

p r a x i s

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Research Institute Examines Practical Theology

By David S. Barrett
Director of Public and Institutional Affairs

The Hartford Institute for Religion Research hosted a national conference in October on "Theology and Congregational Life" as the first major public event to signal its new interest in practical theology.

The conference, like the broadening of the Institute's understanding of its mandate, sought to

intensify the dialogue between congregational studies – one of the Institute's traditional strengths – and congregations' perception and expression of the sacred.

"Historically, the field of congregational studies was dominated by sociological and organizational perspectives – congregations as organizations. Now the Institute is attempting a more integrated and wholistic approach that fully appreciates the essentially theological character of congregations. They are organizational entities, to be sure. But the social and sacred dimensions are so intertwined that multidisciplinary, dialogical forms of understanding appear most appropriate," David Roozen, director of the Institute, said.

The broadening of the research institute's mandate prompted the hiring of James Nieman, who joined the faculty this fall as Professor of Practical Theology, and the shift benefits from the generosity of those who honored Carl Dudley at the time of his retirement from the Institute's core faculty with the establishment of the New Horizons in Congregational Studies Fund.

Dudley directed the conference in his continuing relationship to the Institute *Continued on page 6*

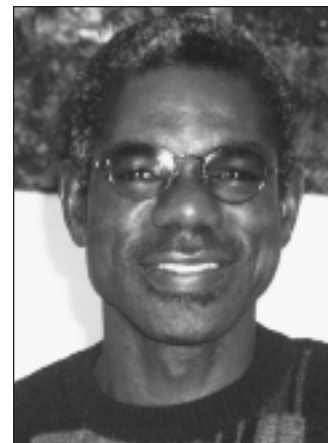
IN CONVERSATION

Rev.
Francis
Acquah

with Alisa
Dzananovic

Francis Acquah, from Ghana, is studying Islam and Christian-Muslim relations at Hartford Seminary this fall.

Q: What made you decide to study abroad?



A: I decided to study abroad because my area of academic interest — a Ph.D. in Ecumenism with an emphasis on Christian-Muslim relations — is not offered by the universities and seminaries in Ghana.

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THEOLOGY AND CONGREGATIONAL LIFE CONFERENCE: (Clockwise, from upper left) Warren Dennis of New Brunswick Theological Seminary and David Polk, retired editor of Chalice Press; Mary Brown Larson of Ledyard Congregational Church and Susan Holman, an independent scholar; Jeffery Tribble from the Center for Church and Black Experience of Garrett Evangelical Seminary and Phil Kenneson from the Ekklesia Project and Milligan College; and James Nieman and Ian Markham of Hartford Seminary.

05
Annual
Report

I N S I D E

News & Notes

By Alisa Dzananovic

New Advisory Committee to The Muslim World

Hartford Seminary's Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees has formed an Advisory Committee to *The Muslim World* journal.

The Muslim World is edited by the directors of the Seminary's Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations and reaches subscribers in 65 countries. The new Advisory Committee will consist of at least two trustees and two outside constituents, one of whom would be a Christian and one a Muslim.

"The importance and visibility of *The Muslim World* is growing and it will be wise to have two board members and two outside academics in assist-

ing the two editors of the magazine, Dr. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi and Dr. Jane Smith," said Heidi Hadsell, president of Hartford Seminary.

"The formation of the Advisory Committee will allow the Board to provide additional perspectives," Hadsell said.

The new committee will: 1) monitor and evaluate the partnership with Blackwell, which publishes the journal, 2) oversee the commitment to publish special issues, and 3) advise the Board and Academic Council about the overall direction of the journal.

Kerr Takes New Post

David A. Kerr, former director of the Seminary's Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, has been appointed to a chair as Professor in Missiology and Ecumenics at the University of Lund in Sweden.

Missiology and Ecumenics is part of the History of Christianity section in

the university's Center for Theology and Religious Studies. Kerr led the Macdonald Center from 1988 to 1996, when he left to join the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, as a professor in the University's Divinity School.

Young Honored by United Church of Christ

In July, the United Church of Christ recognized the ministry of The Rev. Dr. Andrew Young, an alumnus of Hartford Seminary, during its General Synod in Atlanta.

Rev. Young received his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Hartford Seminary in 1955 and the Synod honored him for his distinguished work in the ministry and society as a whole.

Rev. Young is known nationally for his work as a civil rights leader, former United States Ambassador to the United Nations, member of the House of Representatives from Georgia and mayor of Atlanta.

Law, Justice and the Ethics of Love

By Dale L. Bishop

Director of Relationships and Resources for Interreligious Understanding



Ours is a world in which the largest faith communities are comprised of people who call themselves Muslims or Christians. Our respective traditions are alike in that they both make absolute claims. We both believe that faith in, and worship of, one sovereign God is both pleasing to God and a requirement for living a good life. We are both, in a sense, "missionary" religions: both of us consider the revelations that lie at the heart of our faith to be "good news," and we invite others to share in that good news for the benefit of their own souls and to the benefit of God's beloved creation.

We have both learned—not all of us in our respective communities, but probably most of us—that it is highly unlikely that we are going to be able to convince each other to become converts to our own tradition, whether that reluctance stems from genuine conviction or from our strong cultural backgrounds.

We also, perhaps, realize that if it were moral to try to conquer each other militarily—and I don't believe that it would be—if, in other words there were an attempt to provide religious justification for a war between Christians and Muslims, given the destructive capabilities now available to human beings, such a conflict would likely lead to mutual annihilation and would already be a symptom of spiritual annihilation.

We are, in other words, to use a phrase often applied to less than ideal relationships, "stuck with each other." And we can regard that compulsory coexistence as either as a burden that God has imposed on us or as a gift that God has

given us. I personally have chosen the latter interpretation. I believe, in other words, that God has joined us in this sometimes uncomfortable relationship because of the call that we separate-

ly consider ourselves to have received from God to witness to each other, to admonish each other, and ultimately to love each other.

