

# CGCM News

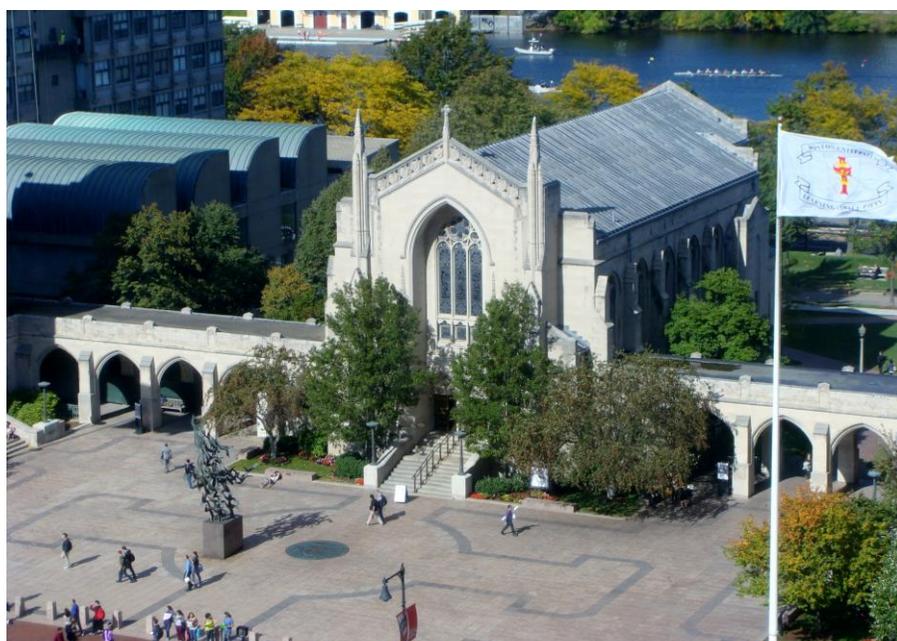
Center for Global Christianity & Mission

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## CGCM Co-hosts Landmark World Christianity Forum

## Spring Semester Events



Leading scholars of World Christianity and Directors of Centers of World Christianity in North America and Europe convened for the first time at Boston University from October 17-19. The importance of the conference was apparent from the beginning, as participants came to Boston at their own expense, and with great enthusiasm for the opportunity to meet other center directors and scholars. Hosts of the conference were Dr. Dana Robert, director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission at BU, and Dr. Todd Johnson, director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell. The purpose of the conference—the World Christianity Forum—was to begin to map the contours of this emerging area and to identify (Continued on page 3)

Wed., February 12<sup>th</sup>  
**“Why God Talks Back so Loudly Now: Anthropological Reflections on the American Charismatic Evangelical Experience in Belief”**  
*A lecture by Dr. Tanya M. Luhrmann the Third Annual Peter Berger Lecture in Sociology and Anthropology of Religion*  
STH B-19, 5:00-6:30 pm

Thur., February 28<sup>th</sup>  
**The Biography of Hiram F. Reynolds, a Founder of the Church of the Nazarene, Who Helped Shape an International Church with an Emphasis on Mission**  
*Report by Dr. Mary Lou Shea*  
STH 325, 12:00-1:30 pm

Also this semester:  
**Ten Year Mission Service in Cambodia** *A Discussion by Rev. Jin Sup Son*  
Time and date to come

BU Celebrates the Work of Rev. Ted Karpf

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BU Alumni Publications, Research, and Public Engagement

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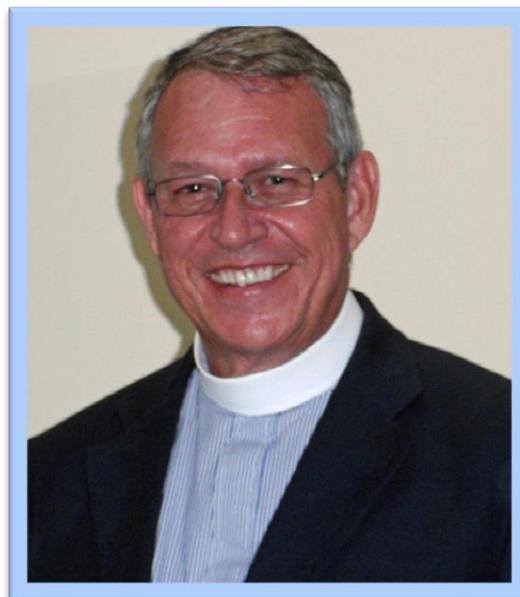


## BU Celebrates the Contributions of Ted Karpf as he Retires

Rev. Canon Ted Karpf may have retired in December as the School of Theology's Director of Development and Alumni Relations, but he retains the rank of Adjunct Lecturer at STH and Faculty Associate of the CGCM. This is the second retirement for Rev. Karpf. He came to BUSTH in 2010 at the behest of Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore after retiring from the United Nations where he had worked in the battle against AIDS in Africa for ten years with the World Health Organization. The opportunity to return to his alma mater and serve was one he says he could not refuse.

Rev. Karpf's appointment, from the beginning, was a joint one between his administrative role and a faculty appointment to teach. Early on he connected with Dr. Beverly Brown, his counterpart at the Center for Global Development, and through her made connections with the School of Medicine and the School of Public Health where he gave numerous guest lectures. Finally, last semester, he set aside the time to offer an entire course on Decent Care.

With financial support from the Center for Global Christianity, a full line-up of international experts in the field, people Karpf has known and worked with for decades, came to Boston to engage with students passionate to learn from them. The and speaker during BU's International Education Week in November was Dr. Kumanan Rasanathan of UNICEF who addressed the social determinants of health, a conversation that was opened to the wider BU community.



