nearly two thirds of Americans did not vote in the last Senate election. In the wake of the Shelby County v. Holder Supreme Court decision, state legislatures have worked to keep young people, Latinos, African Americans, people with disabilities, and the elderly from voting. In Texas, an ID that allows you to carry a concealed weapon is sufficient to empower one to vote—but an ID that allows you to carry a book of Shakespeare is not.

In NAACP history we find transformational leaders who understood the importance of the franchise, including lawyer Charles Hamilton Houston and Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court Thurgood Marshall. As dean, Hamilton set up Howard University Law School as a citadel

of civil rights. Too often, prophets demand too little of themselves and too little of others. If we're going to be good lawyers, ministers, and leaders, we have to ask much of ourselves and much of others. And the only way to do that is by leading by example: working harder and smarter, with a high sense of sacrifice and dedication, and modeling for the people we claim to lead the very values we say we hold.

We at Boston University School of Theology have an incredible legacy.

It weighs upon us. Sitting under the tutelage of theologians far greater than I could ever hope to be, I hoped and prayed that I could be a fraction of what they represented to me. When Howard Thurman and King and the Boston Personalists are part of your legacy, they don't represent your alumni bragging rights; they represent

the prophetic tradition that you're called to serve and represent. When I was here, I used to pose myself this question: if our forebears did all they did with what little they had, why can't we do more with all we have been given? It's exceedingly difficult to inspire people, to get them to follow you, to get them to sacrifice unless you're speaking, preaching, leading, serving from the depths of your soul, and you can't do that unless you're on your knees. You can't do that unless you're drawing from the wellspring

of scripture. You've got to stand on hours of praying, reading scripture, being in the community—hours, days, and years of devotion.

Let me give you an example. We know of Parks because of her heroic stand in sitting down on a bus in Montgomery. What we know less about is the fact that 10 years previously, as an investigator for the NAACP, she created a committee to represent an African American woman who was gang-raped by white racists. Parks did not suddenly

become the mother of the modern civil rights movement on the day she refused to give up her seat.

When Howard Thurman and King and the Boston Personalists are part of your legacy, they don't represent your alumni bragging rights; they represent the prophetic tradition that you're called to serve and represent.

DIGNITY, DISTRACTIONS, AND DREAMS
If there were a selfie entitled "Income and Equality," we might note that in the midst of this uneven economic

recovery, there are the 99 percent who find themselves descending into full-time work and ambitions on a part-time salary. And we find the one percent ever escalating into luxury. We have to support a minimum wage that's a living wage. Jobs represent not only dollars but dignity. When King went to Memphis, he met sanitation workers on strike wearing placards declaring, "I am a man." We have to recognize worth and work out of a deep and abiding love and respect for the individual.

Photo by Nagel Photography/shutterstock.com

King was advised not to go to Memphis. There was no time to go to Memphis. Memphis was a diversion, it was a side trip, it was not the main objective. But transformational leaders prophetically define themselves like the Good Samaritan—being distracted, being called out of their way into communities that need their help. Transformational leaders put their lives on the line.

Last, we look at the selfie “A Vision for America.” The School of Theology is a place where vision, dreams are born. My vision of what I wanted to do with my life was born here, as I was reading Reinhold Niebuhr, Gustavo Gutierrez, Cornell West, Professor Dana Robert, and listening to Professor Harrell Beck (’45,

GRS’54). Transformational leaders have vision—but they also have the ability to communicate a vision. Writer Simon Sinek notes that King’s speech on the National Mall is not remembered as the “I Have a Plan” speech, but as the “I Have a Dream” speech. We are called to inspire people and not be apologetic about it.

Now we have to be multilingual. When you’re speaking to legislatures, it’s often helpful to speak in terms of cost-benefit analysis. It’s important to speak to businesspeople in terms of economics. But when it comes to moving people and creating movements, values are the lingua franca of political discourse. We

have to talk in terms of right and wrong, not merely better and worse. We’ve got to talk about what our society should be like, the direction we should be going.

“If there is no struggle, there is no progress,” wrote Frederick Douglass.

“Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the

ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.”¹ A commitment to pursuing justice no matter what until the very end, that’s what we’re called to. And so when I walk the halls of the NAACP, the portraits I see on the walls are of heroes and heroines who never gave up, who never gave over

to despair or pessimism or defeatism. I’m reminded that I walk among those who believe and yet believe. And when I stand in Marsh Chapel in the midst of this body of believers, I yet believe. I believe in this tradition, I believe in these prophets, I believe in this School of Theology, and I believe those things that we aspire to. Those things that we hope for, those things that we dream of, those things that we envision we will, through our God, bring to pass. □

Transformational leaders prophetically define themselves like the Good Samaritan—being distracted, being called out of their way into communities that need their help.

1. Frederick Douglass, *Frederick Douglass on Slavery and the Civil War: Selections from His Writings* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003), 42.



Watch the entirety of Brooks’s lecture at www.wgbhnews.org (search “Brooks”).



William Fairfield Warren

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Years of Making History

For nearly two centuries, the School of Theology's leaders and alums have been breaking new ground in religion around the world. Here are a few highlights:



Anna Howard Shaw

1872 As BU's first president, **William Fairfield Warren** helps the University become the first to open all divisions to female students. Warren, a Methodist missionary who helped shape STH, also taught one of the country's first courses in comparative religion at BU.

1878 STH students **Anna Oliver and Anna Howard Shaw** become the first women in the United States to receive theology degrees. In 1880, Shaw becomes one of the first women ordained in any branch of Methodism.

1902 Methodist minister **Edgar Helms (1893, Hon.'40)** founds Goodwill Industries in Boston while teaching applied Christianity at STH. Goodwill, which calls itself "one of the region's first models of a successful social enterprise," now boasts 165 member organizations worldwide.

1953 **Howard Thurman (Hon.'67)** begins his role as dean of Marsh Chapel and the first black dean at a predominantly white university.



Howard Thurman



Mary Elizabeth Moore

1968 **Yap Kim Hao ('54, '68)** becomes the first Asian bishop of the Methodist Church in Malaysia and Singapore. In 1973, he is elected to serve as general secretary of the Christian Conference of Asia.

1977 **Josiah Kibira ('64)** is elected as the first African president of the Lutheran World Federation.

2009 **Mary Elizabeth Moore** becomes STH's first woman dean, making her the fifth woman in the world to hold a presidential role in United Methodist Church theological schools.

2014 **Doris J. García Rivera ('06)** is elected the first woman president of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. An alum making similar strides is **Lallene J. Rector ('78, GRS'86)**, who was elected the first woman president of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in 2013.



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“ I have been supported by BU. I have been empowered. I am really grateful for that. I want BU School of Theology to continue its legacy of supporting and empowering women to pursue their calling in ministry. ”

Nizzi S. Digan ('02)

Digan has included a gift to STH in her estate plans.

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