And not only do we witness to each other, we witness to, and in, the world, and we witness within our own communities. One of the essential components of this witness is that of telling the truth—telling the truth confessionally about our own shortcomings and telling the truth as well about our neighbors. One of the Ten Commandments, a commandment that reverberates throughout the Abrahamic tradition, is the injunction that we are not to bear false witness about our neighbors. We are to tell the truth, as best we can perceive it, about each other.

One of my mentors, the late Dr. Byron Haines, who was one of the initiators of the Christian-Muslim dialogue program of the National Council of Churches in the United States, used to refer to the human tendency to see the interreligious encounter as the encounter between the "ideal me" and the "real you." Too often, he was saying, we judge ourselves on the basis of our ideals while we judge others on the basis of their behavior.

The gap between ideals and actual behavior, between the ideal me and the real you, leads to the development of stereotypes. And we know that stereotypes abound in the realm of Christian-Muslim relationships. Stereotypes are so powerful, so persistent and so destructive because they are more than wild flights of someone's malicious imagination. They are not things that are just thought up. Stereotypes have power because they are based on the reality that, as St. Paul put it, "we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." As much as we would like to think that we consistently embody the ideals of our religion, we have all been, at times, the "real me." We have all unwittingly and probably unwillingly contributed to the strengthening of someone else's negative stereotype of our religion.

The theme of this conference has to do with the interrelationship between ethics, law and justice. There is, I will argue an essentialist tendency among both Christians and Muslims to see each other in stereotypical ways when we look at these fundamental concepts. Christians are tempted to see in the centrality of Islamic law a kind of uncompromising rigidity, a legal inertia,

that attempts to impose what many in the West call "medieval" concepts on very contemporary realities. They often characterize Islam as a legalistic religion—and this is not a positive designation—in much the same way that some Christians have interpreted Jesus' critique of the behavior of Jewish authorities in his time as an indication that Jewish legalism has been superseded by Christian love.

I speak here as an admittedly imperfect witness, but one who nevertheless attempts to report faithfully what he has seen and learned from his studies and from Muslim friends, one who does his best to tell the truth about his neighbor. The Islam of my experience is not the unwieldy and unyielding monolith of popular imagination in the West, an imagination that is, by the way, shaped in large part by popular media and by scholars who are ill-disposed to Islam or careless in their work.

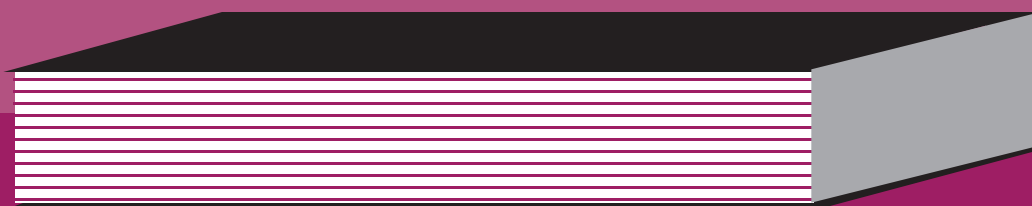
What has emerged as a result of such carelessness or manipulative stereotyping is, of course, inconsistent with the rich tradition of Islamic legal theory and practice. It fails to take into account the diversity of Islam, its different legal schools, the rigorous training of religious scholars and the open debate that is an essential part of the training of an 'alim. Islamic law is, in my own experience, neither inert nor monolithic; it is dynamic; it is diverse; it is represented by the open door, the open door of *ijtihad*, of inspired scholarly effort.

Further, when western Christians with whom I have been in conversation have asserted—again under the influence of popular media "analyses"—that Islam is a religion of merciless retribution and unfeeling legalism, I have been compelled to remind them, or inform them, that literally scores of times during an average day Muslims invoke God with God's two most frequently mentioned attributes. God is *rahman* and God is *rahim*. God is merciful and compassionate, and that mercy and compassion are reflected in both the law and in the fulfillment of prescribed religious obligations.

At the same time, Christianity is often characterized and caricatured as a religion that so focuses on the individual that the law, which is by its very nature corporate and societal, is left to the state and its secular mechanisms. This is true neither historically nor, I would argue, theologically. Historically, the church has had its canon laws, which carried full force in many Christian societies. Personal and family law are, for the most part, derived from church law still in many societies where there are substantial numbers of Christians. Even in the most secular of societies, like that of my own country, *Continued on page 4*

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Law, Justice, Ethics the United States, what is considered to be secular law has grown out of church law and practice. The founding principle of the country, the very motive for its foundation, is a religious principle, that all people are created equal by God, which is another way of asserting a fundamental religious precept, which is that all of us, equally, are children of God, a precept shared throughout the Abrahamic tradition.

Christianity, despite what many Christians have made of it, is neither privatistic nor is it apolitical. When Jesus assured his followers that “whenever two or three are gathered in my name, there I am also,” he was not simply praising the power of small groups; he was also insisting that worship of God and the faithful carrying out of God’s will is incomplete if it does not have a quorum of more than one, that community is an essential aspect of religion.

For Christians in contemporary society, and I would suggest for Muslims as well, the compelling question is not whether they are to participate in the political order as people of faith, and on the basis of that faith; the question is how they should participate and what should be the content of their participation. A further question, which pays respect to the reality of religious pluralism, is how shall the law be formulated in a way that does not abridge the rights of those from other religious traditions, people who are also striving to carry out the will of God in their individual lives and in their own participation in society. A political setting that respects religious diversity, that is not secular in the sense that it attempts to suppress religion, but rather interprets religious diversity as a possible source of morality and spiritual strength, I would argue, can be the basis of a faithful society. Such a setting places a premium on conscious moral choice over against unreflective obedience. Contemporary Christians may no longer strive toward the creation of a Calvinist republic, or a Christendom united under the aegis of the church, but, if they are faithful, they are compelled to seek the realization of the kingdom of God here on earth, having before them always Jesus’ prayer that God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The mode of that political participation will vary, but its goal will be consistent.

