

focus

Boston University School of Theology Spring 2014

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HATRED
OPPRESSION
DISCRIMINATION
INJUSTICE
VIOLENCE

It's been more than 50 years since Martin Luther King, Jr., fought against these wrongs, but some communities still struggle for a share of the Dream.

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ABOUT IT?**

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focus

Boston University
School of Theology

Spring 2014

Dean

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Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore

DEAN'S MESSAGE

A DEMANDING DREAM

BY MARY ELIZABETH MOORE

*What does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?*
(Micah 6:8)

Micah's words pose a demanding answer to the question, "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?" (6:6). He points beyond the sacrificial practice of burnt offerings, even "thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil" (6:7). He calls instead for a way of living that is thoroughly just, thoroughly loving, and thoroughly humble.

Surely Micah, like Martin Luther King, Jr. (GRS'55, Hon.'59), had a dream that his people might be "free at last" if they opened themselves to complete transformation. Such pleas for justice are unrelenting in Hebrew scripture and in many traditional Jewish practices, whether daily *mitzvot*, Sabbath, or Jubilee. And as we see in Micah, justice and kindness are not opposing values; each is a pathway to the other. True justice opens people to deep respect for the dignity of the "other," while true kindness demands justice. And both require humility.

These themes vibrate in most religious traditions, and they certainly sing out in Christianity. In Mark, for example, a scribe asks Jesus, "Which commandment is the first of all?" (12:28). Jesus gives a radical response—to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength,

and to love your neighbor as yourself (12:29–31). Luke offers a different scenario for these same commands (10:25–38). His story unfolds with a volley of questions when a man asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. When Jesus turns the question back to him, the man responds with the commands to love God and neighbor. In both Gospels, the question has to do with how to live or what God requires, and each time the response is love.

The commands set forth by Micah and the Gospels are as captivating as they are daunting. They echo in King's Dream speech of more than 50 years ago; in the efforts of many Muslims, Jews, and Christians to build peace in the Middle East; in local and global efforts to eliminate poverty and provide health care for all people. They echo in efforts to create religious communities that include every race and ethnicity, gender and gender preference, social class, sexual orientation, and theological perspective. Such comprehensive visions *require* justice, kindness, and humility. They cannot become realities if people are unwilling to stand boldly for justice, or if they trample others with unkindness, or if they settle for righteous indignation in place of humility. The hollow places in this world cry out for whole-bodied ethical action, which cannot forfeit kindness for justice or justice for humility.

A NEW VIEW OF NEIGHBOR

We catch glimpses of this ethical action today. In June 2013, the

**We see the dream alive
today in communities
protesting the dispro-
portionate number of African
American men in US prisons,
in the mother who intervenes
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attracts daily taunts, and in
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gay child against bullying.
We see it in those who say
“no” to condemnatory
attitudes and habits that
perpetuate despair among
LGBTQ teens.**

Supreme Court ruled that married same-sex couples could receive federal benefits, and it allowed same-sex marriages to continue in California by declining to decide (and potentially reverse) a lower court case. In these landmark decisions, the possibility of same-gender unions was legally upheld;

however, clergy in some communions are still condemned if they perform such marriages, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) couples continually face discrimination and recrimination. Christian churches still mostly fail to discuss gay marriage and all other matters of sexuality and gender with openness to diverse points of view, and they create few spaces for all people to live well together.

How should we live in such a world? The weight of

scripture points to a challenging vision. Give your love fully to God and neighbor, and, while you are at it, stretch your understanding of neighbor. We have to expand our visions of justice in a world so accustomed to violent injustice. We must stretch our comprehension of economic systems in which the rich get

richer and the poor get poorer. We have to stretch our attitudes when engaging questions of sexuality in a world where LGBTQ people struggle for equal rights and are continually dismissed as an “issue.” We must stretch our perspectives on dialogue to move beyond in-group agreement and out-group fighting toward genuine listening and respect. We need to be just *and* kind—to those who are like us, those who are different, and those with whom we radically disagree. This is the demanding dream presented by *focus* 2014.

NO TIME TO LOSE

Now is the time to enact this dream. The goals of justice, kindness, and humility seem unrealizable and antithetical, but the world has waited too long to reach for them. It will take bold action, hard decisions, and massive effort. But it can be done. We see the dream alive today in communities protesting the disproportionate number of African American men in US prisons, in the mother who intervenes for her child whose disability attracts daily taunts, and in the father who defends his gay child against bullying. We see it in those who say “no” to condemnatory attitudes and habits that perpetuate despair among LGBTQ teens.

This issue of *focus* uncovers realities of injustice and possibilities for kindness and humility on the Syrian border, in prisons, and in local congregations. It uncovers inner struggles of black women and discouraging setbacks on the justice journey. But it also poses practices of singing for justice, liberative play, and persistent questioning. These dreams and actions ask much of us, but they also promise much in return. □

THE MISSION CONTINUES

More distance learning opportunities, prestigious faculty, research funding, and exciting student travel are coming to the School of Theology thanks to its first-ever campaign, officially launched in 2012. STH is nearly halfway to its \$25 million goal. Here are highlights from the campaign, to be accomplished by 2017:

**RECORD NUMBER OF
ALUMS WHO GAVE TO
STH IN FISCAL YEAR 2013:**

832

**RAISED FOR
STUDENT HOUSING:**

\$1.4M

**FUNDING RAISED FOR
FACULTY CHAIRS**



**HARRELL F. BECK CHAIR
OF HEBREW SCRIPTURE:**

70%



**WALTER G. MUELDER CHAIR
OF SOCIAL ETHICS:**

100%

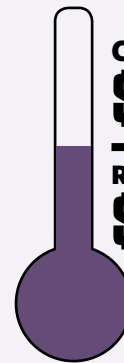


**TRUMAN COLLINS CHAIR
OF WORLD CHRISTIANITY
AND HISTORY OF MISSION:**

100%

**RAISED IN ENDOWED
SCHOLARSHIPS:**

\$1M



**CAMPAIGN GOAL:
\$25,000,000**

**RAISED:
\$12,000,300**

**RAISED TO
CREATE THE STH
COMMUNITY CENTER:**

\$1.2M

**FACULTY, STAFF,
AND DEAN'S
ADVISORY BOARD
MEMBERS WHO'VE
PLEGGED SUPPORT:**

100%



Read more about STH's campaign goals and projects at www.bu.edu/sth/giving.



INVESTIGATING THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANITY



Photo courtesy of the CGCM

Center for Global Christianity & Mission Director Dana L. Robert with three of her former students at the World Christianity Forum. From left to right: Xiyi Yao ('00) of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Charles Farhadian (GRS'01) of Westmont College, and Sung Deuk Oak ('02) of UCLA

Centers of world Christianity don't just document religion's past—they also investigate its future, by exploring everything from Christianity's growing popularity in Asia to implications of the rise of global Islam. There's much that leaders of these academic organizations could share, but they've had little opportunity to connect—

until now. In October 2013, center leaders and world Christianity scholars from the United States and Europe visited STH for a groundbreaking meeting. The three-day World Christianity Forum, cosponsored by STH's Center for Global Christianity & Mission (CGCM), gave attendees a chance to discuss the role centers play in the field,

brainstorm about what work is needed, and explore ideas for collaboration. They also discussed what “world Christianity” means today—a topic that could spark a future conference. Research in the area still generally reflects world Christianity's origins in issues relating to the Global South and immigrant churches in the West, but many teachers now include Europe and North America as well.

Connecting world Christianity centers and their resources will assist not only scholars and center leaders, but also STH students. “We have a lot of international students, and they want documentation on how Christianity started in their countries,” says Dana L. Robert, CGCM's director and Truman Collins Professor of World Christianity and History of Mission. “This is like the beginning of their own histories.”

For more information, visit www.bu.edu/cgcm. □

STH LAUNCHES QUEER THEOLOGY COURSE

How did queer theology emerge, and how does it affect Christian faith and practice? This is the focus of a groundbreaking course launched in September 2013 by STH and Union United Methodist Church, Boston's only LGBTQ-affirming black church and a former stop on the Underground Railroad.

Queer Theology, which was held at Union and was previously available at STH only as an independent study, is believed to be the only graduate class of its kind taught with a mainline congregation. It is tentatively slated to repeat in fall 2014.

“The black Church has been sort of put up by our conservative

brothers and sisters as wholly conservative,” says Pamela Lightsey, the STH clinical assistant professor of contextual theology who taught the course, “and I wanted to say, ‘No, there are black churches that are open and affirming and that want to have a discussion about sexual identity.’” □

FINDING FEMALE POWER



Choi Hee An

They're bright, talented, and successful—but they feel like imposters. "A lot of women—even career women in really advanced positions—sometimes struggle with low self-confidence. They doubt their ability to be leaders," says Choi Hee An, director of STH's Anna Howard Shaw Center. Choi hopes the center's 2014 Women in the World Conference—"Leadership: Women and Power Dynamics"—will help women "find what powers they have inside of them." Speakers, including former Massachusetts State Representative Shirley Owens-Hicks, will explore questions

such as, "As a woman, how do you negotiate power dynamics in your unique leadership position?" and "What are the places where you feel powerless?" The annual conference, says Choi, encourages women to recognize their innate value. "We give them the voice to be heard."

The conference will take place March 26 at the Anna Howard Shaw Center. To register for the conference and/or the Anna Howard Shaw Award Banquet, which follows the conference and honors STH Lecturer and Bishop in Residence Susan Hassinger, visit <http://go.bu.edu/women2014> or call 617-353-3059. □

Photo by Pippa Mpunzwana

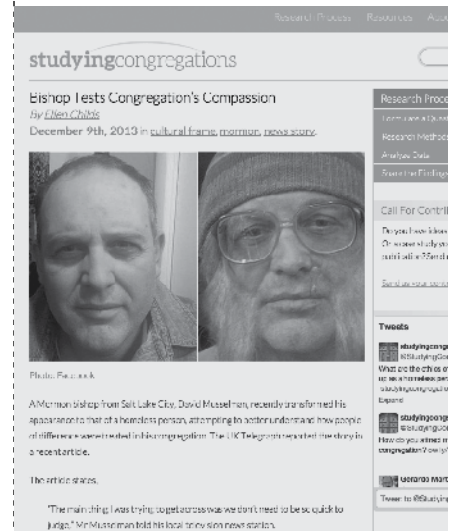
CONGREGATIONAL TROUBLESHOOTING ONLINE

How can a congregation increase racial diversity, successfully share worship space with another community, or conduct research to learn why its attendance numbers are falling? Church leaders can find answers to these and other questions at www.studyingcongregations.org, a free website hosted by STH and Hartford Seminary's Congregational Studies Project Team. The site, which launched in November 2013, offers resources for studying and leading congregations, including case studies, expert commentary, and social science methods and theories. Site visitors can interact with experts and each other via a blog

and social media. The website, supported by \$300,000 from the Lilly Endowment, aims in part to replace the project team's popular print handbooks on congregational studies.

Website Director Ellen Childs expects the site will act as a digital consultant for dwindling, financially challenged congregations, helping them gain access to useful research and determine what questions and issues to explore. "We're trying to give them a fighting chance at discussion," says Childs. "That's what congregational consultants do: they observe and listen and create a plan for the future, and not everybody can afford that."

Start your congregational troubleshooting at www.studyingcongregations.org. □



ADVENTURES IN ETHICS



Peter J. Paris

Peter J. Paris's adventures in ethics and justice have led him everywhere, from Nigeria—where he worked with the Student Christian Movement as the country was shaking off colonialism—to Chicago, where he participated in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s (GRS'55, Hon.'59) first freedom rally in the city and his march to city hall. He's served as a Baptist assistant pastor, presided over organizations such as the Society of Christian Ethics, and has been dubbed "one of the greatest Christian ethicists of our time" by philosopher and academic Cornel West. In fall 2013, Paris became the new Visiting Walter G. Muelder Professor of Social Ethics at STH, where he teaches courses including Christian Thinking about Moral Decisions as well as Ethics and Public Policy. *focus* spoke with Paris about ethics in the classroom, hope in a polarized society, and King's Dream today.

What do you most hope to impart to STH students?

I think what I most want to impart is the diversity of ethical arguments, whether they are religiously based or not. I try to communicate that there's no one Christian perspective. And I try to get students away from the notion that ethics is one thing, and that their ethics is the only one thing. I think that makes for humility on the part of people trying to act in a moral way. It's important not simply to affirm in a vacuous way that others are moral, but to learn something about the ways in which they are moral, the ways in which they consider themselves to be moral, and the accents they place on certain values that may be diminished in your own moral position.

Can you provide an example from past classes you've taught?

I think in order to have, say, a discussion in a class about free choice and pro-life, it's important to lay some ground rules. You can, by virtue of trying to promote your own righteousness, harm someone else whose experience can be quite different. (At other universities) I've had people either leave the classroom very abruptly or come to my office virtually in tears because they were hurt by the tone and the argument another person was making. It's sort of like being in an assembly of the United Nations. You're laying a groundwork that says, "We are not together on this issue but we

respect one another, and maybe we can come together on some other issues in the future."

What gives you hope that we can move in that direction despite how polarized society can be?

The things that give me hope are organizations like the United Nations, ecumenical organizations, interfaith organizations. Congress, as stalemated as it has been, still stands as a beacon of the necessity of people representing diverse communities and constituencies figuring out ways of working together. There's no blueprint that tells them how to do it; they have to do it anew each time. Every achievement opens up a set of possibilities for the next move, which then has to be negotiated again and again and again.

