

SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF
**BLACK
RELIGION**

NEWSLETTER | Vol. 9, No.1 | April 2011



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Rice University, 6100 Main Street., MS-15, Houston, Texas 77005

Honoring Legacies and Changing Lives: Twenty-five Year Celebration of Vanderbilt's Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies

Lecture Presentation-January 20, 2011

Rev. Dr. Forrest E. Harris Sr.
Assistant Professor of the Practice of Ministry
Director of the Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies
Vanderbilt University Divinity School

Note: During the first community breakfast of spring semester, the Rev. Dr. Forrest E. Harris Sr., assistant professor of the practice of ministry and director of the Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies (KMSI), marked the beginning of a celebration to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Institute. His lecture recapped the evolution of KMSI, commented on its prophetic work and examined the Institute's future in context of the challenges of the black church.

First, I must acknowledge that with support from former deans Jack Forstman and Joseph Hough and our current dean of the Divinity School, James Hudnut-Beumler, and with the scholarly support and encouragement of a great group of faculty colleagues, the dedication of superb past administrative coordinators, especially Sha'Tika Brown who now serves the institute in that capacity, it has been my professional honor and privilege to direct the work of Kelly Miller Smith Institute on Black Church Studies for 23 of the past 25 years. For the first two years, Professors Lewis Baldwin and Walter Harrelson coordinated the programs of the Institute. As I stated in a *Spire* article several years ago, over these two and half decades, it has been, to say the least, an adventure of "honoring and changing legacies" through a cadre of theological activities and programs to bridge the resources of the academy with the prophetic Christianity and ministry of black churches.

At the Institute's inaugural event in 1985, then Vanderbilt Divinity School Professor Peter Paris, who later joined the faculty at Princeton University, summed up the mission of the Institute as that of not only perpetuating Smith's pastoral and prophetic legacy as a civil rights activist and as a master craftsmen of the black preaching tradition but to join his kind of prophetic imagination with the theological resources of the academy to impact students preparing for congregational leadership and to engage black churches through dialogue about the contextual challenges of prophetic ministry. In doing so, as director of the Institute, I have stood upon the shoulders of Kelly Miller Smith Sr., whose theological justice vision, prophetic preaching and commitment to the black church and his outstanding delivery of the Yale Lyman Beecher Lecture on Social Crisis Preaching inspired the Vanderbilt Divinity School faculty to establish the Institute on Black Church Studies in his honor. In the process of implementing a vision of theological education for prophetic ministry, the lives of laity and church leaders, KMS scholarship recipients and black church studies students participating in certificate programs, national conferences, dialogues and forums have been significantly changed and impacted.

As the Institute has evolved over these years, the dynamism of creative tension which is always necessary for change to occur created a climate within the Divinity School to make strategic decisions that led to the establishment of the first endowment

for a university-based black church institute and the surrounding of the Institute's work with the scholarship of a nationally recognized faculty of black scholars.

Of the numerous public forums, seminars and conferences on a range of topics (the religious leadership and legacy of Kelly Miller Smith Sr., the black church's agenda for sound health, economics and education, the black church and public policy, the black church and sexuality, to name only a few) the signature events of the KMSI over the past 25 years, in my view, have been the national dialogue on "What Does It Mean To Be Black and Christian in America?" and the most recent conference, the African American Lectionary national forum on Culture, Worship and Preaching. These events, the former having to do with issues of identity politics in the theological and prophetic expressions of black Christianity and the latter event dealing with praxis dimensions of prophetic preaching and worship provide appropriate bookends for my remaining comments on the future work of the KMSI as it relates to the state of black churches today and the theological and prophetic discourse the KMSI has attempted to inspire.

R. Drew Smith in his essay, "Black Churches Within a Changing Civic Culture in America," notes how questions of identity politics and prophetic praxis have throughout its history challenged the theological and sociopolitical relevance of the black churches. The most prominent in recent memory of this challenge is the sociopolitical tension of the 1960s when "a significant portion of the American population was supporting racial discrimination as a matter of law and practice." It was during this period that the courage and prophetic genius of persons like Kelly Miller Smith Sr. and Martin Luther King Jr. creatively combined the struggle for racial justice with the need for revolutionary democracy in America. "What was required to change this patently nondemocratic feature in the world's largest democracy," R. Drew Smith states, "was a democratic reform movement emanating from an unlikely standard-bearer of democratic ideals—namely, African American churches. And at least with respect to an emphasis on civil rights, this vanguard of activist black churches embodied a political culture more consistent with democracy than many within the context of American."