"It was enormously exciting for me to see how beautifully these guests connected with students and witness how excited students were by what we were presenting," Karpf said. Decent Care, he was reminded, "has great intellectual and theoretical legs." He expects to return to BUSTH in January 2015 and do an abbreviated version of the course for those who missed out the first time.

For now, however, he is settling in to his newly-refurbished home in New Mexico, which he calls "one of the most spiritual places in North America. It is a missional place. It is a liminal place. It has been awash in change and challenge for all of its four hundred years." The Sikhs, Sufis, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Presbyterians all have spiritual centers in the area. It was this that drew him to purchase his ranch there ten years ago. His immediate plans are to embrace a life of solitude and prayer and to begin thinking about writing and publishing about decent care and, of course, continue his relationship with the CGCM!

-by Ada Focer

## World Christianity Forum at BU (Continued from page 1)

... identify important questions that need to be addressed in order to establish its identity.

The Forum began with presentations by the directors of each World Christianity center attending. Their purposes—teaching, research and documentation, and public outreach and service—turned out to be similar. What differed was the structure of each center and its institutional locus or absence thereof. The most significant defining attributes were the particular centers. Centers located in secular universities were more likely to emphasize teaching and global level historical research and documentation, all of which give them grounds for relating to secular scholars and religious studies departments. Centers located in seminaries or religious institutions are more likely to emphasize local level research including field work and case studies as well as training for and service to local churches. Freestanding centers have the ability to forge independent visions. The Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, for instance, offers hospitality to foreign missionaries in the U.S. on furlough and also publishes the prestigious journal, the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. What the centers almost uniformly shared, however, was financial fragility. Regardless of the source of funding, whether a dwindling old endowment or grants from individuals or foundations, consistency of funding was felt by the directors to be uncertain.



In subsequent sessions, participants identified and began to wrestle with the larger questions of identity and function. One measure of how new “World Christianity” is as an academic discourse, is that its definition is not entirely clear to people outside institutions dedicated to its advancement. Nor is there agreement by people inside those institutions on what it should mean. The phrase “world Christianity” first emerged as a way to describe Christianity outside the West and research in the area

and research in the area is still generally focused on issues related to the Global South and immigrant churches in the West. Increasingly, though, teachers include Europe and North America in their use of the term. There were scholars attending the Forum who advocated for including Europe, in particular, in research studies.

Participants had different opinions about whether “World Christianity” captures a subject matter or whether it is a discipline with distinctive approaches and frameworks for interrogating cognate subjects such as contextual theology. One participant saw it as an “intersection point” for scholars from various disciplines but with similar interests. A number of participants recommended a descriptive and comparative approach, although there were differences of opinion on whether treating various manifestations of Christianity as phenomena also risked emptying World Christianity of any theological content.

A panel discussion held Friday afternoon and open to the entire community drew a large crowd  
(Continued on page 4)

## World Christianity Forum ...



... from BU and beyond. Three of the Forum participants, Dr. Emma Wild-Wood from University of Cambridge, Dr. XiYi Yao from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Dr. Jehu Hanicles from Emory University, gave talks focused on the relationship between World Christianity and theology, on Chinese Christianity, and on African Christianity respectively (photo left).

The final session on Saturday morning was devoted to small group discussions on how to divvy up the terrain and develop collaborative projects. Potential collaborative research projects, such as the next edition of the World Christian Encyclopedia, were presented. In final plenary, participants discussed

possible next steps growing from this first World Christianity Forum. A logical next step might be to host a conference exclusively on the question "What Is World Christianity?" Another logical step would be to broaden the discussion among centers to include those in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Forum ended on a very positive note, as participants greatly appreciated the hospitality of Boston University in hosting the conference, and especially the opportunity to interact with peers in other centers and programs in World Christianity.

## Boston University Alumni Give a Glimpse into a Diversity of Writing, Research and Engagement

Boston University alumni associated with the CGCM have been active in many different spheres of writing, research and engagement. To name just a few, Dr. **Sung-Deuk Oak**, Associate Professor of Korean Christianity at UCLA and the Dongsoon Im & Mija Im Endowment Chair Scholar, published a new book this fall, *The Making of Korean Christianity*. It was the first of the new Baylor Studies in World Christianity monograph series, and it has been named "Book of the Year" by *Books & Culture* magazine. Rev. Canon **Kapya John Kaoma** writes on human rights, ecological ethics, and mission. Rev. Kaoma recently published his first book, *God's Family, God's Earth: Christian Ecological Ethics of Ubuntu*, which addresses the implication of the coming ecological crisis and explores helpful resources within Christian and traditional religion. He is currently the Rector of Christ Church, Hyde Park, MA and a Visiting Researcher at Boston University Center for Global Christianity and Mission. Dr. **Gerald (Jerry) Anderson** met Pope Francis, gave a lecture and received an honorary Doctor of Missiology degree from the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome in November. It was the first time an honorary degree has been given to a Protestant by this university that was founded in 1627 and is owned by the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. He is emeritus director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, CT.

## More Spring Events

Fri., March 28<sup>th</sup>

**"Christians in Syria at the Crossroads" Persecution of Christians in the Middle East and Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations**  
*The Costas Consultation*  
Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Seminary

Thur., April 3<sup>rd</sup>

**"Women and HIV: A Personal Perspective on Two Continents"**  
*A Talk by Dr. Dana Robert*  
STH Shaw Center, 12:15-1:30 pm

## CGCM News

is edited by Eva M. Pascal

Visit us at Boston University  
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our website  
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