If law rests on the moral basis of ethics, its goal is the realization of justice, of right relationships between people in society, people in community. Laws that are not moored in ethics and that do not have justice as a goal can become the tool of the powerful to suppress the weak and the poor. Our current international order, which reinforces inequality and injustice, which entrusts lawmaking to those whose interests are not in justice but in the accumulation of wealth and power, is not an order at all, but rather is the disorder of the survival of the fittest under the thin veneer of a contrived legality. All people of faith are called to challenge this unjust status quo.

But even justice is itself subject to the demands of the ethic of love—love of God, love of God’s creation. Jesus, in consistently pointing out the insufficiency of law that is not grounded in the ethic of love continually challenged his own co-religionists: “you have heard it said . . . but I say.” Each time, he told his followers that they must go beyond the letter of the law, that they must challenge contemporary understandings of justice in order to meet the exacting demands of divine justice, a justice that is always tempered by God’s essential mercy and compassion.

It is important that we Muslims and Christians talk with each other about these things. Not just our co-existence, but our very existence, may depend on it. Ours is an age when people are realizing that humanity is, indeed, flawed, that people need that spiritual dimension that places humans above even the angels, that makes us children of God and not self-interested competitors. I am convinced that our own traditions, with all their differences, have something to say to the contemporary condition, that we can together point toward a world that is under the sway of God’s justice, a justice that is founded on the ethic of love, established by a God who is rahman and rahim, merciful and compassionate.

This paper was delivered at a World Council of Churches consultation with Iranian scholars in Geneva in September 2005.

Acquah **Q:** What made you decide to come to Hartford Seminary?

A. I decided to come to the Seminary upon the recommendation of my professor and friend, Julio de Santa Ana, who taught me at Bossey Ecumenical Institute in Geneva.

Q: What program at Hartford Seminary are you enrolled in?

A: Currently, I am enrolled in the Seminary’s Graduate Certificate Program in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations. I also intend to continue with the International Ph.D. program once I secure funding.

Q: What are your goals for the time spent here?

A: My goals for the time I will spend here are:

- To strengthen my knowledge of Christian-Muslim relations, a topic very relevant to my work in Ghana
- To make the most out of the rich, diverse cultural and religious environment offered by Hartford Seminary by:
 - a) taking the classes and assignments seriously
 - b) learning from others who have interesting and wonderful experiences and viewpoints
 - c) engaging in dialogue with people of other faiths and cultures so that I can understand better my own
 - d) learning more of the American society – its people, culture, and history

Q: How do you think your studies at Hartford Seminary will help in your work back home in your country?

My studies at Hartford Seminary will help me in my work back in Ghana:

I. As a minister of a church, I can use this program to help me educate members of the church on the need for dialogue, and how to engage in dialogue, with people of other faiths, especially Muslims since the two dominant religions in Ghana are Christianity (62%) and Islam (16%).

II. I will be able to facilitate the interreligious engagements of my church — the Methodist Church Ghana — and also contribute to the work of the Christian Council of Ghana and Forum for Religious Bodies in Ghana in interreligious relations and cooperation.

III. In view of the emergence of religious extremism and fundamentalism, my education at the Seminary will equip me to educate and create awareness among the civil society, the government, religious bodies, NGOs and other peace-building organizations on the need and how to address these dangerous developments, which threaten societal peace.

IV. This course will enable me to join hands with other religious leaders in seeking ways of building peace and advocating for justice in Ghana.

Finally, I wish to express my deep appreciation for the President of the Seminary, Heidi Hadsell, who is my former director at the Ecumenical Institute in Geneva, and whose efforts made it possible for me to be here.

Rev. Francis Acquah is one of two international students taking part in the newly formed Congregational Relations Program. As a part of the program, Rev. Acquah and Abraham Wilar, from Indonesia, also will spend time working and participating in local church activities. The Congregational Relations Program is supported by a generous gift from David E.A. and Sara F. Carson. It has been established to promote peacebuilding in countries affected by interreligious warfare and to encourage the participation of local congregations.

IN CONVERSATION
Ida Nooraman
with Alisa Džananovic

In February 2005, a small delegation from Hartford Seminary including Heidi Hadsell, Ibrahim Abu-Rabi and Worth Loomis visited the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS). They came to find out more about Christian – Muslim relations in our country. The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore oversees Muslim affairs in Singapore.



I am employed as an executive officer at the Council and as a follow up to the February meeting the Research and Development Strategic Unit of MUIS in collaboration with Hartford Seminary designed a three-month-

long professional development program for two of its staff members. That’s what brought me here. My colleague, Alfian Kuchit, and I have been here since September 9 and I must say that I am enjoying every moment of my time here.

Q: What courses are you taking while you are here?

I am auditing four courses: Religion, Conflict & Peacemaking; Dialogue in A World of Difference; Islam in Contemporary Saudi Arabia, Iraq abd Afghanistan, and Women’s Leadership & Spirituality.

Auditing these courses and taking part in discussions encourages the development of a keen sense of analysis and understanding of the issues raised by the instructors. Not having to worry about class assignments makes things a bit easier. I can see that an individual’s learning is further enhanced when one is ‘free to disagree,’ without being judged or misunderstood.

Q: What else are you doing here as a visiting scholar?

So far I have taken part in an 18 day long Interfaith Study Visit to Syria, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. Currently I am visiting Islamic centers and institutions in the Greater Hartford area and I will perhaps visit some in Chicago.

Q: What are your goals for your time spent here?

Work-wise, I am here to learn more about the academic programs offered by the Seminary with the purpose of possible future collaboration. I would also like to get a sense of the administrative model adopted by Hartford Seminary that ensures the smooth functioning of its operation. This will be helpful as we are developing a MUIS academy back home. The MUIS Academy aims to centralize and streamline training and resources for the Muslim community in Singapore. Where opportunities arise, I’d like to visit nearby Islamic centers and institutions and see how they can be useful models for Singapore’s future Islamic hub.

Personally, I have definitely benefited from the Interfaith Study Visit to Syria, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. In the meetings with different religious leaders of various faiths, one could see how these countries make conscious efforts to nurture positive Christian-Muslim relations. One of the major things that I took away from the trip is the realization that a nation’s history can leave an indelible mark on its present day’s stands.