Today, black churches as vanguards of political and prophetic activism known in the past have significantly declined. Through the cultural and contextual cycles of identity politics and neoconservative theological definitions of the black churches, the prophetic voice of black churches has been severely de-radicalized. Historically, black churches have been "free spaces"—environments in which people were served by prophetic leadership against destructive elements of what W.E.B. Dubois called "the 20th century problem of the color line." We have just completed the first decade of the 21st century and many are eager to suggest that social progress we've seem result in "the significance of race declining" and the racial conditions, ideologies and practices that provided the context for the birth of activist politics in black churches on American soil are being ameliorated. However, what has alternatively developed is that "the problems of the color line" are not fixed, they have been transformed, mutated, recycled and have taken on new and in many instances more covert modes of expression in the polity of America governance. As my colleague Juan Floyd Thomas, who is the Divinity School's black church studies professor and researcher for the KMSI suggest "as we move into the new millennium, the politics of the color line and representations of race have become far more subtle and complicated than they were in the Jane and Jim Crow era when Dubois made his famous pronouncement."

In part, what this observation implies is that if black churches are to reclaim their place of historic leadership as activist and prophetic institutions how it interprets democracy in the future will depend on how they name, think about, experience and confront the interrelated modalities of white supremacist values in the configurations of race and gender, racism and sexism, sexual identity in the body politics of America. Thus, one of the great challenges facing future black church generations is not only the need to engage the complex structural and institutional legacy of racial oppression but also to take note of the mutations, the plethora of forms in which race, gender, class and sexual based oppression is expressed and experienced in everyday life of black folk.

Since the death of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, a curious blend of Christian fundamentalism, prosperity appeals of capitalism and conservative politics characterize what is being described as “the new black church movement” or as I would describe it the social mutation of black churches in the designs of new forms of neoconservative and theocratic conservatisms. In other words, this movement, far removed from the activist and prophetic ideology of the civil rights and social justice movements, advances a public discourse that refuses “to translate private sufferings into public issues; a kind of identity reference that works hard to remove issues of power and equity from broader social concerns.” This signals a crisis within black churches as they struggle to reinvent themselves in and against the crucible of new American racism and seek to avoid becoming social mutations of neoconservative and theocratic conservatism, enterprises of market-driven capitalism and consumerism wherein black church leaders become salesmen/ women not prophets, therapeutic peddlers of hope not advocates for divine and social justice, spiritually redemptive without being socially responsible. Ultimately, this imagines the human agency of black churches as simply a matter of individual choices, the lack of principled self-help and moral responsibility; a socioeconomic mutation of American individualism that seeks to negate the continuing institutional and public policy effects of past social histories and injustices of American oppression and racism.

Perhaps, the greatest institutional mirroring for many black churches is that they no longer give black people the courage to be black or help them embody the religious heritage of their ancestor’s faith. Thus, black churches have gradually shifted back toward what Gayraud Wilmore calls “a reactionary traditionalism” and by others as “the disillusionment of a “post-civil rights malaise.” The social justice activism ascribed to leaders like Kelly Miller Smith Sr. has largely faded into politics of denial and a culture of privatization and increasingly turned to a gospel of prosperity positivism. Thus as one scholar puts it, “Increasingly, a concern with either the past or the future is replaced by uncertainty, and traditional human bonds rooted in compassion, justice and a respect for [civility] are now replaced by a revitalized social Darwinism, played out in popular nightly reality-based television, megachurch theology, media and comic depictions of blackness in which middle class self-interest becomes the organizing principle for a winner-take-all society.”

My colleagues here at the Divinity School believe the future focus of the work of Kelly Miller Smith Institute should galvanize “black faith in public life” that takes seriously what Victor Anderson understands as an opportunity for “creative exchange that keeps life open to the event of beloved community.” Traditionally, Victor Anderson says, “civil rights get cast in a narrow interpretive prism that focuses on preventing injuries and injustices from recurring supremacist practices of racism. But America’s continuing dilemma of rectifying racial injustices calls for restorative justice. . . the construction, innovative deployment of concepts of race, God and world to do the work of interpretation, criticism and directing possibilities toward openness, particularly for justice in the social world of poverty as well as in the social spheres of difference.”

Time will not permit a full discussion of the broad outline the KMSI proposes to promote as a deeper understanding of matters of race, gender, faith and social justice issues. Suffice it to say that what is crucial for the theological and praxis work of the institute is to be a countervailing theological resource for the qualitative development and healthy growth of prophetic Christianity known in the past as it should be known in black church life today.

The visionary way forward for the KMSI is as the prophetic poetics of James Baldwin puts it, “The American crisis, which is part of a global, historical crisis, [is not] likely to resolve itself soon. An old world is dying, and a new one, kicking in the belly of its mother, time, announces that it is ready to be born. This birth will not be easy, and many of us are doomed to discover that we are exceedingly clumsy midwives. No matter, so long as we accept that our responsibility is to the new born: the acceptance of responsibility contains the key to the necessarily evolving skill.” As steward of the work of the Kelly Miller Smith Institute for these many years, my concern has been and continues to be with the “necessary evolving skills,” theologically and ethically which is necessary for the continuous birth and rebirth of love, justice and freedom in and through the agency of liberating leadership, both lay and clergy in black churches. At best when it comes to birth and rebirth, we have been “exceedingly clumsy midwives” especially in regards to a radical inclusivity of all of God’s children. The sensitivities for lament are numb, nearly dead to the suffering and oppression around us in the world. We should grieve that the so called new black church movement appears to be stillborn with middle class cultures and institutions that have no interest in the value of revolutionary democracy as they are seemingly bound by what Cornel West calls market-driven capitalism and consumerism.

As a product of the black Christian faith story, the mother lode of my spirit resonates with the dream of “beloved community,” with the faith yet kicking in the belly of a Black womanism, the creative rage and anger in hip-hop culture, and to those committed to staying in the labor room of holistic love until justice and healing is born for the total community. My own scholarly interest and leadership praxis has been shaped by that unseen power that animated the genius and intellect, spirit and faith of some 4 million slaves left virtually homeless, penniless and illiterate after Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. Through all of the hegemony of white supremacist values, scientific phrenology to prove black inferiority, illusion to heavenly salvation that left earthly oppression untouched and unchanged, redemptive individualism, patriotic theism of God and country, through it all, generation after generation of black faith persevered.

“For then there is Jesus,” Dr. Julius R. Scruggs recently preached, whose life and love was “a shaft of holy light” renewing their faith in the God they met in Jesus who joined them in their ultimate concern. It was the clinging faith to the spirit of the God of John Brown at Harper Ferry, Nat Turner’s slave revolt, Frederick Douglass’ freedom discourse, Harriet Tubman’s tenacity for freedom, the brilliant preaching and ethical discourse of Maria Stewart, Anna Julia Cooper, Regina Lee, James Baldwin and Martin Luther King Jr. and the wisdom and spiritual character of my own deceased father W.T. Harris that never abandoned the hopes and aspirations of the struggle for freedom.

The mysterious sustaining power hidden in the lyrics of that long-meter hymn of the black churches, “I love the Lord, he heard my cry, and pitted ever groan, long as I live while trouble rise, I will hasten unto his throne,” is yet to be mined by the scholars of black religion and perhaps will never be completely understood by majority institutions that cannot fathom how black people have shown up on the other side of suffering, pain and oppression. This is the black church at its best—activist preaching, social action, hymns and songs of hope and justice and freedom infused with courageous protest movements against systemic and structural injustice.

As womanist scholar Annie Powell puts it: “I dream of a church that loves God, welcomes the poor, promotes justice for all, combines prayer and compassion with social and political action to eliminate poverty... a church where inclusive language about God is not considered too much to ask and where difference is honored and not diminished.” If this kind of black church is to evolve, my colleague Lewis Baldwin suggests that black churches must “remain relevant to virtually every aspect of African American life, not surrendering many of its traditional functions to other religious and so-called secular institutions; if it does not, the black church will soon outlive its usefulness, stillborn, as a liberating all-comprehensive institution.”

RANDOM THOUGHTS ON OUR FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Dr. Gayraud S. Wilmore

It is hard to believe that it is almost a half-century since we began this ambitious and somewhat ostentatious brainstorm to have a society for the academic study of black religion. I don't remember in what document Professor Butler found those words on the back of last year's brochure--"*formed exclusively for religious and educational purposes, and in particular to engage in scholarly research and discussion about the religious experiences of Blacks*"-but those words sound authentic to me and they amaze and tantalize me today.

I can't help wondering how we would have described ourselves had we met here in Atlanta five years earlier--in 1965--and invited Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to become a member and address our first session with a charge to the organization. That would have been phenomenal and quite possible, you know, for many thought that, with the passage of the civil rights act of 1964 and the voting rights act in 1965, King had accomplished his major victory; that the national struggle was just about over and he would probably accept a chair at Boston University School of Theology or at Harvard.

If that had happened, like Preston Williams and Charles Long, James Cone and Henry Mitchell, Peter Paris and some others of you, Martin Luther King might still be alive today instead of his remains lying in that crypt on Auburn Avenue. But what would this country be like now? What would life be like today for African Americans, other ethnic minorities, women, and gays?

God only knows the answer to that question, and I tremble to ask it, though if! were true to my Presbyterian upbringing, I'd have to say that God didn't intend for it to be that way. So King is with God, and here we are with a different kind of society than we might have had if the times and seasons had turned out differently.

I remember that a few of us at those earliest meetings wanted a more action-oriented society one with an intentional relationship to the black church and the struggle for civil rights. But Shelby Rooks, Charles Long, and I think also James Cone and Preston Williams--the most influential and persuasive in that early group--were convinced that our face as an organization needed to be turned toward the academic community, toward the justification and legitimation of black religious studies in the seminaries and departments of religion of the white universities. And so it has been for most of these forty years.

The result was the rapid acceleration of accredited programs in the predominately white graduate schools and seminaries that made a place for black studies focusing on the religious status quo of North America, Africa, and the Caribbean--and with that came a notable increase in the hiring of black professors, of black faculty members receiving tenure, and the proliferation of courses they were asked to teach dealing with the theology of Dr. King, the role of religion in black history and social progress, the formulation of a black liberation theology, and the role of the black church--past, present, and future. If SSBR ever had its glory days they were in the 1970s when the society justified its almost exclusive concentration on the academic field which helped to create the phenomenal growth of the Fund for Theological Education and the number of black woman and men seeking the Doctor of Philosophy degree in some area related to the Bible or the black church.

The question I want to ask in this brief commentary on our inception as a learned society is where do we go from here? I think that we made the right decision about what we should be and do forty years ago and many of you are here because of that decision. But should we not note today that the purpose statement on the back of last year's brochure makes no mention of the black church? That the stagnant and irrelevant condition of most black congregations and denominations today is a painful embarrassment to us? Should we not be concerned that black liberation theology is misunderstood and condemned in the media and almost exclusively associated with one charismatic sermon by Jeremiah Wright in the pulpit of his former congregation in Chicago? Should we not be concerned that in West and South Africa, and almost everywhere on the continent, a form of highly conservative and even reactionary theology has swallowed up the liberationist and progressive orientation of the ecumenical Third World theology to which some of our members made a significant contribution and with which the progressive black churches in the United States could again make common cause?

One could go on with such questions, but I will end with one summary question that gathers up my obvious interest in a discussion on what is the thinking of this society about the enlargement and even radicalization of its role in the academic community of today. Of course, I am farther out of contact with the academic community than I have ever been and my life, by God's grace and favor, has turned markedly inward to myself and my spouse of 66 years, in a Presbyterian retirement community in Washington, D.C. I probably have no right to even raise problems whose solutions I am incapable of helping you to implement. But permit me to raise one more in conclusion.

Notwithstanding the correctness of our decision in 1970 to limit the Society to the reading and critiquing of scholarly papers at annual meetings, should we not today strike a more radical stance and operation so as to lean upon the black churches and denominations to lessen their interminable housekeeping chores and work with us as progenitors of an avowedly black but also welcoming theology; and that together with pastors and active lay people to develop a strategy that would help to excite more young men and women about African American religious studies as a means of lifting our churches from their current doldrums and thrusting them, in the U.S and Africa, forward to God's mission of liberation in the world through black ecumenical social and political action?

Dr. Anthea Butler
Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Graduate Chair of Religion
University of Pennsylvania

SSBR 40th Anniversary Panel Presentation

Thank you for the invitation today to be with such an esteemed panel! As someone who feels as though I am in a race against time with regard to work in the field of AFAM history, I am not so much interested in discourse, but in doing. That is, I see my particular portion of the broader field of study as one that has suffered for a variety of reasons in the past, but holds some great promise for the future. Let me explain.

As a historian, I've always been struck by how several discourses or narratives seem to dominate the public and private discussion about black religion. One has been the theological track, another the ethical track, and third, the Christian track. Each one of these has produced a large amount of scholarship in the field, some good, some not, but for the most part, historians have been relegated to a sidebar status, so much so that certain tropes of "respectability" black power, otherworldly, etc are words that are used to describe many facets of the writing of black religion, even if they are not a complete picture of what the field really is comprised of. As a result, the axis of most of the work in the field tilts towards a hermeneutic which reads liberation, civil rights, Christian,.. you get the picture.

What I believe is missing though are the voices that have not been integrated into the broader historical narrative of thinking about what the History of black Religion looks like, writ large. By this I mean, we've done a poor job talking about what it means to really begin to look at a history, both in the United States and in the Diaspora, both the religions of African peoples, and what it might mean to teach and research that history as a synthetic whole, not as "parts" as we sometimes have to do in the press for time. History, far from being seen as a core discipline in Black Religion, is most of the time an aside. I believe that is a misfortune. Rather than dwell on what I believe the past situation to be, I'd like to proffer some observations and thoughts for what the future of a "realigned discourse" in Black Religions Studies could entail.

1. Deemphasizing the Protestant Christian narrative of the story. In many ways, writing and teaching about African American Religious History has been either from the perspective of established denominational constructions, sociological frameworks of the past, and the like. Books like Curtis Evans' *The Burden of Black Religion*, and others, have been concerned with the past and how Black Religion has been written about by "outsiders" That is an admirable task, however, it has been left to historians from outside of the religious study realms to begin to look at the myriad of religious practices of the Diaspora. What Am I saying.. its time to leave the quarrel with the old ways of compartmentalizing black religion behind, and to take a look at what sources really say, instead of trying to interpret the source through second hand accounts. This requires the kind of archival work unfortunately many people are unwilling or untrained to do, and as a result, we get thee quirky was to look at the past. What would a history of African Religions in the Americas look like? It certainly would not be a protestant privileged narrative, but one that would primarily be a Catholic and African derived religious Narrative, with the last 100 yrs showing a larger protestant presence. How might that change the ways theology or ethics are written about from these perspectives. Could we see a different history emerging about African Religions in America, so that Garveyism, Rastafarianism, NOI and other groups could be seen as a broader reinvention of religion across the Diaspora for persons of African descent?

2. Closer engagement between historians and other fields to help assist in the broader task of (hopefully) creating a volume/volumes on the history of religion in the African Diaspora work. Here I am thinking about J. Cameron Carter's book which does a nice job of considering history and theology at the same time. Yet, more could be done, especially if the project that was originally started back in the 1990's, then led by Albert Raboteau and David Wills, will ever be accessible to the public. The African American Religious history documentation project is complete, but inaccessible to researchers. The ambitious work was to be an 11 volume set of primary resources from 1450 forwards, but numerous delays to the publication/dissemination of the project have occurred, and it remains to be seen if the project will ever see the light of day. The failure of the project to be disseminated is not just a loss for the field of history, but for all of the work that we do, to say nothing of the countless dissertations and books that lie dormant within that corpus of material.
3. Finally, the importance of the future scholars. If the discourse in my field will change, it will be because we start to train others (even in these down economic times) who understand the importance of "reframing" the field and doing work that is not just of internet, but promotes the broader cause of helping to bring African Religion into the broader conversation about religious studies proper, without blurring its distinctiveness. Right now, if you wanted to send a student to study history, within the religious studies context, you have about four major places you could do it with a "religious studies historian" Princeton, Penn, Vanderbilt, and UNC. Other institutions have theologians, ethicists and cultural studies academics. That fact alone limits our numbers greatly. I also, and this is just an aside, wonder if the teaching of African American Religious history will be either subsumed into either American Religious history, or placed under cultural rubrics rather than a historical ones. If that is the future. and it could very well be, then it does not bode well for related fields as well.

I think I will close it there, and hope that we can find some way to harness our histories, in order to advance our field of study.

Where. . .

A Tribute to the Society for the Study of Black Religion
by Sarah Poole

March 18, 2010

*This poem was shared at the SSBR luncheon last year.

Reflecting the Divine community,
Scholars gather,
Wearing Blackness proudly
Re-energizing passion to
In-carnate words
So that dead poets can live
And forgotten memories can give vision and insight.
To research, publish and teach
To color academic institutions
With speech and literature that is by us and for us.
Where place is the community
And the community is the Society.
Where. . .

Where new scholars are emboldened speak
Where Black theology and Black religion meet
Where first and third wave womanist greet each other with open arms
and criticalengagement

Where voices have resisted
And struggles have persisted
Since the beginning of times

Looking through history's corrective lens,
To get a glimpse of Black experience that
Lives in the highways and byways
That lives in distant regions and in
Local bars and taverns
That lives in churches and reading rooms
That lives in barber shops and on porches
That lives in the collective memory of its people

Where elders become sacred vessels,
Repertoires of knowledge
Pointing to the Black creativity that traveled in the blood of Black people
No matter where the colonizers took possession,
Across oceans where the blood of Africans cried aloud
To the gathering of priests and priestesses
Where deities aid in bringing wholeness
Where past and present merge in the here and now,
Resounding loud in the cries of our children
And our children's children
Generations who come expecting
what we must *learn* to give.

Where myths become fact
 And fitly spoken words sowed confidence to obtain tenure track
 Words that transcended beyond the meeting place
 To form friendships among a community of scholars.
 Creating bridges between who others say we are and who we really are

Where academic theology and practical theology become siblings
 Because Black experience
 wherever you find it
 must raise its fist against white supremacy

Where we accept
 the messiness of dismantling binaries
 Where we expect
 Our walls to be permeated
 Where we reject hate and ignorance
 Where we respect
 Differences of opinion

The Society,
 “an intellectual oasis,” a sacred space
 A womb waiting to give birth to scholarly ideas and intellectual inquiry,
 Where ritual becomes a methodology of preservation

Reclaiming the birthplace of Black religion
 In the heart of the continent of Africa,
 Where variation met variation,
 And transformation couldn't help but to be mutual
 Where moving on requires looking back and
 Looking back requires honesty
 Where the voice of the diaspora makes itself known

Where prophets sometimes find voice to speak
 Because they realize that
 Black Religion is in crisis
 When we see priceless lives wasting away behind jail cells
 And we can't tell truth unless we know truth
 And we can't know truth unless we be true

Where we become interdisciplinary
 Because pens enter disciplines outside their own
 And conversations around multidisciplinary tables
 Water seeds that has grown to be scholarship
 For the people and by the people.

Where action and reflection reach
 Beyond the walls of the Academy, the Black church, Christianity,
 class, gender, and sexuality,
 Inviting new understandings of hope and despair.

Where Black scholars meet
To speak a language that must be translated
To re-create a history that must be updated
To reclaim a heritage that even Black people hated
To shout the proclamation of Black heroes and sheroes
because it must be re-stated.

Where
Reflecting the Divine community,
Scholars gather,
Wearing Blackness proudly
Re-energizing passion to
in-carnate words
So that dead poets can live
And forgotten memories can give vision and insight.

To research, publish and teach
To color academic institutions
With speech and literature that is by us and for us.

Where

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ANNUAL MEETING DATES

2010 7-9 April, Philadelphia, PA
 2011 21 June – 3 July, Bahia, Brazil

TRANSITIONS

Dr. Estrela Alexander has been named Visiting Professor of Theology at the Regent University School of Divinity and executive director of the William Seymour Educational Foundation, which is an exploratory group looking into establishing William Seymour College as a four-year liberal arts college that honors the progressive Pentecostal tradition.

AWARDS

Dr. Andrea C. White, Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture at Candler School of Theology, received The Louisville Institute's First Book Grant for Minority Scholars.

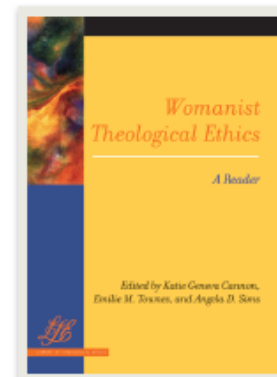
NEW AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS BY SOCIETY MEMBERS

Estrela Alexander, *Black Fire: One Hundred Years of African American Pentecostalism* (InterVarsity Press, June 2011).

Estrela Alexander and Amos Yong, *AfroPentecostalism: The Shifting Strategies and Changing Discourses of Afropentecostalism* (New York University Press, Spring 2011).

Katie G. Cannon, Emilie M. Townes, and Angela D. Sims, eds., *Womanist Theological Ethics: A Reader* (Westminster John Knox Press, October 2011).

James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Orbis Books, Fall 2011).



JOB POSTINGS**JOB POSTINGS****PAYNE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

Payne Theological Seminary invites applications for an Academic Dean position. The Academic Dean serves as the chief academic officer of the Seminary and is responsible for the design, development, and delivery of all academic programs that currently serve approximately 150 students. The Academic Dean supervises full-time and part-time faculty, as well as staff members. In addition, the Academic Dean ensures the quality of academic programs, prepares and administers the Academic Services annual budget, and carries out strategic planning. The Academic Dean recommends the appointment, promotion, tenure, and termination of faculty, and promotes teaching and research faculty development resources, including encouraging, supporting, and advocating for excellence in teaching.

The Academic Dean promotes the vision, mission, and values of the Seminary through the activities and programs of the Seminary, and works with other seminary administrators to assure the well-being and success of the Seminary. The Academic Dean engages in on-going faculty and program review and assessment, and supports curriculum and program development.

Candidates should have earned a Master of Divinity degree (M.Div) and a Ph.D. in theological education from an accredited seminary and/or university. Candidates must demonstrate accomplishments or credentials that would merit appointment at the rank of a tenure-track professor; must have three years of management or administrative experience at the level of department head, chair, research director, center director, dean, or the equivalent; and must be willing to teach a minimum of two courses per semester.

Review of candidate materials will begin immediately. Applications should include a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, and three professional references (one must be from most current employer). Inquiries, applications, and nominations should be directed to: Payne Theological Seminary, ATTN: Faculty Search Committee, P.O. Box 474, Wilberforce, OH 45384-0474.

Payne Theological Seminary is an Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action Employer

AUGUSTANA COLLEGE- Conrad J. Bergendoff Visiting Fellow

Augustana College invites applications for the Conrad J. Bergendoff visiting Fellow in Religion for the 2011-2012 academic year. Desired areas of expertise: Hebrew Bible, Judaism, and Christian traditions. Preference will be given to candidates who have recently completed a Ph.D. or Th.D. program. The Bergendoff Fellow will be expected to participate in Teaching Circle and other programs designed to help new faculty develop their pedagogical skills. She or he will also be expected to make at least one on-campus presentation of scholarly work. Term of appointment: one year renewable for a second year, contingent on staffing needs, demonstrated excellence in the classroom and funding. Salary: \$35,000. Health insurance, professional meeting allowance and other benefits provided. Bergendoff Fellows who secure tenure-track appointments at another college or university may request release from contract. Filling the position for the 2011-2012 academic year is contingent on funding.