This issue of *focus* touches on the 50th anniversary of King's Dream speech. What do you believe that speech has to say to us today?

King began with the preamble to the Declaration of Independence—that we're all created equal, endowed with unalienable rights—and he hoped the day would come when the United States would live out the meaning of its creed. That day has not yet come. But various things have been set in motion by King and by others to place us in the right direction. There's still a long way to go on every front because that's the nature of the human condition. □

FOUR ALUMS, THREE CHALLENGES



The diverse missions of STH's 2013 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients have taken them from urban immigrant communities to the halls of hospitals to the offices of a global media ministry. The recipients are, as pictured from left, Michele Shields ('81), direc-

tor of Spiritual Care Services at the University of California, San Francisco, (UCSF) Medical Center and the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital; Deborah Lieder Kiesey ('76), bishop of the Michigan Area of the United Methodist Church; and David Farley ('78), pastor of Echo Park United Methodist Church in Los Angeles. Not pictured: Andy Crouch ('94), executive editor of *Christianity Today*. After receiving their awards, the recipients gathered at STH for the panel discussion, "What Are the Three Greatest Challenges Facing Us in the Next Decade?" To watch the panel, and to see videos of other STH events, search "STH" at www.bu.edu/buniverse. □

ALUM MAKES HISTORY IN ROME



Gerald Anderson ('55, GRS'60), above left, with Father Alberto Trevisiol (center) and Cardinal Fernando Filoni

The Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome has existed for nearly 400 years, but it hadn't given an honorary degree to a Protestant until November 14, 2013. Gerald Anderson ('55, GRS'60) received a Doctor of Missiology from the rector, Father Alberto Trevisiol, and chancellor, Cardinal Fernando Filoni. A former United Methodist missionary in the Philippines and the emeritus director of the Overseas Ministries Study Center in New Haven, Connecticut, Anderson delivered a lecture entitled "A New Missionary Age" to students and faculty. Speaking about the persecution of Christians in many parts of the world today, he said, "Once again we are coming to know that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." □

REMEMBERING ORLO STRUNK

"Embracing the complex, the controversial, the unknown" was Orlo C. Strunk, Jr.'s modus operandi, psychiatrist Robert Charles Powell once said. Strunk ('55, GRS'57), a leader in pastoral psychology who taught psychology of religion and pastoral psychology at Boston University for 16 years, died in September 2013 at age 88. Strunk was also a United Methodist minister, counselor, author, former managing editor of the *Journal of*

Pastoral Care, and a fellow in the American Psychological Association. Presiding over the ceremony in which the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy presented Strunk with a significant contribution award in 2011, Powell praised how Strunk, "with courageous persistence, promoted and defended the formulation of new views" in the field, "even if these were not popular." □

SINGING WITH THE STONES

When Sarah Zenir's choir director announced that the group had been invited to sing with the Rolling Stones, she thought he was joking. But on June 12 and 14, 2013, Zenir ('14) found herself onstage with Mick Jagger and the rest of the band at Boston's TD Garden, performing "You Can't Always Get What You Want" to the screams of 12,000 fans. At each stop on their "50 & Counting" tour, the Stones teamed with a local choir to perform the song; for Boston, the

Stones's scout chose BU's Marsh Chapel Choir, which includes students and alums, professional singers, and Boston residents. Director Scott Jarrett (CFA '99, '08) had three weeks to pull together a group of 24 singers and rehearse.

Zenir, a master's student of sacred music and choral conducting, admits she had a tough time sleeping the night before the concert. Singing with legends for such a large audience, she says, was both nerve-racking and exhilarating.

"I've never had a rock-and-roll experience before, and getting to do it at that high level, performing with a musical icon... People



Sarah Zenir at TD Garden to sing with the Rolling Stones

still don't believe me when I tell them that this happened." □

THEY'VE GOT MAIL

Being a new student can be daunting. Wouldn't it help to receive a welcoming letter from an alum? Micah Christian ('12) thought so. Along with STH staff, he launched the "Cloud of Witnesses" letter-writing program, named for a reference in Hebrews 12:1. In January, after the bustle of the first semester, each new STH student receives a letter from a graduate sharing thoughts on topics such as how seminary has played a role in his or her life. STH matches the writers and recipients, hoping to spark ongoing conversation and support. The program is now in its second year. "We want the alum to have a connection to the



Micah Christian

School as it is now, and for the student to have a connection to the legacy of the School," says Alumni Relations Officer Jaclyn Jones ('06). Interested alums may email jkcjones@bu.edu. □

EXPLORING A RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO TRAGEDY

On April 11, in anticipation of the one-year anniversary of the April 15, 2013, Boston Marathon bombings, the School of Theology's Center for Practical Theology will sponsor a moderated panel discussion about feminist and womanist theological responses to communal tragedy. Presenters include Wendy Farley of Emory University, Susan Abraham of Loyola Marymount University, Melanie Harris of Texas Christian University, independent scholar Sharon Betcher, and others. To RSVP, visit www.bu.edu/cpt. □

STATE OF PLAY



Austin Washington

FORMER SOCCER PRO AUSTIN WASHINGTON ('16) SWITCHES UP HIS GAME AS A NEW STUDENT AT STH.

BY ANDREW THURSTON

The Estadio Banorte is sold out. It's just a preseason game, but you wouldn't guess it from the more than 20,000 soccer fans cheering, whooping, whistling, and singing. The sound reverberates around the home of the Club Social y Deportivo Sinaloa—the Dorados—in western Mexico.

It's February 27, 2008, and this is Austin Washington's Major League Soccer (MLS) debut: the Chicago Fire versus the Dorados. Among the defender's Fire teammates are American, Mexican, and Malian internationals. Five weeks before—until the Fire picked him in the fourth round of the 2008 MLS SuperDraft—Washington ('16) was just another college soccer prospect. Now, he's limbering up below a wall of noise, swallowing the rising panic. The referee puts the whistle to his lips. The din of the crowd tumbles from the stands. One last stretch. The referee throws his arms forward and blows hard on the whistle.

The crowds still roar, but not for Washington. In January 2010, the Fire hired a new coach; the following month, it announced in a press release it was waiving Washington.

Three years have passed. It's summer 2013 and the former soccer star is about to start a shift in the roe room of an Alaskan canning factory. There, Washington spends long days—20-hour

shifts are not unheard of—scooping salmon eggs from sacks, lathering them in soy sauce, and packaging them for hungry customers in Japan. Good-bye, big leagues.

Since getting cut from the Fire, Washington has started over, completing his undergraduate degree and working in patient care and on a maintenance crew to pay the bills. Now, he has a new career plan. It doesn't involve professional soccer or, he can say with relief, fish factories. That's just a summer job to pay for what comes next—seminary.

FROM DRAFTING TO WAIVING

There was never a plan B. Washington loved soccer. He dreamed of playing abroad. When he won a scholarship to Gonzaga University and “figured out I was capable enough to compete, really compete,” the dream seemed like it might become reality. Five weeks after the draft call came, he was in the Estadio Banorte, playing a solid 83 minutes for the one-time MLS Cup-winning Chicago Fire. In his two years with the Fire, Washington played defense and midfield, reached a North American SuperLiga final, and spent a spell on loan to the Cleveland City Stars.

He hasn't kicked a ball competitively since. When you've starred at the top, he says, it's “almost like

“I don’t want to get injured anymore, kicked anymore. I do like playing soccer with kids; they just want to be out there having a good time—you don’t have to worry about people being too competitive.”

—Austin Washington

going backwards” to play anywhere else. Besides, he adds, “I don’t want to get injured anymore, kicked anymore. I do like playing soccer with kids; they just want to be out there having a good time—you don’t have to worry about people being too competitive.”

Without soccer, he needed another calling. A pastor friend suggested divinity school, so in spring 2013, Washington decided on a different kind of tryout. “I was thinking about peace-building,” he says, so he took two classes at Boston University School of Theology, renowned for its Religion & Conflict Transformation program. It drafted him—or he drafted it—and he started in fall 2013 as a full-time Master of Divinity student.

GIVING WHAT’S ASKED

STH is where Washington hopes to figure out what God is asking of him. At the moment, he’s trying to discern whether his future lies at the pulpit or in a nonprofit focused on conflict resolution. Soft-spoken and a reluctant public speaker, Washington doesn’t seem like a natural preacher, but appearances can be deceptive. As a soccer player, he often surprised people who only knew him off the field. “I tend to be a pretty laid-back person and people don’t often think I’m as competitive as I am.” If he’s

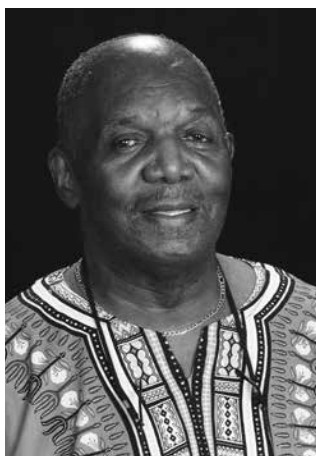
called to ministry, the nerves will probably disappear, just as they did at his Fire debut in Mexico. “It’s really about giving what’s asked,” he says of any possible pastoral post.

For the past three years, Washington has been a deacon of the Church of God in Christ, leading youth in Bible study, driving congregants to services, and presenting the occasional sermon. As someone who grew up in a Pentecostal church that held a literal interpretation of the Bible, Washington says STH has prompted him to question his beliefs and let his “own theology just fall apart, my own opinions, everything, just melt.” It’s uncomfortable, he admits, but that’s why he chose a seminary beyond the comfort zone of his upbringing. “The whole idea is to know God. I imagine that’s why, on some level, everyone goes to divinity school. The better I can understand what’s going on or just how to approach life, the better.”

There was another big factor in his decision to come to STH: learning more about former Dean of Marsh Chapel Howard Thurman (Hon.’67). “I was thoroughly impressed with him. I’d love to take a class on him, as well as on Martin Luther King, Jr.”

Washington is looking forward: he’s excited to learn more about Thurman, study the Hebrew Bible, and “figure out who Christ was.” He’s no longer an ex-soccer player looking back; he’s just another student contemplating what he can do with life and where he can be of help. □

THE POET PREACHER



Theodore Lockhart

FOR FOUR DECADES, THEODORE LOCKHART (CAS'65, STH'68) HAS BEEN FIGHTING—AND WRITING—TO END PREJUDICE.

BY LARA EHRLICH

In January 1957, Theodore Lockhart (CAS'65, STH'68) had just turned 18 and was en route from his hometown of St. Petersburg, Florida, to an Air Force base in Japan when he felt the call to ministry “thundering in my consciousness.” He’d have to wait four years to answer the call. Lockhart had planned to follow in his uncle’s military footsteps and had signed up for a four-year term in the Air Force.

Religion had always been a source of strength for Lockhart. “Growing up in the South meant that my world was full of real trouble and life-threatening danger for violating the laws and customs of racial segregation,” he says, but it was through an expression of Christianity “specific to the life of Negro Christians under segregation that I was able to endure segregation in the South and deal with its manifestations in the North.”

Lockhart’s career as a United Methodist minister spanned four decades and traversed historic changes in the Church and American society. But it started out with a challenge that helped shape the course of his life. Officials of the United Methodist Church offered to

support the newly discharged Lockhart’s spiritual journey and encouraged him to apply to Boston University with the promise of financial aid. Once he was accepted, however, the funds fell through. He got by at BU on his earnings from a summer job, but when the money ran out, he told his mother he was coming home. Intending to take out a second mortgage on her house, Vivian Lockhart asked Rev. Louise Beaty, the white minister of First Unity Church in St. Petersburg, for a reference to the bank. Instead, Beaty wrote a check. When Lockhart met Beaty for the first time at a church service over Christmas break, “she smiled and gave me a wink,” Lockhart wrote in a presentation to St. Petersburg College students. “Imagine that, a white woman and black man exchanging smiling winks in the days of Jim Crow segregation!”

WORKING FOR INCLUSION

After graduating, Lockhart strove to give other African Americans a leg up in education, as Beaty had given him. As assistant dean of Boston College’s Black Talent Search, the university’s first effort at racial inclusion in the wake of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s (GRS’55, Hon.’59) assassination, Lockhart helped African American students enroll and excel at BC. He also served on BC’s Black Forum, a program dedicated to establishing a black studies department, a new concept among universities eager to recruit African

“Growing up in the South meant that my world was full of real trouble and life-threatening danger for violating the laws and customs of racial segregation.”

—Theodore Lockhart

American students. Lockhart was equally committed to fostering inclusiveness in the Church. In 1969, he became chairperson of the New England Conference Board of Christian Social Concerns and authored a resolution calling for the appointment of minorities to churches within the conference.

The African American experience is fundamental to Lockhart's career—and to the poetry he has been writing since he was a child. His new book, *Before Blackness, Lying After Truth, In Rabbitude, and Other Poems*, includes poems from the 1960s to 2011 that are influenced by black folk culture, the black consciousness movement, and events like King's assassination, as in "April's Repetition":

*"Ted! Ted!
They've shot Martin Luther King Junior!
They've killed him dead!"
Well I'll be damned.
I'll be goddamn!
Another man done gone!
Another man done in!
Another man done!
Another Black Man!*

AN UNEXPECTED MISSION

Though Lockhart has always been invested in African American rights, in 1996 he took up another rights battle he never expected to join. He was serving as minister at Union United Methodist Church (UUMC) in Boston's South End—an area into which more gay people were moving at the time—when a church member

asked him about the United Methodist Church's position on homosexuality. Several members were "shocked" by the Church's noninclusive position and formed a task force that, over four years, looked into becoming a reconciling church. Their mission statement drew upon the Bible and African American spirituals: "There's plenty good room, plenty good room in ma Father's Kingdom, plenty good room, plenty good room—just choose your seat and sit down." In 2000, UUMC became the first official African American United Methodist reconciling church.

Lockhart's influence has reverberated at UUMC in the years since his retirement. The church holds discussions about AIDS, features a "Happy Pride" sign on the front lawn, and hosts a gospel brunch during Pride Weekend. It was also the first African American church to hold Boston's Annual Gay Pride Interfaith Prayer Service. In his retirement, Lockhart has remained an active supporter of inclusion, serving as interim pastor at one of Florida's two reconciling churches. And his voice in the African American community is still powerful in poems inspired by current events, such as the shooting of Trayvon Martin: *What's the right pace for me to run/You who hold the gun./Should I run at the joggers pace/Or do you want my sprinter race.* In his roles as both a preacher and a poet, he says, he "attempts to help others see things as they show up in lived experience." □

BORDER CROSSING



Erin McKinney

A VISIT WITH SYRIAN REFUGEES AND ACTIVISTS TAUGHT ERIN MCKINNEY ('14) ABOUT KEEPING THE PEACE.

BY JULIE RATTEY

"I was scared," Erin McKinney wrote in her journal. "I kept looking from face to face in my group, searching for someone to make it better. Then it hit me: Who the hell am I to need consolation?"

For three days after she returned from Turkey, McKinney ('14) felt like she was dreaming. Jet lag wasn't the only reason: returning to campus life felt surreal after spending nearly two weeks meeting people impacted by civil war. The journal was an attempt to help her process experiences such as a visit to a camp of 14,000 Syrian refugees.

McKinney, a Master of Divinity student in the School of Theology's Religion & Conflict Transformation program, visited Turkey over spring break in March 2013. The trip was part of an independent study that she and classmate Irene Willis ('13) created with the help of STH Springboard funding. Traveling with Palestinian peace activist Aziz Abu Sarah and members of a citizen diplomacy class from George Mason University, McKinney and Willis met with government officials, activists, aid workers, and refugees to learn about Syria's civil war and Turkey's response. The war began in 2011 after Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government issued a violent crackdown on citizens who

were demanding political change as part of the Arab Spring protest movement. Assad's government has since been accused of using chemical weapons against its own citizens. More than 125,000 Syrians have been killed in the war, and over 1.5 million have fled the country.

McKinney says her visit to the refugee camp on the Turkey-Syria border was "shocking, chaotic, overwhelming, and one of the scariest, life-altering moments" she's ever experienced. When she and her group passed through the camp gates, they were swarmed by eager children. In the press of the crowd, McKinney realized how easy it would be for a friendly interaction to be misinterpreted. As she later wrote in her journal, she felt scared and in need of consolation. What if camp security thought her group was in danger and fired a weapon? What if a riot broke out? But concern gave way to compassion. "I had to hold my panic in check," she wrote, "while we visited the refugees who had already experienced more than any of us ever had."

She remembers the refugees' donated clothing, slightly dusty from the desert environment; the rows upon rows of tents in the fenced-in enclosure; the children who didn't know whether their fathers and uncles in Syria were still alive. But the moment

Photo courtesy of Erin McKinney

**"Most of the people
we talked to,
whether they were
injured citizens or
activists, honestly
felt like the world
was just watching
them all die."**

—Erin McKinney

that made McKinney cry was when, as the group was saying its good-byes, a refugee boy who appeared to be about eight years old began excitedly chanting "Allahu akbar!" ("God is greater!") and other children joined in. The cultural saying is one of "throwing things up to God," says McKinney, and she'd heard it in everything from celebratory dinners in Turkey to activists' YouTube videos exposing government violence in Syria. Speculating on what the children wanted to convey, she says, "All of the people we met on the trip were really driven. I'm sure this has trickled down to the kids. So the impression I got was, 'We're stronger than this. This will end.'"

Struck by the plight of the refugees and activists she was meeting, McKinney found herself wondering what her visit could accomplish, but she's since realized "the power of personal relationships."

"Most of the people we talked to, whether they were injured citizens or activists, honestly felt like the world was just watching them all die. So they'd say, 'Thanks for caring. Thanks for traveling all this way just to come see me. God bless you.'" Establishing connections on a grassroots level, she says, can make a positive impact. "It

doesn't necessarily have to be politicians who are doing this negotiating. We can just go and be with people—share a meal or hear their story. They can appreciate our presence because we're new visitors, and we can appreciate theirs because they opened our eyes and touched our lives."

That's an insight McKinney plans to use in a possible career in community building, conflict transformation and mediation, and interfaith education. Specifically, she'd like to help a university prepare to welcome and support religiously and culturally diverse students and promote healthy student interactions. "Relationship-building on the levels that are so low we actually forget about them is really important, especially across diverse backgrounds. So on a college campus, I would arrange for students to have meals together or attend fun events that would break the ice. People would become friends first and then learn about each other's religions and differences."

She would also encourage students to travel to the Middle East as she has done, to "see a different way of life" and grasp some of the complexity behind local tensions and conflict. She cites an earlier trip to Israel and Palestine that she took with STH as an example. "You can't help but have sympathy for both sides but still acknowledge the wrong that's being done," she says. "I think it's good to complicate people's worlds." ■

FAITH BEHIND BARS



Jim Pall

HOW PRISON CHAPLAIN JIM PALL ('76) STAYS POSITIVE IN A CHALLENGING MINISTRY

BY LARA EHRLICH

Dress conservatively. Leave your cell phone in the car. Sign in upon entering. As you pass through the metal detector at the State Correctional Institution (SCI) in Dallas, Pennsylvania, you might feel a little oppressed. But though prison chaplain Jim Pall ('76) goes through this routine every day, he doesn't feel demoralized. When he was 11, he suffered a brain hemorrhage in school, and a teacher saved his life with CPR. Looking back, he says, he came to realize the "fragility" of life and was called by God to the ministry. "Ever since that time, I have joy. Even a bad day is a good day. A phrase that is repeated frequently here in the prison is, 'No one is promised tomorrow.'"

Pall's positivity serves him well in his role as SCI Dallas's facility chaplaincy program director. He even brings levity to his wardrobe: he must wear a tie every day, so he "bought some very interesting bow ties." Though he is restricted from sharing details about the inmates, Pall speaks passionately about helping them practice their faith. "Religion gives many inmates a sense of peace and acceptance," he says. "In the artificial monasticism of prison life, many inmates come to terms with the mistakes they have made and are led by our religious services to be repentant. Where else in the prison are they ever

going to hear the word 'forgiveness' but in the chapel?"

SCI Dallas's chapel serves multiple religions—and even has a revolving altar for Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic services. Coordinating the inmates' varied activities has broadened Pall's own perspective on faith. He likes to say that he was a United Methodist when he began working at the prison 26 years ago, and now considers himself a "Wese-Metho-Presby-Lutha-Bapta-Penta-Chari-Fundagelical." Pall's duties range from filing hair length exemptions for Rastafarians to conducting the Protestant Sunday morning services to counseling inmates when they suffer the death of a loved one. He's also contributed to the creation of Toolkit for Enhancing End-of-Life Care, a program applicable to all county, state, and federal prisons in the United States that includes training for inmates to attend a fellow prisoner around-the-clock so that "no one dies alone."

You might think that serving in a prison for more than two decades would take a toll on Pall's home life, but he takes preventative measures. He selected "a very interesting, large, strong tree" outside the prison walls, and when something is weighing him down at the end of the day—whether the death of an inmate or a difficult counseling session—he leaves his worries in its branches. ■

RISKING IT ALL



Rev. Dean Snyder preaching at Foundry

WHY DEAN SNYDER ('72) PUTS HIS ORDINATION ON THE LINE TO PERFORM SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

BY JULIE RATTEY

Every day, Dean Snyder is at risk of losing his ordination. As a United Methodist pastor who performs gay and lesbian marriages, Snyder ('72) openly flouts the Church's official position against such unions. Though his congregation stands behind him, it would only take one person filing a complaint to trigger a process that could oust him from his role as senior pastor of Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, DC. Yet Snyder doesn't see himself as a revolutionary: he simply believes he's doing the right thing.

The same-sex marriage question came to the table for Snyder in fall 2009, when he heard that marriage equality was coming to the district. Since up to one-third of Foundry's congregation is openly gay and lesbian, Snyder thought it was imperative that Foundry respond. Would it continue to fly under the radar by holding public services to honor gay and lesbian committed relationships, or risk performing same-sex marriages in church?

The congregation explored options to avoid overtly breaking the rules, such as hiring a wedding officiant from another denomination, but a comment from congregation member Doug Barker provided a turning point: "I want to be married in my church by my pastor." Barker and his partner Sam were dedicated and well-known

congregation members. "Everyone immediately understood that it would be disrespectful to Sam and Doug not to celebrate their wedding the way that we celebrate everyone else's," says Snyder.

In September 2010, with a vote of 367 to 8, Foundry Church members accepted marriage equality for their congregation. A year later, Snyder married Doug and Sam, who had been together more than 20 years. "It ended up meaning a lot more than I'd ever imagined," says Doug. "It meant that you're home, that you belong." Doug says the ceremony also moved Sam, who'd lived in the segregated South and experienced prejudice as a gay man growing up fundamentalist Southern Baptist. "After we were married, Sam lifted his ring finger up in the air and said, 'No longer the back of the bus.'"

Snyder says United Methodists "need to keep organizing, educating, and explaining in order to help the Church as a whole, to give churches like mine that have a significant presence of gay and lesbian people the ability and freedom to minister to our people." It's important, he adds, "to have heroic congregations and heroic pastors." □



To hear a sermon on marriage equality that Snyder delivered at Marsh Chapel, visit <http://go.bu.edu/snyder>.

JOURNAL

JUSTICE FOR THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY!

I n the push for acceptance, churches are among the cause's greatest allies and greatest opponents.

BY ROBERT CUMMINGS
NEVILLE, *professor of philosophy,
religion, and theology and dean emeritus*

Slightly over 50 years ago, on August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr., began his “I Have a Dream” speech at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC, with these words:

*Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity. But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination.*¹

Abraham Lincoln’s generation had known, reflectively, that slavery was wrong and that African Americans had the same right to freedom and respect as any other group. Yet there were strong social and cultural interests that resisted this knowledge because it implied that traditions from which many drew their identity would have to change radically. Also, for many Americans, those of African descent

were viewed with what psychologists today call “disgust reactions.”

As King said, the institutions of segregation and discrimination were still in place in 1963. I was raised in St. Louis, which still had separate toilets and water fountains for “white” and “colored.” In the summer of 1963, I was ordained a deacon in the Methodist Church, which segregated all its “colored” into a Central Jurisdiction that was not eliminated until 1968, with the founding of the United Methodist Church.² Now, 50 years since King’s speech, most of those institutional barriers have been taken down, or at least attempts have been made to do so—as with school busing policies, equal opportunity and affirmative action programs, and changing church structures.

1. Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream” (speech, Washington, DC, August 28, 1963), American Rhetoric, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm>.

2. The segregated Central Jurisdiction was not an invention of the antebellum or even Reconstruction-era Methodist bodies but of the uniting conference of 1939, the year I was born; the wooden chairs now in Room 325 of the School of Theology were used by the bishops of the 1939 uniting conference that created the Methodist Church out of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

About the Professor



Robert Cummings Neville writes and teaches in the fields of philosophy, religious studies, and systematic theology. He was dean of the School of Theology from 1988 to 2003, and dean of Marsh Chapel from 2003 to 2006. Neville was ordained an elder in the United Methodist Church in 1966 and has published numerous books and articles.

Photo by Frank Curran



Our social ethics program no longer has to *justify* freedom and justice for African Americans, only figure out ways to complete emancipation.

Churches, including the United Methodist Church, are in the vanguard of change; but they also are the deepest sea anchor opposing change. Where do we stand with regard to the unjust treatment of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people? As with African Americans, many Americans regard sexual minorities with deep

negative disgust reactions or belong to cultural groups that define themselves in part by exclusion and hatred of LGBTQ people.³ LGBTQ people

have been regarded not as *naturally* second-class human beings, but as *unnatural*. Whereas African Americans have been murdered for being perceived to have crossed segregation lines, LGBTQ people have been murdered simply

for being who they are. Matthew Shepard's 1998 murder in Wyoming was justified in the eyes of many bib-

3. Most of the public debate has been with regard to homosexuality and gay rights, but the issues nearly always pertain to all sexual minorities, hence LGBTQ.

4. For a detailed history of the gay rights movement, see Dudley Clendinen and Adam Nagourney's *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999).

5. The medicalization movement stemmed from Richard von Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia Sexualis*, translated by Harry E. Wedeck (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1965: orig. pub. 1886). The points made in this paragraph about medicalization and medical treatment are neatly summarized in Chandler Burr's "Homosexuality and Biology" in *Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate*,

Churches, including the United Methodist Church, are in the vanguard of change; but they also are the deepest sea anchor opposing change.

ed. Jeffrey S. Siker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 116–134.

6. Burr, 118.

7. The Christian change ministries are ineffective. Alan Chambers, the longtime leader of Exodus, one of the largest change ministries, resigned in 2013 with an acknowledgment that the change techniques simply don't work.

8. John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

9. See my “The Dean’s Reflections: Homosexuality and the Church in Theological Education,” *focus* (Fall/Winter 2000): 18–22, and John Silber’s “Reflections on Homosexuality in the Bible and in Methodism,” *focus* (Spring 2001): 25–26. See also Professor Carrie Doehring’s “Living with Theological Differences” and Professor Simon Parker’s “Homosexuality and the Bible,” *focus* (Fall/Winter 2000): 23–25; Bishop Mack B. Stokes’s “Response to Dean Neville’s Article ‘Homosexuality and the Church in Theological Education,’” *focus* (Spring 2001): 27; and my response to Silber and Stokes, “The Dean Comments,” *focus* (Spring 2001): 28–29.

10. Dale B. Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior: Gender and Sexuality in Biblical Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

11. Roman Catholic thinkers are obliged by Church authority to say homosexuality is “disordered”—that is, not directed to the goal for which sex acts are natural—but few would defend the Aristotelian teleology on which this argument is based.

lically religious people by Leviticus 20:13: “If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.” Because of deep cultural prejudice against sexual minorities, many LGBTQ people have feared to come out as who they are, even to their own families; families frequently have rejected those who do. African American families do not reject their children because they are black, although they often do if their children are gay.

Reflective people in Lincoln’s time generally knew that slavery was wrong and that people of African descent were not inferior, but reflective people in America a century later still were debating whether it was wrong to be LGBTQ and, if so, in what sense.⁴ From the early twentieth century to the 1970s, some in the medical establishment had argued that minority sexual orientation was a disease, not a moral failing, which was supposed to be a progressive advance.⁵ Attempts to cure it included electroshock, psychosurgery, and behavioral aversion therapy, as well as various forms of psychoanalysis.⁶ At the same time, many other people had argued that minority sexual orientation was a morally perverse choice. Christian “change

ministries” were established to help LGBTQ people reverse that choice and break out of the sexual minority “lifestyle.” But over the last quarter century, ample scientific evidence has shown that sexual orientation is given at birth and cannot be changed any more than other biological givens.⁷

For many Christians, the most important consideration about homosexuality, if not all sexual minority states, is what the Bible says and how the Bible is to be interpreted. John Boswell’s *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* broke open the scholarly question in 1980 by arguing that the Bible is not of one voice in the matter and that the Christian Church has often tolerated homosexuality.⁸ Disputes raged (not too strong a term) in the scholarly and the religious press,

Over the last quarter century, ample scientific evidence has shown that sexual orientation is given at birth and cannot be changed any more than other biological givens.

including in this very journal.⁹ Dale B. Martin’s *Sex and the Single Savior*, perhaps the best recent summary of the scholarship, showed in effect that there is no reason to take the negative things the Bible might be construed to say about homosexuality as normative for us today.¹⁰ In 2014, it is hard to find any serious scholar who would say that any sexual minority status is morally wrong, unnatural, or condemnable on biblical grounds.¹¹

In the last few years, public attitudes toward homosexuality, usually focused



on same-sex marriage, have rapidly become much more tolerant. Increasing numbers of states have legitimated same-sex marriage. The Supreme Court has struck down the relevant negative elements of the Defense of Marriage Act. Increasingly, the rights of LGBTQ people to be free from discrimination are being legislated into law. Although much of the leadership for gay rights has come from the churches, including from United Methodists, generally churches are the main conservative drag behind the curve. This is true of the United Methodist Church. But disgust reactions are crumbling as people come to know their sexual minority

**Rejection of homophobia
is now a mark of Christian
identity just as rejection of
racism was a generation ago.**

neighbors for who they are. As with segregation and racial discrimination in King's time, the question now is not so much what is right concerning LGBTQ issues, but rather how to bring our society into conformity with what we know to be right. Just as most of us now would not attend a congregation that fails to welcome African Americans on the same basis as others, it is time that we also avoid congregations that do not welcome LGBTQ people with the same hospitality and respect that are shown to others. Rejection of homophobia is now a mark of Christian identity just as rejection of racism was a generation ago. □

Boston University School of Theology

WE TAUGHT HIM FOR TWO YEARS. HE'S BEEN TEACHING US EVER SINCE.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s (PhD'55)
ethical leadership is the marker by
which we judge ourselves today.

► bu.edu/sth



JOURNAL



Keeping

the Faith

For black women facing conflict between what's preached at church and what they experience in their daily lives, it takes creativity to keep God and faith in the picture.

BY PHILLIS ISABELLA SHEPPARD,
associate professor of pastoral psychology and theology

At least three years ago, my father's God stopped being my God. His church stopped being my church. And yet, today, because I am a coward, I let myself be initiated into that church. I let my father baptize me in all three names of that God who isn't mine any more. My God has another name.¹

Lauren Olamina, a young black woman trying to survive in the chaotic and violent world depicted in Octavia E. Butler's science fiction novel, *Parable of the Sower*, reveals the complicated and sometimes hidden relationship she has to religion. The daughter of a Baptist minister, Lauren is a woman hiding two secrets: her extraordinary empathic sensibilities and her self-created religion, Earthseed. Under the scrutiny of her father's Baptist faith, Lauren is viewed as strange and unwanted. Perceiving that danger from the outside world is about to encroach on her gated community, Lauren prepares to leave home. Her newly constructed faith will guide her for the life beyond her family, beyond the Baptist church, and beyond those whose hopes rest in the God of three names.

Religious life in Butler's literary imagination is a thorny experience

resting in and between social, cultural, and psychological processes. It is mirror and prediction; it is social commentary and theological reflection; it is frightening and it is hopeful. One reading of her *Parable* series is that Butler makes religion a trope for the psychology of the self in fluctuation. *Parable of the Sower*, then, requires the reader to consider black religion as deeply psychological—for the individual and cultural context—and it is inextricable from these overlapping domains. We must not only recover the psychological aspect of religious experience, we must take time to cultivate spaces for it to appear. As with any psychological work, what we discover may initially be obscure only to become discernible and finally,

About the Professor



Phillis Isabella Sheppard is a womanist practical theologian, psychoanalyst, and sometime poet. She is the author of *Self, Culture, and Others in Womanist Practical Theology* and is active in the Evangelical Covenant Church. She is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Pastoral Theology* and is a member of the American Academy of Religion's steering committee for the Womanist Approaches to Religion and Society Group.

1. Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993), 3.

explicit. This makes black religious experience a complex matter.

SEX, RELIGION, AND SECRECY

Like many who began graduate school over 25 years ago, my introduction to the study of black religion assumed a fairly one-dimensional read: black religion is Christian, institutionalized, a faith-fueled social activist project, and, while denominationally diverse, painted on a primarily Protestant canvas.

Womanist approaches to black religion were in an embryonic phase. I became interested in the complexity of black women’s experience of religion while interviewing them for a project related to sexuality, religious experience, and secrecy in the lives of black lesbians.

The women I interviewed mostly described themselves as religious but only occasionally involved in institutional religion. By most standards, their narratives of religion were complicated experiences dotted with hope and betrayal. Religion, while described as a needed resource in their day-to-day survival, was also a source of confusion, pain, and longing for acceptance. For some, there existed an uneasy disconnect between what they heard

preached about religion and sexuality, and the practices of their day-to-day lives. They lived religion outside the officially recognized religious sites. Quite often, these women felt that they could not live up to the religious ideals they heard in their churches concerning sexuality or gender. And yet, what was initially surprising to me was the way in which these women carried religious ideas inside their lesbian identities—even those that

conflicted with lived experience. In other words, they felt they could not attend religious services, but the language, idioms, and views on gender representation and sexuality permeated their lives. They loved other women, they created ceremonies to mark the important events of their lives, they raised children, and they prayed to the only God they knew—the one they had initially heard about in church.

These women felt they could not attend religious services, but the language, idioms, and views on gender representation and sexuality permeated their lives. They loved other women, they created ceremonies to mark the important events of their lives, they raised children, and they prayed to the only God they knew—the one they had initially heard about in church.

LIVING IN TENSION

Black religious culture was the psychological glue in their lives, and gender and sexuality were part and parcel of their cultural milieu, but not the totality or defining aspect of it. On one hand, they turned an ear toward past religious messages; on the other, they carved out a world in which self-

2. Mignon R. Moore, "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian Communities," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32, no. 1 (2006): 113–39, 114–15.

3. Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," in *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology*, ed. Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Christina Gilmartin, and Robin Lydenberg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 157.

4. *Ibid.*, 160.

5. Mark J. Gehrie, "The Self and the Group: A Tentative Exploration in Applied Self Psychology," in *Advances in Self Psychology*, ed. Arnold Goldberg (New York: International Universities Press, 1980), 371.

identifiers such as butch, femme, and lesbian were acknowledged, valued, and formed with intentionality and purpose. In her research on gender representation by black lesbians in New York City, Mignon R. Moore found that "there are various physical representations of gender in black lesbian communities. They suggest that these portrayals of gender are not arbitrary...[and that] presentations of self among black lesbians are not mere sexual play. Once formed, the gender style women choose tends to remain consistent over

time."² As Patricia Hill Collins reminds us, "Self-definition involves challenging the political knowledge-validation process that has resulted in externally defined, stereotypical images of Afro-American womanhood.

In contrast, self-valuation stresses the content of black women's self-definitions"³ and allows "Afro-American women to reject internalized, psychological oppression."⁴

How does one explain the complexity of religion in these women's lives? The multiplicity of messages they internalized and those they rejected? If it is true that the manner in which a person configures her association to her cultural group reflects her state or relationship to her self,⁵ then it follows that the ways in which she structures her sexuality, gender identity, and religion in her cultural contexts reflect the state of her sense of self or self-state. Most of these women held in tension the nexus between their

sexual-gendered identities and their religious cultural identities, and while not without disappointment and loss, they formed and maintained communities, relationships, and families that mirrored the self-sustaining reality of their lives. Religious experience, in all of its complexity, was inextricable from their lives.

Religious experience, regardless of the sites where it is produced, is a space for the embodiment of the psychological as well as the gendered, sexual, racial, and cultural aspects of

the self. My current research is concerned with the complex place of religion in the lives of black women and begins with these three questions: 1) What is the relationship between black women's religious experi-

ences in private and cultural spaces and psychological processes? 2) What kind of methodology is required for such a project? and 3) What are the implications of this relationship for a womanist psychology of religion?

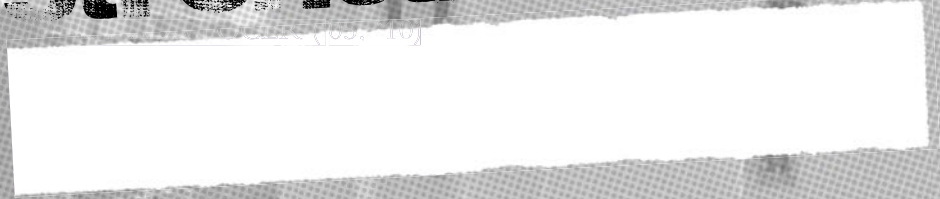
I am convinced that religious contexts give shape and form to identity, the ways in which it is expressed, and the language used in its communication. Discovering meaning in the practices of religion in the lives of black women, and the psychological processes involved, is no small feat. Such an effort demands a sensitive curiosity as well as deep respect, and a posture of receptive introspection. □

How does one explain the complexity of religion in these women's lives?

The multiplicity of messages they internalized and those they rejected?

JOURNAL

strength for the



When we suffer a setback in the search for justice, we needn't fear that our dreams are out of reach.

BY CAMERON PARTRIDGE,
Episcopal chaplain

On August 28, 2013, I stood with friends and colleagues near Boston University's Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial sculpture on Marsh Plaza. We blinked in the brilliant sunlight as we read aloud the "I Have a Dream" speech, first given 50 years earlier. As I read my assigned section, railing against what King called the "bad check" issued to people of color by a country that "guaranteed the 'unalienable rights' of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,'"¹ I felt overwhelmed—overwhelmed by how far we have come since 1963 and also by how much we still have to do to realize King's Dream of the Beloved Community, a world in which we are agents of justice and reconciliation rather than oppression. Episcopal theologian Verna Dozier called this dream, quite simply, "[the] high calling to be a new thing in the world and [to] show all people another possibility for life."²

I look upon this dream as someone multiply embedded—as an Episcopal chaplain at BU, as an academic theologian teaching in a multireligious divinity school, as an Episcopal priest who for several years has participated in a wider Anglican conversation about sexuality and gender, and as a transgender man seeking to help transform the "bad check" with which so many fellow members of the trans* community are faced.³

HOPES AND DREAMS

From this vantage point, the US Supreme Court's striking down of the Defense of Marriage Act and the Senate's approval of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act in November 2013 fills me with a renewed sense of hope. So have the increases in legal protections based on "gender identity and expression" enacted across the country, from Massachusetts to California. And so, too, have my denomination's actions at its 2012 General Convention, formally affirming that transgender people can serve in all levels of ministry, lay and ordained.

At the same time, the decidedly unfinished state of God's dream needs our engagement more than ever. The Supreme Court's striking down of part of the Voting Rights Act, and the outcome of the Trayvon Martin case, struck profound blows. And the trans*

1. Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream" (speech, Washington, DC, August 28, 1963), *American Rhetoric*, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm>.

2. Verna Dozier, *The Dream of God: A Call to Return* (New York: Seabury Classics, 2006), 33.

3. By the terms "transgender" and "trans*" I refer to those whose gender identity or expression does not conform to the sex to which they were assigned at birth. Gender identity refers to one's inner sense of their gender—of being a man, a woman, or another gender. Gender expression refers to the ways in which one enacts one's gender in the world—through mannerisms, hair-style, clothing, speech, etc. Some trans* people transition medically and some do not. Some have binary gender identities—male or female—while others identify as other than simply male or female. The asterisk following "trans" signals the variety of gender identities included in the term—such as agender, transvestite, and two-spirit.

A memorial service held at Marsh Plaza for Martin Luther King, Jr., on April 5, 1968, the day after his assassination.

About the Author



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community continues to struggle against widespread discrimination in housing and access to health care, employment, and credit.⁴ When combined with systemic racism, anti-transgender bias wreaks incredible havoc.

November 28, 2013, marked the 15th anniversary of the unsolved murder of Rita Hester, a transgender woman of color. Occurring a mere mile from BU, Hester’s death sparked a movement—Transgender Day of Remembrance—that is now observed around the world. In so many ways, the struggle stretches forward.

THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF DESIRE

Stretching forward draws upon a key concept for which the fourth-century theologian Gregory of Nyssa is known:

epektasis. The idea is inspired by Paul’s comments regarding participation in the paschal mystery: “I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining

forward [*epekteinomenos*] to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:12–14).

This straining and stretching is an ongoing and deeply eschatological notion for Gregory.

Its implications are also as concrete as they are mystical. *Epektasis* signals a time and space that erupts into and transforms the here and now, stretching its boundaries as it takes on the qualities of God’s deepest desires.

Indeed, *epektasis* is also a concept suffused with desire. Gregory elaborates on it in dialogue with several biblical texts and figures, particularly the Song of Songs and his *Life of Moses*. In the latter, he speaks of Moses as one whose yearning for both the promises and the infinite beauty of God transformed him, rendered him

afresh, and always caused him to long for more. “Hope always draws the soul from the beauty which is seen to what is beyond, always kindles the desire for the hidden through what is constantly perceived.”⁵ For Gregory, God is by definition unencloseable, ungraspable. And yet God grants a “true sight” that

The decidedly unfinished state of God’s dream needs our engagement more than ever. The Supreme Court’s striking down of part of the Voting Rights Act, and the outcome of the Trayvon Martin case, struck profound blows. And the trans* community continues to struggle against widespread discrimination in housing and access to health care, employment, and credit.

4. See the important 2011 study by Jaime M. Grant, Lisa A. Mottet, and Justin Tanis, *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*.

5. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Life of Moses*, trans. Abraham Malherbe and Everett Ferguson (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978), 115.

6. Ibid., 115. Emphasis mine.

7. Here I think particularly of Gloria Anzaldúa's work in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999) on the holiness and danger of borders, the ways in which they are mapped on our bodies.

8. Adrienne Rich, "Integrity," in *The Fact of a Doorframe: Poems Selected and New, 1950–1984* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1984), 273.

"consists in this, that the one who looks up to God never ceases in that desire." As soon as the yearning heart is filled with the divine, God expands the heart's capacity and invites it to desire still more. Therefore, "what Moses yearned for is *satisfied* by the very things which leave his desire unsatisfied."⁶

Thoroughly paradoxical was the life of the one whom God inspired to lead his people

out of bondage in Egypt, across the Red Sea, into the wilderness, and ultimately—beyond the boundaries of his own life—into the promised land. In this vision, the promised land is not a linear, stable, clearly identified space. It appears

more as a peculiar space-time that refuses to be contained by our imaginations and that constantly works upon our hearts—enlarging us, stretching us, transforming us from the inside out, constantly imprinting us afresh with the image of the One who made us.

THE THRILL OF THE THRESHOLD

If perhaps we grow weary of the continuing struggle to be truly "free at last," if we fear that there will never be an end to the process of understanding and fully incorporating human difference, if we worry that gains made today will be rolled back tomorrow, perhaps we might view this process through this Nyssen

lens. The struggle to participate in the unfolding dream of God challenges all of us to open our hearts, to allow ourselves to be changed in and through our relational bonds with one another, to experience this transformation as part of our ongoing, individual, and communal *epektasis*, our stretching forth toward the heart of God. This is not a linear progression, nor is it bound by time. We may stride forward and later step back, only to move forward once more.

In the meantime, as the possibilities of transformation open out before us, we are located on and in a threshold. We are always in some sense perched between—located in the already and the not yet. Truly,

The struggle to participate in the unfolding dream of God challenges all of us to open our hearts, to allow ourselves to be changed in and through our relational bonds with one another.

this location can madden as much as inspire, not simply because of its ambiguity, but because this cusp is also far from static. This threshold in which we stand is dynamic, shifting, dangerous, inviting.⁷ And so, with Paul, we groan in labor with all creation "while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:23). With the late poet Adrienne Rich we declaim, "A wild patience has taken me this far."⁸ With Martin Luther King, Jr., we strive to sing "free at last, free at last," knowing that the dream will continue to stretch out before us, transforming us into a people we can only begin to imagine: a people after God's own heart. □

JOURNAL

Songs of

JUSTICE



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ollowing the example of civil rights-era black people, the LGBTQ community is harnessing hymns to advance its own rights movement.

BY STEPHANIE A. BUDWEY
(’04, ’12)

We live between the is and the ought to be of the world. This is a primal site of the deepest moral and theological dilemmas in human existence. The actual state of affairs—whether injustice, greed, tyranny, or suffering born of war and famine—reveals that the world is not as it ought to be. This elemental fact generates permanent tensions for all worldviews and ritual practices. When the gap between the “is” and the “ought” becomes too great, the impulse for revolution is ignited.

—Don Saliers, “Theological Foundations of Liturgical Reform”¹

While reading his paper to an audience of liturgists at the Congress of Societas Liturgica in Germany in 2013, theologian Don Saliers paused here, adding that the civil rights movement of the 1960s was a time when singing human beings moved between what “is” and what “ought” to be. In their discussion concerning the connection between music and social movements, academics Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison note that music has the unique ability to act as “an important vehicle for the diffusion of movement ideas into the broader culture.”² The civil rights movement was such a time, accompanied by songs such as “We Shall

Overcome” that created the “central social process” of the “mobilization of tradition.”³ Music and politics are a powerful combination, and when they are joined together in the context of a social movement, they are “an important, if often overlooked, source of cultural transformation.”⁴

In his discussion of African American hymnody, James Abbingtion highlights the direct link between ongoing “social, political, and economic reforms” of the 1960s and their influence on African American congregational song.⁵ He also holds up the work of Wyatt Tee Walker, who traced the movement of the songs from “Spiritual” to “Freedom Song”⁶ and pointed out the strong connection between the political message of the movement and the music that supported the message: “The music of the struggle soon belonged

1. Don Saliers, “Theological Foundations of Liturgical Reform” (paper presented at the XXIV Congress of Societas Liturgica, Würzburg, Germany, August 6, 2013).

2. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

3. Ibid., 1–2. They define the mobilization of tradition in this manner: “in social movements, musical and other kinds of cultural traditions are made and remade, and after the movements fade away as political forces, the music remains as a memory and as a potential way to inspire new waves of mobilization.”

4. Ibid., 4.

5. James Abbingtion, “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side: Hymnody in African-American Churches,” in *New Songs of Celebration Render: Congregational Song in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. C. Michael Hawn (Chicago: GIA Publications, Inc., 2013), 73.

6. Ibid.

About the Author



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Photo by Pippa Mpunzwana

to any sympathetic supporter of the movement.”⁷ These songs were versatile in that they could be sung within both “sacred” and “secular” venues; Abbington writes that the freedom songs were “not only sung in freedom marches and rallies but also were regularly sung as congregational songs in worship, especially in churches throughout the South.”⁸

TAKING HYMNS TO THE STREETS

A similar phenomenon is characteristic of the LGBTQ rights movement. Jimmy Creech, a former United Methodist minister who was removed from ministry after celebrating a same-sex union, poignantly describes the scene at the 1988 North Carolina Gay Pride Weekend:

Just behind us, members of St. John’s Metropolitan Community Church pulled a little red wagon carrying a boom box playing familiar hymns—“Jesus Loves Me, This I Know,” “Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine,” and “Just as I Am, without One Plea.” They sang as they walked, transforming the hymns from songs of private piety into profound public affirmation of a faith in God’s radically unconditional love and acceptance. These lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual people had every reason to turn their backs on the [C]hurch because they had been condemned,

*rejected, and vilified in the name of God and Jesus. But they were not just singing, they were testifying.*⁹

Through their reappropriation of these hymns, the “brave voices” Creech heard were queering the hymns as they claimed “that they, too, were children of a loving God who had blessed them with innate dignity and integrity.”¹⁰ They boldly reappropriated hymns sung in conservative churches that had previously shunned them, and were now proudly singing them in the streets

At STH’s 2013 Service of Matriculation, we sang the hymn “The Arc of History,” joining together the civil rights and LGBTQ rights movements in many ways.

during a gay pride parade. Eyerman and Jamison describe this action of “reconstitution”: “But in taking on a political dimension within social movements, oral traditions—the forms of musical and cultural expression—are reconstituted. By

becoming sources of empowerment, education, and ‘consciousness-raising,’ musical expression can thus serve as a form of exemplary social action.”¹¹

NEW SONGS FOR NEW EXPERIENCES

Early on in the LGBTQ rights movement, these hymns were sung in churches too, as LGBTQ people had no other hymns to sing. But soon, they and their allies would begin to write their own hymns, born out of their own experiences. At STH’s 2013 Service of Matriculation, we sang the hymn “The Arc of History,” joining together the civil rights and LGBTQ rights movements in many ways. Though there has

7. Wyatt Tee Walker, “Somebody’s Calling My Name”: *Black Sacred Music and Social Change* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 153.

8. Abbington, “If It Had Not Been for the Lord on My Side,” 74.

9. Jimmy Creech, *Adam’s Gift: A Memoir of a Pastor’s Calling to Defy the Church’s Persecution of Lesbians and Gays* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 50–51.

10. *Ibid.*, 51.

11. Eyerman and Jamison, *Music and Social Movements*, 78.

12. Adam M. L. Tice (b. 1979) is a Mennonite hymn writer: www.adammltice.com. Adam M. L. Tice, 2013; © 2013, GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission. www.giamusic.com.

13. The original line is “the love that dare not speak its name,” which comes from Lord Alfred Douglas’ 1894 poem “Two Loves.” Douglas and Oscar Wilde were reported to be lovers and the quote came up at Wilde’s 1895 trial for “gross indecency.”

14. See particularly Tice’s stanza three: “though surely as one struggle ends, / another takes its place.”

been much debate about the connection of these two movements, they became inextricably linked by the back-to-back rulings of the Supreme Court on June 25 and 26, 2013, striking down part of the Voting Rights Act and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). How could those of us in the LGBTQ community fully celebrate the striking down of DOMA while our African American sisters and brothers were dealt the blow of the decision on the Voting Rights Act only the day before?

Adam M. L. Tice’s hymn “The Arc of History”¹² addresses this tension, and the constant struggle between what Saliers described as the gap between what “is” and what “ought” to be. Tice composed this text immediately after the Supreme Court ruling on DOMA, and through text and music, he intertwines the civil rights and LGBTQ rights movements: he sets the text to “McKee,” a spiritual, and the text makes references to both well-known civil rights quotes—“the arc of the moral universe,” as made famous by Martin Luther King, Jr.—and a famous reference to same-sex love (the love that now “dares to speak its name” in stanza one).¹³ Although the text celebrates the striking down of DOMA, it does not allow us to rest on our laurels.¹⁴ As Professor Peter J. Paris so powerfully charged those at the Service of Matriculation in his sermon “The Prophetic Vision of Justice and Love,” there is still work to be done because there is still injustice in the world. May those of us from the School of the Prophets take up such a worthy call. □

THE ARC OF HISTORY

Editor’s note: This hymn is inspired by the 2013 Supreme Court ruling against the Defense of Marriage Act.

1. *The arc of hist’ry bends today
again t’ward peace, its aim,
as love, once more, has found a way,
and dares to speak its name.*
2. *As shame and silence lose their hold,
we learn to sing new songs;
new voices lead us, proud and bold,
to overturn old wrongs.*
3. *The arc of hist’ry always bends
when people share God’s grace;
though surely as one struggle ends,
another takes its place.*
4. *For dreams deferred and rights denied
our churches must lament;
and when ours is the priv’leged side,
Christ calls us to repent.*
5. *The arc of hist’ry bends t’ward peace;
come, see what God has done!
Where justice, grace, and love increase,
a new world is begun.*

—Adam M. L. Tice

JOURNAL

Luisa Capetillo's Dream



C

hristian anarchists have long struggled against oppression and striven for an alternative vision of communal life.

BY RADY ROLDÁN-FIGUEROA ('05), *assistant professor of the history of Christianity*

As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, it is also important to remember how other equally inspired figures confronted the ills of inequality and oppression. Christian anarchists, for example, have long articulated an alternative vision of human communal existence. Historically, anarchists have been both internationalists and antimilitarists, as well as stubbornly committed to both liberty and equality. Christian anarchists such as Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) and Jacques Ellul (1912–1994) rejected political coercion and the need for the state in favor of communal organization based on mutual cooperation. Both derived their political convictions from their own readings of the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and primitive Christianity.¹

The Puerto Rican feminist and labor organizer Luisa Capetillo (1879–1922) was another exponent of Christian anarchism.² Recently rediscovered after a long period of unjustified neglect, she is now widely recognized as one of Latin America's earliest feminists, and former President Bill Clinton placed her amongst the likes of suffragist Susan B. Anthony (1820–1906).³ The intimate relationship between Capetillo's political and religious views, however, has not received the same level of attention. Her religious convictions are still seen as peripheral

to her political ideas. Yet Capetillo, like Tolstoy, Ellul, and other Christian anarchists, harmonized her faith in human progress, belief in the possibilities of mutualism, and despisement of the corrupting character of statist structures with her deep admiration, even reverence, for the inspiring figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Her love for liberty was as uncompromising as her passion for social and gender equality.

Born in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, to a French mother and a father from the Basque provinces of Spain, Capetillo was baptized in 1890 at age 11 and raised Roman Catholic. In 1906, she became a "reader" in a local cigar-making factory. Her new role, which required her to read to the artisans as they crafted cigars made with tobacco leaves, enabled her to get acquainted with socialist and anarchist

About the Professor



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1. See Jacques Ellul, *Anarchy and Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988).

2. For her biography, see Norma Valle Ferrer, *Luisa Capetillo: Pioneer Puerto Rican Feminist* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

3. William J. Clinton, "Women's History Month, 1998, Proclamation 7071," *Code of Federal Regulations*, title 3, 1998 Compilation (1999), 12.

ideas that were common within the workers' movement of the period.

WOMAN ON A MISSION

Capetillo devoted all her life to the workers' movement as a labor organizer and author. She was an active member of the Federación Libre de Trabajadores (FLT), the first labor union established in Puerto Rico after the American invasion of 1898. Her affiliation with the FLT and work as a reader for cigar makers paved the way for her first book, *Ensayos libertarios* (*Liberation Essays*, 1907), which was followed by *La humanidad del futuro* (*Humanity in the Future*, 1910) and *Mi opinión sobre las libertades, derechos y deberes de la mujer* (*My Opinion on the Liberties, Rights, and Duties of Women*, 1911).⁴

Capetillo expanded her field of work by joining the growing Puerto Rican exodus to the then-sprawling industrial centers of the northeastern United States. In 1912, she moved to New York and a year later to Florida, where she worked with cigar makers in Ybor City and Tampa. Her involvement with Cuban workers in Tampa led her to move to Havana, where she stayed from 1915 to 1916. There, she ran into difficulties with the authorities not only for her organizing work but also for cross-dressing as a man. After she was deported, she returned to Puerto Rico and published *Influencias de las ideas modernas* (*The Influence of Modern Ideas*, 1916), a collection of plays, stories, and other small works.

Capetillo denounced the rich who hid behind a veil of false Christianity and reproached them for not showing the abnegation of true Christians.

Capetillo's religious views represent an amalgam of traditional Christian ideas and emerging currents of Christian Spiritism. In her play *Influencias de las ideas modernas*, included in the book of the same name, the central character explains how her independent study of Spiritism led her to anarchism: "This made me a revolutionary, because it explained to me that all men are brothers, that no one has the right to hurt others or to impose their ideas on them or to enslave them, and I also realized that luxury was a crime as long as there was misery."⁵ In *Ensayos libertarios*⁶—a collection of short columns and speeches that she either wrote for a workers' newspaper or delivered at political meetings—Capetillo

decried the poor living conditions of workers in Puerto Rico. For instance, she reported that coffee workers earned an average of 50 to 60 cents per day.⁷ Moreover, she articulated the themes that signaled her intellectual independence as a Christian anarchist. Her political program consisted of the promotion of autodidacticism, nonviolence, mutual aid, and self-reliance for the removal of the corrupting force of egoism. Capetillo advocated the use of the general strike as the only tactic for achieving workers' emancipation, and proposed the abolition of national boundaries in order to create an international fraternity of humankind.

Capetillo also made a visceral attack on the Roman Catholic Church, holding clergy's religious "mercantilism" responsible for

4. For a complete anthology of her writings and bibliography, see Norma Valle Ferrer, ed., *Luisa Capetillo: obra completa: "Mi patria es la libertad"* (San Juan, P.R.: Departamento del Trabajo y Recursos Humanos; Cayey: Universidad de Puerto Rico en Cayey, 2008).
5. Luisa Capetillo, *Influencias de las ideas modernas*, in *Absolute Equality*, trans. Lara Walker (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2009), 29.
6. Capetillo, *Ensayos libertarios* (Arecibo, P.R.: Real Hermanos, 1907).
7. *Ibid.*, 11.

8. Ibid., 5.
9. Ibid., 25.
10. Capetillo, *Ensayos*, 6.
11. Ibid., 16.
12. Ibid., 11.
13. Ibid., 25–26.
14. Ibid., 9–10.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 32.

“godlessness, skepticism, blasphemy, and even crime.”⁸ For Capetillo, free thought did not preclude belief in God. She reasoned that if free thinkers rejected God’s existence, it was only because “priests and friars” were liars and made “commerce” with their religious “tales.”⁹

THE TRUE CHRISTIANS

Capetillo argued that the true Christians were the anarchists. She was reacting to the Puerto Rican society of her time when the majority of the people were Catholics, including the rich landlords. But she also criticized wealthy Spiritists. She denounced the rich who hid behind a veil of false Christianity and reproached them for not showing the abnegation of true Christians.¹⁰ She said that to let a hungry person go to jail for stealing bread was the most impious, “anti-Christian” act.¹¹

Workers, in contrast, were called to be “practicing Christians,” following the teachings of Jesus. Moreover, she saw herself as “preaching the practices of Christ.”¹² Capetillo saw anarchist ideals as the purest expression of the teachings of Jesus, whom she represented as a free thinker who venerated nature.¹³ He was the founder of a new “cult” (*culto*) inspired by forgiveness and predicated upon love and respect for the dignity of life.¹⁴

Christ’s cult was characterized by deep reverence for nature: “Christ prayed in open nature, this is the true temple.”¹⁵

For Capetillo, religious temples were the loci of idolatry, where the hypocrisy of the rich could be disguised alongside the frivolity of exterior ceremonials. Nature, on the other hand, was the real scenario of the divine. Hence, workers needed to turn to nature to find the principle of equality that would eradicate the evil of egoism. Anarchists did not have to wait for God to end injustice. The teachings of Christ were all they needed: “With the Christian maxims we ought to rule

ourselves, and in that way we worship God without temples, or altars, or recitations, or litanies.”¹⁶

Luisa Capetillo died of tuberculosis in 1922. She was almost destitute at the time, and the workers’ movement she

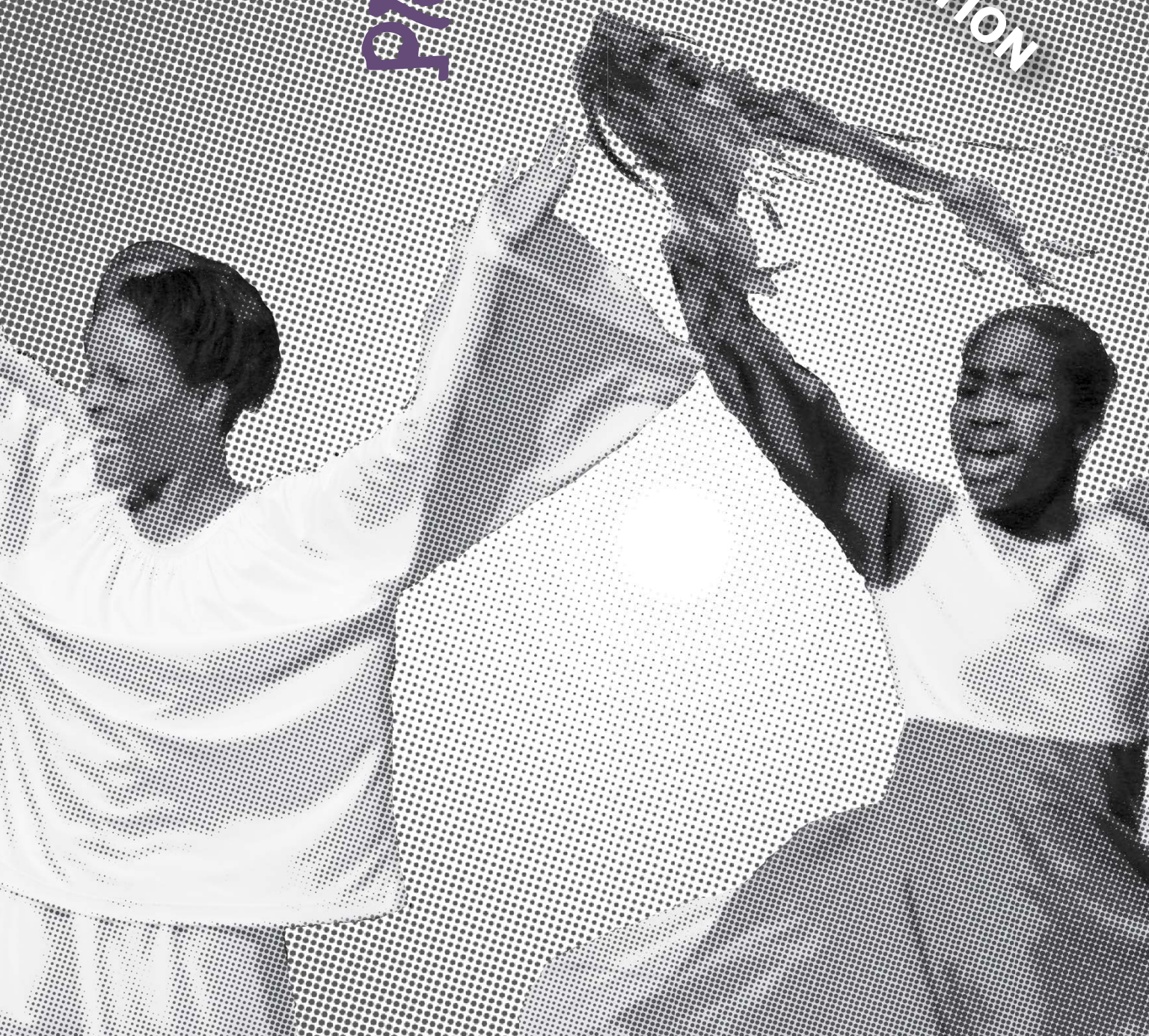
sought to inspire was experiencing major transformations under the influence of rising nationalism. Her commitment to the cause of liberty and equality for all, however, should serve as an inspiring call to action for all people of conscience. Certainly, we are in a better position to transcend her anti-Catholicism. More importantly, we need to rekindle hope for King’s Dream. The need is particularly urgent at a time characterized by the unprecedented concentration of wealth, the development of powerful technologies that monitor our daily living, the demagogic undermining of democratic institutions, and the spread of gender violence. Like King, Capetillo had a dream—a dream for a society of genuine human proportions predicated upon liberty and equality for all. □

**Capetillo’s commitment
to the cause of liberty and
equality for all should serve
as an inspiring call to action
for all people of conscience.**

JOURNAL

Playing

Toward LIBERATION



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ake-believe isn't just for children. Playing at the kingdom of God helps make it a reality.

BY COURTNEY T. GOTO, *assistant professor of religious education*

In a world of suffering, oppression, and injustice, one might assume there is neither time nor place for playing. Play is often considered frivolous—associated with children, adolescents, and entertainment—and irrelevant to the serious business of Christianity's role in human liberation and Christian formation. On church grounds, play is often thought to be restricted to areas such as the nursery, the playground, or meeting rooms for youth. Churches intentionally isolate play from “serious” areas like the sanctuary and the pastor's office. In religious education literature, play remains on the periphery, relegated to discussions of youth and children's ministry and omitted from discourse about adult lay education and clergy formation.¹ However, play allows human beings to negotiate perceptions of reality and possibilities for changing it.

To play is to lose oneself in a revelatory mode of engaging reality “as if,” exploring freely a world of possibilities bounded by the practices that structure it. Playing allows a person to sense what is true or authentic by inviting the player to enter a world of imagination, creativity, and the senses. This entails setting aside just enough disbelief, appearances, or literal ways of thinking to shift temporarily into another way of engaging reality. Rooted in the Greek

verb *prospoieomai*, which means “to pretend,” play involves a world characterized not only by make-believe, but of acting or believing as though something were true.² In playing, possibilities abound. Alternatives and visions can be inhabited, explored, and abandoned. A child plays with a cardboard box as if it were a house. Readers suspend their disbelief when they enter the fictional world of a book. Soldiers fight as though they are in a combat situation when they engage in war games.

Even in dangerous times, playing pretend can be vital. In the midst of slavery, African Americans continued to practice forms of play that preserved human dignity.³ Playing helped slaves to resist and to indirectly make a mock-

1. Jerome Berryman advocates for play in religious education. The author argues that godly play is not only for children but also for adults. However, the major contribution of Berryman's work is in the area of children's play and religious education. Jerome Berryman, *Godly Play: A Way of Religious Education* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991).

2. David LeRoy Miller, *Gods and Games: Toward a Theology of Play* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 143.

3. James H. Evans, Jr., *Playing: Christian Explorations of Daily Living* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 21–28.

About the Professor



Courtney T. Goto is assistant professor of religious education and a codirector of the Center for Practical Theology. Her research interests include aesthetic teaching and learning; intersections between faith and culture; and imagination, creativity, and embodied knowing in adult religious education. Her latest book project is *The Grace of Play: Pedagogies for Leaning Into God's New Creation*.

Photo courtesy of Courtney T. Goto

ery of white slave owners.⁴ Reframing an unfathomable reality by temporarily separating themselves from it was key to their survival, giving them hope, dignity, and vision. Playing allowed African Americans to experience who they truly were and to reject racist understandings of slaves imposed in everyday life. By playing, they were creating what Jürgen Moltmann calls an “anti-environment” or a “counter-environment.” Such an environment opens people to “creative freedom and future alternatives” through “conscious confrontation.”⁵ Playing with more liberating possibilities is vital to exploring them, claiming them, and making them real.⁶

PLAYING AT POSSIBILITIES

Christian communities often play at or in the kingdom of God,⁷ losing themselves in exploring a world of possibilities in Christ, so that they might live into them more fully. Much of Jesus’ life and teaching attempts to strip away barriers and social norms that keep people from recognizing the inherent worth of all people, including those who are marginalized. In playing *at* the kingdom of God, Christian communities attempt to create the world to which Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection point—a place where all of creation can live in justice,

harmony, and authenticity. In taking Communion (a practice that invites playing), the faithful sense the reality to which Christians are called by believing “as if” and being reconciled to one another and to God in the sharing of Christ’s body. Paradoxically, sometimes Christian communities play *in* the kingdom of God, which has both a not-yet and already dimension. Human beings are already children of God, related to God and to one another by grace.

Playing has been key to Christian faith for generations of believers, but play has been named otherwise or not at all because of play’s negative connotations. Christians routinely play through liturgy, while interpreting the Bible, in singing, and in other practices that evoke creativity, imagination, and the senses. Furthermore, religious educators have long taught through the play of imagination and the arts. However,

if Christians were able to recognize play in more critical, theoretical terms, the faithful could intentionally retrieve and deepen play for the sake of liberation. Becoming aware of when, how, and why they are playing in church, the faithful could then facilitate experiences of creating and inhabiting more visionary counter-environments, which encourage and challenge people to live into more liberative ways of being and being with

In playing at the kingdom of God, Christian communities attempt to create the world to which Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection point—a place where all of creation can live in justice, harmony, and authenticity.

4. Evans discusses the “corn shucking ritual,” which allowed slaves to poke fun at the master under the cover of frivolity. *Ibid.*, 25.

5. Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Play* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 12–13.

6. *Ibid.*

7. The term “kingdom of God” carries with it patriarchal overtones that foreclose the possibility of playing for some. However, I use this familiar language to illumine a perhaps less-familiar notion of Christians playing.

8. Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology*, vol. 3: *Creator Spirit*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 169.

9. *Ibid.*, 129.

10. *Ibid.*, 169.

one another for the sake of the world. Playing can be subversive, involving the unexpected. It can often bring people to a more honest place of recognizing and questioning habits of thinking, feeling, and doing that they take for granted and that serve to hide what they would rather not know.

BRINGING STORIES TO LIFE

Christians could seek and live into new counter-environments by entertaining the stories of the Gospel and Christian heritage that are key to the faith of marginalized and oppressed people. Playing with and through these stories might entail re-creating them and bringing them to life through poetry, theater, or visual art. The intention is to explore these narratives of faith from a new perspective, trying them on as if they were stepping into the shoes of

those who have suffered. Eventually, a church community could create other renditions of the story, to speak to what feels urgent for the community's transformation. For example, a church that does not have a history of participating in the Underground Railroad can experience the story through playing, creating their own rendition and claiming it as their own.

PARTNERING WITH THE SPIRIT

When church communities play creatively with stories that inform faith, they practice seeking inspiration from the Creator Spirit. In playing, one partners with the Spirit to "leap over one's own boundary," as Hans Urs von Balthasar says, to imagine and participate in creating what transforms.⁸ The Holy Spirit works within and among the willing

faithful to empower them to do what they cannot accomplish alone.⁹ In Jesus' life, it was in healing the sick and raising the dead. In contemporary times, playing can contribute to the process of liberation. Any leap toward freedom inevitably involves death—perhaps the death of holding patterns that have long held one captive—and it involves resurrection, including the birth of new critical awareness and more

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abundant ways of thinking, feeling, and doing.¹⁰

Playing enables Christians to practice leaping over their own boundaries with grace rather than sheer will. The world created in playing entices a person to venture into a new reality, even if temporarily. However, a person never emerges quite the same. □

JOURNAL
SERMON

DREAMING
WITH

EYES
OPEN

A

s BU's history reveals, it's only when we match dreams with deeds that great change is possible.

BY BISHOP PETER D. WEAVER ('75, Hon.'13)

The following is adapted from Weaver's baccalaureate address at Marsh Chapel for Boston University's 2013 Commencement. The Scriptures read for the service were Ecclesiastes 3:1–8 and Romans 12:1–2, 9–13.

This morning as I walked across Marsh Chapel Plaza, I remembered Commencement Day 2012. I'd heard one of the graduates say to his family and friends, "This is a dream come true!" Without skipping a beat, his father replied, "And what is your next dream?"—probably hoping it wasn't to live at home the rest of his life. It's a great question, whoever you are: "What is your next dream?"

This conversation reminded me of a phrase about dreams crafted by Elie Wiesel (Hon.'74) for his novel *The Time of the Uprooted*. One of the great professors and human beings here at Boston University, Wiesel is a Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner who has confronted the worst in humanity and sought to call forth the best. In *The Time of the Uprooted*, the central character, Gamaliel Friedman, has faced extraordinary challenges and pain. At one point, he reflects on human beings as "the restless and mysterious shadow of a dream, and that dream may be God's." His hope, he says, is to "dream with my eyes open."¹

1. Elie Wiesel, *The Time of the Uprooted* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 5.

We have all had eye-opening experiences as we have faced the challenges of this life and world. Boston University has always been a place and a community that calls us to dream with our eyes open, keeping an eye on reality as well as an eye on possibility.

AN EYE ON REALITY

Every time I walk across Marsh Plaza, I am swept up again in the events of 1970 when I was a student here. On May 4 of that year, four students were killed at Kent State University, and BU students packed Marsh Plaza in protest. The next day, BU's administration building was firebombed and the deans voted to cancel exams and Commencement. Waves of bomb scares on campus continued that year: in one 10-day period there were 35 threats.

About the Author



Peter D. Weaver is the retired resident bishop for the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church and a former Boston University trustee. He has worked with Jim Wallis and others on the Make Poverty History campaign. Weaver has served as president of the global Council of Bishops of the United Methodist Church, for which he works in Washington, DC.

Photo by Cydney Scott

In the many rallies on the plaza, we would sing: “Last night I had the strangest dream I’d ever had before/I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war.”² There we were dreaming of a world without war, but with our eyes closed to the very reality of violence in our own BU world. Our dreams of transformation were somehow disconnected from the schemes of coercion in which we were participating.

More than 40 years have passed, and there is still war, violence, and hatred all around us. Whether it takes place at the finish line of a marathon, or in response to heinous acts in Syria, or in a street fight in Boston, or in a domestic argument gone ballistic, violence seems to be the response of choice. And racial, religious, and sexual minorities are still at risk in this society.

Too often we turn a blind eye to the realities of violence, injustice, and suffering in which we ourselves are complicit. Too often we have not been clear-eyed about the evils embedded in the realities in which we participate, nor farsighted about the commitments that are necessary to live into the possibilities of which we dream. We too easily drift into conformity to the world, as Paul reminded the Romans (12:1-2), and abandon dreams of transformation.

An eye on reality should bring us all to confession. Dreaming with our eyes open lets us see that dreams without deeds are simply daydreams, and deeds detached from great dreams are simply mindless, sleepwalking conformity to what is.

AN EYE ON POSSIBILITY

Something else happens every time I walk across Marsh Plaza: Sergio

Castillo’s memorial to BU graduate Martin Luther King, Jr., lifts my spirit. It is titled *Free at Last*, echoing the last lines of King’s Dream speech delivered 50 years ago. King spoke with eyes open to searing realities as well as soaring possibilities. Too often we forget that although his words focused on human civil rights, the breadth of his spirit and dreams—born of God and nurtured in this University—could not be contained or limited. His eye became focused on the possibility of confronting not only racism, but also war, poverty, and all that diminishes or destroys our God-given humanity.

If the dreams of peace, justice, and equality for all are to become reality, we must, like the doves of peace in *Free at Last*, launch ourselves from the University toward the city and the world—with eyes open to do the work of peace, to fly in the face of injustice, to continue to dream “even though,” as King said, “we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow.”³ If these dreams, and the true “common-wealth” of economic resources and community power, are to become reality, the dream-doers must leave Marsh Plaza and Commonwealth Avenue; they must get on the MBTA and go to the Financial District, to Government Center, the Theater District, and over to Dorchester where eight-year-old Boston Marathon bombing victim Martin Richard lived. He had talked of coming to BU. He had held up his dream on a blue poster board: “No more hurting people. Peace.” Can it happen?

It is the story of this University. With an eye on reality and an eye on possibility, the BU vision arises. This University

2. Ed McCurdy, “Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream” (1950).

3. Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have a Dream” (speech, Washington, DC, August 28, 1963), *American Rhetoric*, <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihavedream.htm>.

and its graduates are not just about education, but education that prepares for the doing of dreams, the incarnation of imagination. It is in the DNA of BU: Dreams Nurturing Action. This has never been a university content with mimicking others—in the words of Paul to the Romans, “conforming.” Rather, our history has been about transforming—about dreams nurturing action reflecting the imagination of God.

MATCHING DREAM WITH DEED

In the 1860s, three Methodists had an eye on a radical possibility. They believed every person was created in God’s image and deserved an education. They had a dream of a university open to everyone—men and women, all races (they were passionately antislavery), all economic statuses, and people of all religions or no religion. This was a radical notion. They already had a school of theology that Harvard had offered to take under its wing, but they refused because of the compelling dream they had of fully inclusive education and society. Their dream was that this education would be free to everyone, supported by scholarships (we’re still working on some dreams).

With eyes wide open to reality, and the dream of possibilities clear to him, Isaac Rich, a BU founder, gave his entire fortune to the dream, even

before there were any buildings, faculty, or students. That’s an incarnation of imagination—matching the dream with a deed. It was the largest single donation that had ever been made to an American college or university at that time. What followed was amazing and transformational. Here from BU graduated the first woman PhD in America, the nation’s first black psychiatrist, the first woman with a Bachelor of Divinity degree, the first woman to be admitted

to the Massachusetts Bar. Here, Alexander Graham Bell strung wires across his classroom, leading to the invention of the telephone. Here, Edgar Helms (1893, Hon.’40) imagined the ministries that became Goodwill Industries. Here, Alexander Golob

(CFA’16, CAS’16), seeing a drab, bare wall in a BU parking lot, organized seniors and other artistic dreamers and doers to create an amazing mural transforming our campus. And here, with eyes open to the environmental crisis, the Class of 2013 wore red graduation gowns transformed into fabric from 107,000 recycled bottles.

What is your next dream? With an eye to realities and an eye to possibilities, what is the incarnation of imagination you yearn to live into? At age 84, Elie Wiesel said recently, “I get the feeling I haven’t even begun. I have so much else to do.” Let’s begin. Let’s commence. □

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We all share a common destiny: that of continuing the ongoing pursuit of God and discerning what God is up to—and what that may mean. As physicist Sir Arthur Eddington noted, “Something unknown is doing we don’t know what.”¹ I want to know: what is that something up to? In the Bible, Esdras raises fundamental questions about human destiny, particularly our propensity for good or evil. God’s reply is a pretest to learning “the answer”: God gives Esdras three problems, saying, “If you can solve one of them for me, then I will teach you why the heart is evil.” (2 Esdras 4) While at STH you may have thought your doctoral defense was a bear or your master’s thesis was an agony, imagine being asked by God to “weigh for me a measure of fire, or measure for me a blast of wind, or call back for me a day that is past.” (2 Esdras 5) It is the notion of questions—whether you are asking them or being asked—and their significance that I would like to explore. Questions help us to locate—literally, personally, and spiritually—where we are and offer direction about ways we might go. Some 40 years ago, upon completing the last lecture of the semester, the late Professor of Hebrew Scriptures Harrell F. Beck asked, “How many of you feel that you have acquired something of value in this course? All hands went up. Then he asked, “So what have you acquired or learned?” I raised my hand and stammered, “But, I don’t know.” Beck smiled and went on: “I can only hope I have exposed you to some of the deeper questions, the possibilities, and the potential resources for struggling with them. I hope you have gained a vision of what you may wish to know but do not yet know. I hope you have begun to realize that it is the questions—not the answers—to which Holy Writ speaks and stirs us.” He looked at me and winked, saying, “A responsible answer, Mr. Karpf.” My favorite poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, describes the search for wisdom this way: *When a baby is taken from the wet nurse, it easily forgets her and starts eating solid food. Seeds feed awhile on ground, then lift up into the sun. So you should taste the filtered light and work your way toward wisdom with no personal covering. That’s how you came here, like a star without a name. Move across the night sky with those anonymous lights.* Perhaps—even now—you still have a question or two about what your time at STH was about. That is good; keep the questions coming. For those of you who have figured out all your answers, question them for more insight. Some years ago, while on mission in South Africa to build response to the overwhelming calamity of HIV/AIDS, I ran out of questions, doubting myself and my sanity. Hope dried up as every week I opened yet another diocese or community to the possibility of doing the impossible: caring for those suffering from AIDS and preventing more infections. Early one Sunday morning on another flight out, the Chief Hasidic Rabbi of South Africa and I were seated together. As the plane took off, we both opened our prayer books, the rebbe donned his prayer shawl, and we said our individual morning prayers. Then we settled back and began to tell each other the stories of our lives. In this intimate conversation we encountered true communion. When one of those individual conversational silences came, as they do, the rebbe looked intently at me and asked, “What’s troubling you?” I replied, “There is a lot of horror in my life with megadeath due to AIDS; deceit and inertia from government; silence from the Church; and fumbling in communities.” He nodded in agreement and paused just long enough for me to ask a question that had been burning in me. “Tell me, with all that you and your community have endured, and all that you have seen and experienced, how do you dare pray?” After a while, he answered as only a rebbe can—with three questions. “Tell me,” he asked, “have you a friend with whom you pray, as those concerned for one another?” I shook my head “no.” “Have you a teacher with whom you pray as a student of prayer?” I shook my head again. “Have you a student to whom you teach prayer?” I confessed that I was alone. “Aha,” he said. “You have lost your anchors in the sea of desolation. Without these anchors you are adrift in your own experience and can only hope that you are in the hands of God. Without these anchors you may not be hearing the voice of God in the silences between the words and your experience.” Nodding silently, I began to weep in my emptiness. From that day, the rebbe became my teacher. Later, I found a friend and a student. If you don’t submit to the questions, you may find yourself staring into the void today, wondering how to weigh a measure of fire, or believing that you have been tasked to catch a blast of wind, or that you will actually try to call back a day that is past. It is, after all, about the questions. You may know the social work window in the center stairwell of the School of Theology. It has been a place of solace for many. I was recently shocked to discover that it really doesn’t tell a story as much as it begs questions. 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What does it mean when we have no questions or have run out of them? The lack of questioning signals our end, our death: physical, psychological, or spiritual. But new questions can lead to new life, our rebirth. What are your questions today? Where are you going? Whom will you love and how? Where is your imagination on fire? How can you bring meaning? Let me return to Sir Arthur Eddington, who leaves us with this discovery: “We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised procedures, one after another, to account for its origins. At last we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo! It is our own.”⁴ Indeed, continuing the question leads us home—home to ourselves and ultimately, home to God. And so hear this invitation from Rumi to a life of questioning: *Come, come, whoever you are. Wonderer, worshiper, of leaving. It doesn’t matter. Ours is not a caravan of despair. Come, even if you have broken your vow a thousand times Come, yet again, come, come.*⁵ As the holy one blesses, so may you be blessed with the illumination of a million questions and the brightness of wondrous possibilities. □ We all share a common destiny: that of continuing the ongoing pursuit of God and discerning what God is up to—and what that may mean. As physicist Sir Arthur Eddington noted, “Something unknown is doing we don’t know what.”¹ I want to know: what is that something up to? In the Bible, Esdras raises fundamental questions about human destiny, particularly our propensity for good or evil. 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JOURNAL
SERMON

POWER

In our lifelong pursuit of God, asking questions is just as important as finding answers.

BY TED KARPf ('74)

The following is adapted from Karpf's address at Marsh Chapel for the Boston University School of Theology Hooding Ceremony in 2013.

We all share a common destiny: that of continuing the ongoing pursuit of God and discerning what God is up to—and what that may mean. As physicist Sir Arthur Eddington noted, “Something unknown is doing we don’t know what.”¹ I want to know: what is that something up to?

In the Bible, Esdras raises fundamental questions about human destiny, particularly our propensity for good or evil. God’s reply is a pretest to learning “the answer”: God gives Esdras three problems, saying, “If you can solve one of them for me, then I . . . will teach you why the heart is evil” (2 Esdras 4:4). While at STH you may have thought your doctoral defense was a bear or your master’s thesis was an agony, imagine being asked by God to “weigh for me the weight of fire, or measure for me a blast of wind, or call back for me the day that is past” (2 Esdras 4:5). It is the notion of questions—whether you are asking them or being asked—and their significance that I would like to explore.

Questions help us to locate—literally, personally, and spiritually—where we are and offer direction about ways we might go. Some 40 years ago, upon completing the last lecture of

the semester, the late Professor of Hebrew Scriptures Harrell F. Beck ('45, GRS'54) asked, “How many of you feel that you have acquired something of value in this course?” All hands went up. Then he asked, “So what have you acquired or learned?” I raised my hand and stammered, “But, I don’t know.” Beck smiled and went on: “I can only hope I have exposed you to some of the deeper questions, the possibilities, and the potential resources for struggling with them. I hope you have gained a vision of what you may wish to know but do not yet know. I hope you have begun to realize that it is the questions—not the answers—to which Holy Writ speaks and stirs us.” He looked at me and winked, saying, “A responsible answer, Mr. Karpf.”

My favorite poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, describes the search for wisdom this way:

About the Author



Ted Karpf is the former STH director of development & alumni relations. He is an Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Washington, where he was also Canon to the Ordinary for Clergy Deployment and Congregational Development and a canon of Washington National Cathedral. He is living in a small village in New Mexico, praying.

1. Arthur Stanley Eddington, *The Nature of the Physical World* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928).

*When a baby is taken from the wet nurse,
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Perhaps—even now—you still have a question or two about what your time at STH was about. That is good; keep the questions coming. For those of you who have figured out all your answers, question them for more insight.

THE THREE
ANCHORS OF PRAYER

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2. Jalaluddin Rumi, “A Star Without a Name,” *Masnavi Book III, Say I Am You: Poetry Interspersed With Stories of Rumi and Shams*, trans. John Moyne and Coleman Barks (Athens, GA: Maypop, 1994).

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3. Luke 4:18, my emphasis.

4. Arthur Stanley Eddington, *Space, Time and Gravitation: An Outline of the General Relativity Theory* (Cambridge, England: University Press, 1920).

5. Shaikh Abu Saeed Abil Kheir, *Nobody, Son of Nobody: Poems of Shaikh Abu Saeed Abil Kheir*, trans. Vraje Abramian (Prescott, Arizona: Hohm Press, 2001), 4.

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NEW QUESTIONS, NEW LIFE

You may know the social work window in the center stairwell of the School of Theology. It has been a place of solace for many. I was recently shocked to discover that it really doesn’t tell a story as much as it begs questions. The window says: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to *preach*.”³ It is a poor paraphrase of the biblical passage, an artifact of another age. Encountering the window, each of us must ask: To whom are we preaching? About what? Why is this Good News? What will this change? In the context of the right questions, the window points to larger purposes impelling us toward relief and release, toward justice-seeking and peacemaking by, for, and with all people.

What I learned from that window is how I needed to expend my life—by touching and being touched over and over again by society’s ills: disease, death, heartbreak, injustice, inequity, poverty, and indignity. I have been tossed into the world of brokenness and horror only to learn and relearn that this great com-

mission is neither theoretical nor some trumped-up piety, but a daily fact of life in which we always have the choice to touch or be touched.

What does it mean when we have no questions or have run out of them? The lack of questioning signals our end, our death: physical, psychological, or spiritual. But new questions can lead to new life, our rebirth. What are your questions today? Where are you going? Whom will you love and how? Where is your imagination on fire? How can your life bring meaning?

Let me return to Sir Arthur Eddington, who leaves us with this discovery: “We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after another, to account for its origins. At last we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo! It is our own.”⁴ Indeed, continuing to question leads us home—home to ourselves and ultimately, home to God.

And so hear this invitation to a life of questioning:

Come back. Come back, no matter what you think you are.

An idol worshipper? A non-believer?

Come back.

This gate, no one leaves hopeless.

If you have broken your vows ten thousand times,

*Come back.*⁵

As the holy one blesses, so may you be blessed—with the illumination of a million questions and the brightness of wondrous possibilities. □

NEW WAYS TO LEARN WITH STH



Pamela Lightsey

THANKS TO LIVESTREAM BROADCASTS AND INTERACTIVE WEBINARS, ALUMS CAN STAY MORE CONNECTED TO STH THAN EVER.

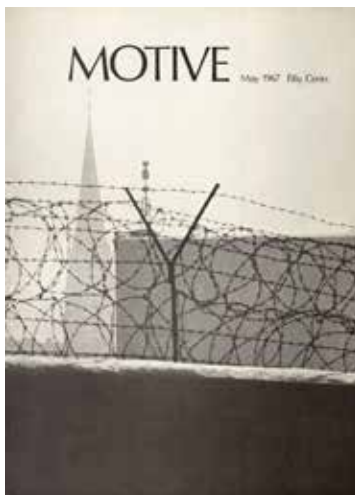
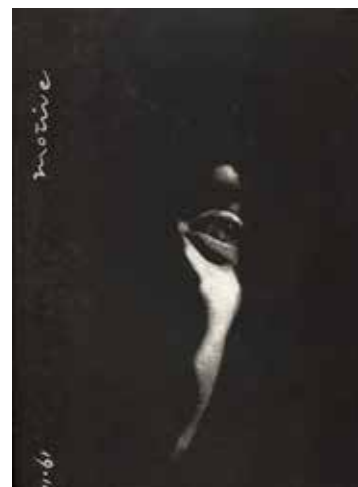
BY PAMELA LIGHTSEY, *associate dean for community life and lifelong learning*

In the 1947 edition of the Morehouse College student newspaper, a young Martin Luther King, Jr., wrote, “The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.” Throughout each year, the School of Theology Lifelong Learning program supports ongoing critical thinking in alums, current and prospective students, as well as the public. We now have a new approach to lifelong learning that involves bold, energetic use of modern technology. Here’s what’s new:

- **Livestream broadcasts:** Anyone interested in STH presentations by distinguished scholars and faith leaders can now watch them as livestream broadcasts (real-time video feeds). Joining a broadcast requires only a computer and an Internet connection. This means we can now reach a larger audience of learners—including our alums—located around the globe. You can watch presentations like our Center for Practical Theology’s annual lecture and our Lowell Lectures live or after the fact at <http://go.bu.edu/focus/live>.
- **Interactive webinars:** You may be accustomed to seeing webi-

nars packaged as a prerecorded PowerPoint with voice-over. Though that model has its benefits, it can be rather boring. We format our webinars with a short PowerPoint presentation to pique your interest, and conclude with a live, visual broadcast of a faculty member responding to questions that have arisen from the 20-to-30-minute instructional session. During the fall 2013 semester we produced three webinars: *Mass Incarceration, Retributive Justice; Reformation and Marriage*; and *Revisiting the American Dream*, which you can access along with upcoming webinars at <http://go.bu.edu/focus/webinars>.

- **Credit programs:** We continue to offer residential learning opportunities, such as the Pastor Scholar program. Learners earn continuing education units (CEUs) by selecting, registering for, and completing one of several courses on campus. Participants have the advantage of attending intellectually rewarding, for-credit courses on cutting-edge research topics. CEUs are also available by attending Lifelong Learning-sponsored conferences, including the annual Anna Howard Shaw Center conference. Learn more at <http://go.bu.edu/focus/lifelong>. □



motive Magazine goes digital



What stands out “like a mini-skirt at a church social”? According to *Time* magazine in 1966, the answer was *motive*, the former magazine of the Methodist Student Movement. First edited by Harold Ehrensperger, who was a professor at Boston University School of Theology, and published from 1941 to 1972, the magazine was known for its avant-garde approach to issues including civil rights, the Vietnam War, and homosexuality. Methodist activists and figures, including former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, credit the publication as a formative influence, and the Columbia School of Journalism named it runner-up to *Life* as Magazine of the Year in 1965. But though scholars study the publication, only the School of Theology and a few other institutions hold a complete archive, making it difficult to access. STH is digitizing its collection for the public, with the cooperation of the United Methodist Church (which holds *motive*’s copyright) and sponsorship from STH’s Center for Global Christianity & Mission. Readers will be able to access the magazines free online and search for content using keywords. STH expects to complete the project this spring. Learn more about *motive* at www.bu.edu/cgcm/motive-magazine. □



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Gift Plans That Work

Planned giving offers many alternatives to standard donations, including bequests, gifts of real estate, and life-income gifts that both provide tax-exempt income and support BU. Working with the Planned Giving office, many alums and friends of STH have found meaningful ways to strengthen the School while honoring their own passions, educational pursuits, and loved ones.



Elizabeth Findley Hazel ('90) has always believed that "it is in community that we see God." And she has felt the presence of God more in the Boston University School of Theology community than anywhere else.

Hazel supports the STH community through outright gifts and a bequest aimed at relieving the financial constraints that can be a barrier for aspiring theology students. "The greatest strength of planned giving for me is the ability to keep a scholarship running after my death," she explains. "I am a widow with no children. The money I use for living expenses could be made part of a larger pool of money that would enable the scholarship to live on."

Hazel's goal, she says, is "to keep the richness of Boston University School of Theology programs flowing—not the least because they open the awareness of God's presence to the communities surrounding other schools and programs in the University. Making the distance between heaven and earth shorter is an important part of my faith."

To learn more, contact BU Planned Giving at 800-645-2347 or opg@bu.edu.