



Union Now

The Magazine of Union Theological Seminary | Summer 2013

Religion and Democracy:

Bearing Witness

*Events at Union Explore
the Intersection of Faith and Power*

Students Speak

*Union Students Share Life Stories
and Hopes for the Future*

Alumni/ae Profiles

*Union Graduates Reflect on
Motivation and Mission*

*Also: Inspired Stories of Generosity, New Faculty,
Commencement Photos, and News*

Union Now

Summer 2013 | Issue 3

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Contents

Features	Bearing Witness	20
	Events at Union Explore the Intersection of Faith and Power	
	Students Speak	27
	Union Students Share Life Stories and Hopes for the Future	
	Alumni/ae Profiles	36
	Union Graduates Reflect on Motivation and Mission	

Departments	President's Message	2
	Union News	3
	Commencement Photos	34
	Class Notes	40
	In Memoriam	43





Dear Union Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2013 edition of *Union Now*, the Magazine of Union Theological Seminary. This issue takes up a topic that has long been central to the mission of the seminary, Religion and Democracy. Exploring these two words and their inter-relation is a complicated and often vexing enterprise, but one which Union is committed to engaging in our classrooms, our public events, our worship services, and in the homes and offices of our many alumni/ae and friends. In this issue, the writers present multi-textured, multilayered views on the matter.

At the concluding session of our Economics & Theology Lecture Series this year, Rob Johnson, the President of the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET), spoke of a recent conversation with a group of major financiers and economists in London, whom he refers to as the new “high priests” of our world.

They talked to him about how troubled they were by the pervasive loss of public and personal trust in our economic system and their role in it. They knew that most people in the world assume that financial leaders like themselves seek only personal gain and never public enrichment. They were fearful that this profound loss of public trust could lead us into a deep state of economic and social collapse, the likes of which our

modern world has not seen. If that wasn't disturbing enough, these powerful leaders had no idea what to do about this state of affairs. These high priests are at a loss.

It's hard not to agree with their assessment of this loss of public trust in financial institutions and their leaders. It applies equally, I believe, to most of the institutions and organizations—both public and private—that comprise our democracy.

Union students echo this when they talk about church-life, politics, public service, and authority. I hear it, too, when they wrestle with the challenges of becoming leaders in communities where ministers are eyed with deep suspicion, and where congregants have an increasingly difficult time sustaining church connections because of the breakdown of trust between clergy and congregant and between congregants themselves. And the list goes on.

An interesting question to ask is what are the qualities that make for large-scale institutional trust as well as the more intimate personal kind. Here are a few; authenticity, integrity, reliability, transparency, steadfastness, fair mindedness, basic care, an ability to make people feel seen, heard, and most importantly, valued.

There is another quality I'd add to the list. It is one that Union Professor Cornel West and Rob Johnson brought into the INET discussion. That quality is *vulnerability*. It's the ability to acknowledge human limitedness, or as our great theologians would have put it, our finitude. To allow oneself to be vulnerable is to stand honestly present in the world, even when it means accepting uncertainty, admitting mistakes, and owning weaknesses that cannot be fixed. It also includes the ability to be responsive to and changed by the world around you.

It means recognizing that perfect control is not only impossible, it can be damaging. Life doesn't work that way. We are marked as much by tragedy as we are by glory, and this is as true of our institutions as it is of our personal lives.

What would it mean for our society to bring back into the story of our democracy, a story about our national vulnerability? Even more, what would it mean for the high priests of our economy to include in their grand economic strategies, the reality of fragility, the limits of knowledge, and weakness—the limits of our economic system and the weaknesses of all human actors within it. It might mean getting rid of the notion of “high priests” altogether, in favor of a more democratic model of economic life.

These days, it sounds cliché to say that owning our weakness makes us stronger, but I believe it is true. For the generations of scholars, ministers, and activists who have passed through the doors of Union, it's a fundamental truth they learned to embrace while they were here. To be vulnerable is to be human and to accept the beauty of our fragile creatureliness.

When you think about it, one of the key reasons we have the political system we call “democracy” is our recognition of collective vulnerability. It's a bedrock concept—we are equal—meaning we are all equally human and alas, equally vulnerable.

Teaching the theological reality of “vulnerability” has long been one of Union's greatest strengths, born of its deep Christian roots. For 176 years, we have been teaching students to see that the point of leadership is not to rule the world but rather to more honestly love it.

It's hard to imagine a more theologically rich portrait of ministry than this. Grace and justice abide there together.

I hope you have as much fun reading *Union Now* as our editorial team has had creating it.

Peace,

The Rev. Dr. Serene Jones
President
Johnston Family Professor for
Religion & Democracy

To Give to Union: The Rev. Dr. John H. Fish, M.Div. 1958, Endows the Sally and John Fish Scholarship

BY JASON WYMAN

Why is Union such an important place for you and why have you chosen to support it in the ways that you have?

Union had a profound impact on me. Right after my senior year at Princeton, where I wrote my thesis on Reinhold Niebuhr and went up to visit him a couple of times, I had the opportunity to go to Union. It was outstanding, almost like a continuing Liberal Arts education. So, I think that Union was an especially formative experience. It was an interesting time for both my wife [Sally] and me. It was a good place and time to raise a family and be challenged by the issues of the day.

And I think, Sally, who died two years ago, would have appreciated a lasting gift in her name. The scholarship will be the Sally and John Fish Scholarship.

What are your hopes for Union as an institution and how do you see your gift helping to promote those hopes?

I want Union to be, as it was then, at the forefront. I want Union to continue to be the place where people think broadly about ministry. And I'd like to fund the scholarship to provide the opportunity to young people who might not be able to afford it to get that kind of education. Because it's not only the formal education you get at Union. It's a commitment you begin to feel. And I want Union to continue to be a leader in the United States amongst the progressive seminaries.

Does Union Now's theme this year of Religion and Democracy resonate for you, and if so, how?

I hope Union continues to think broadly about social justice and the common good and their relation to democracy. It was primarily Niebuhr's understanding of democracy, how people's capacity for justice makes democracy possible and people's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary, that spoke to me. That kind of Niebuhrian understanding



is profound. So I want Union to continue to be a leader in the broadest sense.

This would be a great chance to hear about what you've done as a minister and the activism you've engaged in throughout your life.

I was a pastor in Michigan for five years, and it was great time to be in a small town. By 1963 a lot of things were happening in the country and I decided to rethink my next phase of ministry and go back to graduate school. And I went to the University of Chicago because of its faculty and also because right next to the University was one of Saul Alinsky's most significant community organizing efforts in the distressed area of Woodlawn just south of the university. I became very much involved in what Alinsky was doing in Chicago. I really began to spend a lot of time in Woodlawn and became active in the First Presbyterian Church with a very dynamic minister named John Fry who was a Union graduate. Between Fry's active ministry and Alinsky's approach to community organizing I learned that if you want justice you have to organize. So I spent about five years during my graduate studies working with The Woodlawn Organization. I sometimes say I got my Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago but I got my education from Woodlawn. There was a process of community empowerment and helping

Woodlawn speak for itself that really shaped my energies. I began to see the world differently because I was located differently.

In 1969 the Associated colleges of the Midwest asked a group of us to start an urban studies program in Chicago. It was an experiential program. Students became immersed in the city. They lived, studied, and worked there 24/7. We started with the students' experience and gradually larger questions emerged about power, justice, and change. It was an exciting way to teach because we weren't giving answers but were helping students to ask questions. The city was the teacher.

The reason I like teaching, and urban experiential teaching, is that the seminar travels around the city all the time. We might work with a woman on welfare in her apartment or we might meet with some formerly incarcerated people at a halfway house. The city is full of experiences. I was able to draw on the resources of the city as part of my curriculum. I often took more notes when we had a speaker than the students did because I thought it was extremely rewarding to be in touch with some of these non-profit organizations.

I was also the chair of the internship program we had, and that got me in touch with a lot of organizations. It's that sort of being able to see the world through a variety of lenses that, for me, started at Union in my field placement and continued from then on.

Later I agreed to go with a large delegation for Witness For Peace to Nicaragua. If you place yourself in a border-town in Nicaragua with contras aided by the Reagan administration not far away and you talk to people there you begin to see the United States differently. So when I came back I got involved in groups that were working on Central American issues and soon that led to my leadership in the Sanctuary Movement in Chicago and nationally for the next four years.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Dr. Mary Boys '78 Steps Up to the Plate

BY BARBARA RICE

The new Dean can play hardball. Dr. Mary Boys was a catcher from childhood through high school. She has always loved sports, and she brings the mentality of a key team player to her new job. In describing the role of a catcher, and of a Dean, she says, "You see the whole field, and you've got to know the proclivities of the other players. You have to be the one who is aware of more going on on the field."

Dr. Boys, having taught at Union for eighteen years, knows the field, the players, and the larger arch of the history that brings us to this moment—this moment when a major theological institution is about to appoint a Roman Catholic nun as its academic dean. She knows, and has lived, some of the history that those of us who are here for a brief few years only know through reading or hearsay. This longer view and broader lens equip the soon-to-be Dean with particular gifts that she brings with her in this new role.

Dr. Boys graduated with a joint degree from Union and Teachers College in 1978. She had intended to become a Biblical scholar, but once she began teaching high school in Spokane Washington she "fell in love with it." It was then that she realized her primary vocational passion, which is to put the Bible in conversation with the educational life of the church, and this is still the focus of her work. Prior to beginning her career at



Dr. Boys often says that she has "learned a few things over the years about what it means to contribute to the school for the flourishing of all." One of Dr. Boys' goals is to foster deeper ties among faculty members to contribute to a larger type of community building as well as work with others who want to build community. Dr. Boys, who has chosen community as the primary focus of her deanship, admits that the term is "complicated and elusive." "Community is difficult to work in, and live into, but even though it's not easy, it has to be a priority," she said.

Building community requires a balance of internal and external focus—what is happening within the walls, and how are we engaging with the world outside? Dr. Boys feels that at times the Union community can be too internally focused, and that while self-examination

is important, we need to be reminded of the larger picture as well. She posed the question to me, "How do we

Building community requires a balance of internal and external focus—what is happening within the walls, and how are we engaging with the world outside?

Union, Dr. Boys taught at Boston College for seventeen years. She taught in the theology field, specifically in the sub-department called "Religious Education and Ministry." She became interested in Jewish-Christian relations when she first began studying Christian origins. Her newest book, *Redeeming Our Sacred Story, the Death of Jesus and the Relationship between Jews and Christians*, will be published this fall.

critique ourselves and each other in a way that is honest and strategic? How do we do this in a way that brings about transformation?" We discussed the larger question of what loyalty to a school looks like at its best. Dr. Boys firmly stated that loyalty does not look like being docile, or accepting things that are not in keeping with Union's long held core values of justice. Being silent is not the same as being loyal. Certainly not, and, she adds,

"loyalty might also include a certain reticence to knowing we do not know the full story of things." Dr. Boys hopes to help Union's edginess, fire, passion, and fearlessness emanate from an even deeper and more grounded place.

Where did this Seattle native, Christian-Jewish relations expert, author, and scholar, get this hard ball, no non-sense approach to life? Also, by the way, did I hear she is a nun? Yes, Dr. Boys is a nun, but of course, she does not belong to just any order of sisters. She belongs to an order of international "feisty women," as she calls them. Both Professor Boys and Preaching and Worship Professor Janet Walton are members of The Sisters of the Holy Names. The Sisters of the Holy Names are regularly on the Vatican's short list of troublemakers.

Dr. Boys joined this community of women when she was only seventeen years old. When I asked her how her parents felt about this, she became slightly sentimental, and said, "They weren't too happy. You know, there are many ways to rebel." She said that at the time she did not think it would necessarily be a lifetime commitment. However, she has remained a member of the community because she is committed to the full development of the human person, and she stated that continuous movement towards full development is also true of life in community at Union.

The new dean learned to play softball from her father, who was her coach throughout childhood. The tenderness between father and daughter is palpable as Dr. Boys talks about him and their softball bond. Little did he know that he was fostering in his daughter a skill set that would weave its way into the accumulation of gifts, talents, and hard-won skills that she will bring with her as she becomes Union Theological Seminary's next Academic Dean. We look forward to welcoming the future Dean Boys into this role while also congratulating and thanking outgoing Dean Daisy Machado for her tenure as Dean, and I seriously doubt there will be any seventh inning stretch. And the people said, "Play ball!" 🏇

Union in the News BY SHADI HALABI '12

Union's President, Students, and Faculty Maintain High Profile in National News

At the request of President Obama and Vice President Biden, President Serene Jones delivered a Prayer for the Nation at the 57th Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service at the Washington National Cathedral, Tuesday, January 22. Joining President Jones were former Union student, Rev. Gabriel Salguero, and Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock '06. Jones' words drew from Union's foundation of social responsibility and called us to "put our bodies and souls in motion, in the spirit of our brother Martin, on behalf of the poor and disenfranchised, the worn and the weary, the bruised and the afflicted."

After the release of Professor Gary Dorrien's book, *The Obama Question: A Progressive Perspective*, earlier this year the *Washington Post* has published an article depicting Dorrien as emblematic of the progressive "Christian left," a posi-

tion that looks toward the President's second term with a general sense of optimism. Dorrien is presented in the article as critical of Obama while still hopeful that he will oversee a more progressive second term.


World AIDS Day, wherein a "time is taken to remember those loved ones who have been lost to HIV/AIDS by telling their stories and honoring their legacy." In his article, Clayton writes of religious communities' participation in the World AIDS Day efforts and highlights Union, among others, as institutions that choose to advocate for those living with HIV/AIDS. When President Jones was asked why she believes Union's involvement in World AIDS Day was important, she responded, "Religious communities can often be the most oppressive places for people living with HIV/AIDS, and these communities, in their posture, encourage the pandemic to grow" and that, as places of healing, "Churches should be leading the charge" in fighting that negative reputation.

Of course, the Union community doesn't limit their advocacy to these issues alone. In the spirit of social justice,

publications that seek to empower and uplift community leaders."

Over the past year, Union has also established its presence in the community through a few protests. *The New York Times* reported on an October 19th protest in the basement of the Church of the Redeemer in Queens. According to the report, Golden Dawn, a neo-Nazi group based in Athens, reportedly had established an office in Astoria. Union and other groups joined the neighborhood in a show of support for the community.

Additionally, the *Alternative Press* wrote of the arrests made on October 21st when demonstrators, some of whom were Unionites, protested the New York Police Department's "Stop-and-Frisk" policy, the implementation of which disproportionately targets—and disenfranchises—African-American and Latino young men. Notable among the arrests was Union Professor Cornel West who has, after being hired last year, wasted no time participating in an on-the-ground interpretation of Union's legacy. Union community members continued to show resistance to Stop-and-Frisk during a Good Friday prayer service. The prayer service, which was held while a federal judge heard the testimony that will determine whether or not the police department is constitutionally enacting the policy, was led by Union Professor Samuel Cruz. In an interview with BET.com, Cruz said that "the judicial system played a role in the execution of Jesus, and he advocated for justice in society."

As can be seen so clearly through its activities in the public eye, Union's commitment to social justice is still very much at the foundation of Union's community. President Jones' charge to "put our bodies and souls in motion" echoes the ethos of our long-standing institution and reflects a sentiment that is still very much alive today. 

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Beyond mere campaign functions, Union's political commitment should be seen as an extension of its high priority for social engagement. Union has continued to show its support for the LGBTQ community. Union's own Todd Clayton, a first year M.Div., chronicles some of his thoughts on LGBTQ issues in *Huffington Post* articles, and published an article for GLAAD in preparation for

as represented in the sentiment of Jones' prayer in President Obama's inauguration, Union looks to those who have been "poor and disenfranchised." Union's Poverty Initiative, which seeks to "raise up generations of religious and community leaders committed to building a movement to end poverty," has been recognized by the *Huffington Post* in *Faith Inspires*, a weekly segment meant to recognize "faith-inspired" persons or groups working within their communities. The article commended the Poverty Initiative's awareness-raising efforts with their book tour for *Pedagogy of the Poor* as "the latest in a series of anti-poverty

Becoming Who I Am: Malcolm Boyd '56



Q/A

BY JASON WYMAN

The Malcolm Boyd Veritas Award, newly established in 2011, is given to a graduating Union student who shows promise for the work of social justice on behalf of the LGBTQ community. This year's awardees are Barbara Lea Rice and F. Romall Smalls.

What about Union has motivated your continuing interest and support of the institution, and what are some important events from your life?

At Union as a student I wrote my first two books. About ten years later, something I wrote was included in a book called *Witness to a Generation: Significant Writings from Christianity in Crisis (1941-1966)*. My essay was "Maintaining Humanness in the Freedom Movement." That was a Union book, and I was included. I felt very honored and grateful and it's what made me feel part of the Union family. I was at Union two years and completed the S.T.M. degree.

As I began parish ministry work I was also a member of a Freedom Ride in 1961, from New Orleans into the Deep South. And that changed my life. I mean—this was a whole new area for me. Activism over race and civil rights, it opened the door to all of that for me. After completing the Freedom Ride, I became caught up in all aspects of race relations and Civil Rights, and got into total activism—and I kept writing.

I became sort of an activist-plus. Got totally involved. In 1965 several things happened. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called a small group of us from all over the country to Selma, Alabama for a meeting with him where I met Jonathan

Daniels, a seminarian. We planned on meeting again later but he was murdered by white supremacists. Later in 1965 I wrote the book that changed my life: *Are You Running with Me Jesus?* It was a modest book of prayers that no one expected very much from. But it completely caught on with a huge public. In fact it sold a million copies and became global. There's even a Chinese edition. That changed everything because I had to deal with celebrity and that's very hard to deal with incidentally.

After that I continued following Dr. King, of course. The last time I was with him was in the early 1970s; there was an Episcopal Peace Fellowship Peace Mass down in the basement of the Pentagon. We went into a corridor of the Pentagon and began the Eucharist. I was the designated preacher of the day. As I gave the homily antiphonally a policeman was shouting through a horn "You are under arrest!" and we were taken to jail. So that was kind of a highlight. Strange experiences. Episcopal priests didn't get ordained for that, they got ordained to have little parishes in Connecticut.

I'm also gay. I was dealing with coming out, and how it could be possible. I was so well known, which made it more complicated. So when I did come out there was this uproar and a full page

in *People* magazine and all of that. At the time it was very difficult for me because rather than being welcomed or included, there was just a kind of corporate outrage. Like, how dare this beloved person who wrote this book we love betray Christ? So, the coming out, instead of being fun or glorious or freeing was a nightmare. I felt not welcome. It was not easy. But after fifteen years the climate changed a bit. There was more acceptance and understanding and dialogue. Now it's been just under 20 years that I've been at the Cathedral Center of the Diocese of Los Angeles. I was asked to be the Poet-Writer in Residence in the Cathedral Center. And then a later Bishop changed that to Writer-in-Residence of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles.

Mark, my partner and I, have been together for 29 years. J. Jon Bishop Bruno blessed our union. It was the first time that a sitting bishop in the Episcopal Church had done so. That was a number of years ago and it was a huge event.

How did you first learn about Union? Given your background, working in Hollywood before going to seminary, what really made Union the place for you to be?

In Hollywood I was the first president of the Television Producers Association of Hollywood, and I was a partner of Mary Pickford. One night I was at a party at the Beverley Hills Hotel. And for some reason that night I stood back and looked at the scene and realized I didn't want to be like these people in five years. In other words I was trying to deal with the question of meaning in my life. And I didn't find meaning in that scene. So that meant I would have to leave Hollywood.

So I did three years of seminary in Berkeley, and then I had the opportunity for a year in England and in Europe that was very pivotal. I met Hendrik Kraemer, who was a Dutch theologian, very famous and distinguished. And he was coming to Union with his wife that fall and he wanted me to study at Union. Henry Van Dusen was the president of the seminary.

Kraemer told Van Dusen "you haven't met Malcolm Boyd and you don't know anything about him, but I'm requesting that you give him a scholarship." On very short notice I had to get on a boat and showed up at Union and it was the beginning of the fall and I didn't know what I was doing.

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Union has always represented for me the best seminary in the world. Its scholarship has always been impeccable. And it's always been on the side of justice. Union made a witness to a generation... Being at Union deeply affected and changed my life. Just the environment. Being there, the interactions with people. Without Union I don't think I could've become who I became.

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Union made a witness to a generation. And Niebuhr particularly, there was never anyone like Niebuhr. Being at Union deeply affected and changed my life. Just the environment. Being there, the interactions with people. Without Union I don't think I could've become who I became. I don't think Union has lost that. I had to find out what Union was. And did. Because Union was full of people like me. I mean, we're searching, we're committed. We're trying to figure it out.

What are your hopes for Union in the future as an institution?

To remain uncorrupted as Union continues in its way, honoring the past, and bringing its past into the present while preparing for the future. We have to deal with institutions in our lives. And Union is a wonderful institution with excellence and spiritual integrity. I would say it's a kind of light shining in a dark place. Without places like that we perish.


I received the Unitas award in 2005 and it meant a great deal to me. I think that was the first time Mark and I were photographed for the Union magazine. It was an opening up to a new gay consciousness. I felt loved. So I feel a part of Union.

This year's magazine theme is Religion and Democracy. That's clearly something that has played a big part in your life.

Well that's why I left Hollywood. Because it was a selfish egotistical career that really had nothing to do with justice issues. I was wanting to explore the depths of life. And Union did of course provide the means to do that, and so what I got from Union stayed with me through a number of controversies, some very public. In all of these things, though, I had to leave Hollywood to become myself.

I made a decision that for my life to have meaning it had to be service to others and it had to oppose injustice, and that it had to be open to change and that I had to be an instrument of change.

Are there any final things you'd like to say?

I refused to be a single issue. Because I don't think anything is a single issue. That is my ideal. But I think then we need allies. I think we need people searching for meaning as we are and thanking God for meaning where we find it. Sometimes there's a rage that cannot be softened and we need to seek help. And we need to be together to seek help. And help others and then let others help us. That's really the core of what I believe. It's a balance we're after. 

No One Tradition: Grappling with the Challenges of El Salvador

BY JOHN ALLEN

Paul Knitter was standing with his students in a small garden behind a chapel on the San Salvador campus of Universidad Centroamericana next to rose bushes that marked the places where six Jesuits were shot by the Salvadoran military on November 16, 1989, when tears came to his eyes. He told the story to a small group of Union students, how neighbors heard the Jesuits arguing with the soldiers and then praying together in Latin up until the gunshots were fired.



“If theology is not in some way dealing with the reality of suffering due to injustice then it is incomplete, and it can be harmful.”

—Dr. Paul Knitter


Since accepting the Paul F. Tillich Chair of Theology, World Religions, and Culture at Union in 2007, Dr. Knitter had hoped to take students to El Salvador, a nation he and his wife Cathy Cornell have stood in solidarity with for many years. This January, Paul and Cathy brought students to learn about the liberative spirituality of Archbishop Óscar Romero and to encounter the poor of El Salvador in their ongoing struggle for justice and liberation.

His experience of El Salvador has shaped his theological work. El Salvador, he says, taught him that “if theology is not in some way dealing with the reality of suffering due to injustice then it is incomplete, and it can be harmful.” In his seven years of teaching at Union, Dr. Knitter has pressed students to grapple with the social significance of their theological insights. He brought students to El Salvador to see it exert its spiritual power on them. The students of the travel seminar were shaped in different ways, and in different moments, but all of them learned a new depth of commitment to the struggle for justice, and witnessed a seemingly impossible level of hope in the midst of overwhelming violence.

Dr. Knitter’s greatest contribution to Union may have been the generation of students he has taught to engage their social justice struggles with an inter-religious sensibility. A perspective on diverse religious expression that took root when he found himself in Rome during the Second Vatican Council has permeated his work ever since. Dr. Knitter has modeled and taught how to be a committed Christian and a person who engages other religious traditions. He wrote his book *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian* while at Union, and taught it as a manuscript before its publication. Dr. Knitter says he eagerly anticipates a time soon when Union will lead the growing theological movement toward interreligious engagement by seeking it in a way that is “oriented toward the well-being

and flourishing of all life on this planet; an interreligious dialogue focused on liberation.”

Behind his commitment to inter-religious engagement and his teaching of socially engaged theology lies a basic truth: we cannot do this work alone. The project of liberation must be carried out by multiple wisdom traditions. No one tradition has sufficient theology or spirituality to address our present crisis. In El Salvador, Dr. Knitter negotiated the pull between, on the one side, the deep call for justice and an option for the poor that comes from his Christian tradition and, on the other, the insistence from his Buddhist practice that even members of death squads are deserving of compassion. How does a leader confront power while maintaining a connection with the oppressors, so that confrontation is solid and demanding, while remaining humble and caring? To hear him wrestle with this tension is to witness a great mind and a thoroughly committed heart draw on diverse wisdom traditions to learn how to live in the midst of suffering.

In retirement, Dr. Knitter will continue the engaged exploration in which Union students have been privileged to accompany him for the past seven years. He and Cathy will form a Sanga in Madison, Wisconsin to teach Tibetan Buddhism, he will return to the board of Christians for Peace in El Salvador, and finish a book with Dr. Roger Haight about Buddhist-Christian dialogue. He is ready to continue his life in Madison, and he speaks with deep gratitude for his time at Union. He calls the time an “undreamed-of gift.” It was this gift of working with committed and engaged students that came to the surface standing in the rose garden at the UCA. Dr. Knitter says he was moved to tears as he stood with a new generation of students that will carry on, not just in El Salvador, with commitment to the meaning of the gospel which beckons us toward lives of greater compassion. 



Seen in El Salvador: Photos taken by students and Professor Knitter reveal beauty and hope in the face of violence and suffering.

Dr. Su Yon Pak '99 Prepares Students with the Field-Based Education Program

BY THIA REGGIO

Union's Integrative and Field-Based Education (IFE) Program “aims to foster learning communities that model and teach students ways of thinking, being, and doing that are integral to their visions of ministerial identity and practice.” This description of the program on the seminary's website is preceded by quotes that emphasize a balance of “imagination with ethics,” “politics and social concerns.”

This special perspective on what is typically viewed as a pragmatic consideration is the contribution of Dr. Su Yon Pak, the program's creative and innovative director. Pak has crafted an experience that, as its name suggests, integrates vision and action, academics and practice, and seminary and real world interactions. All of this is designed to strengthen students'

the same time, Pak cautions, fieldwork without reflection and context can be disorienting, numbing, and even discouraging for seminary students.

She emphasizes that “Discernment and formation are the central goals of the process. The process of learning in terms of formation is not only about the roles we're asked to take on, but about understanding authority, power, organizations, yourself, and what kind of leader you are: self-knowledge, self-learning, and learning about the churches and organizations in which you will work and move.”

Dr. Pak does everything in her power to ensure that Union students are prepared both for their future careers and nurtured during their time as students. Pak's balance of hands-on

participation at carefully selected field sites with academic rigor in the classroom, and experiential reporting and reflection on-site and on-campus, is designed to provide a deep, mindful approach to field

“How do we integrate our experience of the world, of scripture, of intellect...how do we gain knowledge in ways that are not just cognitive? These are the questions that drive the Integrative Field Education Process.”



passion and commitment while challenging their preconceptions about themselves and the world of ministry and related fields.

“How do we integrate our experience of the world, of scripture, of intellect...how do we gain knowledge in ways that are not just cognitive? These are the questions that drive the Integrative Field Education Process,” Pak explains. No amount of academic preparation on its own can allow a seminary student to experience what it is like to stand by the bedside of an ailing congregant, prepare and deliver a sermon from the pulpit, work with incarcerated individuals, organize a community for social change, or inspire a group of middle-schoolers to consider what their faith means to them and their world. At

education that fosters healthy discernment.

Jeff Grant, J.D., M.Div. '12 speaks of his experience in Union's Integrative Field Education Program this way: “It had been almost thirty years since I had read from a textbook or written an academic paper. I was overwhelmed at Union almost immediately. As a drowning man, I entered my middler year and found the life-ring of Su Yon Pak's Integrative Field Ed course. Pak's course knit together the theological, philosophical, structural, and political from my other courses into a fabric of practical, understandable, and real world applications to teach me how I could help people on the margins. I regained the sense of hope, awe, and wonder that led me to Union in the first place. I finally knew I was home. I took Field Ed again in my third year—a much more intimate time of reflective growth in a small class setting where I had my closest and most intimate experiences of seminary. Su was our leader, confidant, counselor, boundary setter, friend—and above all, our teacher.”

In a typical Masters of Divinity degree trajectory, students take Field Ed in their second, or “middler,” year of seminary. The process of choosing a field site begins in the first year, however, as students are beginning to envision what their ministries may look like after graduation. Union has an excellent reputation for enthusiastic, engaged students and has thus created strong relationships with a broad spectrum of field sites from hospital chaplaincy teams at top New York hospitals, to not-for-profit organizations (including Union's own Poverty Initiative), to traditional and non-traditional parish settings.

“The decline of the mainline churches is a challenge. The question becomes whom are we preparing and for what?

**The Rev. Dr. John H. Fish, M.Div. 1958,
Endows the Sally and John Fish Scholarship**


CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Church is redefining itself. What does it look like? What other skills do students need to know in order to do that work, reshaping and re-imagining what the church will look like. What do they need, what analytical skills, support systems? Our community partners provide feedback to inform this conversation,” says Pak.

Prison has been an intensive focus of the IFE program. “Urban settings for ministry demand a top-of-mind awareness of incarceration and its effects on communities. MCC, Sing-Sing, teaching math, serving at Rikers Island’s horticultural society. Different programs for prison populations are imperative, not just Bible Study.” Pak insists. Then of course, re-entry has become an important ministry. The Center for New Leadership in Brooklyn is a one-stop-shop building, advocacy, and training organization, raising awareness around “stop and frisk” in New York and other related issues. “Our students are learning to think about how to theologize differently and ultimately reinvigorate the community to reinvigorate the church.”

“Beyond the student experience I envision...a way of doing outreach to the teaching institutions, to methodologically and pedagogically relocating the teaching from high in the ivory towers into the communities themselves. Community engagement for the institution, changing year-to-year depending on the student placements.”

For Union itself, more active integration of various fields can be an opportunity for cross-disciplinary learning and conversations among the departments and institutes with our field partners to reshape our curriculum and overall learning experience for the future.

Another emerging piece of the IFE equation is reaching the “spiritual, not religious” folks. “How do we have a more robust conversation about what that looks like? What are the faiths and traditions of those who say, ‘I have no tradition’? Without that self-understanding, you don’t know for whom you are called to do what. Why do you feel called? Who called you? Get it unstuck, break out of the denominational language. Why would you be here if you don’t feel called? We must consider this part of the student body, not at the expense of those who feel a traditional call, just allowing for multiple expressions of the passion that is within you that allows you to do something. Just by being non-affiliated, you don’t get off the hook. If you’re a leader you need to know what is your foundation, what values are you standing on?” As Pak considers these questions, she invites others into the productive process of questioning and reflection. IFE is a program that encourages and fosters curiosity, led by a person who practices intentional curiosity and helps to make Union Theological Seminary an unparalleled learning experience. 

I have one other question that came up as we were speaking. You’ve talked a lot about the importance of urban settings for what you’ve done. Union’s full name is Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York. Did you have many similar activist or social justice experiences in New York to those you had in Chicago?

I’ve fallen in love with cities and I loved being in New York. I was a busy student and had a busy life there so I didn’t get involved in as many of the issues outside of my field work, with all of my studies and having a family. But being in Chicago I continue to really fall in love with cities. And I’ve spent some time in Mexico City and a week in Guatemala, and some time in Nicaragua. And I just enjoy walking around cities and observing what is happening.


Are there any final things that you think are important for you to have said in this interview?

Most of the interesting things in our lives happen when we are dislocated and we don’t follow the normal path. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation, that’s when you’re going to learn the most. And I think that’s what I found when I went to Woodlawn and when I went to Nicaragua and later to Guatemala. It also shaped my agenda in the ACM Urban Studies program. Do something out of the ordinary and it will change the way you think about yourself and the world about you.

So, that really answers the first question, why my wife and I were interested in giving to Union, because the trajectory my life has taken was really shaped by Union.

We want young people to see the world a little differently before they get locked into a career and family.

I also think Alumni/ae associations are under-utilized networks. They’re used to raise money for the alma mater, they’re used to recruit students. But we began to think using alumni/ae networks to do social justice projects is something that we could maybe work on.

The simple matter is, of all the experiences I had growing up, Union shaped my thinking more than any other. And it’s probably because of my introduction to Reinhold Niebuhr’s realistic perspective on struggles for social justice. My affection for Union is based upon this experience. Both my commitment to social justice and my belief in strengthening faith-based activities has made me want to give to Union. 



David McAlpin '53: Generations of Giving to Union

BY JASON WYMAN

How did you come to know about Union and what brought you to give such generous gifts to the seminary?

I knew about Union when I was a college undergraduate and maybe even before then because my father was invited a number of times to become a trustee, which he later became. So when I decided that I felt I had a call to the ministry Union was very high among the seminaries that I wanted to apply to. That was enhanced by my father's longtime friendship with Henry Pitney Van Dusen who was the president of the seminary. I had met Dr. Van Dusen, and when I arranged to visit the seminary he invited me to have a talk with him and visit him in the president's residence. There were a lot of reasons for my going to Union. I had been to school in Princeton for a good part of my life, but I didn't want to go to another school in Princeton. I also was very attuned to social issues and I felt that Princeton was a more conservative institution than I wanted to be at. So I decided to go to Union and had four really stimulating and inspiring years there under the instruction of some of the great minds in theology, in biblical studies, and in the history of Christianity. I got what was at that point a B.D., a Bachelor's of Divinity, which is now a Master's of Divinity. It was a great time. While I was candidating for ordination in New Jersey I got to know Benjamin J. Anderson who was pastor of the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church, which had been a black Presbyterian Church that Anderson had integrated. That was still before the Civil Rights movement. After I worked with him for a while simply as a volunteer, Witherspoon Church called me to be an Associate Pastor. So that was my first pastoral charge.

That must have been an intense first experience as a pastor.

Yes it was. And the Civil Rights movement came along very soon after that. I was very much involved in the struggle to overcome segregated housing in Princeton, then more broadly through the Minister's Project in Mississippi, which I also participated in. Then I was called to be pastor of the East Detroit Presbyterian Church. That was another opportunity to continue to be involved in working against racism and in urban affairs. Then I came back to be a career counselor at the Northeast Career Center, which had been established to provide career counseling to people in religious occupations, particularly in the ministry. That experience clarified for me that my real passion was to be involved in working for social change in the community and in society. I quickly got involved in a non-profit organization that was providing occupational training to inmates in several of the New Jersey state correctional institutions.

In the 80s, I went to Nicaragua during the Contra War. That experience was a transforming experience for me, and as a result I decided to go back to Nicaragua in a capacity where I could actually help to do something. So I then organized several delegations to go work with Habitat for Humanity in Nicaragua.

That led to a group of people in New Jersey talking about establishing an affiliate of Habitat in the Trenton area. And we did that in 1986. I became the president of that affiliate, working with the lower income residents of Trenton, and also working in other neighboring communities. I continued as president of that board for almost 25 years.


What are your hopes for Union as an institution?

I believe that Union is in a unique and very significant position to exercise leadership in the church and in America's larger society. In dealing with and advocating the love of God toward those who are disadvantaged and powerless in human society in relation to the powers that be that control society, and in motivating the leaders in the business and political life of the country to adhere to doing the right, to establishing and following high ethical standards.

I think Union Seminary is also in a good place to engage with the changing role of spiritual and ecclesiastical concerns in this country. When I went to seminary the Protestant ethos dominated our society. There have been very significant changes in society in the intervening sixty-some years and this is no longer a society that's dominated by white Protestant males. And Union has been—and I think will continue to be—among the leading theological seminaries in relating to what used to be considered the “other” people in our society: women, people of color, and adherents of other religions.

And I think that there's another change that's occurring in our society that Union is right at the front end of, that fewer and fewer people coming to adulthood identify themselves as affiliated with the old-line major religious organizations and denominations. So there is an increasing number of people who are searching, and are on a quest for belief, and who look for places where there is a willingness to include those who aren't members of a particular denomination or religion. So those are some ways I see Union being a wonderful place.

In what specific ways do you see your gifts helping Union to realize those hopes and ideals?

I see my forebears as being the significant donors to Union. My great grandfather, who started the McAlpin collection at the library, and my grandfather and my father who continued that collection. And then there's the support of the Skinner-McAlpin professorship, which continues to be important, and the faculty member who currently holds that chair, Mary Boys, who has just been appointed Dean of the Faculty. She will play a very important role in the life of the seminary and in the theological world. My great-grandfather, my grandfather, and my father were all Trustees and I served on the Board of Trustees myself for a number of years. Among my major contributions has been bringing the endowment for the Skinner-McAlpin chair back to a fully-funded level. 

The Unfolding of History: Union's Chapel Project

By Matthew Vaughan, Troy Messenger, Janet Walton, and Susan Blain

Worship punctuates the day at Union Seminary, supporting and challenging our communal, social, and academic lives. Central to that worship experience is James Chapel. Many in today's Union community don't know that James Chapel has not always looked and felt like it does now. The original James Chapel was a sanctuary with pews, chandeliers, wood-paneled walls, and a formal chancel area. Although lovely, the space predetermined a particular style of worship that by the 70's was no longer expressive of the many traditions represented in the Union community. In 1978, James Chapel was reimagined to become a more flexible space: chairs replaced fixed pews; theatrical lights lit spaces not touched by chandeliers; bare walls welcomed art exhibits; and the moveable table, cross, and pulpit anticipated a constantly reimagined engagement of people and space. A new organ was also installed, which was the only furnishing tied to one spot. This new space invited students, staff, and faculty, to design worship services that more effectively met the needs of an increasingly diverse community. In the words of the chair of the board Rosie Havemeyer, "It was a change whose time has had come."

Over the next 33 years the community has responded with remarkable creativity to the challenge of this flexible space. Janet Walton, Susan Blain, and Troy Messenger have begun a project to document the communal memory of worship at Union in James Chapel. It is a history compiled from the experiences of alumni/ae, professors, and staff who have planned and led worship at Union over the years in the "new" James Chapel.

In order to compile this history, Janet, Susan, and Troy are gathering stories from a variety of people. Throughout the 2012-2013 academic year, the team has been conducting interviews, hosting alumni/ae gatherings, making calls, hosting panel sessions, and even using social media (check out the Facebook page for Union Theological Seminary – Chapel History Project). Their anecdotes and memories all point to the fact that Union's worship experiences shape our community and the ministry of its members—even after graduates leave our Morningside Heights campus.

Everyone has favorite, indelible memories of sounds, objects, words: a simple box turning four different ways to give expression to the faith journeys of LGBTQ persons; people returning to the table after communion to finish the bread and the cup and to linger in a space where something beautiful has happened; small groups laboring over panels of fabric to create banners to take on a peace march. People tell stories of worship spilling out into the city and world—blurring the lines between praise, reflection, and action.

The project has spread to and from several offices here at Union. While Janet Walton has been working on it full-time for the spring of 2013 (she took a sabbatical for this specific purpose), many at Union have been involved in the planning and orchestration of it. The creative collaboration between the offices of Institutional Advancement and Worship has helped to

reconnect and re-engage alumni/ae across decades and around the country. The varieties of people involved, much like the rich tapestry that defines worship at Union, have helped to make this project a truly special experience.

Within the coming year the history will unfold in a variety of media including the internet, video, text, and still-life pictures. The team will send out an e-blast that will contain links to the sites to share all of the relevant information to the larger Union community. [U](#)



The creative collaboration between the offices of Institutional Advancement and Worship has helped to reconnect and re-engage alumni/ae across decades and around the country. The varieties of people involved, much like the rich tapestry that defines worship at Union, have helped to make this project a truly special experience.

Trailblazers: *If You Can't Speak the Truth, Somebody Else Will Make it up for You* BY DERRICK MCQUEEN



Union teaches and prepares students to be truth-tellers in the world. As my grandmother used to say, “If you can’t speak the truth to family, somebody else will make it up for you.” Trailblazers and the history of the African American community at Union have been a part of discordant conversations in both the private and public sphere as of late. But the powerful truth is that the African American contribution to the community contributes to Union’s realization of its mission. The history of Trailblazers and its meaning for the African American community cannot be fully captured by any one person.

Trailblazers is an event held to celebrate African American alumni/ae and is held during the month of February, Black History Month. This year’s theme was “The Phoenix Out Of The Fire.” The Rev. Dr. Henry Mitchell, ’44 Preaching Series, as organized by the current student body, was a wonderful weekly worship opportunity. An unspoken tradition of Trailblazers is the wonderful interaction with the Worship Office in planning several chapel events celebrating our alumni/ae and our current Black students. But of course all of these events lead up to the large Trailblazers celebration service.

Each year alumni/ae are recognized for their ministries and this year was no exception. The Rev. Tony Lee ’97 was recognized for his work as founder and Senior Pastor of the Community of Hope A.M.E. Church. His work in the D.C. metropolitan area is truly an answer to the

call of the community, and wonderfully demonstrates Union’s call for social justice realized. The Rev. Robina Winbush was also honored for her outstanding contributions to the community as well as to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). In her role as Associate Stated Clerk for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), she serves as the Director of the Department of Ecumenical and Agency Relations in the Office of the General Assembly. She has truly been an envoy in many ecumenical circles, building bridges throughout her journey. The third honoree was not a Union alumna, but a wonderful Union presence that has impacted the lives of countless Black and African American students during her continuing service in Burke Library. Elder Betty Bolden, of St. James Presbyterian Church, lends support way beyond the stacks. A co-founder of the Black Women’s Caucus, she has helped Union students recognize their power in the world at large. Trailblazers recognizes that the community of those who have paved the way and gone before is a full and rich tradition.

The evening’s celebration was honored in worship by a thought provoking and powerful sermon by Union alumnus The Rev. Dr. Calvin O. Butts III ’75, pastor of the historic Abyssinian Baptist Church. Although his church is just a few blocks north of here, this was Rev. Dr. Butts’ coming home of sorts. He has long supported Union in his ministries, but this was the first time he has come back to preach. Trailblazers is not just a Black History Month celebration, it is a homecoming. Coming home to Union to literally pass the torch on to current students and celebrate our alumni/ae is a fountain of rejuvenating water for thirsty souls. As was stated when the fire passed hands from alum to student, this life giving work of Trailblazers, “We Commit To Pass It On”.

Being Black at Union brings a whole other set of challenges when it comes to reintegrating back into self and community. This relationship with the legacy of African American alumni/ae is one of

the few resources available to speak to this concern. But that all of Union can lay claim to this legacy does something quite remarkable. It allows us to model what it means to be a diverse community that respects, is inspired by, and that broadens our academic learning beyond our own imaginations and the image of Union as an “institution.” This model of interaction with our alumni/ae is the visible “Spirit of Union” that lingers like dew on stone walls, the petals of magnolias, the grass in the quadrangle.

Trailblazers has had several caretakers over the years worth lifting up and recognizing. On Saturday, February 17, 2001, there was a worship service entitled “Celebrating our Journeys: Reunion, Remembrance, and Renewal.” This “Re-Union” brought African American alumni/ae from around the country to share their memories of Union. The Rev. Dr. Ella Mitchell and The Rev. Dr. Henry Mitchell co-preached, wisely saying, “As we meditate on our journeys past, present, and future we do well, for to do so is healing and empowering, to say nothing of just plain fun.” The Rev. Dr. Annie Ruth Powell ’90, ’95, Seminary pastor of Union at the time, was instrumental in helping to form the Black Alumni/ae Association. The Rev. Dr. James Forbes ’62, who gave the eulogy at her funeral, remarked “There were no drive-by hellos with Annie Ruth” and that “she was a woman of spirit who walked with God and God walked with her.” Finally, in her role in the Development Department of Union, The Rev. Dionne Boissiere ’04, grew Trailblazers into the celebration it is today, keeping the true spirit of the event alive as one of those founding Union students involved in the first event in 2001.

To be a trailblazer is to make a path for those to come. Keeping those trailblazers close allows for the fire of the spirit to be visible in the darkest of nights. Why Trailblazers? This is why Trailblazers: to embrace each other, work together, be unified in a spirit of love, and simply to say “thank you.” ■

Union Goes Online with Registration, Billing, Housing Applications, and Admissions

BY DAN ROHRER

Visitors to Union's website have gotten a taste of the major changes the school has undergone in its electronic communications. The new site (utsnyc.edu) has brought Union out of the past and put us on the cutting edge of web design and functionality, boldly evoking the engaged, passionate kind of theological education that is uniquely Union's. That public presentation of Union's identity is only the tip of the iceberg, though. The most monumental changes in the school's electronic systems directly impact current and prospective students, who now can register for classes, apply for summer and semester housing, pay their bills, and seek admission to any of Union's graduate programs—all online.

Even students who started their studies just a few years ago remember going through Union's outdated registration process. The line of students would start at the Registrar's Office and snake around the corner of the administrative hallway, everyone holding their

handwritten registration cards to give to Registrar Edie Hunter. Now, student advisement happens through a web-based scheduling program—fully automated, without

STUDENT ADVISEMENT HAPPENS THROUGH A WEB-BASED SCHEDULING PROGRAM—FULLY AUTOMATED, WITHOUT THE NEED TO STAND IN LINE.


the need to stand in line for hours. Students meet with their faculty advisors and then select their courses remotely during a scheduled time, eliminating the need for long lines of students and long days for administrators.

The same is true for online bill-pay. Instead of filling Bursar Gary Turner's office with paper checks and receipts, or having to swipe credit cards in person, students are able to take care of their tuition and other expenses through a simple and secure online gateway. Electronic billing happens through Diamond Mine, a company that specializes in the financial needs of independent schools like Union. As with other online payment systems, students simply type in their relevant billing information and submit it to a secure server. While this is a major step forward for Union, it also reflects the school's values, using a smaller company instead of a large corporation, and reducing environmental impact by eliminating paper waste.

Student housing applications have moved online as well. Since March 2013, all of Union's semester and summer housing applications have happened online. By visiting the housing section of Union's website, students can find exact recreations of the paper forms that used to pile up on the desk of Michael Orzechowski, Director

of Housing and Campus Services. The online forms allow students to register their housing preferences, furniture needs, number of pets, and all of the other information that they used to have to write out by hand. For anyone who misses the old paper format, though, there is hope: official leases still require hard copies with handwritten signatures.

On top of all of these internal improvements to student life, the school has also transitioned to online applications, which serve prospective students more effectively than the paper applications did. Carolyn Klaasen, M.Div. 2013, applied to the doctoral program using the new electronic format, which she called "a wonderful improvement" over the paper applications she used in applying to the master's program. Applying to Union used to require extra effort, she noted; but the new application made the experience comparable to applying to other schools in our peer set.

These changes to online services represent a concerted effort to bring Union's technology up to date. The Offices of Communication and Marketing, Admissions and Financial Aid, Housing and Campus Services, Academics, Finance and Operations, Institutional Advancement, and Information Technology have all worked together to improve the school's online presence and functionality, all for the sake of serving students and alumni/ae more effectively. More online improvements are on the way as Union looks for better ways to be the school it has been for 175 years. 



A Theology Was to Be Found Here: BY HEATHER WISE

A Tribute to Professor Christopher Morse '68, '76

Christopher Morse likes to joke about how when Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a visiting scholar at Union in 1930–31, he wrote to his bishop, “A theology is not to be found here.” All who know Dr. Morse, a member of the Union community since 1967, know he likes to joke. But Bonhoeffer was concerned no one was teaching dogmatics. No one was asking the questions “What is God doing?” and “What difference does it make?”

Enter the Rev. Dr. Christopher Ludwig Morse, the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Professor of Theology and Ethics, who revived dogmatics and took up social reality “into the service of dogmatics,” as Bonhoeffer envisioned. Theology focuses on social reality because God acts through Jesus Christ *apocalypsed* (“revealed”) in the flesh and blood realities of this world. Morse, who studied at Union with Bonhoeffer’s friend Paul Lehmann, asks the crucial questions of what God is doing and the difference it makes because, as Bonhoeffer wrote following the apostle Paul, “God is ultimately for us.”

Dr. Morse did not plan to become a teacher. He came to Union for the S.T.M. while on sabbatical after five years in a parish in Virginia, was asked to stay to complete the Ph.D. (he did not have to apply!), and became a beloved professor, a “pastor to pastors.” (Everyone who has sat in Room 207 for ST 104 knows Morse preaches those lectures!) Perhaps like John Calvin, one of the major figures he has taught for years, Morse was dragged to his vocation. Regardless, he has loved teaching students how to think theologically.

For Prof. Morse, theology is a secondary discipline which reflects upon the primary testimony of the church. An ordained elder and lifelong United Methodist, Morse did not grow up with what he calls “the heavy hand of dogma” and enjoys working with the commonly held doctrines of the church. Dogmatics, he teaches, is simply the “testing” of dogma, or “decreed teaching,” and, as such, is “the antidote to dogmatism.” It is the most radically critical of all disciplines as it requires a constant reassessing of what is faithful to the teaching of the Gospel for our present time.

Not every spirit is from God and not all God-talk is trustworthy. Growing up in the segregated South, Morse awoke to the sin of racism in church and society. In his book, *Not Every Spirit*, he developed a theology of “faithful disbelief,” adjudicating what Christian faith refuses to believe. Morse put both the call to “test the spirits for which are of God” (1 John 4:1) and Rachel’s refusal to be consoled when her children are killed (Matt. 2:18, Jer. 31:15) at the center of his theology. Saying “No!” to what Bonhoeffer called “cheap grace,” Morse stands in solidarity with the Rachel whose refusal is a constant prod for attending faithfully to injustice in society.


How do we “test the spirits” and what difference does it make? “By this you know the spirit of God, every spirit which confesses Jesus Christ *en sarki* (“in the flesh”) is from God.” (1 John 4:2) As Dr. Morse writes in his most recent book *The Difference Heaven Makes*, heaven, as the place of God’s forthcoming to earth through Jesus Christ in the flesh, enters into our life and death realities to reconcile the world and us. Rehearing the Gospel as news, Morse teaches us to discern what God is doing, to listen for what we are called to do in response to the good news of the reality of heaven right in front of us.

For Morse, heaven makes all the difference in the world because we are not God and cannot resurrect ourselves or our communities from the dead, no matter how much we yearn for justice. Only God can answer Rachel’s refusal. We have to go the way of the cross. But holding the tension between the cross and God’s promise of hope and a future, the hope of heaven is, as Paul wrote in Romans 8:29, that “nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God.” The glory of God, the promise of the Gospel, is not that we must earn salvation, but that we were made for salvation, for being loved by God.

For nearly half a century, Prof. Morse has witnessed the Gospel at Union and points beyond. He has served as a bridge between Union constituencies and as an active participant in theological circles in academy, church, and society, including as president of the American Theological Society. His professor at Yale, H. Richard Niebuhr said, “God does not need a defense attorney. God needs a witness!” It is this non-defensive witness that has allowed him to be a centerboard for the Union ship. And if you thank him, he will say, “Thank you, but if it was a help to you, God did it. I tried to witness it.”

Dr. Morse welcomes all people—every race, class, sex, gender, creed—to test the spirits with him, to listen for the call of God upon their lives, their communities, and society and the world at large. Like his professor Robert L. Calhoun, Morse is the rare teacher who can answer student questions in such a way as to suggest you had the answer all along. While Morse always rightly insists we cannot create the hearing of the Gospel in anyone, he, with world-class virtuosity, plays its most compelling tune.

Christopher Morse, on behalf of the literally thousands of people whose lives you have touched as a pastor, preacher, mentor, teacher—one who taught us that we don’t master this subject (divinity), it masters us—thank you. Because of you, we can go forth into the world, trusting “the promise that a just and gracious God tests all human testing,” which sets us free to do the human work of theology.

If Bonhoeffer had been here during your 39 years as professor, he would have had to amend his statement to his bishop, “A theology was to be found here.” 



Union Welcomes New Faculty BY LUKE BAUMAN

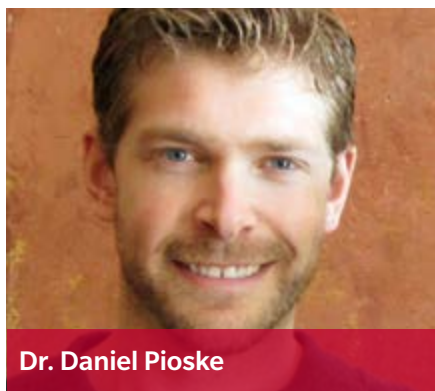
President Jones, in her Vision Paper for Union, outlined four key dimensions of the mission Union strives to embody. These commitments are “preparation of Religious Leaders, Academic Excellence, Prophetic Public Service and that Union foster Love and Knowledge of God.” A critical force in the fulfillment of these goals is a poised faculty who are dedicated to the school and its students. This year Union added three such teachers whose work enhances Union’s ability to put its mission into practice. They are **Dr. Jerusha Lampty**, **Dr. Daniel Pioske**, and **Dr. Cornel West**.

Before coming to Union Dr. Lampty taught in the Department of Theology at Georgetown, where she also received her doctorate in 2011. When asked what brought her to Union she said, “In my research I am interested in religious pluralism and the implications for that lived reality. I am interested in the intersection of theological realities with that of practical realities.” She has a degree in Anthropology and studied traditional religious practices of West Africa, where she worked as a Fulbright scholar. Her research is focused on theologies of religious pluralism, comparative religion, and feminist theology. Her first book, in process, is centered on Qur’anic discourse around religious otherness. Using feminist theology and semantics she is working on re-interpreting the Qur’anic understandings that maintain static religious identities, putting in play the multiplicities of religious difference. Also larger social questions around democracy are asked in her work through theological discourse. She said, “It’s healthy to problematize the norms of democracy and the theological lens is for this project.” This fall one of her courses will be “Comparative Feminist Theology: Islam and Christianity.”

Dr. Pioske came to Union after getting his doctorate at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he also received an M.Div. He teaches Biblical languages at Union. His work has emphasized historical theory and Biblical hermeneutics, particularly how they apply to the

Davidic kingdom. This upcoming fall he will be teaching a course called: “The David Story: From the Bible to Rembrandt to Faulkner.” It will center on how the Davidic story has been interpreted in western culture throughout history. For him, Biblical languages are essential for this work. When talking to me he said “Text is a way to unmask presuppositions in translation as well as ideological structures in historical and contemporary culture.” Of why he came to Union he said, “I was looking for a place where I could do serious research while also continue developing my love of teaching in an intellectually rigorous environment.” His position as a Postdoc Fellow at Union continues for one more year.

This year, Union added three faculty members whose work enhances Union’s ability to put its mission into practice.



Dr. Daniel Pioske

Dr. West rejoins Union as Professor of Philosophy and Christian Practice. He comes to Union having taught here, at Princeton, Yale, Harvard, and the University of Paris. He received his B.A. from Harvard (magna cum laude) and his M.A. and Ph.D. at Princeton. His work focuses on issues of politics, race, gender, and justice in America. His writing and teaching are a pedagogical embrace of the Socratic method. This past fall, he taught two classes, “The Tragic, the Comic, and the Political” and “The Socratic, The Prophetic, and the Democratic.” His spring courses focused on W.E.B. DuBois

and Abraham Joshua Heschel. He said about coming to Union: “Union is the great institutional center for serious and self-critical prophetic reflection and praxis, and so it’s always been home for me.” His return to Union is a kind of homecoming for the Union community as well. He sees Union as a key force in national conversations about democracy and the common good, saying, “The prophetic thought and praxis is the leaven in



Dr. Jerusha Lampty



Dr. Cornel West

the democratic loaf anywhere.”

As the academic year ends, we are also celebrating the careers of faculty who have dedicated their lives to Union and its students. Drs. Morse and Knitter have with care created classrooms of vigorous inquiry, challenging students to both crystalize their theology and live in to it fully and courageously. That is why the quality and commitment of our new faculty is so encouraging. Their institutional and pedagogical priorities promote confidence that they will robustly live into the legacy and standards that are the hallmark of education at Union. **U**

The Union Community Responds to Hurricane Sandy BY THIA REGGIO

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2012, Union battened down its hatches, along with the rest of New York City, in anticipation of what would come to be known as Superstorm Sandy. Students posted storm-prep humor on Facebook and gathered in common spaces to weather the storm together. The facilities team had taken the necessary steps and the administration had communicated emergency plans, allowing students to feel that the community was as ready as we could be.

"Living in a fortress on high ground has its advantages," one student quipped. Sandy was noisy and persistent, whipping around the quad with ominous whistles and gasps. When the storm had passed, Union had escaped any serious damage. But it was clear that other communities in New York and the surrounding region had not been similarly spared.

That there was damage and suffering was all that Union students and staff needed to know. Within the first hours and days, collections had begun for much-needed food and supplies, volunteers had gone to affected areas to help, and phone calls were made to establish networks that are still operating to serve Sandy survivors today.

Third year M.Div. student Nathaniel Mahlberg was one of those who joined forces with Occupy Sandy—an off-shoot of the Occupy Wall Street movement that used its considerable grassroots organizing skills to accomplish much mucking out and delivery of supplies in Lower Manhattan, South Brooklyn, and the Rockaways.

Nathaniel describes that awakening sense that others were in need beyond the walls

of Union. "I remember after we had all hung out during the storm, the next day was eerily quiet," Mahlberg recalled. "Carolyn (Klaasen) and I started getting information and a group of us got out our bikes—the subways and buses weren't running again yet—and made our way down to the Lower East Side." What they found were high-rise buildings plunged into darkness. "People were trapped in there, especially elderly people, with no electricity, no water. They were so grateful to see a friendly face."

Mahlberg described the spontaneous ministry of listening and presence that evolved from those early days of showing up for stranded residents with food, water, and a willingness to "hear their stories." Later, Mahlberg and others formed respite stations with herbal teas and other supplies, "and just a few chairs set up so that people could rest. It's a kind of street chaplaincy—being a witness to the pain and shock that people are feeling. It wasn't just me by a long shot. Carolyn and so many others got involved. It was just according to when people could get away and spend some time. It was the real meaning of grass roots."

Union's Executive Vice President, Rev. Fred Davie, who has experience in government agency operations, was soon called upon to participate in more structured collaborative efforts between the local, state, and federal agencies; large not-for-profit entities such as the Red Cross and AmeriCares; and the faith-based community at large. Rev. Davie was appointed by Governor Cuomo to the New York State Sandy Response Commission.

Dr. Mary White, former Board chair and current Union Trustee, has been involved with

Sandy preparedness and relief in her role with the Medical Reserve Corps of NYC.

As a recent M.Div. graduate and current S.T.M. candidate, I also became involved in relief and recovery efforts, first in a volunteer capacity and later as the Disaster Response Coordinator for the Presbytery of New York City. Forming partnerships among affected churches and their communities, volunteers and donors, and the National Presbyterian Disaster Assistance organization is the focus of the Presbytery. The entire faith-based community, including Sikhs, Muslims, Latter Day Saints, Protestants and Catholics, and Buddhist and Jainists to name a few have worked in concert with Community Based Organizations, filling gaps and working to engage government to meet the resultant needs, especially of the marginalized communities, in affected areas.

Union's spirit of community engagement led us to immediate action in response to last October's disaster. Volunteering, organizing, advocating, and providing an overall presence of caring and hope, Union has once again demonstrated that the seminary's commitment cannot be contained within the seminary's walls. Although Sandy may have been held at bay by those fortress-like walls, they could not contain the Union community's desire to serve those whom Sandy affected most deeply.

The long term recovery efforts are just beginning. Union administration, staff, students, and alumni/ae will no doubt continue to participate at all levels of response for years to come.

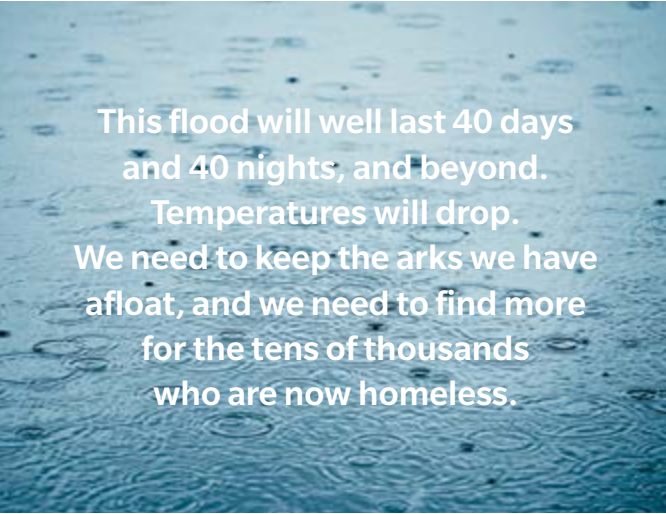
Sermon | GEN. 7:II–24 BY NATHANIEL MAHLBERG

This time, when all the fountains of the great deep burst forth and the windows of the heavens were opened; this time, when the storm surges began to swallow the land beneath the full moon; this time, there were many arks, many sanctuaries that held strong in the winds and remained above water. There were arks to evacuate people as the floodwaters rose, arks to carry the most fragile of us who became even more fragile when hospitals lost power. Incredible, courageous, successful rescue efforts. Many Noahs, many arks.

And yet, many arks shattered. Many people's homes were blown apart, these sturdy hulls that have held the precious

things that ensure a family's continued life just cracked open before the waves and washed away. The coast is just littered with shattered arks... everything gone, washed to sea, from files to baby photos... cars buried in sand, computers trashed, clothes shredded, beds destroyed, food, water, shelter torn away, (it's unbearable!): everything sunk, but life itself.

And, yes, for too many, even life was swept away. Oh, these tragic situations of people perishing in the floods and the winds—maybe that's very close to some of you. A friend of mine goes to a synagogue in Brooklyn that lost this incredible young woman who grew up in the community. She and a friend went



This flood will well last 40 days
and 40 nights, and beyond.
Temperatures will drop.
We need to keep the arks we have
afloat, and we need to find more
for the tens of thousands
who are now homeless.

out into the storm because a neighbor needed help and a falling tree hit both of them; they died together. The sadness is just bottomless. Dozens of lives, gone—several of them rescue workers. And let us not forget the Caribbean, where the death toll is much higher.

Now, after the storm, the big scramble is to keep people alive in the arks that have held out. As power outages enter their second week, there are people who are trapped and isolated without water, heat, food, medicine. We all know the plights of those in our Union community, who thankfully are safe and yet now face great challenges.

This flood will well last 40 days and 40 nights, and beyond. Temperatures will drop. We need to keep the arks we have afloat, and we need to find more for the tens of thousands who are now homeless.

In the Genesis story, we can't forget, God sent the flood because the people that God created had learned violence. Violence had spread across the earth. Killing, violating, dominating. Scripture says God was grieved in God's heart because of this, and therefore resolved to destroy everything in a flood. Gen 6:13: "God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end to all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence because of them; now I am going to destroy them along with the earth."

This is disturbing, especially if we don't buy into the whole divine retribution thing anymore. But there's something deep going on here, which I feel is unmistakable in Sandy. When we look beyond the anthropomorphic characteristics of God in this story, we can find a teaching, a hard teaching, about reaping what we sow.

I have to say it straight: climate change is due to carbon emissions. I've studied the arguments, and it's clear. It's scary that storms like this could well be the consequence of a hundred years of our civilization pillaging & polluting the earth, filling the earth with violence. Recklessly disregarding the equilibrium that sustains life is has bad consequences, simple

as that. I don't think God wills it as much as it's part of the fabric of God's dynamic creation—cause and effect, sowing and reaping.


Well, when you're listening to the voice of Creation, and you know a storm's coming, you gotta build an ark. When Sandy subsided, the storm that came in its wake has been the storm of power outages, the storm of food and water shortages, the storm of broken pieces that won't fit back together.

And, in the midst of *this* storm hundreds and thousands of people have become ark builders. In a day, Occupy folks in Brooklyn got a kitchen and donation-and-distribution hub up and running in an allied church, and soon got people out to set up in Far Rockaway. Two established community organizations in the Lower East Side immediately called for donations and began sending teams out to get food and water to people. Church aid groups sprang into action.

Volunteers and donations began to flow and then flood—a counter-flood of people pitching in however and wherever they can. People are so full of concern and urgency that they lose normal divisions. One of the days I was in Chinatown I found myself in a car with three other people I'd met two minutes ago: this grumpy but goodhearted lawyer, this fancy young woman who did PR for hip-hop artists, and this quiet kid who was the son of a Chinatown fish merchant. We became a team for a day, like so many others, going up into powerless developments knocking on doors—among us we spoke all the languages we needed to talk with everybody and address their needs. Tongues of fire!

You know that an effort is deeply good when people who live on the streets have permission to claim their power to do the work alongside everyone else. We have witnessed that, among so many other acts of power and compassion. Across this city, as we've all seen, spontaneous generosity and grace has been unleashed. God is moving.

It is sacramental to work together with a common heart in the midst of suffering. Just as we share a simple meal to participate in the movement of the Sacred through brokenness, so also when we share the simple hard work of building an ark together in the face of devastation, we are breathing as one with the Spirit of Life. We gotta' keep on breathing, we gotta' keep on building, 'cause this flood is still raging and we got a lot more arks to make. This work is for the long haul—to rebuild after the acute needs have been met and the initial volunteerism high has crashed, to rebuild *justly* in the face of terrible inequalities, to respond to the call to wake-up and repent of our civilization's self-destructive habits.

Through all the pain and all the fear, I honestly feel a hope I haven't dared to feel before. All the city workers and all the grassroots efforts have displayed the incredible capacity of human beings have when we're animated by the Spirit of mutual-ity. It's that Spirit and that capacity that can create the larger ark, the ark of a sane and sound civilization, that's going to be what it takes to carry us all through. 



Bearing Witness

Events at Union Explore the Intersection of Faith and Power

By Jason Wyman

Union is known throughout the world for the excellence of its education, the quality of the ministers and academics it trains, and the activism and passion for social justice that it emanates as a seminary with a rich history of standing for the prophetic vision of Christianity. Part of what makes Union able to give those things to the world, however, is its ability and willingness to bring important people and actions to its campus in New York. The past year has seen Union redouble its efforts to be a place where the most important and pressing conversations are being had, and where world class speakers on far ranging topics can come to be in dialogue with other experts in the field alongside Union students and Union's larger community. New speaking series, including one on Economics and Theology hosted by the Institute for New Economic Thinking (INET – ineteconomics.org, where videos of all of the events are available) and

a three-part series on interfaith dialogue that focused on three historical luminaries who created a tone of ongoing discussion about these urgent issues. Continuing annual speaking series like the Judith Davidson Moyers Women of Spirit Lecture and the Forrest Church Memorial Lecture promote the legacies of these important people and perpetuate the spirit of their work. And Union faculty and students continue to invite scholars and activists to campus for conferences that draw some of the biggest names in their fields. These events are vital for Union, both for life on campus and for making Union a place that people know about as one where these kinds of imperative, trailblazing, and often difficult discussions can happen. "Dialogue" and "conversation" are words that get thrown around academic institutions a lot as an ideal; Union has always worked to make that ideal central to its identity, and never more visibly and strongly than in the last year.



ABOVE LEFT: President Serene Jones and Joseph Stiglitz at the first Economics & Theology lecture on September 19, 2012 in James Memorial Chapel.



ABOVE RIGHT: Jeffrey D. Sachs and Kathryn Tanner at the third Economics & Theology lecture on Wednesday, March 6.

The INET series on Economics and Theology has been ongoing and one of the biggest events happening at Union. On its website, INET states “The Economics and Theology series is designed to provoke creative thinking about money and markets in light of the world’s pressing economic challenges.” Speakers so far have included icons in economics like Joseph Stiglitz, George Akerlof, Jeffrey Sachs, and Amartya Sen, all in conversation with Rob Johnson, Director of INET, and a variety of Union professors including Drs. Gary Dorrien and Cornel West, as well as other distinguished respondents. Stiglitz is an economist and professor at Columbia University. He shared a Nobel Prize in Economics in 2001 and won a John Bates Clark Medal in 1979; he is widely noted for his contributions to economics that are sensitive to the effects of highly imbalanced and poorly-distributed wealth and often argues that the uneven distribution of wealth in the United States today makes for an unfair economic climate and unstable political system. Union’s President Serene Jones, Johnson, Stiglitz, and the other participants, as well as the audience, engaged in a theologically inflected conversation about the state of the economy and the increasing wealth discrepancy between the rich and poor in the United States. Akerlof, Nobel Prize winner in economics and Koshland Professor of Economics at the University of California at Berkeley, spoke on a recent book in which he argues that our

current market obsessed economic system sets up a situation in which “phishing for phools” happens. A “phool” is someone who is not foolish, but is instead tricked into making economic decisions that seem to be in one’s best interest, but actually aren’t, and “phishing” is the process through which the structures of our economy allow big economic players to make average consumers into phools. The third INET event of the year hosted Amartya Sen, Indian philosopher and economist, and also a winner of the Nobel Prize in economics. Sen, in conversation with Cornel West and Gary Dorrien, discussed the ethics of economic policy making, especially as it pertains to the ongoing economic crisis in Europe and austerity measures, and human rights. The final event in the series featured a conversation between Rob Johnson and Cornel West with President Serene Jones hosting titled “Improvising in the Void: Recreating an Economics that Serves Society.” As the final event of the year, it featured the intersections between theology, economics, and culture. Johnson and West took up the question of how an economic system can be developed that is improvisational, dynamic, and resists marginalizing an arbitrary underclass. As West asked at one point, “What kind of human beings do you want [as a society] to produce? Do you want greedy human beings? Do you want short-term thinking human beings? Do you want myopic human beings? Do you want human beings... who only obey the 11th Commandment: ‘Thou shalt not get caught?’”

The INET series has sought to provide answers, even if just preliminary ones, to these questions all year. The series will continue next academic year.

Union is also known as a seminary on the forefront of interreligious dialogue and hosted several marquee events on that topic this year, including a three part series by Eboo Patel, founder and president of the Interfaith Youth Core (ifcy.org). Patel has also been appointed to the Religious Advisory Committee of the Council on Foreign Relations of President Barack Obama, the Board of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the National Committee of the Aga Khan Foundation USA, and the Department of Homeland Security's Faith-Based Advisory Council. Patel spoke about the role of interreligious work in the lives and work of three religious justice giants: Martin Luther King, Jr., Joshua Abraham Heschel, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In his talk on King he raised the question "Where does King's faith intersect with the faiths of others?" and offered the interfaith insight that "love is the key that unlocks the door" of greater understanding and less violence. He also stressed that much of King's late anti-war work was done alongside Buddhist activist and writer, Thich Nhat Hanh. According to Patel, Heschel believed very strongly in the need for faith in order for justice to be done on the earth. Yet, despite his strong identification with Orthodox Judaism and faithful practice throughout his life, Heschel, in Patel's eyes, had a strong love for the diversity of humanity. In his third and final talk Patel discussed Dietrich Bonhoeffer, theologian and martyr who left Union Theological Seminary near the end of World War II to be in solidarity with resistance to the Nazis. He was hanged in an extermination camp by the Nazis just before the end of the war. Patel used



TOP: Eboo Patel, founder and president of the Interfaith Youth Core, delivers one of three lectures at Union in a series entitled "Interfaith Leadership on America's Sacred Ground;" ABOVE LEFT: Betty Sue Flowers and Gary Dorrien; BELOW: Professor Cornel West makes a point (SEE QUOTE) at an Economics & Theology lecture.

"What kind of human beings do you want [as a society] to produce? Do you want greedy human beings? Do you want short-term thinking human beings? Do you want myopic human beings? Do you want human beings...who only obey the 11th Commandment: 'Thou shalt not get caught'?"

Bonhoeffer to illustrate what it looks like for someone to be fully committed to one's own faith while being willing to take the ultimate risk for the justice and freedom of others, including those with whom one may not share faith. Overall, the series emphasized that Christianity, exemplified in the series by Bonhoeffer, must be in dialogue with other religions, working with them for justice, in order to truly fulfill its own religious vision of the world; the same goes for all other major religions, including Patel's Islam, Heschel's Judaism, and Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhism.





LEFT: Farid Esack presented "The Academic Study of Islam and/in/for the Wounded Empire" on April 5, 2013.

BELOW: Paul Knitter at the 2013 International Buddhist-Christian Conference, with participants, April 17–20, 2013.



Dr. Esack talked about the importance of interreligious dialogue maintaining justice as a central concern, noting that across the major religious traditions "No prophet ever came into this world and made a fundamental question of 'How can I fit in with power?'"

Other speakers on interreligious dialogue over the past year have included Dr. Amy-Jill (A.J.) Levine and Dr. Farid Esack. There was also a multiple-day conference hosted by graduating Ph.D. student Kyeongil Jung and retiring professor Dr. Paul Knitter that brought top scholars from around the world in Buddhist-Christian dialogue to Union. A.J. Levine, University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Vanderbilt University, came to Union in October to deliver a lecture to a large crowd on the insidious problem of anti-Judaism in Christian ministry, theology, education, and scholarship. While Levine guessed that a large proportion of those in attendance had taught or preached in an anti-Judaic way at some point, she emphasized that the most important thing is to learn what constitutes anti-Judaism and be sure not to make the same mistakes in the future. As she put it, "If you have inadvertently included anti-Judaic things in teaching or preaching, the good news is it's not your fault. The bad news is if you continue to do it, it is your fault." She discussed ways to strengthen already existing protocols for combatting anti-Judaism, in denominations that have them, and the need for similar systematic efforts in all denominations. Dr. Farid Esack is a Muslim scholar and activist from South Africa. He talked about the importance of interreligious dialogue maintaining justice as a central concern, noting that across the major religious traditions "No prophet ever came into this world and made a fundamental question of 'How can I fit in with power?'" His conclusions for interfaith dialogue emphasized the need to resist trying to find a positivist, objective truth when trying to create a space for interaction between religions. In the end, for Esack, "Understanding is the result of a dialogue between horizons of meaning. Authentic dialogue is about entering the other world while hanging onto your own."

Union has had a truly remarkable year of events. These events, and others that occurred on campus, make the seminary stand out as an institution to be recognized on a global scale. Indeed, the speakers at these events came from around the world to engage this unique community because, in many ways, it is the only place that these kind of exchanges can happen, and even in day-to-day Union life, do, regardless of whether an official event is happening or not. This level of inquiry and pursuit of what it means to be more expansive, open, and just is what defines Union as a place where theology and religion find their boundaries and go beyond them, whether in interreligious dialogue, interdisciplinary work, or in the classic sense of "faith seeking understanding" blended with Union's own distinctive and relentless pursuit of justice. **U**

ANOTHER BUS STOP: *Sister Simone at Union*

By Erica Richmond



UNION CELEBRATED the third annual Judith Davidson Moyers Women of Spirit Lecture on April 3rd. This year we had the honor of hosting Sister Simone Campbell of the “Nuns on the Bus” campaign. Sister Simone serves as the Executive Director of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobbying organization. A progressive faith leader, Sister Simone embodies the essence of this lectureship. Bill Moyers established this series in order to celebrate his wife Judith; this event highlights women of faith who devote their lives to advocacy. These leaders take risks. Faith motivates them and sustains them through this hard work. Following in the footsteps of our previous speakers, Leymah Gbowee and Vandana Shiva, Sister Simone spoke about the overlap between spirituality and activism. Her lecture, “Heart on Fire: Spirituality and Activism,” captivated the audience. President Serene Jones and Judith Moyers introduced Sister Simone. In her introductory remarks President Jones invited Union’s new academic dean, Dr. Mary Boys, a Roman Catholic herself, to stand. Also in attendance were members of the Board of Trustees, faculty, community members, and students. No matter the particularities of our vocational calls, we all know something about faith and justice. As the founder of Nuns on the Bus, Sister Simone had a lot to say on the subject. She spoke candidly about her political and personal struggles. Committed to poverty alleviation, healthcare reform, and immigration rights, Sister Simone lives her life out loud.

Sister Simone’s daring energy enlivened the campus. In addition to Wednesday’s lecture, she also participated in several events on Thursday. The Institute for Women, Religion, and Globalization hosted a breakfast for Sister Simone and Union students. This intimate setting gave our students the opportunity to chat and ask questions. Sister Simone also preached during Union’s weekly Thursday communion service. Dr. Boys also invited her to visit one of her courses, “Jewish and Christian Women in the American Historical Experience.” During her twenty-four hours at Union, Sister Simone made a lasting impression.





LEFT: Judith Davidson Moyers introduces Sister Simone Campbell at the Third Annual Judith Davidson Moyers Women of Spirit Lecture, April 3, 2013. RIGHT: Sister Simone shares a light-hearted moment with Dr. Mary Boys.

As Sister Simone preached on the Road to Emmaus, we were reminded that her devotion to God and the Holy motivates her political commitments. As she said in her lecture, “[spirituality and activism] are integrated. It is a seamless garment that needs to be worn at all times.” Wearing this coat harnesses our anger so that it may be productive. Fighting against injustice, it is easy to let rage take over. Nevertheless, Sister Simone offers us another model. Having received her fair share of public backlash for her political commitments, Sister Simone has ample experience channeling anger.

Last year, on April 20, 2012, Pope Benedict officially censured the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Sister Simone, and NETWORK. The Vatican criticized Women Religious for focusing too much of issues of poverty instead of focusing on other Catholic

fighting. While they seem dichotomous, they are, in fact, intertwined. She says, “When [radical acceptance and fight] become a unity my experience is fire. It’s like the fire of Pentecost. It’s the solid fuel and it is the flame, the passion, and then it’s the messy ash. And it’s the searing heat. But it’s the warm inviting light. It’s like God alive in our midst.” Sister Simone’s honesty provides us with the perfect example for faithful leadership. She acknowledges, and even celebrates, the messiness that comes with this work.

Her description of fire reminded me of a conversation she and I had earlier. Waiting for her lecture to begin, Sister Simone casually asked me, “Have you ever gone through a raging feminist stage?” I assured her that I had. Then I laughed and told her that perhaps it hadn’t ended. She replied, “Oh, I couldn’t sustain mine, I was too angry, too worked up.” Listening

to her lecture in the packed chapel, I began to understand what she meant. Sister Simone has certainly not let go of the fight, but she has found a way to sustain it. Just like the image of the burning bush, Sister Simone professes a model that is intense and fiery but does not consume us.

Similar images are fostered here at Union. We too attempt to find synergy between religion and

activism. Our faith motivates us; it calls us to take risks. Knowing this, we strive to find a better balance between ourselves, our work, and our understanding of the sacred. All of us engage in this in our own way. We listen to the wisdom of Sister Simone, we study great theologians, we ask hard questions, and we discern. Frederick Buechner defines vocation as when “our greatest joy meets the world’s greatest need.” Witnessing the success of the Nuns on the Bus campaign, it seems as though Sister Simone has achieved just that: vocation. [U](#)

As Sister Simone preached on the Road to Emmaus, we were reminded that her devotion to God and the Holy motivates her political commitments. As she said in her lecture, “[spirituality and activism] are integrated. It is a seamless garment that needs to be worn at all times.”

priorities, mainly abortion and birth control. This spring, Pope Francis reiterated his concerns about the “radical feminist nuns.” While the April 2012 censure caused pain, Sister Simone also expresses gratitude: The censure elevated NETWORK and gave birth to last summer’s ‘Nuns on the Bus’ campaign. Instead of seething in angry paralysis, Sister Simone explains how she pushes herself to find spiritual balance. In order truly to be in proximity to God, Sister Simone says she needs to see God within her enemies. Moreover, she says she needs to blend radical acceptance with

STUDENTS SPEAK...

Current Union students share their insights, surprises, and plans for the future.

By Dana Ribeiro

» Anika L. Gibbons earned her M.A. in May. Her work focuses on the intersection of psychology and religion. A NYC native, she came to Union after a successful career in the entertainment industry.

Why Union?

I didn't know anything about Union. I was walking by the school one day and felt the legacy of prayers in the hallways and in the classrooms and thought this is a place where I can rest my soul for a while.

Were you clear on your future career path when you came, or is that unfolding as you progress?

I was clear that I was working in the entertainment industry for a long while and I have always been passionate about studying God. I had no idea what career opportunities could be available to me other than church ministry. A career developing a ministry using the tools of psychological/spiritual counseling unfolded before my eyes.

Could you have envisioned where you are? Are you surprised where you wound up?

I was told in prayer one morning that it was time to go and study. So I will say that I could and did see myself back in academic life, what would come from it and how it transformed me, has been revealed slowly.

So on some level, you are not surprised to be doing this work?

My current place in the world is a culmination of my life's work thus far and yes it is all in alignment.

What advice would you give students who want to follow a similar path?

The advice I would give students is to know who you are at your core and know that there is no knowing your core if you can't withstand an earthquake to shift it and shape it. Remember that truth comes before love. Truth and love extend from God's grace, and that grace is something that will never leave you. At Union that grace can show up in your moral code, your ethics,



Anika L. Gibbons '13

your papers, presentation, friends, the divine guides that show up as your professors and your allies. But most of all remember your enemies will drive you to that grace to sustain you when it is time to fight for what you believe in.

What do you think allows you to get the most from your Union education?

The thing that will allow one to get the most out of Union is being able to tell when you are being fed what will grow you or being fed what enhances your limits. The thing that will allow you to get the least is not knowing how to navigate between the two.

What has surprised you the most about Union?

What has surprised me the most about Union is how often we study "God thought" versus how often God is thought of.

The least?

What has surprised me the least about Union is how rigorous the academic work is. I am so grateful for that. It has taught me so much about myself and so much about what Union does have to offer.

Finish this sentence: The future of theology within the realm of social justice is _____.

The future of theology within the realm of social justice is there will be no future unless theologians consistently put their money where their mouth is. Theologians must embody the deeper meaning of justice and apply it in a social context or else theology will no longer be a springboard for those who are seeking true social justice. If theologians don't show and prove then folks may begin to realize that they do not need a conduit to receive justice since God is already on the side of the oppressed.



Todd Clayton '14

» Todd Clayton is a first year M.A. from San Diego, California. His work both in, and out, of Union centers on advocacy for LGBTQ communities.

Why Union Theological Seminary?

I was in the application process at a few different seminaries and I had narrowed it down to two. Union wasn't even on the list, until I met Chris Hedges through my undergraduate writing professor. Chris asked to meet me because he had heard some of my story. In our discussion he really pushed for me to consider Union and the more we talked the more it sounded like a good option. I am forever grateful for that meeting with him and for his ability to discern on the spot, so to speak, how appropriate Union would be for me.

Were you clear on your future career path when you came, or is that unfolding as you progress?

When I wrote my admissions statement, I said that all I knew for certain was that LGBTQ people who grew up in religious environments that were inhospitable absolutely needed help, and that whatever I did would somehow be tied to the presence of these people. For me victims of religious abuse are not statistics, but stories and faces. I know these people. I came to seminary because so much of LGBTQ anxiety and self-hate is tied to religion, and providing them with different language to make sense of their experience is crucial to developing a positive sense of self. Through my time here I have come to focus on writing as a meaningful form of advocacy, and see that as a likely direction I am heading after I graduate.

Could you have envisioned where you are, the work you are doing in the field, academics, etc.?

I firmly believe where you study, the actual physical location is important, because whatever you are studying is filtered through the lens of that location. There are few lenses more

diverse and more dynamic than New York, and I am convinced that if I had studied in a different city I wouldn't have been forced to bump into so much.

What advice would you give people who want to follow a path similar to yours?

Idealistically I would say always follow your deepest intuition, and don't be afraid to be courageous, and if that intuition, and that courage, is leading you to a place like this, then take that hunch seriously and trust that what comes next will make sense.

What do you think allows you to get the most from your Union education?

Working outside of Union has been really important for me because the workplace forces me to translate whatever I am learning here into language that makes sense to people who aren't in the theological academy. Dr. Cone is my advisor and he constantly challenges me to be performing at my peak and isn't afraid to tell me when I am not, which I really appreciate.

What has surprised you the most about Union?

As a gay student I was surprised by the level at which my experience is reflected in the student body and in the administration. I have never been in a religiously inclined community with as many LGBTQ colleagues, and it has been good to feel a sense of solidarity that I have never felt before.

How do you think faith, theology, politics, justice, democracy and Union fit together?

Union is in a really interesting place right now. There is a lot of unrest between the student body, administration, and faculty. There are a lot of power dynamics in play at present, and as difficult as it has been for me to come into this context, I have been really impressed by the audacity of the student body and its willingness to demand justice and a voice. I have been impressed that at least a handful of administrators have shown up and have listened. At Union, the voice of the students has a power that I hope prepares us to be agents of democratic change after we leave this place, because the struggle of Union is no different from the struggle of America, and if we can learn to do that struggle better in this place I like to think that we can be better agents of democratic change beyond here.

Within your context and the work that you do finish this sentence: The future of theology within the realm of social justice is _____.

Is forever tied to homeless LGBTQ youth in America. I have a deep care and concern surrounding teen homelessness in America because 80% of teen homeless youth are homeless for reasons related to their sexuality. I think any theology that doesn't take that seriously, or doesn't take seriously the reality that LGBTQ religious youth are eight times more likely than their non-religious counterparts to attempt or commit suicide, is pointless. If we don't reckon with the harm and the damage that is being done to LGBTQ youth in the name of religion, then the church is failing.

» Dorothy Hutchison is a first year M.Div. and practicing Episcopalian. Prior to coming to Union, Dorothy had a thirty-year career in education, most recently as head of the Nightengale-Bamford school here in NYC.

Why Union Theological Seminary?

It was always my dream to come back to school. I was drawn to Union because of the quality of the faculty, and the commitment to social action and justice. I liked the idea that it was founded in a place where the seminary education was connected to the city.

Were you clear on your future career path when you came, or is that unfolding as you progress?

I have been on a trajectory for 33 years with my career and this is the first year that I have slowed down. I am just trying to let myself be and see what unfolds.

What is your focus right now? Are you surprised at where you've wound up?

I came in thinking that I wanted to do biblical studies, beyond that I really didn't know what I wanted, and so I am surprised that I am finding so many new avenues of interest. I firmly believe it comes down to the professors, and I have loved every one I have had in my time here. Every professor brings a unique perspective.

What advice would you give students who want to follow a path similar to yours?

I think you have to be open to all possibilities, and be ready to have your life go in a different direction, because you are going to be profoundly changed here, and that has been an amazing thing for me. To know my life has been deeply changed and not yet be sure how exactly, but the idea that preconceived notions don't always work here.

This idea of being open to change is very interesting, especially for older students who might think they have an idea of what they need. Can you speak more about that?

You have to be open to the whole experience. I have a classmate who is a Hindu monk who has become one of my closest friends here, a Muslim woman professor, and I am sitting at a Christian Seminary. I couldn't have imagined that. I had this assessment of myself as a very liberal, very pronounced feminist, and then here, sometimes, I almost feel conservative. My eyes have really been opened to what it means to be an activist, the entire possibilities of being liberal. Ninety-nine percent of the time it has been a really good challenge for me to think of the world in a different way. It can be unsettling at times because it is so radically different from the environment I came from, but radically different in a good way.

What do you think allows you to get the most from your Union education?

The privilege of being a full time student without working, and also maintaining a life outside of here. That balance helps me to appreciate it all.

The least?

I can't help but be a school administrator, and I am always thinking about how much more this place could be with additional funding. Union is such a diamond in the rough. The classrooms in which we study should reflect the quality of the teaching that we get here. Not that appearance is everything, but it is such a beautiful space, it deserves more.

What has surprised you the most about Union?

I was so nervous about coming into a new community after being in my last career for so long, and being an older student. But the community here is so fun! Everyone is so open, and the people I meet, the little bits of their lives that I learn, always pleasantly surprise me.

We focus a lot on democracy and theology here at Union.

What do you think the role of theology in democracy is?

I think they are absolutely inseparable. I don't claim to think that everyone in a democracy needs to have a religious life, but I think what we are trying to do in seminary is think about a new order for the world, and the promise of democracy is that everyone would have a voice and dignity. We are preparing people for real citizenship. What Jesus and Paul said in the new Testament was radical, still is radical, and fundamentally gets to the heart of the matter: Any kind of regime that silences people is ultimately not what God intended for this world.

Finish this sentence: The future of theology within the realm of social justice is _____.

It's bright! Theology and social justice here are so intertwined, professors and students are constantly asking "So what?" Unless theology makes a difference in social justice in this world, what is the point? How can we reach those who are unreachable? It's a staggering challenge, but there are small differences that can be made all the time.



Dorothy Hutchison '14



Jacob Reese '14

» Jacob Reese is an Oregon native and M.Div./M.S.S.W. in conjunction with CUNY/Hunter College. Currently he is doing his field placement at MS 390, a middle school in the Bronx.

Why Union Theological Seminary?

I wanted to go to Union to explore theology, not necessarily from a personal place, but realizing I was going to be working with populations in social work that were marginalized, who were experiencing suffering. I knew that it was going to be very difficult for me to make sense out of that from a meta-narrative perspective and so I wanted to have some of the theological underpinnings that would help me understand these realities.

Were you clear on your future career path when you came, or is that unfolding as you progress?

I was clear I wanted to go into social work vocationally, but I was not clear on the specifics. As I progress in my education I see that social workers actually do everything, which makes figuring out my next steps difficult. I am very interested in working with nonprofits, medical social work, clinical work with individuals and families, etc. and I think all of those have intersections with a faith dialogue.

Could you have envisioned where you are, the work you are doing in the field, academics, etc.?

I did not envision working with kids. It can be very challenging to work with children, especially as a social worker when you feel like structure and authority is important, and that is greater than your personal comfort levels with such things.

Does your current place in the world make sense given your hopes/aspirations/interests?

It does. I am hoping to be placed next year doing medical social work with cancer patients, which brings its own unique set of

challenges. That work intrigues me because you see the entire range of humanity represented.

What advice would you give someone who would want to follow a path similar to yours?

There are very few M.Div./M.S.S.W.s and I am not sure why because I think the two degrees are a great complement. So many people at Union are doing incredible things, changing the world. And even though they wouldn't consider themselves social workers, a lot of it is social work. Be engaged, learn from everyone.

What do you think allows you to get the most from your Union education?

The thing I cherish most is the conversations with my peers. That is where I have found the most learning and growth. If I had a regret it would be not having more of those conversations.

From Union's perspective, democracy and theology are intertwined in such a way that one creates or liberates the other. What do you think the definition of democracy is in terms of theology?

I think democracy on its own means all people having a voice. What theology adds to that is that every person is sacred, every person is deserving. Whether at the systemic level, or if you are thinking on a smaller level as a social worker that might run a group, what does it mean for people to have agency, to be able to share and feel like they have an investment and a part in how that process happens? As we talk in terms of liberation and freedom, some of those ideals that we often hear in what we call a democracy in this country, which isn't really a democracy, what I have ultimately realized is that these are very subjective concepts, but they are also very spiritual concepts. The experience of being free, or having freedom, isn't really something you can legislate. We are nowhere near what I would consider an equal democracy, and theology should inform some of the ethical decisions as we proceed forward.

Finish this sentence: The future of theology within the realm of social justice is _____.

Beginning from the ground up. Continuing to challenge and critique a lot of the basic assumptions and foundations that have still maintained some type of power throughout the history of theology. We still maintain a lot of very traditional ideals and concepts and sometimes we don't question where these come from. Starting with our context, not some predefined concept of who or what God is. But starting with what do I experience in the here and now? If we start from a place of being informed by those who are marginalized now, then theology will spring forth. The antithesis of a broken suppressed situation is going to be that life giving space that people are yearning for. People want that equilibrium, are searching for what they feel is a natural fit between them and their environment. Not to negate history, or tradition, but in terms of the future for theology we are going to have to let go of some things in order to free social justice from being defined by the past.

» Rima Vesely-Flad is a 37 year old mother of one, a New Yorker, and an Episcopalian. She is a current Ph.D. candidate and holds an M.Div. from Union which she earned in 2002.

Why Union Theological Seminary?

I completed my M.Div. at Union in 2002, and felt that the faculty at Union would respect my work as an organizer and policy advocate in the field of criminal justice as I was still involved with that work when I started my doctoral program.

Were you clear on your future career path when you came, or is that unfolding as you progress?

I had taught in a prison for two years and knew that I was interested in pursuing that path as part of my work, but I did not envision becoming a college professor. I became committed to teaching undergraduates in an academic setting when I began leading seminars as a visiting professor at Sarah Lawrence College. I stayed there for four years. I had the opportunity to teach service learning classes so that my students had a community-based component to the texts that they read on the penal system. They were able to look through the eyes of people who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated, and for that reason, I came to see teaching as social justice work.

Could you have envisioned where you are, the work you are doing in field, academics, etc?

I've stayed in the field of criminal justice and have written a dissertation on the social function of punishment, so to some extent there has been a clear trajectory. But when I came I was much more interested in Calvinist theology and criminal law. After I started teaching courses in criminal justice policy, I focused my research much more on contemporary moral politics and the use of the prison to control marginalized populations.

Does your current place in the world make sense given your hopes/aspirations/interests?

I do feel like I have held a certain vision in front of me—that of writing and agitating about the penal system, and how it functions in the lives of black people in economically depressed communities—and I am still committed to that vision. Also, I like teaching college students, and have accepted an offer at a liberal arts college (Warren Wilson) that prioritizes activism, service learning, traveling, and rigorous academics. So I feel like all of the experiences I've had—founding a non-profit advocacy organization, conducting research in South Africa, teaching service learning at a liberal arts college—come together in the position I will begin in the fall.

What do you think allows you to get the most from your Union education?

The fact that Union is in NYC is a huge benefit—during the first years of my program, I was also able to participate in an incredible activist and intellectual environment.



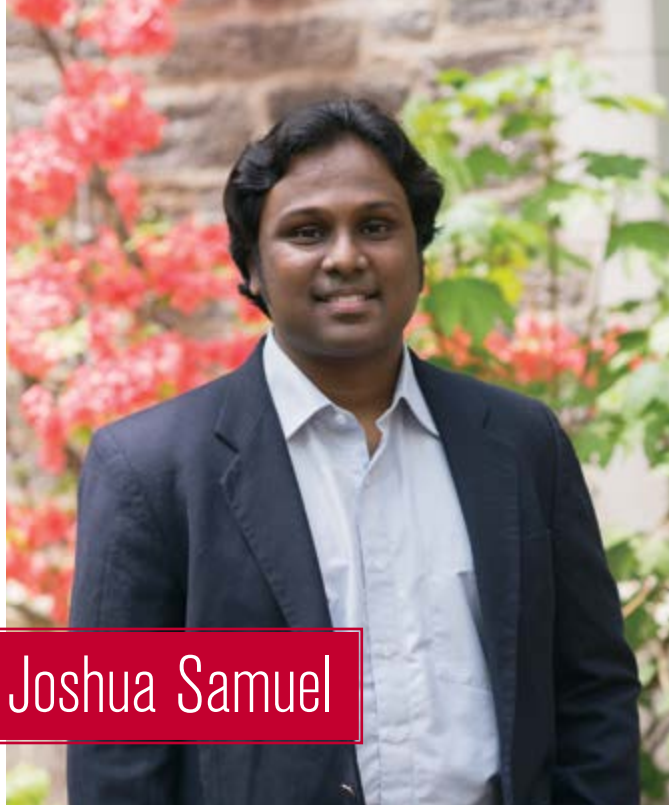
Rima Vesely-Flad '14

From Union's perspective, democracy and theology are intertwined in such a way that one creates or liberates the other. What do you think the definition of democracy is in terms of theology?

Democracy has its roots in covenantal theology. I have studied New England Puritanism in depth, and it is very interesting to see how covenantal theology, inspired by Calvin, fueled participatory government in New England colonies. Of course, the social covenant was not extended to many peoples, especially those who did not exhibit sufficient "regeneration"—women, Native Americans, and blacks who were servants and slaves. But initial ideas about a covenant of grace with God that also extended to the social community fed ideas about the secular social contract, so that by the late eighteenth century, beliefs in natural rights and government by consent inspired a revolution. And since then, the circle of participants in democratic government has grown wider. Perhaps contemporary theology can help to illuminate why certain peoples are still excluded from democratic participation—for example, people with felony convictions who have served their time. To date, more than five million black people have permanently lost the right to vote due to a felony conviction. In some states, more than twenty percent of the black population has permanently lost the right to vote. How does theology address the reality of disenfranchisement?

Finish this sentence: The future of theology within the realm of social justice is _____.

Important for asserting the human dignity of all peoples against forces that deny, oppress, marginalize, and subjugate those who have scant political power or social visibility. **U**



Joshua Samuel

» Joshua Samuel recently completed his Master's in Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) at Union and is planning on pursuing his Ph.D. here as well.

Originally from Chennai, India, Joshua did his equivalent of an M.Div., knowing from a young age that he wanted to be a student of theology, then preached as a pastor in the Church of South India for several years before deciding to come to Union to do his S.T.M. and apply for a Ph.D. Joshua says "The balance between social justice and academic integrity is what brought me here." Having heard about Union since his childhood from his father, it was a place that stuck out as an obvious choice when he wanted to do advanced theological studies beyond his Bachelor's of Divinity. He was also impressed by the people he had a chance to meet in India that were preaching or working in churches who had graduated from Union and found the work they did combining church work with social justice inspiring. Joshua says that a big part of what brought him to Union is that he has "liberation built into him." Given its global reputation as a center for liberation dialogue in all of its fields, Joshua was drawn from around the world to come here.

For his S.T.M., Joshua has worked primarily with Dr. Paul Knitter and Dr. Brigitte Kahl on exploring commonalities between Paul's idea of "emptying" of self in the New Testament and the Buddhist principle of "emptiness." His S.T.M. extended paper is focused on that topic. He sees both of these concepts as having a lot of potential for interfaith dialogue and for promoting social justice work in both traditions and in cooperation with one another. Further, he wanted to reconcile what he sees as too sharp of a split between the two disciplines. Union is a place where Biblical Studies and Theology can and do

work closely together, and that offered him the opportunity to pursue that space between the two and how they can overlap. When asked why he chose to take the extra year to do an S.T.M. rather than try to go straight into a Ph.D. program, Joshua explained "I think the S.T.M. offers a bridge and it offers you a chance to shape your future; to fine tune your thinking and what you want to do."

While at Union, Joshua has continued to preach in Indian communities in the city and pursue social justice work. His wife and son also moved to Union from India toward the end of his S.T.M. when he was accepted into the Ph.D. program. Joshua will be staying at Union to work with Dr. John Thatamanil, examining comparative theology and liberationist dialogue. After completing his Ph.D. he plans to teach while also doing activist work and preaching. As an international student he says he experienced some culture shock at first upon moving to the United States, but found Union to be a very open and welcoming place where he feels at home. To other international students, he would encourage them to "just be open, don't make judgments."

For Joshua, coming to Union was worth it because of the balance of liberationist theology and interfaith dialogue, which is something very rare to find in any institution. Union is known for its distinct character and reputation of being a place that takes both of those issues head on in academics and in practice. Joshua sees it in the ethos of the institution, the faculty, and especially the student body. This unique blend of concerns is a reflection of himself, he says; Union cares deeply about advancing the discourse on the need for interfaith dialogue and for the importance of keeping liberation and justice at the forefront of theological thought, and that "is" him. [U](#)

Given its global reputation as a center for liberation dialogue in all of its fields, Joshua was drawn from around the world to come here.

Fundraising Ministry BY AMY MEVERDEN

Twice a year in the evenings a group of students swarm the administrative offices on campus eager to call alumni/ae and friends of Union, asking for updates, stories about Union's glory days, and to chat about the annual fund. As the name suggests, the Fundraising Ministry is more than simply a fundraising drive. Students actively connect with alumni/ae, updating records, recording both humorous and meaningful stories of life at Union, hearing about the vocational journeys of life post-Union, and adding alumni/ae to the Union prayer list for various needs.

The Fundraising Ministry was created by Union alumnus Rich Montone '08 in 2005 under the leadership of President Hough as a response to Union's financial crisis at the time. Montone organized this student-led initiative to call alumni/ae

“It’s annual fun to see the trepidation of first time callers rapidly change to energy and enthusiasm. They relax with the warmth they receive from alumni/ae as they share their stories and listen to stories of Union in another time.”

—Kevin McGee, Director of Special Events and the Annual Fund


and raise funds to help keep Union moving. The success of this initiative was immediately apparent, as proceeds increased with each successive phonathon. In 2008 Yvette Wilson '09 took over as the head of the Fundraising Ministry, followed by Laurel Koepf '08, '12 in 2009. In 2011, Fundraising Ministry Manager Janelle Stanley '12 converted the paper call sheets to a computerized database system, saving reams of paper, loads of time, and streamlining the process by which data is recorded and analyzed. Currently, I co-manage the team with fellow current Ph.D. student Jason Wyman. Together we envision ways to increase outreach and efficiency in cooperation with members of the offices of development and advancement, including Director of Special Events and the Annual Fund, Kevin McGee; Director of Institutional Advancement, Melissa Fuest; and Director of Data and Records Management, Luke Henderson. The donations raised by the phonathon go into the annual fund, which supports the students and operations of the seminary at large.

A typical night at Fundraising Ministry begins—as all things should—with snacks! Fundraising Ministers arrive early in the evening, greeted by dancing French Bulldog and current phonathon mascot, Giorgio. The team checks in and we determine a nightly prize to help ministers set goals for their evening calls. Prizes in the past include: most money raised, best Reinhold Niebuhr/Paul Tillich story, greatest number of credit card

donations, and most specified pledges. Callers disperse to various work stations located in administrative offices. After calling Eastern and Central time zones, we break for a family-style dinner, which is always lively as students share various alumni/ae stories of beloved professors, student pranks, and love at first sight in the Hastings dorms. Ministers then finish calling Mountain and Pacific time zones. At the end of the night, work stations are tidied, numbers are tallied, the night's prize winner is selected, thank you notes are written, and students organize pledge slips and correspondence, usually ending the night just before midnight. At the end of the most recent phonathon, President Jones generously invited the Fundraising Ministry team to her home for a pizza party to celebrate the hard work and accomplishments of the drive.

Before moving into a co-manager position in 2012, I began as a Fundraising Minister in my first year of the Ph.D. program in 2009-2010. I remember feeling very nervous about asking people for money, but what I discovered was that this job is not just about “the ask.” I was being ministered to by alumni/ae who cared about me as a student, wanted to hear what I was studying, were curious to know if we lived in the same room in Hastings Hall, asked for my opinion on a Greek parsing for a Bible study, and took a moment to pray for me and my journey at Union. I was so blown away by those precious moments when I was not just connecting with a Union alum, but with a minister, a chaplain, a therapist, a professor, an organist, an advocate, an artist, a spouse/partner who took the time to enter back into Union by serving, in turn, a current Union student with words of encouragement and solidarity. By entering into the lives and stories of the alumni/ae who have gone before, I am inspired, encouraged, and renewed to stay the course and make the most of my Union experience. I am also inspired to give my share to Union when I graduate, having seen the culture of generosity set in place by generations and generations of Union alumni/ae.

Kevin McGee, who graciously allows us to invade his office for our base of Fundraising Ministry operations gives the following reflection: “It’s annual fun to see the trepidation of first time callers rapidly change to energy and enthusiasm. They relax with the warmth they receive from alumni/ae as they share their stories and listen to stories of Union in another time. Every once in a while a student will talk to a writer or professor or preacher they’ve been studying and they bask in the exchanged words. They also receive courage from talking with folks who have been in their shoes and have lived long and well while following challenging principles. I think they also reflect on the time in the future when their phone will ring and wonder who is on the line.”

So when your phone rings in January or June, it might be a friendly (and possibly nervous) Fundraising Minister, who would love to hear a meaningful Union memory and have just a few minutes of your time. We do hope you’ll pick up the phone! 

Commencement!

Union students and their families, faculty, and staff joyously celebrated 2013 graduates May 17 on the quad.





In Conversation with Alumni/ae INTERVIEWS BY ANDREW SCHWARTZ

In keeping with the theme for *Union Now* this year, “Religion and Democracy,” the following four Alumni/ae interviews address how Union and its graduates support a democratic vision that inspires equality and justice throughout the United States.



Reverend Seth Pickens '06

Reverend Seth Pickens is a fascinating person. Pastor of a ninety-year-old Baptist church in South Los Angeles (also formerly known as South Central LA), he possesses a voice full of compassion, a head of knowing, and a spirit that is determined to create positive change. He's a pastor all the way through, casually spending the first ten minutes of our conversation interviewing me, not because he was testing my chops, but because he truly cared and was curious about who I was.

Rev. Pickens finds inspiration from his initial call to preach as a young man, lessons learned as a Peace Corps volunteer in Haiti, hours spent in classrooms at Union, and from years of preaching, teaching, and learning in his congregation in L.A. Rev. Pickens and I spoke for nearly an hour and in that hour I learned about and discussed life with a person who has dedicated himself to bring the radical love and inclusivity of Christ to his Church and his broader community in Los Angeles.

Reverend Pickens, tell me, what brought you all the way to Union in the first place?

Well, I tell this joke, but it's true, Union was the only school that I could get in. In college I had this spiritual turn and I took what they called a “call to preach.” I took time off, though, to do the Peace Corps in Haiti for two years and it was there that I decided to apply to seminaries, and Union took me in and I'm really glad that it did. I went to Morehouse College and Union was spoken of so highly there and it was in New York City, which was a big attraction.

Do you see Union affecting the work that you're doing now?

Oh yeah without a doubt. In Bible Study on Wednesday we were talking about the text for this Sunday, Matthew 16, which is: “Peter, on this rock I'll build my Church, and the gates of hell won't overcome it.” And we were talking about the new Pope. There are people who don't understand that we are Catholic as Baptists. They don't understand that we trace the Apostolic Tradition back to the disciples. We are Protestant-Catholics, you see, and it's that church history perspective that you get at Seminary that you get to bring into preaching and teaching. That history has implications when it comes to realizing the community that you're in. You're in that community in a very real way—as is the new Pope. That Bishop of Rome, that's us, and it comes alive in a new way for our community. See we owe it to the people, we owe it to the Kingdom to have that seminary education, to help us get a glimpse of what happened 2000 years ago in order to know what we're doing today.

How do you see the church engaging questions about religion and democracy?

The role of the church, the role of the local congregation, is always community engagement. The church is always a local thing. Even a mega church is always a

community thing and we have to assess what the problems are. We have to look at our context and, while that may turn universal, it's always our context and it's that which we have to address. For my context in LA, there's so much unemployment in the Black community, the LAPD, the public school system is shot to hell...I mean I buried a 19-year-old last week.

The role of the church is to look at what we have control over, what we can offer. So for example, food and nutrition are very vital right now. It's something that is important to every individual and we've got a gym in the church and we're running fitness classes three days a week. We can lobby for policy change and it's important because it works, but it's really the little things that we can do.

What advice would you give to the graduating seniors at Union who will be going into the ministry and inheriting communities of their own?

I would tell them that they really have to be bold and that they have to hustle. The life of the mind is a beautiful thing and it's great to sit around and talk about Niebuhr, but the M.Div. doesn't open doors for you. It gives you the keys, but it's not going to open up that door. You've got to have the courage to use those keys that the M.Div. gives you to open up the doors that you believe are meant to be opened up in your life.

Another thing is this: the world is so cynical and some of the members of your community will be too. The world is painful, it's complicated...it presents so much challenge and people get used to that pain and sometimes can only reflect that pain back at you. So for those young ministers coming up, I would tell them that they need to learn to be compassionate and they need to learn to be patient. If you walk into the world with the same idealism that you walked into seminary with, you're going to be in for something else.

Who was your favorite professor or what was your favorite class at Union?

{Laughs} oh man, there were so many. Zen Meditation with Hyun Kyung Chung comes to mind. I loved that class. She was incredible. That and voice building with Bob Seaver. He would come in and help us with our diction and timing. There was something holy in that classroom every time I walked in.



Rev. Luis Cortés Jr. '81

Listed as one of Time magazine's "25 Most Influential Evangelicals" in 2005, The Reverend Luis Cortés, Jr. is the CEO of Esperanza USA, a network of Hispanic Christians, churches, and ministries committed to raising awareness and identifying resources that strengthen the Hispanic community. He also serves as the founder and president of Nueva Esperanza, Inc., the largest Hispanic faith-based community development corporation in the country.

What was it that brought you to Union?

When I came to Union I was pastor of a church in Brooklyn. I was born and raised in New York in Harlem, on 155th Street and 8th Avenue, so I knew about Union and it seemed the logical choice. The UTS tradition affirmed a more open understanding of ministry, which for me as a pastor doing civil rights work in Brooklyn, was just logical.

Which Union professor had the most impact on you and your career?

Dr. James Washington was a key person for me. He took an interest in me and mentored me on several issues, not just church history. Dr. James Forbes was a homiletics professor and he took time to understand my Hispanic tradition yet prepare me for the "Anglo Pulpit." Prof. Bob Seaver was great because he helped me with my public speaking and really helped me nail that down. As far as theologians, I really want to mention Dr. Robert McAfee Brown. He was a great theological influence for me. Through him I was able to modify my theology. I come from an Evangelical tradition. He was flexible and nonjudgmental, he could dialogue openly. He helped me grow theologically and helped me find application points with liberation theology.

Tell me a little more about that.

At Union Theological Seminary I felt as did most Hispanic students at the time as "other"—I'm a New Yorker, I'm Evangelical, I'm Hispanic and from a Baptist tradition. At Union Theological Seminary at the time, that was the "other"—the minority. People like Robert McAfee Brown, James Washington, Robert Seaver, and William Kennedy helped me to evolve my position, as opposed to totally deconstructing my tradition, or making me feel I had to betray theological underpinnings. They were interested in my development, not their ideological/theological suppositions.

At UTS there was a litmus test! Is there room to be different? What's interesting is that Union creates space for the outsider of the traditional church, but if you're from the traditional Evangelical church and you're tied to that church to do ministry, you were considered suspect to their "brand" of faith. I'm a Progressive Evangelical now, but at that time we Evangelicals were suspected of being anti-intellectual because of our beliefs.

When I look back, Union helped prepare me theologically and opened me to other ideas and I think that's important. But it was my ethnic faith community that prepared me for adversity, though. Today we struggle for civil rights and immigration rights. It is part of what I do and it's what my ministry is.

Union gave me tools for doing theology and helped me understand how to apply those tools, which I use in my vocation to this day. I faced a lot of adversity for my convictions at Union. But that adversity led me to form the Hispanic [now Latino/a] Caucus with Dr. Daisy Machado.

Do you think Christianity should be in conversation with economics, democracy, and social justice, and if so, how does it inform the work you do?

Without question! Christianity and theology should be drivers. They should be drivers to make you relentless in the pursuit of justice. Anyone who fights for justice needs a driver, motivation. If you have a good, solid Christian understanding and that's not your driver, then something is wrong. Your understanding of God should create obligation—and obligation leads to the pursuit of justice—what price are you willing to pay? Obligation allowed our Christian forbearers to stand up and fight for justice, and it allows some of our Christian sisters and brothers today to stand up and die in the fight for justice. I think Union does a great job helping to prepare individuals for their vocation.

“

Your understanding of God should create obligation—and obligation leads to the pursuit of justice—what price are you willing to pay?

”



Amb. Suzan Johnson Cook '83

My conversation with Ambassador Johnson Cook was one of the most inspiring conversations I've ever had. A remarkably successful woman who still holds onto her humility, Ambassador Johnson Cook, or Sujay to her friends, is one of the amazing individuals to come out of Union.

What brought you to Union?

It was actually my long time friend Katie Cannon, not yet Dr. Cannon, who told me about Union in the first place. I went to Teacher's College so I already knew the Columbia system, but to be honest I didn't know anything about Union. I didn't know about the famous people there, I didn't know about its history. I just knew it was my calling. So I went. And when I got there, I realized I was there in the time of the "Jameses": James Cone, James Forbes, James Washington, and of course, Cornel West.

All of the sudden I was in the midst of this Baptist world and I didn't even realize I was trailblazing. I ended up becoming the first black woman to be a pastor in the American Baptist Church at the age of 23 during my last semester at Union. Katie Cannon uses this line: "When God lines up the yesses." And the "yesses" were lined up in my life at that time.

First ordained Black woman to Ambassador for President Obama.

What did that road look like?

Well, I'm the Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom. Before

that, though, I was a White House fellow in '93-'94 in the Clinton Administration. It's a program for young leaders to become involved in the Executive Branch of government. I started working on the Domestic Policy Council, which meant I was in the White House. Often I would be walking down the halls at the same time as President Clinton and he recognized me as the "Baptist preacher from the Bronx."

And I'm freaking out because the President knows my name! But soon enough we're talking about religion in the hallways, and then he starts sending me to religious conferences in his place. He started running his speeches for religious communities by me because of my connection to the Black Church. And that led to me becoming one of his speechwriters. Eventually I started sitting in on his cabinet meetings.

Once my year was done I thought my time in D.C. would be done too. But I had gotten myself so involved that the Clinton Administration kept on inviting me back. I kept telling them that I had commitments to my church in New York but between them and me, we kept on finding ways to work it out. I worked as an advisor to Clinton, helped promote and run Hillary Clinton's campaign for president, and then there came a span where I wasn't doing much in Washington and was just able to pastor.

It was when I was coming to the end of my pastorate that I got back involved in D.C. I had been pastoring for 30 years and was just ready for a change—I had done as much as I thought I could, and desperately needed a new chapter in my life. I had gotten to the point where I was ready to lament and fall on the floor and cry. And you know what? God knew. Just in that moment when I was ready to collapse the phone rang. It was the Secretary of State's office and they offered me the role I have now. When I look back, I feel that every single strand of my life led me to this position: the international experience, the diversity of living in New York City, the dues-paying of doing the hard work in inner-city America...all that brought me here and now I proudly get to say that I am an ambassador to the world. It's been an amazing journey.

I've got to ask: how do you keep in tension what you learned at Union with the world of politics, which, to be quite honest, seems like a very dirty world?

Well, you know, politics, like the church, is defined by the people who comprise it. I mean the church is very political. As a Black female, twenty-something-year-old in a very traditional white denomination, I had to learn how to navigate those waters as much as much I had to learn how to navigate the Union Seminary waters...basically they are systems, and in politics they call it "The Game," and you just have to learn to deal with them. In theology I learned that you are asking the questions of God and after I left that world I never stopped asking the questions of God, and I didn't stop listening for the answers from God either.

Life balance was always a very important thing for me, whether it was at Union or now in government, I always kept my foot, and myself, and my ties, and my family in the Black Church. So for me, you have to have the balance. My soul had to be fed in order to face whatever powers or principalities or politics and policies I encounter on a regular basis. If my soul is intact then I'm good. You know, I believe that, just like there is that star that led the Wiseman to Jesus, there is such a star today that lead Wise Women to the Lord, so that we can go to new places that we've never gone before. God has placed me as spiritual advisor to two different presidents, you know, and before President Obama created this position, there had never been faith leadership at the table before. I don't think it's an accident at all, and I'm thankful everyday.

Final thought: what advice would you give to people who would like to follow a similar path as you?

Be as broad and open as possible to experiences. See your pastoring as an expression of God's leadership and love. Also pay attention to what God has called you to be and to recognize which role suits you best. That, and you have to be prepared in your public persona and what it means to be a public figure. Your attire, your speech, your whole presentation has to be right. Be ready to pay your dues and don't expect to start on top.

You have to see the vision and the assignment, and be focused on what's been given to you. You also need a support system, whether it's one you create or one that's already there, and it has to be outside of your ministry. Lastly, there are 4 "F's": you have to have faith, you have to have some fun, you have to have funds, and then you have to have fitness, both fiscally fit and physically fit. You just can't be falling apart and try to preach wholeness. You have to model it in your own life.



Tom Porter '69

Tom Porter is a Rockefeller Grant recipient, Methodist pastor, family man, lawyer, professor, mediator, peace activist, and organizer. What I found most impressive about him, though, was not his resume but rather the obvious conviction and intention he applies to all that he does. But as much as his convictions drive him, Mr. Porter is constantly open to the soft voice of the Spirit and remains intent to hear and see where he is being led.

What was it that brought you to Union?

I came in 1966, straight out of college. My wife and I were living in New Haven and we knew that we wanted to move to New York. The only trauma was that I promised her an apartment in Greenwich Village, but when we got [to Union] we learned that the Rockefeller Grant required we live on campus, which meant we had to live in Knox Hall and share a kitchen and a bath with fourteen other couples! Union, though, was

the best academic place I'd ever been and I've been in some good ones. I loved the professors. They respected our views and were interested in them, and were pastoral as well as academic. This was in the days of the Civil Rights movement morphing into the Vietnam War and the War of Opposition movement. During those times, Union was as progressive as it's ever been and the faculty became so invested in the issues and the students.

After Union, I became a Methodist minister in Paterson, New Jersey. I was a co-pastor with a senior pastor who pastored three different churches: one in a Black neighborhood, one in a Puerto Rican neighborhood, and one in a white neighborhood. It was a remarkable two years. I worked with a great group of pastors who were trying to turn Paterson into the Garden State again, so we were working on de-segregating the school system and building low income housing. It was a great two years but after working with all the lawyers for the work we were doing, I learned that I could be more effective with a law degree so I headed to Boston for Law School.

How do you see your education at Union influencing what you do now?

I'll never forget my times sitting and talking with Dan Williamson. His brother was a Federal Appeals Court judge, which meant we talked a lot about law and religion. And really, just the interdisciplinary, prophetic work done at Union inspired me and everything I've done.

I was a trial lawyer for 25 years. I started at one of the biggest law firms in town but pretty quickly I started my own firm, which was fun because I got to help create my own community. But I could never get away from religion. At a conference in Harvard in 1977, Bill Stringfellow, a few others, and I created the "Council of Religion and Law" which brought my two selves of law and theology together. I became the president of that and eventually we created the Journal of Law and Religion.

One year when I was the Chancellor of my conference, I made the mistake of agreeing to give a sermon, which changed my life because they asked me to practice what I preach. It inspired me to leave my law practice and start up an organization in the Methodist church called "Just Peace," which was a little transformation and media-tion center that was there to try and help churches understand their role as centers of reconciliation in this world.

You see, I appreciate everything that's being done at the State Department's Diplomatic Policy level, but I think the place where you can have real influence is at the grass roots middle-management level. So what our program tries to do is train people to be mediating presences in their communities, so that people can come together and have real conversations. Out of that, we hope and believe that people can find Just Peace in their own lives that can spread out into the world. Democracy. We're trying to create real democratic institutions at the grassroots level, and restore community and democracy. That's what I see as being the most important.

Do you find in your work that people in the middle level have a desire for change or do you have to stoke a fire under them to create that change?

I'll tell you this much: I taught a class last night to fifteen law school students, fifteen seminarians, and about four social workers. They are desperate to figure out how we can humanize our systems, and to find ways so that they don't feel distorted in their roles in life, and to find ways to be true to themselves and open to others. I find that this generation is really wonderful. I'm almost 69 and I feel rejuvenated. I've never felt more curiosity than I do right now, in large part because of my contact with the students of this generation. **U**

Class Notes

1940s

Ward L. Kaiser, M.Div. 1949, has published *How Maps Change Things: A Conversation about the Maps We Choose and the World We Want*.

1950s

Beverly Corbett Davison, M.A. 1954, and her husband Andrew S. Davison have been named the 2013 recipients of the Cora and John Sparrowk Award. Given by the Board of General Ministries of the American Baptist Churches USA, the award recognizes those who in life and service over a period of many years have made an exceptional and outstanding contribution to the life of Christ's Church, and who in life and service manifest richly the fruits and gifts of the Spirit.

Donald E. Morrison, S.M.M. 1957, was honored by Augustana College, Rock Island, IL, with the Honorary Alumni Award at the college's annual alumni association awards banquet on May 19, 2012, for his extraordinary achievements and national recognition in choral conducting and his role as a 27-year ambassador for the college.

William J. Shaw, M.Div. 1957, has been elected Vice-Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. Shaw is the Pastor of the White Rock Baptist Church in Philadelphia, and past President of the National Baptist Convention, the largest African American religious organization in the United States.

John H. Fish, M.Div. 1958, was given the Livesay Award for Social Chance by the Colorado College Public Interest Fellowship Program (PIFP) for his role in inspiring PIFP at Colorado College. He has a long history with Colorado Colleges. In the early 1970s he taught at the Colorado College summer school. In addition, over 200 CC students have participated in the Associated Colleges of the Midwest Urban Studies Program where John taught for over 25 years.

John G. Truitt, Jr., M.Div. 1958, and his wife Delores Truitt, were awarded Elon Medallions in an annual ceremony at Elon University that recognizes outstanding service to Elon over the course of many years. "John and Dolores Truitt graduated from Elon in 1953 and for more than six decades have been two of the university's most enthusiastic and dedicated ambassadors," the university says on its website at www.elon.edu. "The dynamic pair met on Elon's campus during cheerleading tryouts and have been rooting for their alma mater ever since."

1960s

Glen Stassen, M.Div. 1960, is the recipient of the 2013 Baptist World Alliance Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award. His writings have influenced the international peace movement for more than three decades, and he is known for his work on theological ethics, politics, social justice, and developing the Just Peacemaking theory. Dr. Stassen is the Lewis B. Smedes Professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA.

James A. Forbes, Jr., M.Div. 1962, received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Temple of Understanding for his advancement of greater awareness and understanding of multi-cultural and interfaith values in communities. Forbes is the Harry Emerson Fosdick Distinguished Professor at Union.

Katherine W. Patterson, M.R.E. 1962, has won the American Library Association's 2013 Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, which honors an author or illustrator whose books, published in the United States, have made, over a period of years, a substantial and lasting contribution to literature for children.

John Stafford Peale, M.Div. 1963, has published a memoir, *Just How Far From the Apple Tree?: A Son in Relation to his Famous Father*. Peale is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Longwood University,

Farmville, VA, where he received the highest award from the University for teaching and professional excellence, and an ordained Minister in the Reformed Church in America. He is the son of the Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale.

Disani Christopher Senyonjo, M.Div. 1966, S.T.M. 1967, and Unitas Distinguished Alumnus, received a Clinton Global Citizen Award at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Annual Meeting on September 12, 2012. The award was given for Senyonjo's outstanding work to support the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people through the St. Paul's Reconciliation and Equality Centre in Kampala, Uganda, and across more than 70 countries where being LGBT is illegal and often persecuted. Senyonjo is Bishop of Kampala (Episcopal Church).

Daniel H. Krichbaum, M.Div. 1967, will retire from his position as Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights in July 2013. Under his leadership, MDCR has strengthened enforcement efforts, including streamlining processes, reducing backlog and shortening timeframes for completing investigations. The department has also expanded outreach efforts—creating new community and law enforcement collaboratives, establishing an anti-bullying initiative, launching the Civil Rights Youth Academy and more.

William C. Nelsen, M.A. 1967, is currently serving as University Minister for Advancement and Church Relations at Midland University, NE, his undergraduate alma mater. He is the former President of Augustana College, SD, and former President of Scholarship America.

Ashley T. Wiltshire, M.Div. 1967, has received the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Washington & Lee University, for "a lifetime of distinctive and lasting achievements in legal services for the indigent, and public service impacting the greater good." Wiltshire served as executive director of the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland

for more than three decades. The organization grew under his leadership and now serves low-income individuals in 48 Tennessee counties.

Christopher L. Morse, S.T.M. 1968, Ph.D. 1976, will retire as Dietrich Bonhoeffer Professor of Theology and Ethics at Union on June 30, 2013 — nearly 46 years after he first arrived at the Seminary as a student. Esteemed and beloved by countless students, Morse has lectured around the world on dogmatics and a variety of other topics, among them hermeneutics, metaphysics, ethics, Bonhoeffer's theological legacy, American politics, and the apocalypse. His major published work is *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief*, which continues to be required reading at a number of schools and seminaries, and is now in its second edition.

Daniel E. Pellegrum, M.Div. 1969, has stepped down as President and CEO of Pathfinder International after 26 years. His passionate advocacy for reproductive health rights and gender equity has advanced Pathfinder's work in some of the world's most vulnerable communities. He will continue at Pathfinder as Special Advisor. In 2011, Pellegrum was awarded the Union Medal, the Seminary's highest honor.

1970s

Elizabeth P. Braxton, M.R.E. 1970, will lead a PC(USA) – P.C.E.A. partnership mission for 2 weeks in Kenya in August 2013. It is now 50 years since Beth first served in Kenya in 1963 with Operation Crossroads Africa. The experience strongly influenced Beth and her husband Bob (**Robert J. Braxton, part. 1970**) and ultimately led them to enroll at Union.

Ronald MacLennan, M.Div. 1970, will retire from Bethany College in Lindsborg, KS at the end of spring 2013 semester. Currently Professor of Religion, he came to Bethany in 1984 as the campus pastor, until 1989 when he joined the faculty. He

has taught classes in Christianity, theology, and Biblical studies. In addition, he served as the Humanities Division Chair and the Johan Seleen Distinguished Professor of Religion.

David H. Binkley II, S.M.M. 1973, was recently honored at Camp Hill (PA) Presbyterian Church on his 40th anniversary as the church's Organist/Choirmaster. As an active member of the American Guild of Organists and the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, Binkley has played organ recitals and presented church music workshop throughout the central PA area.

Beverly Roberts Gaventa, M.Div. 1973, has been appointed Distinguished Professor of New Testament Interpretation in the department of religion at Baylor University. She currently serves as Helen H.P. Manson Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary, where she has taught for 21 years. She will join Baylor beginning in fall 2013.

Marvin A. McMickle, M.Div. 1973, was honored by the Princeton Theological Seminary Alumni/ae Council as a Distinguished Alumnus on October 22, 2012 at the Alumni/ae Bicentennial Reunion, for his commitment to the cause of social justice and the betterment of the human condition. He was also recognized for his scholarship. McMickle is the President of Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, and was for twenty-four years the Pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Cleveland, OH.

Naomi A. Steinberg, M.A. 1975, Ph.D. 1984, has published *The World of the Child in the Hebrew Bible* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013). "This is a book," she writes, "that not only analyzes biblical texts re children as it attempts to answer the question 'What is a child in the Hebrew Bible?' but also brings in contemporary issues on how children are romanticized in our culture. It is based on my Biblical research, service I do in Chicago with children who are

wards of the state, and service I did in a Guatemalan orphanage."

John R. Wilcox, Ph.D. 1977, has published *Revisioning Mission: The Future of Catholic Higher Education*. The book outlines the challenges Catholic colleges and universities face with diminishing numbers of clergy members on campus, and urges the formation of on-campus "mission communities," which Wilcox describes as diverse groups of faculty, administrators and staff committed to preserving the culture and heritage laid down by the founding religious congregations of Catholic colleges and universities.

1980s

Rienzie Eldred Christopher Perera, S.T.M. 1980, Ph.D. 1984, has been installed as the fourth Archdeacon of Galle, Sri Lanka, at a Service of Induction and Installation at the Cathedral of Christ the Living Saviour, Colombo. The Bishop of Colombo, Dhiloraj Canagasabey, presided. Perera was ordained as a priest of the Anglican Church in 1975.

Daisy L. Machado, M.Div. 1981, will step down as Academic Dean at Union effective June 30, 2013. She will remain on the Faculty as Professor of Church History.

Dawn McGuire, M.Div. 1982, has been appointed to the Clinical Advisory Board at Trevi Therapeutics, Inc., a drug development company. McGuire is a board-certified neurologist and Fellow of the Academy of Neurology, and serves on the faculty of the Neuroscience Institute of the Morehouse School of Medicine. She received her medical degree from the Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons.

Christopher H. Strayhorn, M.Div. 1983, has been board certified in Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Strayhorn is the medical director of Palliative Medicine and Supportive Care at Hospice at Home for Lakeland HealthCare, a not-for-profit, community-owned system of care

serving southwest Michigan. Strayhorn received his medical degree from Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. He is also board-certified in internal medicine and pediatrics.

Peter C. Bisson, M.A. 1984, was appointed the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in English Canada in May 2012. Coincidentally in Rome attending a leadership conference during the papal conclave, Fr. Bisson was able to be present in St. Peter's Square to welcome Pope Francis I when he appeared on the balcony for the first time.

Robert V. Taylor, M.Div. 1984, has published *A New Way to Be Human: 7 Spiritual Pathways to Becoming Fully Alive* (New Page Books April 2012) with a foreword by Desmond Tutu and endorsements from Deepak Chopra, Bernie Siegel, Nora Gallagher, **Tracey Lind, M.Div. 1987**, and others.

Lawrence M. Pray, M.Div. 1986, has published *Thresholds: Connecting Body and Soul after Brain Injury* (Ruder Finn Press, New York, 2012). "The book derives its purpose and story from the stroke that ended life as I had known and loved it in the fall of 2003," he writes. "A second stroke in early 2004 nearly gave the coup de grace." Pray shares insight into his journey to rediscover his sense of self, and recognize God's constant presence in times of extreme hardship and confusion.

James E. Hazelwood, part. 1987, was elected bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He arrived for his installation on September 29, 2012 at Trinity Lutheran Church on his Suzuki 1000, accompanied by a cavalcade of "Lutheran Lizards," a group of motorcycle enthusiasts from his home state of Rhode Island. Hazelwood will serve a 6-year term as bishop.

1990s

Emily Enders Odom, M.Div. 1990, assumed the responsibilities of Assistant Stated Clerk and Communications Coordinator for the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.), on a part-time, interim basis effective September 24, 2012. A teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Odom serves the Presbyterian Mission Agency as associate for Mission Communications, resourcing the offices of the Executive Director and Vocation.

Irene Monroe, M.Div. 1990, received the 2012 Spirit of Justice Award from Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) at the 13th annual Spirit of Justice Award Dinner on Friday, October 26, 2012 at the Boston Marriott Copley Hotel. A nationally renowned African American lesbian activist, scholar and public theologian, Monroe was honored for her contributions to the advancement of equality for LGBT people.

Wilma T. Jakobsen, S.T.M. 1997, has been installed as Rector at St. Jude's Episcopal Church in Cupertino, CA. The child of British and Danish immigrants in apartheid-era South Africa, she grew up with a world view of faith paired with social justice. She was ordained by Archbishop Desmond Tutu as the first female deacon in the diocese of Cape Town in the late 1980s. Later, she worked for Tutu as his chaplain for 19 months. Jakobsen holds dual citizenship in South Africa and the United States.

Davina C. Lopez, M.A. 1999, Ph.D. 2006, has been tenured and promoted to Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida.

2000s

Robert K. Bolger, M.A. 2002, has published *Kneeling at the Altar of Science: The Mistaken Path of Contemporary Religious Scientism*. He argues that much of the recent writing in science and religion falls prey to the practice of what he calls "religious scientism," or the attempt to use science to explain and clarify religious concepts. But religious concepts do better when their meaning is found in the context of their religious use, and in the end religious scientism harms rather than helps.

Norris Chumley, M.A. 2002, Ph.D. 2008, has won the prestigious Religion Communicators Council 2013 Wilbur Award for Best Radio Series, for his national public radio series, "Rethinking Religion: Harlem Renaissance – Music, Religion and the Politics of Race" (from Columbia University's Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life). The programs are in collaboration with Columbia University Professors Josef Sorett and Obery Hendricks.

Debra W. Haffner, M.Div. 2002, has published *Meditations on the Good News: Reading the Bible for Today*. She is an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, and the co-founder, President and CEO of the Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice, and Healing, a non-profit, multifaith organization.

Trevor H. Eppehimer, Ph.D. 2006, has been appointed Associate Academic Dean of Hood Theological Seminary. He has been Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Hood Theological Seminary since 2007. Prior to becoming Associate Academic Dean, he served as Director of the Masters of Theological Studies Program at Hood.

Shannon T. L. Kearns, M.Div. 2009, was ordained to the priesthood by the North American Old Catholic Church on January 19, 2013. Archbishop Michael Seneco presided. Founded in 2007, the North American Old Catholic Church has a mission of social justice, does not submit to the authority of the Pope, and is open to female and LGBT clergy.

Nicholas S. Richards, M.Div. 2009, has been appointed Executive Secretary of The Foreign Mission Board of the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. He most recently was an assistant pastor at Abyssinian Baptist Church (NY) under the **Rev. Calvin Butts, M.Div. 1975**.

Julia H. Burkey, M.Div. 2012, has been called as minister to First Church of Christ, Congregational in Middleton, CT. She is excited by the fact that the church is forward-thinking and has been "open and affirming," welcoming all sexual orientations, since the early 1990s.

In Memoriam

AS OF MAY 15, 2013

Alumni/ae

Harold Ranson Landon '38
Louis W. Schneider '38
Charles Schilling '38, '54
Eleanora Patterson Harman '39
W. Lindsay Smith Jr. '39, '55
James Scotland Jr. '40
Robert B. Frey '41
Roger L. Shinn '41, '51
Lauren Edgar Brubaker Jr. '42, '44
Frederick G. Plocher '42
Dorothea Smith Rodkey '42
A. Elizabeth Petrea Cauble '44
George W. Fisk '44
D. Hugh Peniston '44
Barbara Gerstenberg Prasse '44
Nancy Poore Tufts '45
Jane Utterback Weimer '45
Warren A. Firth '47
Lois Koon Fritz '47
Roger J. Steiner '47
John P. Stump '47
Ruth Tappan Bauer '48
Louise Brown Dengler '48
Dawn Saari Russell '48
Kwang-Hsun Ting '48
John E. Williams '48
Walter J. Harrelson '49, '53
Jean Schultz Novotny '49
Helen Hall Ostic '49
William D. Shively '49
Daniel W. O'Connor '50, '60
Rodney P. Scoville '50
Polly Pierce Kempes '51
Orville P. Ratzlaff '51
John D. Shaver Jr. '51
Donald M. Wilson '51
Paul J. Achtemeier '52, '58
Donald G. Dawe '52, '60
Thomas J. Liggett '52
Paul Marion '52
Richard E. Smeltzer '52
Veselin Kesich '53, '59
Joseph W. Baus '54
John J. Hamel III '54
Aharon Sapseizian '54
William R. Voelkel '54
Ralph K. Wodder '54
Arthur L. Brandenburg '55
Norma Hoyt Thompson '55
L. William Youngdahl '55
Seiichi Adachi '56
Beverly Wildung Harrison '56, '75
H. Jackson Forstman '56, '59
Hugh Jerome Leaming '56
Donald E. Morrison '57
Clarence M. Smelser '57
Ann Vlerebome Sorenson '57
C. Leland Udell '57
Harry Yeide Jr. '57
Arthur P. Caliendo '58
Philip C. Jefferson '58
Steven B. Rybolt '58
Willis Milton Stoesz '58, '65
Theodore A. Tietge '58
James S. Tiller '58
Carolyn Allen Wiester '58
Donald R. Broadribb '59
Stephen M. Panko '59
Walter P. Wink '59, '63
Allan W. Anderson '60
Emyrus Royden Weeks '60
Lee Daniel Snyder '61
Barrie D. Scopes '62
Ralph E. Stone '62
Judith B. Sykes Ardis '63
Paul T. Langston '63
Lewis A. Myers '63
Ivan R. Olson '63
Cynthia Ferguson
Schuneman '63
Rinaldo A. L. Walker '63
M. Jean Huffman '64
J. Richard Kerr '64
Eric H. Biddle Jr. '65
Charles R. McAnall III '65
Oscar J. Hussel '68
Joan B. Bockelmann '69
Jane Dewar Schaberg '70, '80
Loma R. Haines '72, '75
Charles Herbert Stinson '72
Bradley E. Rentzel '73
Linda A. van Arsdale
Lanier-Keosaian '76
Stephen Richard Coats '81
Blanche H. Hamilton '83
Ralph Gerald Del Colle '86, '91
Mark Barry DeCourval '12

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Daniel G. Ross
Arthur V. Savage
Gordon E. Smith
Frances R. Storrs
Frank S. Streeter
Charles Thompson
Leonette Wishard

Union Mourns Professor Emeritus Roger L. Shinn '41, '51



Distinguished ethicist and Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics Emeritus, Roger L. Shinn, died on Monday, May 13. He was 96 and had recently been admitted to hospice care.

Prof. Shinn, who first arrived at the Seminary as a student in 1938, began his teaching career at Union when Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich were still on the faculty. He taught from 1947 to

1949 and 1959–1985, and over the years was Instructor, Professor, Dean and Acting President at Union, where he succeeded John C. Bennett, President Emeritus, in the Niebuhr Chair. He was also Adjunct Professor of Religion and Society at Columbia University from 1962 to 1986, and taught at any number of other institutions while still at Union and after he retired. He also served terms as President of the American Theological Society, and the Society of Christian Ethics.

Roger and his wife Katharine celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary in November 2012. She survives him, along with their daughters and their families.

"Roger Shinn epitomized the ecumenical, analytical, and synthetic approach to Christian social ethics, always paying careful attention to what was happening in society and always asking how progressive Christians should think about it and what they should do about it. He taught that way, too, in a wonderfully good-spirited way."

—DR. GARY DORRIEN '78

Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics

Union Mourns Professor Emerita Beverly Wildung Harrison '56, '75



Internationally renowned scholar and teacher of Christian social ethics and feminist theory, Beverly Wildung Harrison died in Transylvania County Community Hospital in Brevard, North Carolina, on December 15, 2012. She was 80.

Prof. Harrison taught at Union Theological Seminary from 1967 to 1999 and retired as the Caroline Williams Beaird Professor Emerita of Christian Ethics. She was a beloved teacher, a brilliant

scholar, a fierce activist, a committed proponent of theological education, and a leader and founder of the field of feminist social ethics. Her humor, her ardently capacious intellect, and her undying belief in social justice, made us all better people.

Regarded widely by her graduate students and colleagues throughout the world as the “mother of Christian feminist ethics,” Dr. Harrison’s ground-breaking book on abortion, *Our Right to Choose* (1983) continues to be heralded by theological students and religious scholars for its fine-tuned feminist methodology and its thesis that women’s reproductive freedom is essential to not only women’s lives but moreover to the strength and integrity of the entire social order.

Dr. Harrison’s second book, *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics* (edited by Carol S. Robb, 1985), was another major contribution to the emerging field of feminist ethics and theory. One of the essays in it, “The Power of Anger in the Work of Love,” an adaptation of Dr. Harrison’s inaugural address as Carolyn Williams Beaird Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Seminary in 1980, has been translated into at least 8 languages and has been studied in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America as well as throughout North America as one of the most influential feminist essays ever produced by a religious scholar.


Beverly Harrison was on the faculty of Union Theological Seminary from 1967 until her retirement in 1999. In addition to working with several generations of students in Christian feminist ethics, Dr. Harrison lectured widely throughout this time. She was visiting scholar in theological settings in Seoul, Zurich, Hamburg, Johannesburg, Mexico City, Canberra, and Auckland.

In 2006, *Our Right to Choose* was published in Spanish and a celebration of this book was held in Mexico City by a Latin American chapter of Catholics for Choice, with Dr. Harrison as featured guest. In 2007 she received an award for her outstanding work by the American Academy of Religion’s Women’s Caucus. This January, Dr. Harrison was scheduled to receive the Society of Christian Ethics “Lifetime Achievement” Award, the second ever recipient of this distinguished recognition.

Dr. Harrison also wrote and taught extensively in the field of economic ethics. For more than thirty years, Dr. Harrison and her beloved life companion and theological colleague Carter Heyward collaborated in workshops, classes, and publications. Drs. Harrison and Heyward were among the co-authors of *God’s Fierce Whimsy: Christian Feminism and Theological Education* (1985). In it the authors argued that the basis of theological education and Christian theology needed to shift significantly so as to include the lives, experiences, and intellectual contributions of women of all classes, races and cultures.

In retirement, Beverly Harrison joined Carter Heyward and several other women in forming an intentional residential community of women, “Redbud Springs,” in the mountains of North Carolina. She remained active, insofar as she was able, in the work of justice. During 2012, she lived in a retirement community in Brevard, NC.

Bev is survived by Carter Heyward and the other members of Redbud Springs—Sue Sasser, Nancy Richards, Gerrie Kiley, and Jennifer Rouse—as well as countless close friends and associates throughout the world; by her brother Hal Wildung of Minneapolis; and her beloved nieces, nephews, great-nieces and great-nephews.

Memorial gifts may be sent to Union Theological Seminary, 3041 Broadway, New York, NY 10027 for the Beverly W. Harrison Lectureship. 





union days

OCTOBER 10 & 11, 2013

Union Days

October 10 and 11, 2013

Union Days is a time for alumni/ae, students, and friends of Union to reconnect with one another and with the Seminary. There is time set aside for those classes celebrating a milestone anniversary, with special recognition, this year, of the Class of 1963 commemorating their 50th reunion. Everyone returning to campus will enjoy meals together with faculty, a President's reception, time to remember classmates who have passed, and time to worship as a community, once again.

All of these activities are woven together with Union-caliber academic programing to create a very special two days on campus. This year's keynote address, "What time is it? What time is where you live?," will be presented by Larry L. Rasmussen, B.D., Th.D., Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics. There will be additional workshops and lectures given throughout the two days.

Union Days is also the time when the Alumni/ae Council honors four exceptional Union alumni/ae at the Unitas Award Ceremony, which is followed by a banquet.

Alumni/ae, faculty, friends, staff, and current students are always welcome to participate and share in the unique community time available during Union Days. We encourage all of you to make sure your e-mail and other contact information is current so that you can receive the latest news on Union Days and the many other activities taking place throughout the year. To update your contact information please e-mail: online@uts.columbia.edu.

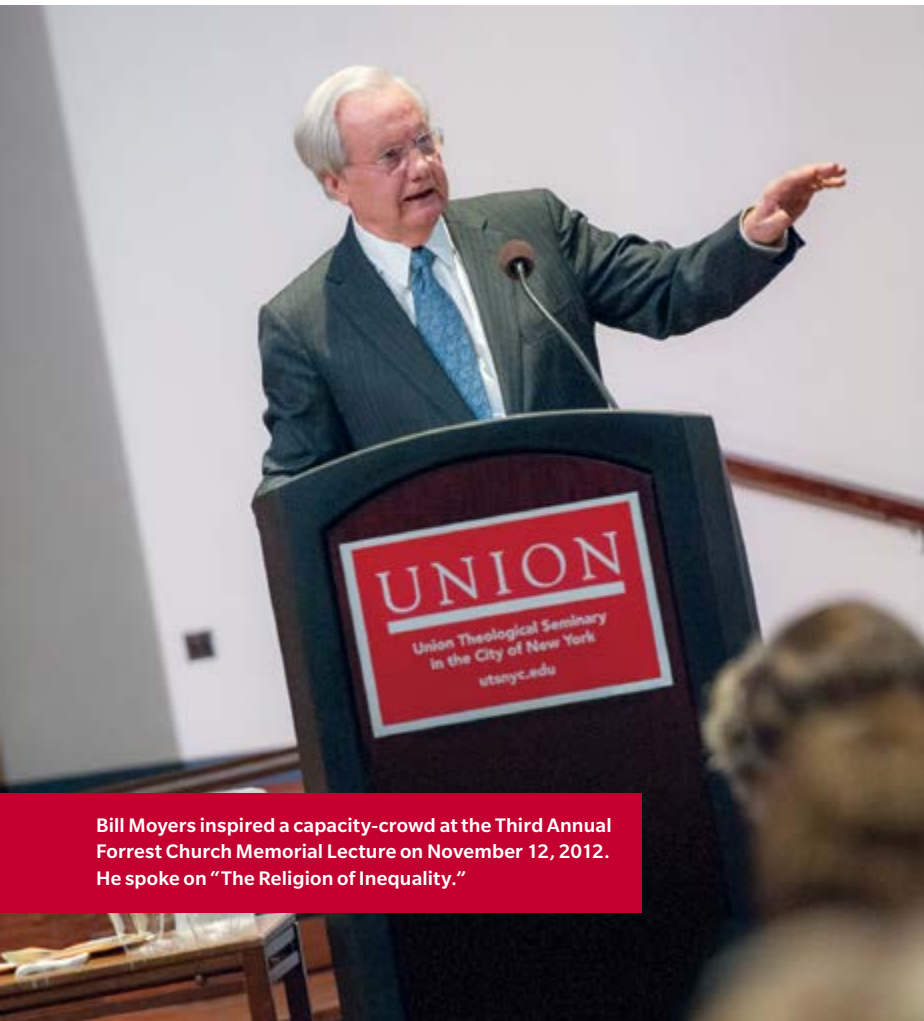
How to get involved

Are you interested in coordinating a time for your classmates or special interest group to gather during this year's Union Days? Do you have questions about the events planned for Union Days 2013? If so, contact Melissa M. Fuest, Director of Institutional Advancement, at 212-280-1419 or mfuest@uts.columbia.edu.

UNION

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3041 Broadway at 121st Street
New York, NY 10027-5792

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Bill Moyers inspired a capacity-crowd at the Third Annual Forrest Church Memorial Lecture on November 12, 2012. He spoke on "The Religion of Inequality."

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