Augustana College is a selective liberal arts college of 2,500 students, most of whom live in residence halls on a wooded 115-acre campus. Augustana College is an equal opportunity employer and actively encourages applications from women and persons of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

We do not discriminate based on age, race, color, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability or creed. Details about Augustana, our expectation of the faculty, the selection process, and the Quad Cities are all available at the Faculty Search website; <http://www.augustanafaculty.org/>.

Send a letter of application, curriculum vita, undergraduate and graduate transcripts, and three letters of recommendation to search #113-11 RE/Berg Fellow Search Committee, C/O Ellen Hay, Interim Dean of the College, Augustana College, 639-38th Street, Rock Island, Illinois 61201 or by email submission to: ellenhay@augustana.edu. Questions may be directed to the department chair, Dan Lee at DanLee@augustana.edu. Review of applications will begin April 11, 2011.

ALLIANCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Intercultural Studies Professor

Alliance Theological Seminary (ATS) invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant/Associate/Professor of Intercultural Studies. The successful candidate will be qualified to teach adult-learners in areas related to missiology including the subjects of culture and society, contextualization, social research, theology of mission, missions strategy and the history of missions at the graduate level at the Rockland Campus location of ATS. The candidate will advise students and oversee directed studies as appropriate. Candidates should have overseas missionary experience, possess an earned doctorate in Intercultural Studies or a related discipline and have demonstrated excellence in teaching, research and commitment to intercultural service. Ministry and online teaching experience is necessary.

Pastoral Theology Professor

Alliance Theological Seminary (ATS) also invites applications for two tenure-track Assistant / Associate/Professor positions in Pastoral Theology. The successful candidates will be qualified to teach adult-learners in areas related to Homiletics, Leadership Development, Spiritual Formation and in areas related to pastoral ministry at the graduate level at the Rockland Campus location of ATS or at the Manhattan Campus location of ATS. The candidates will advise students and oversee directed studies as appropriate. Candidates should possess an earned doctorate in Pastoral Theology or a related discipline and have demonstrated excellence in

ATS seeks candidates who can relate to and engage people from a wide range of diverse backgrounds while also being committed to the mission and values of our parent denomination, the Christian and Missionary Alliance. All faculty must adhere to the Christian and Missionary Alliance statement of faith posted at <http://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/doctrine>. Please see instructional statements on other CMA Distinctives, such as <http://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/perspectives/spiritual-gifts>.

Review of applications begins immediately and continues until the position is filled. To apply submit cover letter and curriculum vitae to the Dean's attention at Alliance Theological Seminary, 350 N. Highland Ave., Nyack, NY 10960 or ATSDeanAssist@nyack.edu.

JOB POSTINGS cont'd**CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF INTEGRAL STUDIES****Philosophy and Religion Dept/Assistant Professor/Women's Spirituality Program**

The CIIS Women's Spirituality Program is a graduate level M.A. and Ph.D. program which seeks to integrate the new wave of womanist-feminist-mujerista and postcolonial scholarship in philosophy, religion, women's studies, and ethnic studies with a deepening practice of embodied women's spirituality. The two degrees we offer are (1) M.A. in Philosophy and Religion with Concentration in Women's Spirituality and (2) Ph.D. in Philosophy and Religion with Concentration in Women's Spirituality. This pioneering program - which is grounded in rigorous academic scholarship in the fields of feminist philosophy, feminist studies in religion and spirituality, Women's Studies, and Ethnic Studies - is also inclusive of epistemological perspectives drawn from the arts, spiritual expression, and social and cultural activism. We focus on a variety of woman-affirming religious and spiritual traditions including Indigenous and African religious perspectives; Abrahamic religions; Buddhist, Hindu and other Asian spiritualities; and pagan, earth-based and Goddess traditions.

The learning community that we envision and seek to cultivate is based on a commitment to diversity, multiculturalism, and eco-social justice. Appreciation of diversity is fostered through cross-cultural approaches that include the experiences of women from many cultures and geographic locations, spanning the prehistoric epoch to the present. Community involvement and service is a required part of the curriculum.

Courses are delivered in flexible formats, which include weekday, weekend, evening, and online courses. In addition to our residential option, we offer a semi-distance option, which allows students to take 49% of their required 36 units online.

COMPETENCIES

Competencies should include two or more of the following:

- Women and world religions (competencies in several traditions, which may include Indigenous; Abrahamic; African/Diasporic; Buddhist, Hindu, and other Asian traditions; and earth-based, pagan, or Goddess-oriented perspectives)
- Feminist spirituality and theology/theology
- Multicultural feminisms and postcolonial discourse (particularly as it relates to spirituality and religion)
- Embodied facilitation and conflict-transformation skills
- Gender, Gender Fluidity, and Queer issues
- Competency in teaching Critical Thinking and Methodologies
- Skills and experience with online teaching
- Administrative skills and experience
- Competence/experience in working with upper level dissertation students (e.g. supervision of comprehensive exams, dissertation proposals and dissertation work)