Sharing a “home away from home” in Hartford with women from various nations, faiths and social background makes my Dialogue course come alive. Our bantering at the dinner table or over a cup of tea, ranging from the Seminary to solving life’s big questions, emphasizes the need to find common ground, as well as to celebrate diversity.

Q: How do you think your studies at Hartford Seminary will help you in your work in Singapore?

I will definitely share with my family, friends and colleagues in Singapore that dialogue is the key to developing and maintaining a positive relationship with members of other faiths, not only Muslims and Christians. Hartford Seminary has given me ideas on how to cultivate interfaith dialogue. Hopefully, we can implement similar ideas in Singapore.

“Speak softly and sweetly. When your words are soft and sweet, they won’t be as hard to swallow if you have to eat them.” - Unknown

Ida Iryanee Nooraman is a Visiting Scholar from Singapore. She works for the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore and together with her colleague, Alfian Kuchit, she is studying at Hartford Seminary in the hope to build a long-term relationship between the two institutions.

2005 International Students and Visiting Scholars

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Rev. Francis Acquah
Ghana
Graduate Certificate

Abdullah Antepli
Turkey
International Ph.D.

Suendam Birinci
Turkey
Master of Arts

Gulsum Gurbuz
Turkey
Master of Arts

Tuba Gursul
Turkey
Master of Arts

Fachrizar Halim
Indonesia
Master of Arts

Ayse Kaplan
Turkey
Master of Arts

Fatma Kaya
Turkey
Master of Arts

Fatma Kilinc
Turkey
Master of Arts

Guat Kwee See
Singapore
Master of Arts

Abraham Wilar
Indonesia
Graduate Certificate

Tubanur Yesilhark
Germany
Master of Arts

VISITING SCHOLARS

Huseyin Cakillikoyak
Turkey

Grace Davie
Great Britain

Alfian Kuchit
Singapore

Zubeyir Nisanci
Turkey

Ida Nooraman
Singapore

as Faculty Emeritus in Church and Community at the Seminary.

The shift, Dudley said, changes the dynamic of who the Institute is. It is opening itself to new partners from networks of sociologically-friendly theologians, and studying what motivates religious leadership in the 21st century. The shift is “witness to our institutional flexibility to shift with the times,” he said. “It is also our

“The main place for both religious discernment and expression is the local congregation. How we understand the theology already in congregations, including its connection to the larger theological tradition, is arguably the most critical question for pastors and seminaries to consider today.” - David Roozen

attempt to take more seriously the bridging of faith and action,” he added, “of seeing faith in action and acting one’s faith.”

The Conversation on Theology and Congregational Life, held over two days on October 11 and 12, drew 50 scholars, students and religious leaders. The entire faculty of the Institute were pleasantly surprised by the outpouring of interest in the conversation. It was over-subscribed.

Roozen thinks this interest has arisen, in part, because “Old-line Protestantism is no longer clear about its overarching theological identity. Admitting this, it has now become clear that the main place for both religious discernment and expression is the local congregation. How we understand the theology already in congregations, including its connection to the larger theological tradition, is arguably the

most critical question for pastors and seminaries to consider today.”

“Yet,” he added, “this idea of theology as expressed by congregations is not the dominant perspective on theology in seminaries. As a consequence, practitioners and scholars who agree about the importance of the question are looking for conversation partners such as they found at our October event.”

The goal of the conversation was to explore and distinguish several different approaches to how theology works amid the congregational practices of members and leaders and what study methodologies best illuminate and enable this work within congregations.

“The conversation of the conference,” Nieman said, “was framed by three questions which will continue to inform the practical theological stream of the institute’s work.”

- What counts as theology?
- How do we help congregations see the theology that is already present in their structure and practices?
- Once it is identified, how do we help congregations work with it toward more sustaining and transforming forms of ministry?

Each participant contributed a short paper answering three questions: What is your approach to theology in congregational life? Who are your conversation partners? What books, articles and authors have been/are most influential in your work? These will be collected as a resource to the participants.

Streets are places of wisdom

It takes something as big as Hurricane Katrina and the pain and suffering we saw among the poor black people of New Orleans to get America to focus on race and poverty. It happens about once every 30-40 years. Added, is the fact of a *third migration* in a hundred years of tens of thousand of poor black families across the country. Which means we can expect the impact of Katrina on these persons to affect us no matter where we live. So, as we shape this conversation on congregational life and reflect on theology, let us be clear: As Christians, we have a stake in what goes on in our communities.

The aftermath of Katrina’s devastation in New Orleans and the Alabama-Mississippi Gulf Coast challenges every aspect of a crisis response. Ministry is no exception. Theological education and congregational studies is challenged by this unprecedented catastrophe in its teaching, learning and engagement, particularly in the area of urban ministry. In the days, weeks, months and years to come congregations must think about a theological and practical response to the crisis that has gospel integrity. This response must fuel our theological reflection and then move us to make a connection to the new ground zero. The challenge before us is this: How do we give appropriate ministry language to the chronic images brought to us by the print and visual media? The crisis in the Gulf Coast challenges congregations in many ways-

- How do we understand ministry and respond when poverty, class and racial justice are involved?

- How might an urban land-use hermeneutical model raise questions about power, wealth and governance?
- How can we bring clear theological inquiry that warrants our best ministry response in the face of such immediate and overwhelming human need?
- How do we frame a public theological conversation with other faiths, private and not-for profit partners about and in the midst of this national crisis?

As one who thinks and teaches urban theological education and focuses appreciatively on the Incarnational ministry of congregational life in cities, I start from the theological premise of helping congregations to understand the missional implication of *Matthew 25:31-46* to take the sanctuary to the streets. I want them to see that streets are places of wisdom as well—*Proverbs 1:20-21*. For this to occur, a transformation of how congregations come to view themselves differently in relation to their community, especially marginalized communities, is essential. I believe a theological inquiry of the ‘grassroots’ that reflects the liberating aspirations of indigenous persons who because of their crisis circumstances seek to discern God’s self-disclosure and self-revelation in the theater of their lives is required.

