

# p r a x i s

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I joined the Board of Trustees of Hartford Seminary 15 years ago. On June 30, I will step down after six years as Chair of the Board, an experience which has been one of the most rewarding of my life.

It was former Dean, Bill McKinney, now President of the Pacific School of Religion, who first got me interested in the Seminary. We both lived on the sixth floor in an apartment house in downtown Hartford. I had my senior year at Dartmouth free of classes to, among other things, read the works of Reinhold Niebuhr. Although a business lawyer by profession, I had long been interested in religion, ethics and interfaith affairs. So Bill and I had many conversations going up and down in the elevator.

## Conversations in the Elevator

*Reinhold Niebuhr,  
a chance encounter and  
the trip to Istanbul:  
Looking back on 15 years  
at Hartford Seminary*

**By Martin Budd**  
*Chair, Board of Trustees*

He encouraged me to get involved in several Seminary events, and so the dye was cast.

In looking back over the last 15 years, I am drawn to a paraphrase of Charles Dickens' opening lines of "A Tale of Two Cities" — much at the Seminary is the same and much at the Seminary has changed.

### The Changes

The two most important changes, I believe, are the Seminary's continuing and successful thrust to expand its national and international reach and the significant growth in its endowment. These two changes have been led by the two fabulous presidents whom I have been fortunate to serve with over the 15 years, Barbara *Continued on page 8*

## SUDAN

Hope for Survival,  
Harvest for the Future

*By Linda Beher*



Long before the convoy of visitors arrived at El Ferdous, the sounds of drums, chants, and singing reached across the woodland savanna. These were the sounds of welcome in South Darfur, Sudan.

**Above:** At Julha, a women's farm in South Darfur, Angelina longs to return home, "to see the ones we left behind." (UMCOR/Stephen Guy)

**Below:** Writer Linda Beher wears a *tope*, the traditional Sudanese woman's covering. (UMCOR)

Together with other United Methodist Committee on Relief workers and representatives of a large Ohio church that has partnered with UMCOR to fund a tools and seeds program for camp residents and their hosts, I was in South Darfur to meet camp and village leaders, see one of the 5,200 farms in production, and talk with residents about their experiences.

*Continued  
on page 4*







### Seminary Co-Sponsors Series on Faith in Film

Hartford Seminary and Real Art Ways, a Hartford arts organization, jointly sponsored nine films depicting different aspects of faith during the fall and into January 2006. The films were shown at Real Art Ways. After each film, a discussion leader led a discussion about the film among the film's audience. Shown here is a discussion held in November 2005. (Photo by Will K. Wilkins, executive director, Real Art Ways)

### Corrections

M. Philip Susag is a Corporator of Hartford Seminary. His name was omitted in the Annual Report, published in the December 2005 issue of *Praxis*. In addition, we are grateful to these additional donors to Hartford Seminary, for the period July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005:

Ms. Roseann Lezak Janow and  
Mr. Marvin R. Janow - Partner  
Mr. Edward J. Requardt '54 - Partner  
Dr. Martha B. Thornton '58 & '62 - Partner

## Wilson Named Chief Development Officer



Lawrence E. Wilson III, an experienced fundraiser and business executive, has been named Hartford Seminary's new Director of Institutional Advancement. He started January 23.

President Heidi Hadsell announced the appointment. Wilson, who had been director of major and leadership gifts at the University of Hartford, replaces The Rev. Scott Sheldon. Wilson currently is a special student at Hartford Seminary.

"I am so pleased that Larry will join Hartford Seminary, providing a seamless transition in Institutional Advancement," Hadsell said. "Larry brings a rich background in development, working with diverse organizations. His interest in theological education, as evidenced by his studies at Hartford Seminary, makes him an ideal person to lead the Seminary in our Institutional Advancement efforts. He can speak from the heart about our educational excellence."

At the University of Hartford, Wilson created and put into action cultivation, solicitation and stewardship strategies to build the university's donor base of alumni/ae, parents and friends with the capacity for major gifts.

Asked why he decided to come to Hartford Seminary, Wilson said, "My thirty-year career journey has been an eclectic one – from corporate management to entrepreneurship to academe to multicultural advancement to non-profit development. Yet through it all, I like to think my decisions and actions have reflected the everyday ethics that emanate from my Christian faith and deep love for my God. I made a conscious decision to make business my career and ministry my avocation when I was in college, with the prayer that someday I might recognize and yield to God's patient calling, and reverse the two."

"Working with the Institutional Advancement team and other staff, I look forward to bringing greater effectiveness to fundraising initiatives at the Seminary," Wilson said. "With God's help, as we advance our important mission, I am certain that we will broaden our donor base, and strengthen our traditional sources of funding as we simultaneously identify and capitalize on new ones."

Previously, Wilson was vice president for development at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles; director for marketing and development for the Mashantucket Pequot Museum; chief executive officer for the Eastern Pequot Indians (of which he is a member); director of admissions for the School of Visual Arts in New York City; and helped minority business management at General Motors.

Wilson has a B.A. in economics and music from Drew University and a Masters in Business Administration from the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

He is director emeritus of music ministries at the United Congregational Church, Pawcatuck, CT.

Wilson said he is joining Hartford Seminary because "I deeply sense that my having the privilege to bring my business acumen and experience to the Seminary is an important part of God's calling me to ministry. To be able to be helpful to the funding, growth and reach of the school while at the same time being nourished and fueled in its classrooms is truly God's gift to me."

He said of his studies at the Seminary, "I am excited to have the freedom to study at Hartford Seminary. It is a renowned and highly respected institution positioned on the cutting edge of social change. It is willing to risk bringing together the divergent views of people of various faiths in an effort to find the common ground that will serve as a foundation for understanding, tolerance and peace in a world yearning – indeed, desperate – for them."

Wilson, in his leisure time, enjoys music and theater. A church musician, he plays the pipe organ and jazz piano and enjoys singing Sinatra tunes. He acts in community theater, most recently in a production of "To Kill a Mockingbird" at Nutmeg Players in Clinton, CT.

Wilson attends Union Baptist Church in Mystic, CT, where he lives. He is married to Janice A. Wilson, a research librarian at Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, CT. The Wilsons have two children, Jillian Gloria Wilson and Lawrence E. Wilson IV.

## What are you reading this Summer?

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- **Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking**  
By Malcolm Gladwell
- **Brother Roger of Taizé: Essential Writings**  
By Marcello Fidanio
- **Fragrance of God**  
Vigen Guroian
- **Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace**  
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### A Special Evening of Theater



Left to right, Seminary President Heidi Hadsell, Susan Fay, and Valerie Harper.

Photo by Jennifer Schimmel

Corporators of Hartford Seminary, together with Trustees and members of the President's Council, attended the opening night of "Golda's Balcony," a one-person play starring Valerie Harper, at the Bushnell Center for Performing Arts in Hartford. The play focuses on the life of the late Golda Meir and her experience as prime minister of Israel. Afterwards, they joined Ms. Harper at a reception at the home of Susan and David Fay. Susan is a corporator of the Seminary and her husband David is executive director and chief executive officer of the Bushnell Center. About 35 people attended the performance and reception, which took place March 7.



Now, a year after UMCOR began its work in South Darfur, I am pleased to offer vignettes on that journey and explain some of the concepts that created an innovation in camp hospitality. You'll encounter Jane Ohuma, head of mission; Saba, a woman who remembers life before the war; and Angelina, one of the women farming at Julha where there was a bountiful harvest in November.

### A Journey That Began at Home

The journey to South Darfur really began on the campus of Hartford Seminary, where I received an M.A. in religious studies last June. The theology of inclusion I came to in my study here and the theology of humanitarian relief both boil down to three principles: commitment, relationship, and transformation. To summarize these:

Commitment is the framework of a humanitarian response to human-made or natural disaster - similar to the moral and faith commitments we make in living "the good life." It is the agreement to accompany a community through an interruption of such magnitude that it can't recover on its own. But the agreement to accompany means to reach sustainable solutions so the community can eventually make its own way. Interdependence is the goal.

Relationship is the heart of the humanitarian response - much as relationship to God is the heart of Christian living. Relationship involves the acts of careful listening to all voices in the community, asking what people need and providing that generously, and then reflecting together on what has been provided and next steps. Fairness and give and take are the goals.

Transformation is the spirit of humanitarian response. Humanitarian aid works a bit like God's grace. No one has to earn the right to aid. As a participant in the international code of ethics for humanitarian agencies, UMCOR refuses to tie a particular religious or political agenda to the offer of aid. Wholeness of recovery is the goal for all beneficiaries, regardless of religion, gender, ability, or place.

### Harvest for the Future

On an August morning Jane Ohuma pointed to a large map of Sudan in the Khartoum office of the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Her arm swept from west to east as she explained to a visitor the plight of displaced people in Darfur, seven hundred miles from the capital city. Ms. Ohuma is head of mission for one of UMCOR's newest programs, operations in Sudan that began in February 2005.

Funded by a large gift from Ginghamburg United Methodist Church, Tipp City, Ohio, and other grants, the agriculture program based in the Al Daein region of South Darfur already had crops in the ground. Some 5,200 families were working the 4-hectare farms. At an average five persons per family, that totaled well over 25,000 beneficiaries.

A program like this is a bit like a puzzle. Needs and resources at a variety of levels, like interlocking puzzle pieces, must be fit together. Most importantly, Ms. Ohuma stressed, solutions to hunger and livelihoods "must address people's need and be people driven." The United Methodist program does just that.

For example, to strengthen the local economy UMCOR contracted with local blacksmiths to make hoes and other handheld tools for the displaced farmers, rather than purchasing them from a factory. Displaced people have no land of their own. So area landowners offered parcels of land in exchange for a portion of the sorghum, millet, cowpeas, melon, okra and peanuts.

An agronomist on UMCOR's field team showed the families how to "intercrop," or mingle, their plantings to reduce risk of crop loss to disease or predators. At one farm sorghum, groundnuts and okra have been intercropped.

Good rains are also part of the equation—and this season they were excellent. The agriculture ministry of the Sudanese government predicted a bumper crop.

A successful harvest reaches into the future, Ms. Ohuma pointed out, providing enough seed for a new season, cash or barter capability, and sufficient food until next harvest.

There is just one planting season in Darfur.

The displaced would like to go back home, said Ms. Ohuma. Instead they have joined Sudan's uprooted. For them, "back home" is uninhabitable. In Kubda, or Zalinge, or Muterr—towns in the Sudan's largest state of Darfur—the wells are filled in with dirt or fouled with corpses. All the houses were looted and burned, and schools and community health clinics razed. The people lost everything they had.

They fled in the hundreds of thousands in all directions—west to Chad, eastward and southward to the region of their state known as South Darfur. Some fled from the southern states. Now they live in settlements and camps for the displaced.

Their host communities, towns within short distances of the camps, are almost as impoverished as they are. Some have fled more than one place, hoping for safety. Ms. Ohuma said, "The



At El Ferdous, the sounds of welcome in South Darfur: schoolgirls chant, "Welcome UMCOR. Welcome church of Ohio." (UMCOR/Linda Behrer)

farms offer more than an occupation for those who are working them. They offer hope for their survival."

UMCOR aid workers have also constructed a reception center at El Ferdous, located in the same vicinity as the farms. Typically, said Ms. Ohuma, a camp population is rather fluid as residents enter and leave. The reception center allows a registration process that will facilitate future UMCOR follow-up with the camp residents as they eventually prepare to return home.

The Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) and the World Food Programme recently named the reception center a "model" for all other camps, said Ms. Ohuma. HAC is the government monitor of all humanitarian activity throughout Sudan.

"Model development is a useful strategy in humanitarian service only if it is accompanied by extension into a program," said the Rev. Paul Dirdak, UMCOR director. "The UMCOR-built reception center at El Ferdous is a model we hope to see extended not only in our own work but by others," he said.

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The farms are another kind of model. When new arrivals see "how beautiful the crops are," Ms. Ohuma beamed, and what has been accomplished in a short time, they want to participate as well. HAC officials were also pleased at the rapid progress and extended the agency's mandate to work in Al Daein for another year.

UMCOR is also distributing emergency supplies to camp residents. Plastic sheeting becomes a roof that provides shade from the sun and protection from the rains. Jerry cans serve as water collectors from the water points in both host communities and camps. Blankets provide warmth on the cool savanna evenings.

Originally from Kenya, Jane Ohuma worked for a time in Kosovo and then in Eritrea before joining UMCOR. "I left Eritrea because the programs were the same year after year," she reflected. "In UMCOR Sudan there is so much to do. We have the potential to be a high flyer in Sudan."

### Saba Recalls Life "Before"

In quiet Arabic Saba recounted her story of life before the war for guests at the Khartoum office of the United Methodist Committee on Relief. By "before" she meant before men on horseback plundered and shot up rural Zalinge in West Darfur, Sudan. Some of Saba's family fled eastward on foot, and by lorry when they were lucky.

For Saba the gunmen put a face on the war that over decades has displaced millions like her—at the United Nations some say as many as four million, the largest number of internally displaced people in the world.

Making the near-thousand-mile trek to Khartoum were Saba and her three sons, ages two to seven, and her two brothers. They faced dangers of banditry and mechanical breakdowns on the road. Now they live in Mayo, one of several camps for displaced persons in the capital. Saba hunts for work by going door to door. She earns a few dinars as a domestic or laundry worker.

A member of her extended family introduced Saba to UMCOR. Since February 2005 UMCOR's new office in Sudan has implemented agriculture programs in South Darfur, helping people like Saba's parents to regain their self sufficiency. As part of its normal practice UMCOR staffs its headquarters in Khartoum and its field operations in South Darfur with local workers.

Saba recalled a vastly different life on the family land. Before the war blew up in Zalinge, her father was a traditional farmer there. He raised goats and cows not for the market but to meet family needs. When Saba left, four sisters stayed behind to care for the parents. Not much remains of the old ways. The animals were stolen or run off by the gunmen, wells were polluted, houses burned, people killed. Still, Saba's wish is to return home.

### El Ferdous Models United Methodist Hospitality

On a braided track barely discernable from the floor of the savanna in South Darfur, a convoy of pick-up trucks and high profile vehicles picked its way southwest from Al Daein in the early morning. Each truck bore the white and blue flag of UMCOR, smartly snapping in the light breeze.

Headed to El Ferdous, the convoy forded several rushing watercourses and slid through beds of mud. At every bend in the track, every driver "hooted," or honked, to warn approaching vehicles. The 40-mile drive took two and a half hours. Stretching before the convoy: the eternal

reaches of the Sudan savanna, a horizon unpunctuated by any landform, an almost unearthly green, a pewter sky.

The displaced persons camp at El Ferdous and its host community have a total population of about 30,000. The camp is one of five where UMCOR has programs in this region.

The El Ferdous camp has become something of a model of camp coordination for this part of South Darfur. The reception center, an UMCOR innovation, is described as the only "humane" reception center in the Darfur region. Hospitality is important to residents of both host community and camp, who join together in welcoming visitors with dancing, chants, music, drumming, and speeches from community leaders.

Under a roof of grasses and reeds woven in a complicated diamond pattern, new arrivals provide information about their home towns, their families, and their needs during the registration process. A leader shows new family members to the temporary gotia, or houses, inside a protected compound. They will live in one of the gotia until they learn where to choose a site for their own house and build a home using cut branches, grass and reeds found near camp as well as plastic sheeting and mats from UMCOR. Community leaders also point out the necessities: water station, pit latrine, and food distribution area.

Since its installation in June 2004, the reception center has hosted some 20 to 25 households a month. Information collected at the center is shared so that the most vulnerable households can receive what they need not only from UMCOR but from other international agencies working in the area.

### At Julha, A Harvest of Hope and Longing

A light rain stirred the fronds of millet and the serrated leaves of ground nut plants that cover the red sand of Julha, a women's farm in Al Daein, South Darfur.

About a dozen women cultivated their ground on an August morning. Some of them bent to the hoe with a child wrapped artfully on their backs in a tight sling. They'd already carried water to the camp in Jerry cans supplied by United Methodist Committee on Relief. Their seed came from UMCOR, too.

And the hoes they were using were hammered out on an open fire by local blacksmiths near El Ferdous. Near the end of the day, the women will carry firewood in bundles of 20 to 30 sticks, bound with cords of reeds, perfectly balanced on their heads. Just another day at Julha, which means forehead.

Teaching women to be self-sufficient is a first step in a community's turnaround after decades of instability. Women can influence the nutrition of entire families, for instance. When they gain the confidence of learning new farming skills, they transmit that confidence, the skills and even extra income to their families. In a culture where the life of a woman is undervalued, these are important strides forward.

Each head of household at Julha received two malwas of millet to plant in the sandy soil and one malwa of sorghum to plant in clay—altogether enough for about four hectares. Using their rakes, weeders, hoes, axes and muk muks, a local hand tool common on the farm, the women cultivated about 4 hectares. *Continued on page 6*



## Sudan

Continued from page 5

Further building the economy were the activities of threshing, provided by non-farm households; packaging seed for selling at local markets; and peanut seed storage in anticipation of the next growing season. The women set aside a portion of their harvest so that other families could benefit from the program in the next growing season.

Farms like Julha dot the savanna of this part of South Darfur where



Drummers stage a dance and ritual for visitors at El Ferdous, a camp for displaced persons in the Al Daein region of South Darfur. (UMCOR/Linda Beher)

UMCOR started the seeds and tools program in 2005. Many residents, like these women, lived at the farm sites, since the plots are too far from the camp at El Ferdous to walk back and forth. A few gotia are scattered around the edge of the field.

Angelina put down her hoe and adjusted her son to her other shoulder. She pronounced her name with a hard “g,” a remnant of colonial schooling in her home state of Bar El Gazal, south of where she stood now at Julha. Her story, told so unflinchingly, was like many others: murdered relatives, sacked village, fleeing in fear. And like other displaced persons in South Darfur, Angelina longs to go home.

What is at home that she doesn’t have at Julha? “The people we left behind,” she said. “We left when we were very young. We would like to see those we left.”

Linda Beher earned a Master of Arts degree at Hartford Seminary. She is Communications Director for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). This article is adapted with permission from UMCOR and United Methodist News Service publications, February 2006.

# Wisdom and Humility

By Heidi Hadsell

***This is a gripping story with a happy ending. Jonah was a good guy, a reluctant messenger of God; the people of the great city of Nineveh, stuck in evil ways, listened to him, changed their ways, disaster was averted, God was merciful to them. A good story, a good morality play relevant perhaps for the people of the United States, or elsewhere, and the evil ways which have become habitual to us.***

And yet, I am bothered by the text. I am bothered not by the outcome of the story, I like happy endings. I am not bothered by what God did, nor what the people of Nineveh did, but by what we do with these kinds of stories. I am suspicious, because at the end of the day, here it is again, an example of one kind of religious thinking, one kind of logic, that when used simplistically gets religious people into so much trouble, all kinds of terrible trouble, often especially with each other. Why so much trouble? Not because of the good fortune of people like the people of Nineveh, but because of the flip side of such fortune. According to often used, facile logic, if God is good to Nineveh because Nineveh is obedient to God, then when others have misfortune it must be God’s wrath, God’s judgment because of their disobedience. If we are successful, rich, and powerful, it must be because God is rewarding us, therefore if we are poor and weak and miserable it too must be because God is punishing us. If the hurricane hits my neighbor’s house and not mine, it must be because I have a special relationship with God, because I am right, and holy, and my neighbor wrong and evil. In this way we seek to know with certainty how God acts in the world, and we bend God’s presence to our design, rather than seeking to conform to God’s design.

On the one hand of course, this simplistic “if...then” logic is very common, and human, and as such, very understandable. It can even be a kind of harmless, magical thinking that one sees frequently in children. Many of us will remember walking home from elementary school looking down at the sidewalk chanting. “If you step on a crack, you break your mothers back,” or standing at the bus stop freezing to death, and saying things to oneself like if I count to 10 the bus will come, or, in school, pleading, oh God, please, please, please, if you give me an A in this class, I will never, ever start my paper the night before it is due again.

In Portuguese such pleading with God is called a “prece” which refers to the request one makes to God, asking God to do something specific, like healing oneself or one’s loved one. If God does what one hopes and asks for, then the person pleading promises to do something like mount the steps of the church on his knees, give money to the poor, carry the cross in the Easter procession, or whatever else. This kind of pleading is so common that in many Brazilian Catholic churches there are whole rooms full of wooden arms, legs, heads, hands, locks of hair and so forth, brought by the faithful to represent the parts of the body that need God’s healing or the promises made to God if God does the healing. Rooms and rooms full of graphic illustrations of peoples’ private bargains with God. This kind of logic is primitive perhaps, often desperate, full of the pathos of human existence, and therefore comprehensible and worthy of compassion and understanding.

The theology of prosperity so common in many parts of the world, including the United States, follows a similar logic. The basic logic is, if I worship this God, and give generously of the little that I have, then God will reward me with wealth and security, as I can see God has done for others. Here God becomes an agent for financial success. Following this logic, if I am not successful, I must not be worshipping correctly, I must give more money to the church, or something else is wrong with me.

Nineveh’s happy ending to the contrary, this logic is often far from harmless. In the theology of prosperity it turns God into an instrument for success, and makes the leaders rich and keeps those filling the churches poor. And elsewhere in human social life it occasions and has occasioned considerable violence and enmity between human beings, each ready to read the will of God to their own benefit and thus often, more often than not perhaps, to the detriment of the other.

In fact, in the social world, this reasoning, this logic can represent religion at just about its very worst. Biblical texts are full of the drama of people acting out in God’s name... blaming the other person, the other clan, the other group, claiming one’s own good fortune to be God’s will, and claiming to

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know what God wants or to be sure of how God is acting in human history. And our own histories are similarly full of such behavior, the consequences of which we live with every day, and with which our children and grandchildren will also live.

As luck would have it, I read the text for this sermon in the lectionary, right about when Pat Robertson proclaimed to the world, that Sharon’s ill health was the punishment of God because Sharon had dared divide the land of Israel. So, already suspicious of this kind of if...then logic, I had to ask myself, what is so very different about the story of Jonah, Nineveh and God, from the story of Pat Robertson, Sharon, and Israel? Robertson, claiming to know just what God intends, and just how God is acting in the world, although of course he quickly recanted, when it became clear that his business deal – a kind of a Christian theme park in the holy land as I understand it, was threatened by his proclamation.

What can one do with such logic, such outlandish and destructive claims, besides condemn their simplistic nature, and lament the behavior they

separate it from the kind of mechanistic and often destructive logic I have just described. The if/then pattern of this story can be understood in the light of another pattern at work here, a pattern which is something like: believe, repent, and follow.

This text is first of all an affirmation of God’s presence in human life, and human history. It is a story of God’s involvement with humanity, God’s care for God’s creation. It is thus an invitation to believe in this God, who is present in human life, in ways that are almost always mysterious to us. Whatever else we might say about this text, we cannot read it and affirm that God is either indifferent to humanity or that God is absent altogether. The text, however, even while it underlines God’s presence in human history, emphasizes the difficulty we humans have in figuring out just how, just when or just where or through whom God is present. Jonah ran from God, trying in every possible way to escape the onerous task of messenger. The people of Nineveh ignored God’s presence entirely, going about their own ways and habits, so thoroughly did they ignore God’s presence, that God needed to

Haven’t we had enough of people claiming to have God on their side and therefore claiming that God is against the other? Aren’t we already sick to death of the violence and injustice perpetrated in the name of a God we claim is love?

provoke? The pronouncements of people like Pat Robertson are enough to want to join those who seek to banish religion from the public square altogether. Haven’t we had enough of people claiming to have God on their side and therefore claiming that God is against the other? Aren’t we already sick to death of the violence and injustice perpetrated in the name of a God we claim is love?

But here is the text, and here is the logic of the text and we have to grapple with it, and by so doing, grapple too with these very same temptations and tendencies in ourselves and in our religions. And of course, upon reflection, the text isn’t quite as simple as I have presented it here. In the text we have several elements which unlock it and

send poor Jonah as a messenger, in order to get through to them. Listening to Jonah, the people of Nineveh were able to believe in God’s presence, and God’s involvement in their history.

Once believing in God’s presence, God’s active concern, and God’s judgment, the people of Nineveh were able to understand that they had become so wrapped up in their own habits, customs, assumptions, and sins, that they were no longer able to hear God, or discover God’s presence or God’s will. They were, in short, no longer able to be in relationship with God. With belief, they were able to see that their arrogance, their lack of humility, had become an impediment to their ability to discern God’s presence in their lives.

The story makes clear that relationship with God, the ability to discern God’s presence, requires not just transformed behavior, but an inner transformation as well. Here we often use the word repentance, which implies a recognition that one is often wrong, often mistaken, often self-centered. And it also implies, in some way, genuine sorrow for straying from the path, and resolve to do better in the future. Repentance requires humility, and occasions the ability to change – to find a new way forward.

The emphasis of this story is on Nineveh. God does not invite the people of Nineveh once they are back on the right path, to judge or to admonish others. It is enough that the people of Nineveh come to terms with themselves, and concentrate on their own sins, their own relationship with God, that they undergo their own process of repentance, and try to figure out how to proceed in faithfulness. Religious people proclaim many things. But the power of God’s presence in the world is not in what we proclaim about God’s relationship with others, about what God does for us and against our enemies, but in how God’s presence transforms our own inner selves and our behavior.

So, how is this story different from that of Pat Robertson pronouncing God’s will?

This story is different because it centers precisely on that which is absent in Robertson’s pronouncement: the textured context and complex process required to begin to discern the presence of God in our midst, and to be transformed by it. It is a story not about humans using God as an instrument for our will, but about relationship with God, in belief and not empirical certainty, it is about the inner movement of repentance and humility, the recognition of the impediments we put between ourselves and God, and it is about how we go astray and then how we find our way back to the path and take it up again.

May God grant us the wisdom and the humility to believe, to repent, and to follow God’s way.

*This seminar was delivered at the Monday chapel service held at the Seminary on January 23, 2006.*





Brown Zikmund, affectionately known as BBZ, and Heidi Hadsell. It was BBZ's idea to diversify the Board. She proposed to add two Jewish trustees, of

which I was one, and two Muslim trustees.

She also started the important reduction in the amount the Seminary takes from its endowment each year to support current operations. When she began, we took more than 7% each year of the endowment and now with Heidi's persistence we are down to taking the standard 5% or less. Heidi not only has

internet. This semester the Seminary will have served 44 students this way. Our outstanding Dean, Ian Markham, who came from the United Kingdom, is another example and motivating force of the Seminary's broadening reach and recognition. Ian has helped to establish a joint PhD program with the University of Exeter in England. He has expanded the international distribution of *The Muslim World* by arrangements with Blackwell, the famous English book and magazine seller, and has started two more international journals edited at the Seminary and distributed by Blackwell.

BBZ initiated a relationship with the government of Indonesia, the nation with the largest Muslim population and significant issues relating to Christian-Muslim relations. Under Heidi's aegis the Seminary has continued its relationship with Indonesia, developed significant relationships in Turkey and has begun exploring relationships in Singapore, Malaysia, and

from \$3.4 million in 1991 to \$4.3 million in 2006 and increase the number of students during that period from 196 to 296. It also has permitted the Seminary to reduce the percent of the endowment it draws for annual operations from more than 7% in 1991 to the standard 5% or below in 2006, and this reduction in the draw in turn has helped the endowment grow. The significant increase in the endowment also provides the Seminary with a substantial cushion should hard times ever plague the institution.

### The Unchanged

What remains the same over the past 15 years is perhaps even more important than the changes described above, the strength of the core faculty, the dedication of the administrative staff, and the Seminary's commitment to serving the greater Hartford community.

The Black Ministries certificate program and what is now called the Women's Leadership Institute are as strong as ever. During the 15 years, the Board, aware of the ever growing Hispanic population in the greater Hartford region, strongly encouraged the President and the faculty to establish an Hispanic Ministries certificate, which has been done with considerable success. These activities are now collected together with others in what is called the Center for Faith in Practice.

Now called the Hartford Institute for Religion Research (HIRR), our research center, focused on the sociological study of religion, also is as strong as ever. Its focus has shifted slightly recently from congregational studies to the subject of practical theology, but it remains a national leader in its chosen field.

The Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian Muslim Relations' ever expanding activities and international reach has been mentioned above. The Muslim Chaplaincy program which it has instituted, among other things, has provided chaplains to the local community, thus filling an important communal need.

### The Future

Explaining to the world what Hartford Seminary is about since the 1970s has been a challenge. We are certainly not a traditional seminary. Our new tagline "exploring differences, deepening faith" is some help. Heidi's grouping the faculty that inhabits "the white building" under the rubric of the Center for Faith in Practice also helps. As a result, we can speak of our three centers, the Macdonald Center, HIRR and the Center for Faith in Practice. But clearly more is needed. The Trustees, during our retreat this March, spent considerable time on marketing issues and the need for a marketing plan.

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It appears that this will be the next step in the Seminary's thrust to expand its national and international reach and recognition and dealing with the challenge of explaining who we are to the world. Helping to explain who we are it appears will be a central part of the tenure of the next Board Chair. I just hope that she or he finds the job as rewarding as I have.

*Martin Budd is a Partner in the Stamford, Connecticut office of the law firm Day, Berry & Howard. He is a former chair of the Board of the Charter Oak Cultural Center, a multicultural organization in Hartford, and is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Anti-Defamation League and Chair of its National Outreach and Interfaith Affairs Committee.*

### What is there to say about Marty Budd?

His enthusiasm is infectious; it has energized us all to strive for excellence and relevance at Hartford Seminary. His advice, on so many issues, has been right on, insightful and sensitive. And of course there is the fact that Marty is not shy about expressing his opinion, more than once sometimes. We certainly know where he stands.

Seriously, I have been honored to work with Marty since I became president in 2000. Marty is a corporate lawyer, comfortable in the biggest boardrooms and involved in the most complex legal transactions. Yet he understands the non-profit sector, especially our world of theological education. He has worked hard to educate himself about both theological education in general and Hartford Seminary in particular. He is engaged in interfaith dialogue himself, with Abrahamic partners, and is a strong advocate of interfaith dialogue as a path to better understanding between peoples. He has urged rigorous fiscal discipline, yet at the same time he has understood the importance of quality – in our faculty and in the programs we offer.

When Marty arrives at the Seminary, he is like a well-dressed whirlwind. He comes equipped with ideas, ready for debate and discussion. We welcome him, knowing that we should expect an energetic conversation. I also appreciate that not only is he a leader but he also delights in learning. Happily, Marty's tenure is not ending after 15 years of service. He will continue as Chair Emeritus on the Board, so we won't lose his wisdom, his wit or his friendship. The Seminary community is blessed by his interest in us, may it continue always.

*Heidi Hadsell  
President, 2000 - Present*

## Cronin Nominated

William J. Cronin Jr. has been nominated by the Governance Committee of the Board of Trustees to become the next chair of the board.

Cronin currently is first vice chair of the board. He said of the nomination, "It is an honor to be asked to chair the board of this exquisite institution. When I am on this campus I know there is hope for the world. I see people of multiple faiths studying together, sharing their faiths, learning from one another...even praying together. It's a unique and wonderful institution."

Cronin is president of Cronin and Company, Inc., a marketing and communications company in Glastonbury, CT. He lives in Hartford.

### When Martin L. Budd was nominated

for the Hartford Seminary Board of Trustees there were some questions. Was it good for Hartford Seminary to have a Jewish member of the Board? There had been a Jewish trustee years ago, but not in recent memory. If our legacy and strength was the Study of Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations, some people wondered if the election of a Jewish trustee would be misunderstood by our Muslim friends. Well, we took the risk and never regretted it.

Not only was Marty deeply committed to the efforts of Hartford Seminary to enable "faithful living in a multi-faith and pluralistic world" (as the Seminary purpose statement put it ten years ago), he knew what that meant intellectually. From his honors study of the Christian theologian Reinhold Niebuhr as a college student, to his knowledge and appreciation for the ultra-orthodox Lubavitch movement within Judaism, Marty Budd was unpredictably refreshing.

He was also fun to work with and very practical. I remember during the years when he lived in Stamford but was still based in the Hartford offices of Day, Berry and Howard, he would return my phone calls on his mobile car phone (Yes, he had a hands free speaker phone) during his homebound commute. Our phone calls allowed us to tend to Seminary business, but also gave us time for some great conversations about contemporary religious issues.

Marty chaired the search committee that brought Heidi Hadsell to Hartford and eventually became chair of the Board. We were repeatedly blessed by his deep commitment to religious understanding and hospitality.

*Barbara Brown Zikmund  
President 1990-2000*

*What remains the same over the past 15 years is... the strength of the core faculty, the dedication of the administrative staff, and the Seminary's commitment to serving the greater Hartford community.*

continued this fiscally responsible trend, but also has effected what the Board, faculty and administration agreed six years ago should be the main thrust of the Seminary's efforts, expanding its national and international reach and recognition.

Heidi herself came from the headquarters of the World Council of Churches near Geneva, Switzerland where she headed the World Council's ecumenical activities. Under her guidance the Board now includes a trustee from Switzerland, one from the Caribbean, one from Virginia, one from Michigan, one from New York, one from Worcester, MA, and one from Boston. In order to accommodate this geographical diversity, we have reduced our Board meetings to two, each lasting a day and a half, with an additional day-long retreat. In addition, setting an historical precedent, Heidi arranged for us to have our Board meeting last May in Istanbul, Turkey as guests of the Muslim Gulen community.

Another aspect of this thrust of bringing the Seminary's contributions to wider audiences has been the faculty's willingness to undertake providing courses on the

Syria. Also, plans are now being made to explore relationships on the European continent where issues of Christian-Muslim relations unfortunately regularly make the front page of our newspapers.

The Board's geographic diversification, our meeting in Turkey, the international experience of the President and the Dean, the increase in our students from abroad, and our relationship with communities in an increasingly number of diverse countries are all elements in the Seminary's broadening national and international reach over the past 15 years. At a number of convocations and graduation ceremonies I have noted that the Seminary's increasing attempts to spread far and wide what it has to offer is in keeping with its traditional roots as a missionary institution. Its mission now is bringing greater dialogue and understanding in the religious context to the world, and it is ever more actively engaged in this mission.

The other major change at the Seminary is the considerable growth in the endowment, from \$23.9 million in 1991 to \$45.1 million in 2006. This has helped the Seminary to increase its annual budget



# New Research Debunks 11 Myths About Megachurches

According to a groundbreaking research study just released by Leadership Network and Hartford Seminary’s Hartford Institute for Religion Research, many of the most widely held beliefs about megachurches could not be farther from the truth.

The Megachurches Today 2005 survey is the most thoroughly researched study of the Protestant megachurch movement in the United States. Since June 2005, more than 1,800 churches were contacted by e-mail, phone and mail, with complete data for more than 400 qualifying congregations received, tabulated and analyzed.

According to Warren Bird, Leadership Network’s Director of Research, “Based on the results of this survey, we are able to conclude that there are at least 1,210 Protestant churches in the United States today with average weekly attendance of over 2,000. That is nearly double the number of megachurches that existed five years ago.”

While tremendously significant as a cultural study and as a “how to” guide for large churches, the survey also is instructive for churches that are anything but “mega.” Scott Thumma, Professor of Sociology of Religion at Hartford Seminary and primary architect of the survey, said, “I am absolutely convinced that megachurches have blossomed, at least in part, because they have responded creatively to the new needs and interests of people in a new cultural reality. There is much to learn from megachurches—and it isn’t all about being big.”

As Dave Travis, Executive Vice President of Leadership Network, said, “Not a week passes without megachurches figuring prominently in one or more national news stories. During 2005 alone, four megachurch pastors had books on the New York Times bestseller lists. And the late Peter Drucker called the rise of megachurches the most important social phenomenon of the late 20th Century. The Megachurch Today 2005 survey provides the perspective that to date has been missing from most reporting on this movement.”

The wide-ranging survey includes data on the many attributes that together define the nature and impact of megachurches in our society. Collectively, the results debunk 11 of the most common beliefs about megachurches.

In terms of affiliation, the greatest number of megachurches are nondenominational (34 percent), Southern Baptist (16 percent) or Baptist, unspecified (10 percent). The remainder are scattered among Assemblies of God, United Methodist, Calvary Chapel, “Christian,” and other Protestant denominations.

The regions with the greatest concentrations of churches are south Atlantic, Pacific and western Central. Every region of the United States has some megachurches. The phenomenon is spreading outside the Sunbelt states.

Downloadable copies of the complete Megachurches 2005 Today survey (in both html and PDF versions) are available at [hrr.hartsem.edu](http://hrr.hartsem.edu). A 15-minute podcast discussion of key survey findings is also available.

**1 Myth: All megachurches are alike.**  
**Reality:** They differ in growth rates, size and emphasis.

**2 Myth: All megachurches are equally good at being big.**  
**Reality:** Some clearly understand how to function as a large institution, but others flounder.

**3 Myth: There is an over-emphasis on money in the megachurches.**  
**Reality:** The data disputes this.

**4 Myth: Megachurches exist for spectator worship and are not serious about Christianity.**  
**Reality:** Megachurches generally have high spiritual expectations and serious orthodox beliefs.

**5 Myth: Megachurches are not deeply involved in social ministry.**  
**Reality:** Considerable ministry is taking place at and through these churches.

**6 Myth: All megachurches are pawns of, or powerbrokers to, George Bush and the Republican Party.**  
**Reality:** The vast majority of megachurches are not politically active.

**7 Myth: All megachurches have huge sanctuaries and enormous campuses.**  
**Reality:** Megachurches make widespread use of multiple worship services over several days, multiple venues, and even multiple campuses.

**8 Myth: All megachurches are nondenominational.**  
**Reality:** The vast majority belong to some denomination.

**9 Myth: All megachurches are homogeneous congregations with little diversity.**  
**Reality:** A large and growing number are multi-ethnic and intentionally so.

**10 Myth: Megachurches grow primarily because of great programming.**  
**Reality:** Megachurches grow because excited attendees tell their friends.

**11 Myth: The megachurch phenomenon is on the decline.**  
**Reality:** The data suggests that many more megachurches are on the way.

## Enrollments Up

Hartford Seminary has seen record course enrollments in both the Fall and Winter/Spring semesters. The number has increased from 274 in Fall 2001 to 349 in Fall 2005 and to a total of 325 enrollments in Winter/Spring 2006.

“The pick up in enrollments is due to an increase in student body, particularly the increase of full time students,” said Karen Rollins, Registrar at Hartford Seminary.

The number of full time students equaled 19% of the student body in the Fall 2005 semester. Looking back at Fall 1999, full time students made up only 5.5% of the student body. “While the conventional thought might be that the increase of full time students is largely attributed in international students (who are required to be full time), international students only make up 36% of the full-time students,” Rollins said.

## In Memoriam

*The Hartford Seminary community lost the following beloved members recently. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their friends and families.*

**The Rev. Dr. Robert F. Berkey** (Ph.D., ’66), 75, of South Hadley, MA, died in December. Dr. Berkey graduated from Otterbein College in Ohio, received two advanced degrees from the Graduate School of Theology at Oberlin College, and earned a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Hartford Seminary. Dr. Berkey was President of the Seminary’s Alumni/ae Council from 1996 to 1998, and served on the Board of Trustees during those years. He came to South Hadley, MA, in 1958 to teach in the Religion Department of Mount Holyoke College, retiring in 1999. He was chairman of the department for many of those years. He also taught courses occasionally at Smith College, Northampton, MA, and at Trinity College, Hartford. While the focus of his career was in teaching, as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, Dr. Berkey was a familiar guest preacher in many area churches. He found great joy in the pastoral friendship and fulfilled that calling by serving as interim minister in several local churches. Because of his commitment to Biblical studies, Dr. Berkey had an abiding interest in the countries of the Middle East. As a frequent tour leader/lecturer for Maupintour’s “Lands of the Bible” travel program, he led group study-trips to the Middle East and twice co-taught a Smith/Mount Holyoke traveling seminar, “In the Steps of St. Paul,” that visited New Testament sites in Greece, Turkey, Israel and Rome. He was co-author of two books: *Christological Perspectives* and *Christianity in Dialogue*. In addition to his wife Carolyn (Miller), Dr. Berkey is survived by two sons: Jonathan Berkey of Davidson, N. C., and Mark Berkey of Richland, WA, and their families.

**The Rev. Robert L. Edwards**, 90, of West Hartford, a member of Hartford Seminary’s President’s Council and former minister of Immanuel Congregational Church, Hartford, died in January. Mr. Edwards was among the many direct descendants of Thomas Hooker and Jonathan Edwards. Mr. Edwards was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Princeton University, and earned an M.A. in history from Harvard University and a Master of Divinity degree from Union Theological Seminary. During World War II he served five years as an Army intelligence officer in this country and Europe, ending as a Captain and being awarded a Bronze Star. After graduation from Union he was called to be a minister of the First Congregational Church of Litchfield where he remained for seven years. He came to Immanuel in 1956, retiring as Minister Emeritus in 1980. He was instrumental in establishing Immanuel House, Hartford, a large apartment complex for low income elderly. He was President of the Greater Hartford Council of Churches (now the Capitol Region Conference of Churches), the board of

the Connecticut Institute for the Blind/Oak Hill, and his Princeton Class. He also served as a trustee of Hartford Seminary, a Corporator of the United Church of Christ Board of World Ministries, and a board member of the Connecticut Prison Association (now Community Partners in Action), and briefly of the Bushnell Park Foundation. Mr. Edwards wrote several widely used hymn texts and was the author of four books, including a biography of Hartford’s famous pastor Horace Bushnell, *Of Singular Genius, Of Singular Grace*, and his own autobiography, *My Moment in History*. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Sarah A. Edwards, author and former adjunct professor at Hartford Seminary; a daughter Edith H. Edwards; and a son, the Rev. James D. Edwards.

**The Rev. Herbert Smith**, 73, of Hartford, who attended Hartford Seminary Foundation, died in December. Pastor Smith attended the Bentley School of Accounting in Boston, receiving a certificate in 1952 before studying at the University of Hartford, Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hillyer College of Hartford and Cleveland State University. Pastor Smith was an associate minister of the Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Hartford. Previously he pastored at 3rd Baptist Church, Suffield, CT; St. James Baptist Church, New Britain, CT; and Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, Cleveland. He is survived by his wife, Sheila Worley.

**Harriet Vardis Schwager** (B.D., ’28, and Ph.D., ’30) 101, of Watertown, WI, died in January. Known to her friends and family as Vardis, Dr. Schwager was born in Hartland, Maine. She was a graduate of Bates College in Maine before receiving her two Hartford Seminary degrees. Dr. Schwager was the first woman to receive a two-year fellowship from the Seminary to study abroad, spending two years studying in Marburg, Germany. Dr. Schwager worked alongside her husband, the Rev. Joseph Schwager, who was a Moravian pastor serving six Moravian churches. In the 1930’s and ‘40’s, she wrote a column for *The Moravian* about putting one’s faith into daily practice – she explained how to be a Christian wife and mother. Later she was adjunct professor at Temple University, executive director of the Women’s Department of the Greater Philadelphia Council of Churches, director of Christian education at Lake Mills Moravian, and secretary of Watertown Moravian. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy invited leaders of religious and welfare organizations to meet with him; as president of the Moravian Women, Dr. Schwager was among those invited. She was a member of Watertown Moravian Church, Church Women United, American Association of University Women and the Friday Review Book Club, all of Watertown. She is survived by three daughters, Maida Clever of Allentown, Pa.; Odette Adams of Watertown; and JoAnn Cleland of Phoenix.



## Faculty Notes



**Ibrahim Abu-Rabi'** is on sabbatical this semester. He received a Fulbright Scholar grant to teach "Nation-Building,

Multiculturalism, Secularism and Religion in Contemporary Singapore" at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.

**Efrain Agosto's** book, *Servant Leadership: Jesus and Paul* (Chalice Press), came out in late November 2005. He lectured on it at the Seminary on January 26 and has preached and spoken on leadership issues in various churches and organizations since then, including Immanuel Congregational (February), Church of St. Mary (March) and the Christian Conference of Connecticut board meeting (March). In March, Agosto did a workshop on leadership at a Stewardship conference in Worcester, MA, and a Latino Leadership Summit in New Jersey. Along with Bishop Jeremias Torres of House of Restoration Church, Agosto introduced a group of local Hartford leaders to Hispanic Pentecostalism as part of the Hartford Religious Landscape series. He responded to a study on secularism in the Latino community at a Trinity College forum in March and delivered an address on "Who are the Publics for Theological Research" at an Association of Theological Schools conference on theological research in Pittsburgh in February.

**Dale Bishop** participated in a forum sponsored by the Middle East Institute of Columbia University in December on the role of missionaries in the Middle East. Papers presented at the forum will be gathered in a forthcoming book to be published by Columbia University Press. He preached at First Congregational UCC in Rhinelander, WI, and Union Congregational UCC in Three Lakes, WI during February and March. Also in March, Bishop presented a workshop on "Our Muslim Neighbors" for "Celebration VII," the UCC New England Women's Gathering in Burlington, VT, and led an event for clergy of the Middlesex Association of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC in Glastonbury, CT.

In March, **Steven Blackburn** spoke at the Plantsville Congregational Church on "Islam and Christianity: Two

Abrahamic Religions" as part of their Lenten series.

**Kelton Cobb** participated in the January term "Building Abrahamic Partnerships" course at the Seminary. He began his spring sabbatical in February to pursue research on a new book that examines historic blunders in the church's past and how these came to be recognized by Christians and addressed. In March, he attended a Wabash Center meeting on "Educating Clergy," and gave a paper on H. Richard Niebuhr and Said Nursi at a workshop in Istanbul.

**Carl Dudley** preached at the United Methodist Church of Hartford in January. He coordinated the Seminary's eight-week series on religion in Hartford, "The Hartford Religious Landscape from Within: On Site, In Person," in February and March. Dudley lectured on Congregational Studies for Orthodox Churches at Hellenic College, Brookline, MA, in February; participated in a conversation of the Congregational Studies Project Team in Miami Beach in March; and consulted with the Presbytery Executives, Synod of the Northeast, PCUSA, in March. Also in March, he was the speaker for the Monmouth Presbytery, New Jersey.

In December, **Heidi Hadsell** preached locally at two congregations and published an article, "The Vigorous Practice of Being Citizens" in *New England Watershed*, December 2005-January 2006. Hadsell traveled to Geneva, Switzerland in January to attend a meeting of the Committee on the Content of Ethics Education, Interfaith Council on Ethics Education for Children, Arigatou Foundation. In February, Hadsell attended the World Council of Churches Assembly in Porto Alegre, Brazil. She made presentations on (1) Interfaith Theological Education at Hartford Seminary, (2) the Content of Ethics Education for the Interfaith Council on Ethics Education for Children, and (3) her new book *Beyond Idealism: A Way Ahead for Ecumenical Social Ethics* which she edited with Robin Gurney and Lewis Mudge and for which she wrote a chapter. In March, Hadsell attended the Globethics.net board meeting in Beirut, Lebanon. At a workshop there co-sponsored by the board and the Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue, she presented a paper on "The Use of Scriptures for Conflict Resolution in a General Christian Perspective." Later in March, she spoke on "The Role of Religious Minorities in Pluralistic

Societies" at the Centennial Conference of the American Waldensian Society in New York City.

**Uriah Kim** finished a chapter to be included in the second edition of *Judges and Method* (ed. Gale Yee; Fortress Press; forthcoming), wrote an article, "Making Enemies Out of Neighbors," for Zion's Herald and wrote a review article, "Time to Walk the Postcolonial Talk," of *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* for Reviews in Religion and Theology. In December, Kim gave a public lecture at Hartford Seminary entitled "King Josiah's Death: The Politics of Interpretation and Identity," which was based on his book, *Decolonizing Josiah*. In February, he gave a lecture on Hebrew Bible at Saint Joseph College and in March he gave a lecture on an Asian American approach to reading the Bible at Yale Divinity School. Kim also participated in the Educating Clergy Conference sponsored by Wabash Center in March.

**Yehezkel Landau** took part in several meetings of the Connecticut Coalition to Save Darfur. In December, he spoke on "Peace as a Religious Issue in the Holy Land and the Middle East" at Trinity Episcopal Church, Newport, RI. In January, Landau was guest preacher at the Martin Luther King Day memorial service at Williams College, Williamstown, MA. Landau led a seminar for two Muslim Ph.D. candidates on the subject "Particularism and Universalism in Jewish Tradition: Biblical, Rabbinic, Medieval, and Modern Texts" in February. His March speaking engagements included: A presentation in Manhattan entitled "A Religious Zionist Peace Perspective: Halakhic and Political Aspects" at a Sabbath gathering of 300 Orthodox Jewish university students sponsored by Yeshiva University; a presentation on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a group of Jewish and Muslim students from Wesleyan University in advance of their joint trip to Istanbul and Jerusalem; a lecture on Islam, Christianity, and interfaith relations as part of a conversion-to-Judaism course at Temple Beth Shalom in Manchester, CT; a speech about the Open House Center for Jewish-Arab Coexistence in Ramle, Israel, at Temple Shalom in Auburn, ME; a panel discussion on "Dialogue Now! The Urgent Need for Abrahamic Peacebuilding" at Woodfords Congregational Church in Portland, ME; and a talk at Boston University on "The Religious Dimension of Israeli-Palestinian Peacebuilding."

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**Worth Loomis** has been participating in meetings of the Kazanjian Foundation, the Hartford Courant Foundation, Mayor Perez's Future Workforce Investment System, and Myron Congdon's project to aid youth in the Asylum Hill area. As Associate Development Officer, Loomis is helping Lawrence Wilson, director of institutional advancement, meet the Seminary's constituency.

Speaking engagements for **Ian Markham** were: (January) As consultant to Leeds Metropolitan University in Great Britain, Markham addressed the staff, faculty and trustees on "Islam in the Modern World." Two graduates of this university were involved in the July 7 bombings in London. Markham was the keynote speaker on "Religious Diversity and Theological Education" at the Theological Consortium of Columbus, Ohio. He offered a series on "Comparative Religion" at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Fairfield, CT. (February) Markham traveled to Istanbul to deliver a paper on "Said Nursi and the State" at the Center for the Study of the Risale-i Nur. He spoke on "Sexuality and the Church" at the First Congregational Church in Watertown, CT. (March) Markham lectured on "Will Episcopalians be Left Behind?" at the adult education forum at St. James' Church, New York City. His publications included: Response to Steven Kepnes in *Iqbal Review: Journal of Iqbal Academy of Pakistan*, April, October 2005; "Truth and Toleration: Hebblethwaite, Hick, and Bediuzzaman Said Nursi," in Julius Lipner (ed.) *Truth, Religious Dialogue and Dynamic Orthodoxy*; and "Global Peace and Justice: The Christian Perspective" in *Policy Perspectives*, April 2005.

**Ingrid Mattson** returned from her fall sabbatical having completed much of her book, *The Qur'an and its Place in Muslim Societies*. Before returning to teaching, Mattson spoke in Colorado Springs at a NORAD-USNORTHCOM conference, "Exploring the Dynamics of Militant Extremism." Mattson guest lectured in the January "Building Abrahamic Partnerships" class, and this semester Mattson is teaching "Introduction to Islamic Law" on-line. In February, Mattson appeared on Public Broadcasting System's NewsHour to comment on the controversy around the 12 cartoon images of the Prophet Muhammad printed in a Danish news-

paper. In March, Mattson and Islamic Chaplaincy Program students met with Chaplain Administrator Susan Van Baalen and four other chaplains from the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

**Doreen McFarlane**, Adjunct Professor of Languages, has written her first book, *The People are Holy: the History and Theology of Free Church Worship*, with Graydon Snyder. It was published last fall.

During December and January, **James Nieman** reviewed and acted on more than one hundred grant applications as a board member of the Louisville Institute. During February, he finished editing the most recent issue of the *International Journal for Practical Theology*, for which he is English-language co-editor. This issue will include lead articles on practical theology in Argentina, and a practical theology assessment of research in church leadership and administration. He also began a semester-long review of the Doctor of Ministry program in his role as its director. More recently, the Lilly Endowment awarded Hartford Seminary a \$50,000 grant for the "Discerning Theologies" project that he will direct. During March, he presented drafts of the opening chapters of a new book in practical theology during a working group meeting held at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. The book is being co-authored with Kathleen Cahalan.

In 2005, **Wayne G. Rollins**, Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies, published a book review of Matthias Beier's *A Violent God-Image: An Introduction to the Work of Eugene Drewermann* in the on-line publication of the Society of Biblical Literature's Review of Biblical Literature. In May, Rollins delivered the opening lecture at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City on "An Overview of the Work of Walter Wink" in celebration of Wink's contribution to biblical interpretation. In November he chaired a section on "Personality Development in the Biblical Context: Heart, Soul, and Mind" in the Psychology and Biblical Studies Section of the Society of Biblical Literature. Late summer saw the publication of his article in French translation on "A Psychological Reading [of the Bible]" in a volume entitled "Guide des Nouvelles Lectures de la Bible." In October and November as part of a "Season of Conversation on Diversity and Inclusiveness" sponsored by the Task

Force on Inclusiveness at the Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford, Rollins preached on "Lessons from the Ark for An Inclusive Church in 2005" and in subsequent weeks delivered lectures at morning and evening sessions on "The Bible, Inclusiveness, and You" and "The Bible, Gays and Straights, and You."

In early January **David Roozen** traveled to St. Louis to consult with the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod's Blue Ribbon Commission on Restructure and Blue Ribbon Commission on Mission Funding. Two weeks later he traveled to Florida for a three-day meeting of the Interdenominational Executives Group, a peer support and learning community of chief executive officers from ecumenically oriented North American denominations. Immediately upon his return to Hartford, he shared in the leadership of the opening session of Yehezkel Landau's week-long, Building Abrahamic Partnerships. In early February Roozen provided leadership for the opening session on Mainline Protestantism of the "Hartford Religious Landscape from Within: On Site, In Person" series, offered in partnership with Leadership Greater Hartford and the Program on Public Values, Trinity College. The end of the month saw the publication of the first issue of Leadership and Transformation during his tenure as editor. L&T is the electronic newsletter of the Seminary's Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership.

**Jane Smith** was the moderator in December for "Conversations with Our Neighbors of Other Religions: How Faith Shapes our Lives," at Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Hartford, in a program co-sponsored by the Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding and Hartford Seminary. Her speaking engagements included: "Reflections" for Service of Lamentation, St. Patrick/St. Anthony Church, Hartford, in February and five talks in March: "Women and Islam," Greater Waterbury American Association of University Women, Prospect Public Library; "Immigration and Religion," Adult Forum, Presbyterian Church, Hartford; "Islam in Greater Hartford," Islamic Association of Greater Hartford, Berlin, with Imam Ali Antar and Chaplain Sohaib Sultan; "The Faith of Islam: Continuity and Contrast?," School of Social Work, Greater Hartford Campus of the University of Connecticut, West

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Hartford; and an address to the Muslim Student Association, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

During the past few months **Scott Thumma** has focused on megachurches and the media. In December, he finished a six-month study of megachurches in the United States. He released an initial summary report of the information in late January. Following this release Thumma received a flurry of press and media attention. The survey was mentioned in more than 100 newspapers and magazines, radio programs, TV shows and Internet blogs. Thumma gave interviews to press associated with the Wall Street Journal, the Dallas Morning News, USA Today, Christian Science Monitor, Atlanta Journal and Constitution, CNN, AP and several religion wire services, as well as media in Great Britain, Japan, Australia and France. He has also accepted invitations to speak at several places on his new research which can be found at [http://hrr.hartsem.edu/org/faith\\_megachurches.html](http://hrr.hartsem.edu/org/faith_megachurches.html). This research increased the web traffic to the Hartford Institute web site by 100% for the first quarter of 2006. Thumma presented a paper at the regional Sociological Association meeting in Boston in February, participated in the Faith Communities Today planning meeting and organized and chaired a group of Lilly Endowment funded web sites in Virginia. In March he spoke at a conference on small churches and then presented a talk on Evangelicalism for the Religion in Hartford project.

**Miriam Therese Winter's** reflection on the challenges of being Catholic was published in the January edition of The American Catholic. In February she visited Texas Lutheran University in Seguin (near San Antonio) to give a keynote lecture on "Poetry as a Means of Social Change" at the university's annual Philosophy/Theology Symposium and to preside and preach at chapel.

In December, **Cynthia Woolever** participated in a consultation with the American Bible Society related to congregational practices. In January, she led a day-long intensive workshop for the Episcopal Diocese of New York with clergy/lay leader teams from sixteen parishes as part of a renewal effort underway in the diocese and led a day-long intensive workshop for the Timothy Project, an effort to revitalize congregations by the UCC Massachusetts Conference. Clergy and lay leader teams from ten congregations participated as well as congregational coaches, consultants, and conference staff. Woolever worked with the Episcopal Church Pension Group to launch a national study of Episcopal parishes through use of the U.S. Congregational Life Survey, whose goal is a denominational portrayal of the unique strengths of the Episcopal Church and their local congregations. In January, she also reviewed a journal article for the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion. In March, Woolever co-authored three articles published in the Journal of Beliefs and Values, a special volume on the International Congregational Life Survey, edited by Mandy Robbins: "What Do We Think about Our Future and Does it Matter: Congregational Identity and Vitality," "The Gender Ratio in the Pews: Consequences for Congregational Vitality," and "Fast Growing Churches: What Distinguishes Them from Others."

## Carpenter Foundation Awards Seminary \$90,000

The E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation has approved a \$90,000 grant to Hartford Seminary's Congregational Relations Program to support scholarships to bring Christian international students to the Seminary to study interfaith dialogue.

The grant, payable over three years starting in January 2006, is conditional on the Seminary demonstrating that it is able to raise the balance of the funds necessary to fund the full scholarship program for 15 students.

The Congregational Relations Program brings international Christian students from countries with high Muslim populations to Hartford Seminary for a graduate certificate in Interfaith Dialogue or Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations.

The goal of the program is to broaden the perspective of future Christian leaders in overseas churches to better relate to their Muslim counterparts. These students leave the Seminary with the skills and knowledge to engage in productive interfaith dialogue at home.

In addition to their formal studies, students in the Congregational Relations Program are embedded in a local congregation where they experience American Christianity first hand.

The program is appealing to these local congregations because it provides a way for their parishioners to experience global mission in a personal way.

In applying for the funds, President Heidi Hadsell wrote, "We have already made two successful recruiting trips to Lebanon and Indonesia where several strong candidates have expressed an interest in studying at Hartford Seminary. We are very pleased by the interest of these prospective students and the enthusiasm of local congregations. In fact, the program has already strengthened our rapport with the local churches."

"We are grateful to the Carpenter Foundation for their support of this program," Hadsell said. "In these troubled times, our effort to encourage dialogue between Muslims and Christians is beginning to bear fruit, and this support will allow us to continue this important work."

## BMP, PMH Awarded \$14,000 for Scholarships

The J. Walton Bissell Foundation, a local foundation that strengthens families and communities, has awarded \$14,000 to Hartford Seminary to provide scholarship support for students in the Black Ministries Program and Programa de Ministerios Hispanos.

BMP seeks to strengthen, support and empower urban clergy and laity. It is a national model for building the leadership, training, and preaching skills of laity and clergy in the urban church.

PMH offers clergy and laity education exercises for personal and community enrichment. The program, taught in Spanish, has classes designed to help clergy and lay leaders strengthen the faith and witness of churches in Hispanic and Latino communities.

## Lilly Endowment Awards \$50,000 Grant

Hartford Seminary's Hartford Institute for Religion Research has received a \$50,000 grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to develop research tools that will identify theologies in congregations. The project, entitled "Discerning Theologies," will be directed by Dr. James Nieman, Professor of Practical Theology at the seminary.

Nieman said that the project "will design new forms of research that local church members can use to understand accurately the complex world of their own congregations and then direct those insights to produce healthy changes."

In this way," he said, "the project is a good example of practical theology, which seeks to understand and strengthen the discipleship and ministry of churches, so they can enact a more faithful Christian witness in the world."

An interdisciplinary group of five scholars will meet over the course of two years to develop the research methods, combining their own insights with those of invited advisors and consultants.

Nieman explained the reasoning behind the project: "Many approaches to congregational studies have treated the congregation as an organization exactly like any other. The result has been an unfortunate distance from the theological discourse central to churches, an undervaluing of the theological roles and claims within congregations, and an inability to connect such discourse with either a broader public discourse or larger theological traditions.

"More basic still, from a research perspective we do not know which methods would actually clarify the theological character of congregations because there has been little attention to theology as the focus of careful study in churches. Those few cases where such methods have been offered are either unusable by local participants or subjective in what counts as theology.

"For these reasons, congregational studies must be reshaped so the congregation is affirmed as an expression of theology whose central practices involve forming and embodying its distinctive discourse and worldview. This requires naming what substantively counts as theology and how this can be accurately and usefully uncovered in diverse practices, especially those contributing to the identity and purpose of the church.

"At heart, this means we are trying develop new methods that are just as disciplined as other current research strategies, but able to encompass a more nuanced appreciation of local theological character."

The project will develop materials for use by the leaders and members of congregations. These will initially be described in journal length articles, with a larger intent of collecting these into a handbook or a resource collection.

The project's evaluation process will yield insights that affect the educational ethos of Hartford Seminary, especially through its Doctor of Ministry degree program, as well as the research agenda of the Hartford Institute for Religion Research, including its congregational research projects.

## Learning About Religion in Hartford

In February and March, Hartford Seminary offered an innovative series on "The Hartford Religious Landscape from Within: On Site, In Person," with faculty at Hartford Seminary, Trinity College and the University of Connecticut as instructors. Participants studied the eight largest faith traditions and movements in the region: Mainline Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Historically African-American Churches, Judaism, the Conservative Evangelical Movement, the Hispanic-Pentecostal Movement, Islam and Unaffiliated Believers. Participants gained an understanding of the religious landscape in Greater Hartford, including history and growth; location and size of congregations; worship patterns, basic beliefs, and unique features; and current issues facing leaders and members. Carl Dudley, Professor Emeritus of Church and Community, organized the series. Information from the presentations will be available on the Seminary website, [www.hartsem.edu](http://www.hartsem.edu).



Shown here is Rabbi Stephen Fuchs, senior rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel, West Hartford, speaking to the class. Below, the class tours the Beth Israel synagogue.





# Will time halt before we are halted by time?

## Reflections on inter-religious dialogue

By Marcia Black

In 2005, I had the opportunity to attend a week-long, intensive program at Hartford Seminary, entitled Building Abrahamic Partnerships: An Interfaith Community of Learning for Jews, Christians and Muslims. The program was taught primarily by Yehezkel Landau, an American-born Israeli, and Imam Yahya Hendi, a Palestinian currently residing in this country. Other gifted Rabbis, Imams, and Christian religious leaders were present as instructors and participants, as well as lay people from all three faiths. The following talk was given at the Jewish Community of Amherst, during Shavuot, a holiday in which we celebrate the receiving of Torah at Sinai.

I begin my talk tonight with a prose-poem written by Naomi Shihab Nye, a Palestinian-American woman, who grew up in St. Louis, Missouri; Jerusalem; and San Antonio, Texas. She writes,

*I was thumbing through a childhood picture album, its vintage red cover embossed with the golden word PHOTOGRAPHS, wondering exactly when and how all the pages let go of one another. They were still stacked, but no longer chronological or bound at the seam. I used to dream of having a loose-leaf life (as opposed to a spiral notebook kind of life) and guessed those old black and white photographs must have heard me.*

*Here I am wearing a polka-dotted headscarf, soberly pushing a... baby carriage....Holding and being held. With neighbors who disappeared into the world and were never seen by us again. With baby brother freshly home from the hospital. With grandparents who died....Here are the friendly immigrants who frequented our address and the concrete steps everybody fell down and the trees that may or may not still be rooted in the deep, silent ground.....*

*I think of the invisible pictures between the pictures, and under them. What was said that made us all look that way at just that moment? The gleam of particulars. My life, anybody's life. I've looked at albums belonging to people I barely know and could swear I recognize people in their photographs. Isn't that what happens with poems? When we let the luckiness come in.*

*In one scene my sleek-skinned father and I are digging in a garden with pitchforks.....The mystery of remembering has added its own light to the garden. Whatever existed then has deepened, been forgotten or restored in some other form. We planted our voices. We planted the things we feared and hoped they'd go away. We ourselves were going away, but each day felt like a whole world, rich and round and thick with dreams. Where are all those days no one took a picture of? Maybe they're in your album. (Words Under the Words, The Eighth Mountain Press, Oregon, 1995)*

I love this poem. It describes for me what it was like during those eight packed days, sharing scriptural, theological, and personal stories with Muslims from Palestine, Pakistan, Egypt, Holland, the United States of America, Christians from Singapore, Burma, Portugal, and these United – or disunited – States of America, and Jews from Israel and from here. And it describes for me a certain way that I understand Torah as the ongoing, living revelation/revolution streaming through each of our lives.

“When we let the luckiness come in.” That is how I felt, sharing deeply with people who, in another place, another time, I might have perceived as too dangerous to encounter. Lucky. Graced. Blessed. That is how I felt.

I must say, at the outset, that I am a particular kind of Jew, a Jew who knows only fragments of our rich, deep, and varied tradition. I grew up Reform, with parents who never questioned the value of being Jewish but at the same time never questioned the value of assimilation. Although I did study and become a Bat Mitzvah, my family never attended shul except on the High Holy Days, and never lit Shabbas candles. What I now know

about Judaism, and what I pass on to my children, has come from my own intense and impassioned study, a study guided by rabbis I have encountered along the way, as well as by rabbis who have passed on but lend me their guidance none the less.

Because my study has been suffused with such poignant yearning, and with such keen awareness of what has been lost, the Hasidic creation metaphor of the shattering of the Divine Being holds much sway with me. For me, these are as accurate a rendition of truths as we are going to find: the shattering of the divine vessel means that divine sparks are everywhere; it is our sacred obligation to find these sparks in all people, all situations, all nations, and raise them up for unification, so that the shattered, Holy One, our God, can once again become whole, Echad. This metaphor of shattering is also for me a truth about the Jewish psyche and the Jewish soul in the diaspora; the diaspora itself a metaphor of the human soul in the 21st century. We come to know ever more deeply the nature of God through this divine process of ingathering. Gathering in the sparks from all peoples compels us to ask what wisdom has been held by each religion that is now essential to the entire world. We no longer can afford to claim a privileged position, or assert a hierarchy of religious truth.

When I read the Sefat Emet’s teachings about the living well-spring of Torah that is within us, I do not just hear “within all Jews”. I read the Hasidic teachings about the ongoing nature of revelation within each of us, and I think this means within all people. Although I hold our Holy Book as sacred, at the same time I hold it as incomplete; as a terribly human story about a flawed people’s relationship with God. Because so many of my friends are secular Jews, I find myself trying to explain the sacredness of Torah. And what I say is – you take any of our lives, yours, mine, those we read about in Torah, and within each of these lives, all the mysteries of creation are hidden.

I looked around at the Muslims in the room with me at Hartford Seminary, I heard fragments of their stories, and I heard Torah. I learned that the stories of Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Hagar, Moses, and Jesus are all in the Qur’an, as well as the stories of Ishmael and Muhammad. I learned that the binding of Abraham’s son is in the Qur’an, although the son is Ishmael rather than Isaac. I became so intrigued, hearing these stories: what other stories are missing from our sacred texts? Suddenly I felt the way Naomi Shihab Nye describes in her poems: *I think of the invisible pictures between the pictures, and under them. ... I’ve looked at albums belonging to people I barely know and could swear I recognize people in their photographs.* This is how I felt as I listened to the Muslims and Christians tell their stories, sacred stories from scripture and sacred stories from their lives. I could swear I recognized them. And I was so glad to be hearing the stories that had been written out of my scriptures, the stories that had “*deepened, been forgotten or restored in some other form.*” I recognized a truth about the way Torah was written in Naomi

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Nye’s words, “We planted our voices. We planted the things we feared and hoped they’d go away.” I felt – perhaps now is the time we can finally say – we do not want these stories to go away, we don’t fear them any longer. We want to see the pictures beneath the pictures, hear the words beneath the words. Perhaps now we can say, “*Where are all those days no one took a picture of?*” And we can acknowledge that some of these stories, some of God’s wisdom, ended up in someone else’s album. When we look in this album, perhaps we will also see ourselves.

The night before the Building Abrahamic Partnerships program began, I had a dream. In the dream I am in a tiny, one room house on a severe tilt. I am feeling constricted, claustrophobic. I have to get out. I walk out of the house and realize that the house is on a tilt because it is half way up Mount Sinai, the way a child would draw a picture of a house on a very steep mountain. As I stepped out I heard this (It is from Deuteronomy 29:1-14): *You are stationed today, all of you, before the presence of YHWH your God... your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel, your little-ones, your wives, your sojourner that is amid your encampments, from your woodchopper to your waterhauler, for you to cross over in to the covenant of YHWH your God.... Not with you, you-alone, do I cut this covenant and this oath, but with the one that is here, standing with us today before the presence of YHWH our God, and (also) with the one that is not here with us today.....* And I suddenly understood that when Moses said these words, they were intended for everybody, Jews and Muslims and Christians, those standing at Sinai on that day and those who were not standing at Sinai that day – because they had been written out, because they had been excluded, because they were not yet born.

In the next part of the dream, I am standing with my father inside the house. I am saying to him that I will no longer accept the blame for dousing the fire with water. He says, “Honey, don’t worry about accusations from the past.” He turns me towards the window and I see the rest of the mountain, all the way up to the top, is enveloped in flames. He says, “Ascend the mountain.” He places his hands on my shoulders, as in a blessing, and I begin the ascent, unafraid, into the fire.

When I told this dream to Yehezkel the first night of the program, he reminded me of what the orthodox Jewish theologian, Joseph Soloveitchik, writes about acquittal and purification. On Yom Kippur we pray, “Acquit us....pour cleansing water upon us....” But this, in fact, is not enough. It is not enough to ask for something to be given from the outside. What is required in order to enter and reenter the covenant is to be purified by the fire of inner repentance, by teshuvah.

I didn’t understand what Yehezkel told me, and I pondered it throughout the program. Mid-day Friday we went to a mosque to join Muslim prayers. I was feeling ill that day, and my memory is that the day was hot and humid. The mosque was an old house, with women and men praying in separate rooms. All the rooms in the house, upstairs and downstairs, were filled. The rooms were completely unadorned, except for the prayer rugs. The women were given hijabs, headscarfs, to wear if we chose. As soon as I put mine on, I felt the power of inwardness, the pull of the tallit (Jewish prayer shawl). The prayers began. I could not understand the Arabic, so simply responded to the rhythm, the warmth of the day, the babies and toddlers crawling from lap to lap as we knelt, bowed, prostrated. By the time my head touched the ground the second time, I felt the pure relief of surrender to God, to

undefended Oneness.

Two days later in the Episcopal Church, surrounded by the pageantry of stained glass depictions of Jesus and Mary, of a fully robed Church choir, I felt myself resisting the call to prayer, holding the ancestral memories of persecution as a shield in front of my heart. Wanting to step through this imprisoned heart, I accepted the invitation to join the processional to receive the priest’s blessing, and for the others, to receive communion. I knelt next to a Christian who had become my friend during the course of the program. I felt the depth of her devotion. For the first time I felt, beyond thought, that one is drinking the blood of Christ, being nourished from the body of Christ. I felt within me the power of a daily devotion where ones drinks deeply from the cup of Divine love, Divine mercy, Divine forgiveness. I understood how this brings one into a state of devekut, a body to body, soul to soul closeness with God.

In both the Muslim and Christian prayer experiences, I felt closer to a surrender to God than I usually do in my own shul. This was both sad and illuminating. Through my encounter with Muslim and Christian prayer, I understood more clearly our rabbis’ entreaty that prayer be the vessel for the eternal fire of Divine love that burns away the separate self. And I began to understand the meaning of my dream. It is not enough that we accuse and absolve each other in the treacherous territory of our memories. We must, in Soloveitchik’s words, allow the divine flame of eternal presence to erupt fully within, so that the separate self burns away, so that the soul becomes God’s candle (Pinchas Peli, Soloveitchik on Repentance, Paulist Press, 1984). This is the fire of inner repentance that my dream signaled to me. By Muslims, Jews, and Christians entering into each other’s devotional practices, we create the possibility for a radical kind of teshuvah. By experiencing the Oneness of God with each other we find the courage to face the splintering of time we call memories, to remove the splinters from our hearts.

And so we learned together. Rabbi Shelly Lewis from California spoke to us about the path of humility as the necessary precursor to interfaith work. He brought us the Talmudic tractate in which we are told that when discussing the different schools of thought between the school of Shammai and the school of Hillel, a heavenly voice went forth and said, “*These and those are the words of the living God.*” The Gemara continues, “*The fact that Beis Hillel’s humility caused their viewpoint to prevail is to teach you that whoever lowers himself, i.e. is humble, the holy One, Blessed is He, raises him up. – And conversely whoever raises himself up, i.e. is arrogant, the Holy One, Blessed is He, lowers him. Whoever searches for prominence, prominence flees from him. But whoever flees from prominence, prominence searches for him. And whoever forces time, time halts him. But whoever yields to time, time will eventually halt for him.*”

We are at a time in the history of the world where we desperately need time to halt before time halts us. Perhaps the lesson is a simple one: with a heart of humility, we need to listen to these and those voices, Muslim, Christian, Jewish so that the agony of splintered time will cease, so that we may find our way to shlemut, wholeness. Black fire on white fire; white fire on black fire. We need all our voices, we need all our words, we need all the photos in all the albums, we need all our memories, we need all the shattered grammars to come together in an ever-expanding conversation with the fathomless, eternal One.





Hartford Seminary's Summer Session will begin Tuesday, May 30 and continue through Friday, June 30. The Seminary's courses are open to members of the public and carry three graduate level credits. Individuals who do not wish to take courses for credit may apply to take courses as an auditor. Many classes fill up quickly, so participants are urged to register early to ensure a place in their courses of choice. For those enrolled in a three-credit course, the cost is \$1,360. The non-credit audit fee is \$575. A special audit fee of \$385 is available for those who are age 62 and older, graduates of Hartford Seminary degree programs or the Certificate of Professional Ministry (cooperative M.Div.), donors of \$250 a year or more, Hartford Seminary Adjunct Faculty and pastors whose churches participate in the Congregational Relations Program of the Seminary.

To register, please contact the Registrar's Office at (860) 509-9511. Her e-mail is registrar@hartsem.edu. To see specific course syllabi prior to the semester or learn more about Hartford Seminary and its faculty, visit our website: [www.hartsem.edu](http://www.hartsem.edu). For information about accommodations, please contact the Office of Educational Services at (860) 509-9552 or academics@hartsem.edu.

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## Special Schedule

### Building Abrahamic Partnerships

Sunday, June 11 – Sunday, June 18 (intensive schedule, includes some evenings)

This eight-day intensive training program offers a practical foundation for mutual understanding and cooperation among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Participants learn about the tenets and practices of the three faiths, study texts from their respective scriptures together, attend worship at a mosque, synagogue, and church, and acquire pastoral skills useful in interfaith ministry. Combining the academic and the experiential, the course includes ample time for socializing over meals and during breaks. Building on Hartford Seminary's strengths as an interfaith, dialogical school of practical theology, this team-taught program is a resource for religious leaders who are grounded in their own traditions while open to the faith orientations of other communities.

Faculty: Yehezkel Landau, Faculty Associate in Interfaith Relations (Program made possible by grants from the William and Mary Greve Foundation and the Alan B. Slifka Foundation)

### Understanding Islam: Rumor and Reality

ONLINE: Monday, June 5 – Friday, June 23

This introductory course is designed to meet the growing need since 9-11 for basic information about Islam. It will cover Islamic beliefs and practices, issues faced by Muslims living in the West, the role of women in Islam, and current efforts at Muslim-Christian dialogue. The course may be of particular interest to Christian pastors, leaders and laypeople.

Faculty: Jane I. Smith, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations

### The Art of Spiritual Direction

This course will be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the following Tuesdays and Thursdays: May 30, June 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, and 22 and from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, June 10

This course explores the ministry and dynamics of spiritual direction. Topics include the history and scope of spiritual direction, especially within the Christian tradition, the theo-

logical foundations, and the variety of expressions of spiritual direction within the personal, interpersonal, and social contexts.

Faculty: Cathleen Murtha, Adjunct Professor in Arts of Ministry and Director, Spiritual Life Center, Bloomfield, CT

## Week of June 5 – June 9

### Marriage, Family, Sexuality: The Theology and Ethics of Relationship

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The changing nature of marriage and family life reflects the need for a thoughtful understanding of the complexity of these relationships and their theological base. This course will explore classic, modern, and contemporary views of marriage and family, including the spiritual, social, and sexual aspects of family relations.

Faculty: Heidi Gehman, Adjunct Professor of Theology and Ethics

### Rituals and Responsibilities of Muslim Leaders in America

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This course is designed for Muslim leaders, including Imams and chaplains, who are serving American Muslim communities. The course examines Muslim leaders' role and responsibilities as well as the proper application and performance of some important areas of Islamic ritual law. Emphasis is on practical application of the law and much of the course is taught in workshop format.

Faculty: Sheikh Muhammad Nur Abdullah, Adjunct Professor of Islamic Studies and Director of Religious Affairs and Imam of the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis

## Week of June 12 – June 16

### Integrating Science and Spirituality: Theological Challenges for the 21st Century

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

While the debate between science and religion continues to engage academic scholars, a new spiritual exploration characterizes the wider culture of our time. In this search, many conventional distinctions no longer feel useful, former dogmas are transcended, and a multi-disciplinary synthesis carries a strong appeal. A new type of mysticism is coming to birth, disturbing yet promising for all churches and religions. How to engage meaningfully with this complex and exciting challenge will be the focus of this course.

Faculty: Diarmuid O'Murchu, Adjunct Professor of Spirituality, social psychologist and author of nine books, most recently "Quantum Theology," "Evolutionary Faith," and "Paradigm Shifts in Religious Life"

### Megachurches

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Imagine a congregation where 10,000 people gather each week for worship, where church budgets are \$15 million a year and where thousands of people volunteer for programs weekly. Welcome to the world of megachurches. The past thirty years have seen a proliferation of these massive congregations throughout the nation. There are more than 1,200 of these congregations in the U.S., and while less than half a percent of all congregations, they attract more attention than all other religious communities in the nation combined. This course will look at the phenomenon to under-

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stand the common characteristics of megachurches, how they function, why they are attractive. In doing this we will discover what lessons can be learned from them which can be used effectively by churches of all sizes and denominational traditions. NOTE: Participating as guest lecturers will be Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in California, which averages 22,000 weekly attendees, and author of the best-selling book "The Purpose Driven Life," and other megachurch pastors. Faculty: Scott Thumma, Professor of Sociology of Religion.

### Are We All Bound for Heaven?: Christian Theology and Other Religions

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This course explores the theological issues surrounding interfaith dialogue. Following a brief survey of the extent of the diversity in religion (both historically and today), the course concentrates on theological issues. The first issue is soteriology: are non-Christians "saved"? Along with "Pluralism", "Inclusivism", and "Exclusivism", the course examines various alternatives. The second issue is similarity and difference. Critics and advocates of Hans Kung's global ethics project are discussed. The third issue is truth, mission, and dialogue. What are the limits to dialogue? Does a commitment to dialogue entail a commitment to relativism? How should Christians interpret the great commission to go and convert the world? These and other questions will be explored.

Faculty: Dale Bishop, Adjunct Professor of Theology and Director of Relationships and Resources for Interreligious Understanding

## Week of June 19 – June 23

### Contemporary Islamic Ethics

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For Muslims committed to living Islam as a way of life, contemporary society offers many challenges. A commitment to the common good exists in tension with the need to protect individual rights. The desire to uphold family values may conflict with the need to defend pluralism and civil liberties. In a world threatened with violence from many sources, self-defense and security take on new meaning. In this class, we will examine these tensions and the Islamic principles that can help Muslims live ethically and with integrity in American society. Case studies will include debates about abortion, gay marriage, militarism and minimum wage.

Faculty: Ingrid Mattson, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations

### Becoming Agents of Reconciliation in Congregations, Communities, and Countries: Lessons from the United States, South Africa, and Indonesia

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This course will use case studies of conflict in congregations, communities, and nations to help pastors, educators, and lay leaders develop skills to become agents of reconciliation. We will explore the biblical and theological theme: "Empowering for Reconciliation with Justice." Participants will be equipped to promote constructive dialogue in conflicted congregations and communities on controversial issues from homosexuality to mission priorities.

Faculty: Robert A. Evans, Adjunct Professor of Theology and Ethics and Executive Director, Plowshares Institute; Alice Frazer Evans, Adjunct Professor of Theology and Ethics and Director of Writing and Research, Plowshares Institute; and Paul Verryn, Methodist Bishop of Johannesburg, South Africa

### The Two Horizons: Being a Pastor-Scholar for Today

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Many ministers today often struggle to relate the formation that they first received at seminary with the day-to-day experience of being a full-time pastor. In this module, we will be exploring a range of resources that are both profound and rich – ideas, theories, strategies and modes of reflection – that will help to further and develop 'a deep habit of wisdom' for theological formation within ministry. We will look at some of the greater pastor-scholars from history – their lives and examples – to see what we can learn from them. The module will also especially concentrate on writing and presentational skills, and is specifically designed for pastors who want to deepen their theological reflection on the practice of ministry, and for others who want to expand their ministry through writing, research and other forms of critical reflection.

Faculty: The Rev. Dr. Canon Martyn Percy, Adjunct Professor of Theology and Principal of Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford, United Kingdom

### Matthew, Mark and Luke: The Synoptic Gospels

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This course is an in-depth study of the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith in light of current biblical scholarship with special attention to the theological perspectives of Matthew, Mark and Luke as reflected in their varying presentations of the Good News in these three "synoptic" Gospels.

Faculty: Wayne Rollins, Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies

## Week of June 26 – June 30

### Informing Congregational Ministry: Intersections of Theology, Social Science, and History

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Hartford Seminary has long been committed to the teaching of congregational studies. That field is always changing, and this course offers the chance to see emerging developments. The centerpiece of the week will be a cutting-edge discussion by a small group of scholars who are leaders in areas of theology, social science, and history, as they consider new ways their respective disciplines might work together more effectively to inform our understanding of congregations. Students will be introduced to underlying issues, listen to the scholarly discussion itself, and reflect upon its usefulness in light of their own places of ministry.

Faculty: James Nieman, Professor of Practical Theology



# The World Council of Church’s Ninth Assembly: A Perspective

By Christy Lohr

While some spent mid-February preparing for the start of Carnival, President Heidi Hadsell and International Ph.D. candidate Christy Lohr focused on ecumenical relations, representing Hartford Seminary at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches held at the Pontifical University of Rio Grande du Sol in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

The Assembly theme, “God, in your grace, transform the world,” invited participants to examine ways in which they could become agents of God’s transformation in myriad situations around the world and called the WCC to similar change.

During the Assembly, the Council inaugurated a new governing style, elected new leadership onto its governing Central Committee and outlined new program priorities in church unity, spirituality and mission; ecumenical formation focusing on youth in particular; and global justice.

The Assembly marked the mid-point of the WCC’s Decade to Overcome Violence and welcomed messages from three Nobel Peace Prize winners. Plenary sessions reflected the program priorities and highlighted notable speakers, multimedia presentations as well as “non-traditional” plenary styles such as expressive dance and cultural displays.

A series of workshops called *Mutirao* (a Portuguese term for a cooperative community project) ran parallel to the business plenaries. These seminars, cultural events and exhibitions were open to all participants and supplemented the Assembly deliberations.

Lohr offered a *Mutirao* entitled “New Approaches to Interfaith Education” that was well attended. The workshop reported on the Interfaith Education Project (IEP) jointly administered by Hartford Seminary and the WCC. Participants were invited to describe their own interfaith activities and suggest resources that would assist in their educational efforts.

President Hadsell addressed those gathered on the unique mix of interreligious dialogue and education found at Hartford Seminary. Lohr was pleased at the response to the *Mutirao* saying, “The number of participants far exceeded expectations, and the feedback they offered was very helpful. They served as a sort of focus group for the IEP.”

Hadsell also served as a panelist in a *Mutirao* on values education with children and presented *Beyond Idealism: A Way Forward for Ecumenical Social Action*, a new book she co-edited that will be on shelves from Eerdmans this spring. (Reserve your copy now in the Seminary bookstore!)

In the midst of keynote addresses by such dignitaries as Brazilian President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, and South African bishop Desmond Tutu; cultural presentations from the Latin American churches; business sessions; and morning and evening worship, Lohr and Hadsell also enjoyed the opportunity to catch up with old friends of Hartford Seminary who were in attendance.

Board member Hans Ucko, directed “ecumenical conversations” on Christian unity and religious pluralism at the event, and Seminary friend and former Trustee Margaret O. Thomas participated in the *Mutirao* offerings.



Participants celebrate in a *multirao*, a cooperative community project at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Porto Alegre, Brazil. (Photo by World Council of Churches)



Christy Lohr, center, is a Ph.D. candidate at Hartford Seminary. She attended the World Council of Churches 9th Assembly with Margaret O. Thomas, a former trustee of Hartford Seminary, and Hans Ucko, a staff member at the World Council of Churches and trustee of Hartford Seminary.



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