

E-COMMUNICATOR

NO. 10

VANDERBILT DIVINITY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER February 2, 2009

WEEKLY CALENDAR

MONDAY, February 2

10:10 – 11:00 a.m. Religion in the Arts and Contemporary Culture

Art Room G-20 (details below)

TUESDAY, February 3

12:00 – 1:00 La Mesa

Common Room

12:00 noon "Religion and Politics in the African Diaspora"

Dr. Sandra Barnes

Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, Auditorium

WEDNESDAY, February 4

10:10 a.m. Weekly Worship Service

All Faith Chapel

12:00 noon "Religion and Politics in the African Diaspora"

Dr. Omar Ali

Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, Auditorium

THURSDAY, February 5

12:00 noon "Religion and Politics in the African Diaspora"

Dr. Juan Floyd-Thomas

Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, Auditorium

FRIDAY, February 6

9:00 am – 3:00 pm Turner Center Conference (info below)

Scarritt Bennett

10:10 a.m. Coffee Hour – Divinity Reading Room

12:10pm Eucharist Benton Chapel

For room reservations within the Divinity School please go to the Divinity portal

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/divinity/p/> and use the on-line room reservation form.

RELIGION IN THE ARTS AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Monday February 2nd / 10:10 – 11:00 AM / The Art Room (G-20)

"TAKE HEED, WATCH!: THE MEANING OF THE O'CONNOR STORY COMES LIKE A THIEF"

Michael Kreyling discusses the theological texture of Flannery O'Connor's fiction through the lens of her short stories "Everything That Rises Must Converge," "A Good Man is Hard to Find," and "The Displaced Person."

TURNER CENTER CONFERENCE

On February 6, 2009, Bishop Ken Carder will lead a one-day Turner Center conference 9:00-3:30 at Scarritt-Bennett Center on "Prophetic Ministry: Nurturing Communities of Justice." The topics of his presentations (see below) will be: "The Church as a Prophetic Community of Justice," "A Grace-Formed Community in an Economy-Formed World," and "A Reconciled Community in a Polarized World."

Bishop Carder is Professor of Pastoral Formation at Duke Divinity School. He is a Tennessean by birth and a Vanderbilt alumnus. He has also served as bishop of Mississippi (2000-2004) and the Nashville Episcopal Area (1992-2000). Registration is FREE for students. To register, please contact Danny Rhodes, danny.rhodes@vanderbilt.edu or 343-4073.

Prophetic Ministry: Nurturing Communities of Justice

Bishop Ken Carder

February 6, 2008

Scarritt-Bennett Center

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

What: Black History Month Symposium: "Religion and Politics in the African Diaspora"

When: February 3-5, 2009

Time: 12:00pm-1:00pm

Where: Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center, Auditorium

Presenters: Dr. Sandra Barnes (Tuesday); Dr. Omar Ali (Wednesday); Dr. Juan Floyd-Thomas (Thursday)

Institute for Seminarians and Rabbinical Studies

May 19-21 2009

Each year the Center for Christian-Jewish Understanding (CCJU) of Sacred Heart University welcomes 30 students from Christian and Jewish seminaries across the country for a three-day study institute to prepare the next generation of religious leaders to intelligently and critically carry the dialogue forward.

If you are interested in being considered for one of these positions, please register your interest with the associate dean's office as the first step in the nomination process. The deans will nominate 2 VDS representatives by the close of February.

The Center for the Study of Religion and Culture at Vanderbilt is pleased to announce the 2009 [Mafoi Carlisle Bogitsh University Seminar in Religion and Culture](#):

How Many Ultimate Realities Are There? Religious Diversity and The Trinity

John J. Thatamanil

Assistant Professor of Theology, Vanderbilt Divinity School

Tuesday, March 10, 2009, 7:00 pm

Benton Chapel, Vanderbilt Divinity School

Reception to follow in Tillett Lounge

Christian theologians have long sought a way to understand religious diversity without explaining diversity away. In this lecture, John Thatamanil will address religious diversity by arguing for a complex view of ultimate reality. He will appeal to three key terms--Mystery, Contingency, and Relation--and show how this particular "trinity" can help us understand and learn from the differences between Hindu, Christian and Buddhist traditions without erasing difference or dismissing unity.

Over the last two decades, this way of understanding religious difference has come in for severe criticism. In this model, the different experiences of "ultimate reality" or "the really real" do not tell us anything about what the Real is and so unity ultimately trumps diversity.

Two models have come to prominence since: 1) The different religions really have different ultimate realities in view. There is no one reality like God or Brahman behind the different religious traditions. On this view, religious diversity wins out over unity. There are multiple religious ultimates. 2) The ultimate reality is complex: it is neither one nor a sheer many. This particular family of approaches has been especially appealing to Trinitarian theologians for whom God is neither one nor many but one-in-many and many-in-one.

In this lecture, John Thatamanil will argue that this latter kind of approach is most adequate. He will talk about trinity by appealing to three terms--Mystery, Contingency, and Relation--and show how this particular "trinity" can help us understand and learn from the differences between Hindu, Christian and Buddhist traditions without erasing difference or dismissing unity.

Vanderbilt University Divinity School invites you to a

Community Breakfast

Thursday, February 12, 2009
7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Divinity Reading Room
Vanderbilt Divinity School

Featuring
Professor Paul Chang-Ha Lim

"Preaching Against Pharaoh: Liberation Theology from the Puritan Revolution to Reverend Jeremiah Wright"



Breakfast \$10
Reservations Necessary

Please RSVP to (615) 936-8453 or register online at www.vanderbilt.edu/divinity (click "Events") by February 9, 2009

Preaching Against Pharaoh: Liberation Theology from the Puritan Revolution to Reverend Jeremiah Wright

What connection is there between a cadre of English Puritans who preached against the reign of Charles I in the 1640s and Jeremiah Wright, popularly known as President Barack Obama's pastor? Most do not see any connection at all between: the "conservative" Puritans (they were most assuredly not!) and the liberal Reverend Wright. During this breakfast presentation, Professor Lim will discuss the theme of "Preaching Against Pharaoh" as an interpretive thread that connects these key "pulpiterring" efforts of some Puritan parliamentary preachers and Jeremiah Wright, both of whose "patriotism" was often questioned, reputations besmirched, and pulpits assailed and misunderstood. Liberation theology, Lim argues, has its origin in the revolutionary period of the 1640s where much of preaching was done "against Pharaoh," and it is this similar tendency that connects the Puritans with Reverend Wright.

Community Breakfast March 12, 2009
Vanderbilt Divinity School Refectory
7:30 - 8:30 a.m.

Stacey-Floyd-Thomas
Associate Professor of Ethics and Society

"I found God in myself, and I loved her fiercely": Womanist Literature
as a Resource for Ethics

In observance of Women's Month, our time together will focus on a choreopoem performance and discussion taken from Ntozake Shange's *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*. With this presentation of vignettes and accompanying conversation, this gathering will address how Black women's fiction aids in advancing the search for the imago Dei via an interlocking race-gender-class analysis that asserts the theological and moral dimensions of their lives in ways that undermine the dominant society's impositions upon them.

Relevant Religion Series

March 24, 31 and April 7, 2009
West End United Methodist Church
7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Annalisa Azzoni
Assistant Professor of Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures

Marriage at the Beginning: Marriage in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible

This series will examine different aspects (religious, legal, socio-economic) of marriage through a survey of ancient Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian sources and the relevant sections of the Hebrew Bible. The variety of literary and historical texts will reveal a complex picture of how this "institution" developed at the very beginning of recorded history.

Antoinette Brown Lecture March 26, 2009
Vanderbilt Divinity School Benton Chapel

Traci C. West
Professor of Ethics and African American Studies, Drew University

Lying on Women: Religion, Race, and Intimate Violence in the African Diaspora

The lecture will address intimate violence against women and girls who are often stymied by cultural myths about women's culpability. These myths work together with the lies the perpetrators tell. Christian religious beliefs can add to this problem or offer truth-telling resources that counter it. This lecture will focus on what it means to cross cultural, national, and historical boundaries to identify Christian activist strategies that confront this deceit as well as the violence, especially sexual violence, against women in Africa and America.