Looking to the “Missional Church” approach to scripture and the world has provided me some helpful insight, and a stimulating critique for advancing urban ministry and congregational studies. I am interested in forging a conversation of an urban grassroots gospel of the Kingdom of God as central to both public thought and public action. This theology of the grassroots starts with a pedagogical dialogue and systemic analysis of the neighborhood between persons in the academy, the church and community. It values people’s experiences in-ministry *Continued on page 8*

THEOLOGY: A Passion of the Heart

As a local church pastor, I sometimes feel rather alone wrestling with theological issues. As much as we think, read, and pray on our own, there is no substitute for good, challenging discussions. I believe that theology cannot be a solitary activity; its very nature implies words spoken and shared as we explore the nature and reality of God in our midst.

All too often our church members tend to think of theology as a dusty academic subject, a topic mostly irrelevant to their daily lives. They understandably glaze over when the word “theology” is mentioned—not something on which they want to spend the time or energy debating. They are hungry for words they think more relevant to the concerns of everyday life—coping with stress, inflation, busy schedules, raising children, trying to understand local tragedies and worldwide disasters. Sometimes all people would like to hear in church are “feel good” words, to affirm them as good people

The challenge for the local pastor is to help people recognize that God is, indeed, in the midst of their lives, that God does think they are good people, but also wants to challenge them to bring their faith to life. Theology needs to come out of the text books as a mind exercise and become a passion of the heart. For people to grow in faith, we need to inspire thinking, discussion, and passion. We need to help people realize that theology is an important piece of their lives.

In reality, people, as much as they avoid the word, are doing theology. They have values and convictions by which they run their lives; they are responding to God, even when they do not name God. Even when they are ignoring God, it is a theological response of a kind.

I believe the diversity of our present culture is affecting how people think about theology when they do think about it. The conservatives believe the liberals have no theology; and the liberals believe the conservatives have usurped theology and are making it a political influence. And, as frequent as interfaith discussions are among the “theological aristocrats,” people have all too often turned pews into trenches.

Our denomination, the United Church of Christ, has posed theological challenges this past year. The gay marriage resolution caused dissent in many congregations. In ours, the Deacons did not

even want to discuss the issue, since we had other problems locally. The death penalty issue in Connecticut was also a stumbling block for

many, especially in the rural churches near us, one of which still had families of a serial killer’s victims. There were many people in our local churches this year who felt that the denomination had moved in a direction they could not follow. I am not sure where God seemed to be for many people, but they were convinced it was not in the UCC. Many of us, as pastors, were torn between the extremes.

Of course, these are all oversimplifications by a local church pastor of a medium-sized, moderate, mainline church, which often sees fellowship as more important than theology. An example of theological apathy I encountered was to be told that someone would rather leave out the sermon than to eliminate the announcements people make about the on-going life and activity in the congregation. But then there are sparks of passion in Bible study groups as people wrestle honestly with theology, and the comment someone made after I first did a role-playing sermon of a biblical character: “I never really thought about how people in the Bible were real people.”

We can identify theology at work, however subtly, in various aspects of congregational life: by which hymns are requested, by what prayers are offered during worship or at meetings, by cares and concerns shared, by how the budget is prioritized, by which sermons invite a lot of head-nodding, even by which emails are forwarded around by members of the congregation.

I am grateful for the two Bible studies we hold—one looking at lectionary texts, and the other using some contemporary theological book as a basis for discussion. This summer we read Borg’s *The Heart of Christianity*, which prompted much thoughtful and honest debate. Through studies like this, those who are interested in theology are able to explore, challenge, and grow in faith.

I am also grateful for clergy support groups—one within our Association and an ecumenical one in our town. I believe that we grow through the exchanging of ideas, as

well as receiving support and understanding in our sharing. This fellowship also prods us to each keep current on activities and current issues.

My Doctor of Ministry studies were invaluable—for both personal growth and for congregational understanding. Looking back, I would say texts and studies such as *Varieties of Religious Presence* (Roozen, McKinney & Carroll) helped me observe and begin to understand how different congregations “do” their theology.

Theology is not just the work of theologians and academics, nor even just of pastors. Theology is our lifeline, our connection with God and with each other. As sisters and brothers, we are called, together, to constantly seek God in our world and meaning in our lives. Theology in a congregation is a continual challenge, frustration, puzzle and joy; but we are called to explore and to grow, and to encourage one another in our life together in the congregation. We will never, in this life, find the answers; but the journey itself is the reward.

Praise God!

Mary Brown Larson
*Ledyard Congregational Church
Gales Ferry, Connecticut*

What do you hope a congregation will do with its theology as it becomes aware of and intentional about it?

Herein is the rub! I presume that the purpose of any congregation is to embody its revelation in the particularity of its situation (a heavily Christian and modern presumption that needs to be tested with each particular congregation, especially those within faith traditions other than Christian and Jewish). Accordingly as a congregation’s theology is brought to awareness it should be placed in dialogue with the congregation’s sense of revelation, in dialogue with the strategic dimensions of its particular historical situation, and in dialogue with the larger theological tradition(s) with which it identifies.

David A. Roozen, Director, Hartford Institute for Religion Research, Hartford Seminary

Seminary Delegation Visits Syrian Leaders

A Hartford Seminary delegation led by President Heidi Hadsell spent 10 days in Syria in October, meeting with government, religious and educational leaders to discuss mutual cooperation and the opportunity to exchange students.

One conversation was with Dr. Hussam al-Din Farfour, founder of Al-Fath University in Damascus, and Dr. Maher abu al-Dahab, dean of languages at the university. They said their university would work to send five students a year to Hartford Seminary.

The Seminary group also met with the leaders of two state universities, in Damascus and Aleppo. Each of these universities has 100,000 students. Ibrahim Abu-Rabi', co-director of the Seminary's Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, said these two universities are considering sending students to the Seminary.

Meanwhile, they invited the Seminary to send students to them to study Arabic.

The trip also involved meetings with religious leaders. The Rev. Bchara Moussa Oghli, pastor of the Armenian Protestant Church of Christ in Aleppo, was one of the hosts of the nine-person Seminary delegation and accompanied it throughout the group's 10-day stay. Oghli, who has been involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue for a decade, arranged meetings with pastors of several Armenian Protestant churches.

Among the religious leaders who met with the Seminary delegation were the Armenian Catholic Archbishop of Aleppo and the Grand Mufti of Damascus, who is the highest Muslim religious authority in Syria.

Hadsell said that the trip was an excellent start to a cooperative partnership between the Seminary and the colleges and universities in Syria, as well as an opportunity to learn more about Christian-Muslim relations in Syria. "I was impressed with the experience religious and educational leaders have in the field of dialogue, and also appreciative of the warm hospitality they showed toward our delegation," Hadsell said.

Worth Loomis, a Seminary faculty member and development officer, accompanied Hadsell, and said that he has a new view of Syria because of the trip. He spoke of the warmth of the people and the openness of the officials to dialogue with Americans.

The American Embassy also hosted the group at a dinner at the ambassador's house, where they met 100 guests.

Dr. Abu al-Huda al-Husseini, a sheikh at Al-Salihiyyah Mosque in Aleppo, also was a host with Rev. Oghli, and helped shape the itinerary. Dr. al-Husseini had visited the Seminary earlier and invited the Seminary to send a delegation to Syria.

The group of Hartford Seminary professors and visiting scholars also visited Turkey, Azerbaijan and Georgia. They met with religious and civic leaders in all of these countries. The purpose of the tour was to study Christian-Muslim relations and cultivate academic and religious contacts.

Streets are Places of Wisdom *Continued from page 6*

as equally important in the educational process as they reflect upon their engagement as practical theology.

It acknowledges the voice of those who are victimized by persons of *privilege and power*, and at the same time recognizes the voices of those who legislate public policies without valuing the input of least fortunate. It is a process of educating the congregation and the grassroots community (who may not be a part of the faith community) to see for themselves the false reality prescribed by those in power. It raises the question: How do those who are systematically marginalized give expression to the presence of God in their liberation? In other words, the theology of the grassroots must speak a prophetic voice of liberation to the systems, structure, people, and conditions that stand in the way of acquiring a just life.

Although qualitative research methods can include many different approaches

to congregational study, ethnography is considered essential to discern the articulated spiritual sophistication of grassroots persons as curriculum information to bridge the teaching and learning gulf between the academy, the church and the community. This methodology applied to congregational 'core' curriculum development can uncover the structure of meaning that undergird community life.

Ethnography applied through a process of biblical reflection and action examines the religious and teaching values of urban grassroots persons in dialogical relation with the congregation. This direct encounter with community persons incorporating a land-use hermeneutics becomes starting points where the congregation's stories get interrelated with the community's stories. This land-use hermeneutical approach takes its biblical clue from Hebrews 11:10, and Psalm 48:12-14, thus providing contextually rich information to help congregations get into activities leading toward congregation and community change and to improve what they are already doing.

information to help congregations get into activities leading toward congregation and community change and to improve what they are already doing.

Congregational life is an educational process, whereby communities of people, learners and "host" who are also learning, work together to figure out what is going on, and what interventions or actions are necessary to change "what's going on" to a more desirable future. For this conversation, this means paying close attention to the realities of urban context, and to our own sense of calling and purpose in the world as followers of Christ.

Warren L. Dennis
Professor of Metro-Urban Ministry
New Brunswick Theological Seminary
New Brunswick, NJ

Alumni/ae Notes



The Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikan '66 was honored by the Armenian-American Community of the Midwest on September 25 after 46 years of active pastoral ministry. In 1965, Rev. Tootikan came to the United States to study for a Master's Degree in Theology at Hartford Seminary. He simultaneously served as a student minister at the Community Congregational Church near Hartford and Minister-Elect for the Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown, Massachusetts. Rev. Tootikan assumed the pastorate at the Watertown Church in 1966, where he served for 19 years. During his ministry, the congregation grew both spiritually and financially, constructed a new Christian Education building and initiated new young adult organizations and other programs in the Bay State. In 1975, Rev. Tootikan was called to the pulpit of the Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit, where he served for 30 years. During his service, the church erected a new Christian Education Building, embarked upon 11 major fundraising campaigns to benefit the missions and ministries of the congregation, and organized an Armenian Heritage Committee.

The Rev. Canon Dr. Richard T. Nolan '63 celebrated his 50th Anniversary with Bob Pingpank on Saturday, October 8th at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. Dean James Kowalski ('91, D.Min.) preached on commitment.



CONVOCATION 2005
Hartford Seminary held its annual convention on September 12, the first day of classes in the Fall Semester. The program included worship, an address by President Heidi Hadsell, an introduction of the faculty and songs and music.

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. Howard L. Grant ('66), 83, of Glastonbury, died in July at Hartford Hospital. Born in 1921 in Manchester, he lived in Glastonbury for the past 18 years. Prior to his retirement in 1987, Rev. Grant was a minister with the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. He had served in North Canton, North Haven, Glandale, KY and Katonah, NY. Rev. Grant was a graduate of the University of Hartford, Hartford Seminary and received his Masters of Sacred Theology from Yale Divinity School. Besides his wife, Judith (Clamser) Grant, he leaves three sons and daughters-in-law and five grandchildren.

Siddiq Abdul Sattar, 68, of Avon, a Corporator at Hartford Seminary, died in August while vacationing in Vancouver, British Columbia with his wife Phyllis Sattar. Mr. Sattar was employed for many years as an engineer by United Technologies Corporation, retiring in 1993.

The Rev. Dr. James L. Spangenberg ('62) died in August at his home in Rockland, Maine. Habitat for Humanity of Georgetown County came into being because of Rev. Spangenberg. Since the affiliate was founded in 1990, about 60 homes have been built in Georgetown County. Rev. Spangenberg lived in Georgetown from 1985 to 1994. Rev. Spangenberg was Professor Emeritus of Keene State College, in Keene, N. H. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in history from the University of Florida and a Bachelor of Divinity from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY. He earned his M.A. in sociology at the University of Michigan. After graduate work in theology at Columbia University, Dr. Spangenberg

studied at the Merrill-Palmer Institute for Human Development, Wayne State University in Detroit, and Hartford Seminary. He earned a Ph.D. in human development from Pennsylvania State University. Ordained in 1957 by the American Baptist Convention, Rev. Spangenberg served as a campus minister at Eastern Michigan University, at Penn State University, at Clemson University, and at the University of Louisville. He also served as a supply minister throughout New Hampshire. He was active in family planning community services his entire professional life. Besides his wife, Lena R. Spangenberg, he leaves three children, two brothers, and a sister.

Anne L. (Rose) Widman ('52), 79, died in July at her home in Wolfeboro, NH. Mrs. Widman received her Bachelor of Arts from Kentucky Wesleyan College and was preparing to be a missionary to Pakistan at Hartford Seminary Foundation. She worked as the Director of Administration and Elderhostel Coordinator at Geneva Point Center in Moultonboro, NH, and Director of Christian Education for several churches in Ohio. A very active member of the Wolfeboro First Congregational Church UCC she had served as a moderator of the church and chaired various boards and committees. She was the first woman elected to First Vice President of the International Association of Conference Center Administrators, and served on the boards of the New Hampshire Camp Directors Association and the New England Chapter of the American Camping Association. Survivors include her husband, the Rev. Harry Widman, a son and daughter-in-law, three daughters and their husbands, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Editor’s Note:

The August 2005 issue of Praxis contained several essays reflecting on the Board of Trustees visit to Istanbul, Turkey in May. The visit included conversation with leading figures of the Muslim community and of other faiths. In response, several alumni/ae and friends of the Seminary asked whether the Board had considered the relationship between Turkey and the Armenian community.

One question asked was why a session with interfaith leaders did not include Armenian religious leaders. Organizers of the session said that the Syrian Patriarch of Istanbul and Ankara, His Eminence Mor Filkinsos Yusuf Cetin, did attend the dialogue. Invited but unable to attend were the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Bartholomew I, and the Armenian Patriarch, Archbishop Mesrob II Mutafyan.

To provide further context, presented in this issue are a letter from a former student and an essay from a current student who traveled with the Seminary study tour in Turkey in May.

David Barrett, Editor

Turkey: A Personal Journey

By Chris Lovejoy

In my first semester at Hartford Seminary I took a core requirement: “Dialogue in a World of Difference.” On a late Monday afternoon in early fall, I sat in my first class, and noticed a few young people, many of whom looked familiar, although I did not know them. These were women in hijab and men dressed a little more formally than the other students. The professor announced that we were lucky this year to have joining us a group of students from Turkey. Intellectually, that sounded delightful, but emotionally, I caught my breath.

You see, I am an Armenian. Most people do not know what that means or why that would matter in this circumstance and sometimes I am not sure either. I am actually half Armenian, on my mother’s side, but my mother spoke Armenian exclusively in her home until she was five, when she needed English for school. In fact, my

Governments will make concessions based on self-interest, and I am not willing to wait until the Turkish government or other governments, for that matter, decide it is in their best interest to talk about the Armenian “question.” If the Turkish government is going to admit what happened to the Armenians, they will do it because their own citizens force them to. And that will not happen if we do not talk to the people themselves.

grandfather called my father “odar” (outsider in Armenian) and, although my older sisters went to Armenian school, I didn’t.

For me, being Armenian meant that I spent my Sundays waiting, while my mother and grandmother cooked and my older Armenian aunts and uncles came over for large meals. They were different from most people I knew, in their mannerisms and the way they talked. And we ate things that no one I knew ate: grape leaves stuffed with ground lamb, smothered in *madzoon* (yogurt with a lot of garlic) and other delicious, but similarly different things. They spoke in a familiar language that I had never learned and held my cheeks and called me “sakis.” They broke in with English to boast about the famous people who are also Armenian – I was very excited when I heard about Columbo, until I realized they meant the yogurt, not the detective.

In addition to the fond memories were the stories with which I was raised. They always began with warnings: “Don’t you ever trust a Turk – if they find out that you are Armenian, they will kill you.” My grandfather and his brothers were animated, spitting when they talked, eyes fierce.

The stories would pour like blood, staining my mother’s white carpet. “I hid while the Turks rode into our village on horses. They sliced innocent women and children with swords, not just killing them...cutting them to pieces.” “They sliced off pregnant women’s stomachs; the women were forced to watch their babies die while they bled to death themselves.” “We barely escaped with our lives.”

I remember my grandmother’s sad, brown eyes and the strain in her expression, “No one cared; not even the Americans.” It was as though we were not Americans ourselves. One uncle told of how he joined the Russian army as soon as he was old enough and snuck back for revenge. He said he was given two Turkish soldiers for Christmas and that he cut off their heads with a dull blade using his left hand, to make sure they felt it.

So, even though I was sitting safely in a Seminary in Hartford, looking at the innocent faces of people almost young enough to be my children, I could still feel the echoes of these stories. And when the professor asked us to mark on the map where in the world our grandparents came from, taking the chalk from a young, Turkish woman, I felt a bit faint.

When I marked “Istanbul,” something like glee filled the room. Here they were, having just left their home to study Muslim/Christian relations in a foreign (and maybe hostile) country and sitting in their first class was an American with Turkish roots. “No,” I told them, “I am an Armenian.”

Some of the young men fell silent, but the rest were still overjoyed. “One of my good friends is an Armenian,” one said. “I can’t believe you are from Istanbul,” I heard another. I smiled uncomfortably.

During break, I ran to the chapel for my evening prayer. The Turkish Muslims were already there and made room for me among them. I found over the next few weeks that, although we did not share our religion, we shared a similar prayer schedule and we prayed together often, laughing every time our paths crossed about how much we had in common. One evening my daughters and I were invited to dinner at the home of three young women. They told me they would teach us to make an authentic Turkish meal: *monte*. It had seemed inconceivable that something I call authentically Armenian could also be

authentically Turkish, although it seems so obvious now. We came from the same place; of course we share much of the same culture.

One of the young men who had been silent when I told the class I was Armenian stopped me during a break later in the semester. He said that the Turkish government does not admit what happened but that *he* knew what happened. Another talked about how things are different during war; there were Turks who were killed, too. But he also said that the Turkish government is doing a very bad thing by blocking conversation. He believes the only way to come to the truth is to have the records open and for people to talk freely. I know that hundreds of thousands of civilian Armenians died during that short period of time and that nowhere near that number of Turkish civilians did. That is something that must be explained. I do not abide by the use of the term “relocation” for the marching of a million human beings into the desert with no access to food, water or protection; and there is evidence of systematic violence, which cannot be explained simply by the term “war.” But I also know that I do not need to be acknowledged to exist.

I went to Turkey because I realized that part of my heritage is there. These had been my family’s neighbors; this used to be their home. My grandfather spoke longingly of the beauty of Istanbul and my grandmother of Mt. Ararat. The cave where Abraham was born, the place where Peter and his gatherers were first called Christians...these are also mine. Who were the Ottomans that they should have taken it from my family? Who is the Turkish government that I should now allow them to take it from me?

In Turkey I met older, Muslim women who grabbed my face close to theirs, the way my grandmother used to; men whose hands looked just like my grandfather’s. I ate the food my grandmother used to make and heard a cadence very similar to the one I heard in my living room, growing up. When we had left on a long bus trip and one of the Turkish girls exclaimed she had to *cheesh* – I laughed, because I knew exactly what she meant. But more often on that trip, I cried.

Everywhere I went I told people I was an Armenian and everywhere, from the southeast to Istanbul, people told me that they knew what happened to the Armenians. A few told me their families had hid the

Armenians when the soldiers came; some said they were devastated at what had happened to their neighbors. “We had lived peacefully together for hundreds of years. How could this have happened?” Far from trying to kill me, they welcomed me into their homes, they fed me and they cared for me. Here were the people, not Armenians themselves, who cared about what had happened to the Armenians.

I was disheartened while there to see that a conference slated to discuss the “Armenian question” was cancelled and that Turkish Justice Minister Cemil Cicek accused those participating in the conference of treason against the Turkish government. The conference was said to be one-sided, but, of course, it is the one side that has not been heard. The conference has been rescheduled and re-cancelled, with angry Turkish picketers bearing signs that depict Armenians killing Turks.

On the plane, one of our fellow travelers sat with an Armenian-Turkish man who claims to still be harassed when he enters or leaves the country and that “Armenian” is stamped on his passport. I do not know if his behavior warrants this harassment, or if it simply has ethnic origins, but these are questions that need to be asked.

What I have learned from being a descendent of what I have always known as genocide is the damage done to families and individuals of the group targeted. I know that it is not o.k. for me to label large groups of people, even Turkish people, and to treat them as if they are all the same. I have learned first hand what fear and hatred of an entire group of people can do and I, for one, refuse to be an enemy.

Governments will make concessions based on self-interest, and I am not willing to wait until the Turkish government or other governments, for that matter, decide it is in their best interest to talk about the Armenian “question.” If the Turkish government is going to admit what happened to the Armenians, they will do it because their own citizens force them to. And that will not happen if we do not talk to the people themselves. Soon it will be true that only Armenians care about what happened to the Armenians because those in Turkey who care will no longer be alive to verify our memory. We have waited long enough.

Chris Lovejoy is a Master of Arts student at Hartford Seminary.

Pastor Urges Seminary to be Open to the Truth

September 11, 2005

To the Editor:

I received the August issue of Praxis and was terribly disturbed by the article entitled

“Board of Trustees Meets in Turkey.” To quote from the article: “Besides the board meeting, the trustees visited Fatih University, talked with leaders of the Journalists and Writers Foundation which promotes interfaith dialogue through major international conferences, and met with the Archbishop of the Assyrian Church, the Vatican Ambassador to Istanbul and numerous members of the interfaith community.” What happened to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople? How can an academic community travel to the seat of the Byzantine Christian Empire and ignore completely the leader of the Orthodox Christian world? Is it because of the political issues that would not allow you to meet with Patriarch Bartholomew along with the other Christian representatives in Istanbul. The Patriarch and the Greek Orthodox presence in Turkey live under severe Turkish oppression.

How can you promote interfaith dialogue without including the Greek Orthodox presence in Istanbul? If the Patriarch was not invited because of his tenuous political position in Turkey, I can understand that and that should have been included in your article. It appears to me that the promotion of interfaith dialogue means the inclusion of all factions in a country whose fundamental religious rights are being denied them by the Turkish government.

Is your faculty aware of the oppressive rules under which the Orthodox Church is forced to live in Turkey today? Is your faculty aware that the Turkish government has closed the Patriarchal Theological School of Halki? After some twenty-five years, the government of Turkey continues to refuse the opening of this theological school. Is your academic community aware of the fact that 150,000 Orthodox Christians lived in Istanbul up until 1955? Are you aware that since 1955 there have been such repressive measures against the Christian population of that city that today there are only 2,500 left?

And, finally, my dear seekers of the truth, I am enclosing for your information some material about the catastrophe of the Christian presence in Asia Minor. As we commemorate the destruction of that great Christian city [Smyrna] by the Turks on September 13, 1922, we should remind our Turkish friends that they must own up to the genocide of the Armenian and Greek populations of Turkey.

I have been a Greek Orthodox priest for forty-six years. I believe very strongly that we must know what our roots are and that we should not forget the sacrifices of our ancestors. I was a student at Hartford Seminary for two years seeking to expand my knowledge of Christian truth. I would hope that the contemporary academic community of Hartford Seminary is open to the truth, the truth that sets us free.

Father Constantine J. