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CGCM NEWS



Dr. Myers with his wife Susan at Old Town Square,
Klaipėda, Lithuania

Dr. Travis Myers

In this month's spotlight, we feature Dr. Travis Myers, a Boston University School of Theology and CGCM alumnus (2015) and an Associate Professor of Humanities in the Theology Department at LCC International University in Klaipėda, Lithuania. Travis began his journey at LCC as an Assistant Professor in the Fall of 2022, teaching sections of two required core curriculum courses: World History and Arts & Culture. He has since also taken on the periodic Introduction to Missiology and History of Christianity courses. His recent promotion to the position of Associate Professor reflects his academic achievements and the University's recognition of his exemplary teaching, research, and service.

In August he will officially assume the role of the next chair of the department. In an interview with us, Travis shared career-shaping aspects of his academic journey so far.

We asked what motivated him to pursue his current vocation. While on faculty of a niche US college and seminary for several years as the resident missiologist and historian of Christianity, he felt increasingly unsatisfied and resigned at the end of 2020. He elaborated, "During an extended personal sabbatical from full time academia, I was considering a career change, perhaps starting law school at age 50 or working in refugee resettlement, when a friend emailed me a list of job postings from various Christian colleges and universities in January of 2022. That's how my wife, Susan, and I found LCC International University." (As part of LCC's Student Life staff, Susan coaches student leaders while assisting SL leadership in various capacities.)

We asked what made them decide to move to LCC. Travis reflected, "Everything about their profile seemed a good fit for where we were at in our spiritual journeys and career aspirations: students from 50 plus countries; a priority of serving students from war-affected regions; a trauma-informed community; an institutional concern for peace and justice; an international faculty; an ecumenical environment; an 'invitational' posture toward students of other faiths or no faith (pursuing winsome

rather than polemical Christian witness). When we were first married in 1996, we had planned to live and serve somewhere in a context of post-Soviet occupation or influence but got redirected for awhile. Joining LCC in the Baltic has proven a life-long desire fulfilled.”

We asked him to name important people who have influenced him. Dr. Myers replied, “My maternal grandparents, Albert and Winifred Boeker (the latter a high school math teacher for more than 30 years), Dana Robert, Tim Tennent, Garth Rosell, Peter Kuzmič, Anastasios Yannoulatos, Tim Keller, Timothy George, Richard Mouw, John Stott, René Padilla, Andrew Walls, Lamin Sanneh, Lesslie Newbigin, Harvie Conn, Craig Ott, Miriam Adeney, Paul Hiebert and Peter Cha (as profs at TEDS), D.A. Carson and Peter O’Brien, John Roeckeman and Cameron Anderson (IVCF), Joe Bella (first Christian friend) and Daniel Kleven (former student now friend), Ulrich Zwingli, Jean Cauvin, John Eliot and Waban, Richard Baxter, Andrew Fuller, Charles Simeon, Mary Lyon, Abraham Lincoln, AT Pierson, John R. Mott, VS Azariah, JH Bavinck, Hendrik Kraemer, John Perkins, Justo Gonzalez, Brian Stanley, Rodney Stark, Philip Jenkins, Mark Noll, Thomas Kidd, Francis Bremer and Alden Vaughan, Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Mrs. Florini (third grade History and English), Mr. Kracht (7-8th grade Social Studies), Señora Stuart (8-9th grade Spanish), Mrs. Sanders (sophomore English), and Coach Ruskin (junior high track, baseball, and basketball).”

The subject of his graduate school days at the Boston University School of Theology piqued our curiosity, and so we asked about memories he cherishes from that time. Dr. Myers said, “Boston pubs with cohort peers, especially David Scott. Handel’s Messiah at Boston Symphony Hall with Cisca and Daryl Ireland. Attending regional ASM meetings at Maryknoll. Visiting OMSC in New Haven. Lunches in Sherman Union with Tim Leary, director of IVCF graduate fellowship. Reading for comps at Raising Caines. Running down books in BTI libraries. A course with David Hempton at Harvard Divinity School. The Armenian Museum in Newton. Valet parking cars one summer with colleagues from Haiti, the DR, and Puerto Rico. Daytrips with Susan to Gloucester or Bearskin Neck. And, finally, Dr. Robert (aka ‘DLR’) saying after my dissertation defense (I’m paraphrasing), ‘Welcome to the guild; you may now call me Dana.’”

His passion for teaching is tangible and inspiring. On his promotion to Associate Professor, LCC recently posted, “Dr. Myers has quickly become an integral part of our academic community. His commitment to excellence in education and his passion for his field have left a lasting impact on both colleagues and students alike.” What drives his passion? Dr. Myers candidly replied, “I feel privileged, satisfied, and quite significant to be serving through my teaching, advising, etc. the kind of young people who want to study at LCC. They come to be part of a multicultural student body where they can experience friendships with persons from dozens of other countries. Many come to us with experience already as activists and/or community servants. Most are hungry to learn and to be shaped by professors and staff members. The opportunity to be a part of their intellectual development and personal maturation over the course of four years and even one semester is very motivating. I aim to help students recognize and appreciate what is Good, True, and Beautiful, and to be purveyors of such in the world, themselves.”

Teaching in an intercultural and international environment brings with it opportunities as well as challenges. How does he navigate this on a daily basis? He told us that the opportunities pose challenges and vice versa. He elaborated with the following examples: “The need to learn a new academic and publishing ecosystem here in the European Union; the need to learn local and regional histories to better understand my students; the desire to relate to/with colleagues and Lithuanian neighbors in a meaningful manner but a constant awareness of one’s own lack of understanding and “foreignness” which require others to be inconvenienced; working in an English-language bubble, in a context increasingly fluent in English as a second language, which makes life easier for us, on one hand, but the endeavor to learn Lithuanian all the more difficult, on the other hand.”

Finally, we wanted to know if he had any words of wisdom or thoughts for the readers. In an inspiring voice he replied, “The most rewarding scholarship is the fruit of collaboration. You are not merely what you know or believe. Learn from your students. It’s a privilege, luxury, and gift from God to do what we do. Retrieval is more needful than innovation(s). Christ is able.”

World Christianity Conference, Ghana

In March 2024, Princeton Theological Seminary's World Christianity Conference, held at the University of Ghana in Accra, focused on "Revisiting Women and Gender in World Christianity." With over 180 scholars and graduate students participating, the event featured plenary talks by Profs. Kwok Pui Lan, Ivone Gebara, and Egodi Uchendu, as well as a dialogue with Nana Kow Ackon V, a female chief from Cape Coast.



CGCM Affiliates. From L to R: Aixin Yi, Morgan Crago, Xiaoli Yang, Jesudas Athyal, Michèle Sigg, Gina Zurlo, and Soojin Chung.

Coming from a variety of disciplines, papers ranged from the contemporary women's participation in Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) of West Africa, to early women's ordination in China and Ghana, to histories of women building educational institutions in Brazil. Special tributes were paid to Profs. Mercy Amba Oduyoye and Dana Robert for their contributions to World Christianity. Prof. Oduyoye was honored for her work as a theologian of World Christianity and Prof. Robert was honored with a lifetime achievement award for her contributions to (the study of) world Christianity. Several themes arose throughout the week, including the significance of indigenous women in mission history and their roles in daily life and liturgy. The conference fostered a warm and collaborative atmosphere, sparking enthusiasm for further exploration in the field.

First Annual Kenya Christian Biography Conference

April 22-28, 2024, Dr. Sigg traveled to Mombasa, Kenya where she participated in the first annual Kenya Christian Biography conference entitled, "Reclaiming the Voices of First Generation Church Leaders," co-sponsored by the Diocese of Mombasa Research Institute (DoMRI) and the Dictionary of African Christian Biography. The two-day conference took place at the Anglican cathedral and drew about 40 attendees, lay and clergy, including Bishop Alphonse Baya (sponsor) and guest speaker Archbishop emeritus Eliud Wabukala. Dr. Sigg gave one of the keynote presentations (the second was given by Prof. Esther Mombo). There were seven presentations of biographies of Kenyan Christian pioneers (three of women, four of men) by DoMRI researchers. Afterwards, Dr. Sigg gave a brief workshop for the biography writers. On Sunday, she preached at the cathedral at the invitation of Bishop Baya.

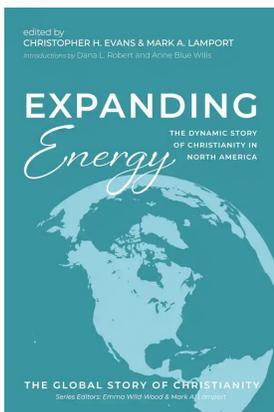
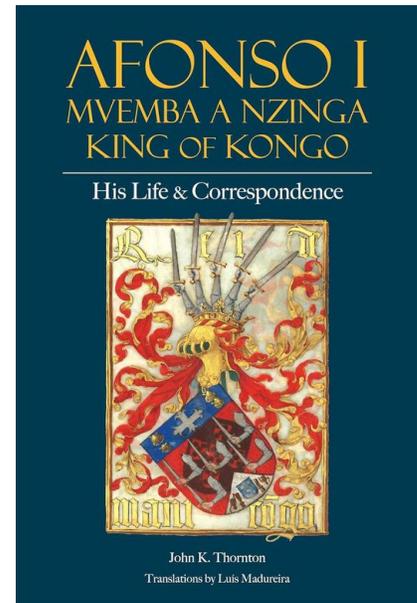


RECENT PUBLICATIONS

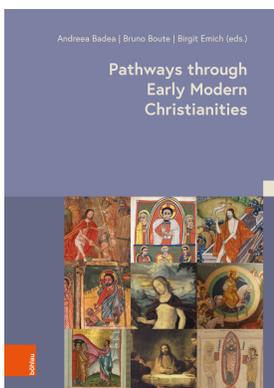
David (Dima) Hurlbut's (CGCM Visiting Researcher) recent article won the Mormon History Association's 2024 Best International Article Award.

“‘Social Projects’ and the RLDS Church’s Mission in Southeastern Nigeria, 1966-1977,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 50, no. 2 (Fall) (2023).

Professor John K. Thornton (CGCM Faculty Associate) has written a new book about the African Christian convert who sought to convert his kingdom, *Afonso I Mvemba A Nzinga King of Kongo: His Life & Correspondence*, recently published by Hackett Publishing Company. Toby Green, Professor of Precolonial and Lusophone African History and Culture, writes, "John K. Thornton's new book is another must-read. It contains both translations of the extant letters of the most significant king of Kongo's history, Afonso I (r. 1506–1542), and a powerful, learned, and highly readable analysis of what these letters tell us about the life and times of one of the most important rulers anywhere in the world during the sixteenth century. This book will be essential reading for scholars, teachers, and students engaged with the history of the Kingdom of Kongo."



Allison Kach's (current student, CGCM) chapter on “North American Pentecostalism” is a part of the new book *Expanding Energy: The Dynamic Story of Christianity in North America*. The book has an introduction by Dr. Dana Robert, William Fairfield Warren Distinguished Professor at Boston University and Director of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission. The book is edited by Christopher H. Evans, professor of history of Christianity and Methodist studies at Boston University's School of Theology, and Dr. Mark A. Lamport.



The book *Pathways through Early Modern Christianities* was recently published by Böhlau | Brill Deutschland. Dr. Eugenio Menegon, a CGCM Faculty Associate, has contributed a chapter titled, “Local Religion in the Early Modern Period,” to this volume. The book is available for free at <http://bit.ly/3KxLgFq>