The ideal candidate will have a Ph.D., college- or graduate-level face-to-face and online teaching experience, a record of publication, knowledge of multi-cultural feminisms and feminist spirituality, and expertise that will complement that of the current WSE faculty. In reviewing applications, the committee will place high value on the following factors: (1) Commitment to the disciplines explored by the WSE program; 2) Demonstrated proficiency in relevant competencies; 3) Scholarly publications and engaged scholarship in relevant competencies; 4) Inspiring and effective teaching skills, including online skills and facilitation of experiential and academic learning in the multi-cultural classroom; 5) Ability to mentor students and direct doctoral dissertations; 6) Willingness to participate in WSE-related community events; 7) Skills and experience in administrative and leadership responsibilities. Materials will be reviewed until the position is filled.

To Apply

Please send a cover letter describing how your skills and experience match the requirements of the position and your view of graduate teaching. Submit your CV. List three professional references. Include samples of recent syllabi, publications, presentations, or other relevant materials

We prefer that you send all materials to: jobs@ciis.edu

Given our recruitment in several departments, please be sure to clearly state which department you have applied to

If you wish to apply by mail, send your application materials to the following address:

Prof. Arisika Razak, Chair
 Women's Spirituality Program
 California Institute of Integral Studies
 1453 Mission St., 4th Floor
 San Francisco, CA. 94103

CIIS is committed to providing an open, fair, inclusive, non-discriminatory environment for all individuals across differences of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, physical ability, or medical condition. We seek to increase the presence, representation and inclusion of U.S. historically under-represented people of color, international, bilingual and bicultural students, faculty and staff; and, to provide an environment that will attract and retain individuals identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and intersex (LGBTQQI).

LEXINGTON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**Christian Ethics**

Lexington Theological Seminary announces a search for adjunct faculty in Christian Ethics to teach in its new online program. Qualifications include Ph.D. or its equivalent (ABD will be considered), experience in congregational life, and technological skills: have either taken or taught online courses; developed powerpoint for courses; used a LMS. Preference will be given to people who have used Web. 2.0 tools or social networking, online quizzes, discussion boards, chat rooms in teaching. For information about LTS see www.lextheo.edu. Applicants should send a c.v., a letter of application, and two letters of reference to: Dr. Sharon Warner, Academic Dean, Lexington Theological Seminary, 631 S. Limestone, Lexington, KY 40508 by May 10, 2011.

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY-NEW ORLEANS**Christian Ethics**

Loyola University New Orleans invites applications for a one-year sabbatical replacement position, to begin in Fall 2011. Teaching duties will be four courses per semester: two sections of "Introduction to World Religions" and two sections of "Christian Ethics." Completed Ph.D. required; teaching experience desirable. Send a letter of application and a curriculum vitae electronically to Dr. Tim Cahill, Department of Religious Studies (tccahill@loyno.edu) by May 1st. References should email letters directly. Loyola University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS**BIOLA UNIVERSITY**

Biola University's Center for Christian Thought (CCT) will grant as many as eight one-semester Research Fellowships: four "external" fellowships (for scholars from institutions other than Biola University), three "internal" fellowships (for Biola University faculty), and potentially an additional post-doctoral fellowship. These Fellows will comprise an interdisciplinary group focused on the theme *Christian Scholarship in the 21st Century: Prospects and Perils*.

Questions to be addressed include: What is Christian Scholarship? Why is it important? What are its proper aims and methods? What challenges does it face? Whom does it serve and how? How does Christian scholarship contribute to a life of obedience to Jesus' love commands? Need it so contribute? Should Christian scholarship aim to influence culture? If so, how?

CCT Fellows will be in residence at Biola University from January 29, 2012 to May 19, 2012. Fellows will participate in a two-week seminar at the start of the term led by visiting scholars Nicholas Wolterstorff and Alvin Plantinga, who will then return at the end of the term to interact with the Fellows' research in a two-day conference. For the remainder of the term, Fellows will meet weekly for round-table discussions of their research projects related to the theme. Each Fellow will have the opportunity to collaborate with CCT staff to communicate their research to both academic and non-academic audiences. Occasionally, the Fellows may be called upon to comment on the theme or related issues for various media outlets. There are no teaching or other requirements connected to the Fellowships.

Application Instructions

Applicants are asked to submit the following by May 15, 2011:

- Curriculum vitae
- Name and contact information of three references familiar with applicant's scholarly work
- A research proposal of no more than 1200 words describing the applicant's proposed project. Applicants should begin their proposal with a 150-word abstract summarizing their research. The body of the proposal should clearly state the connection of the research to the Center's theme, the significance of the research, the distinctive character of the argument advanced, and the methodology employed.

Completed applications should be submitted electronically to the CCT Director, Gregg TenElshof, at gregg.tenelshof@biola.edu.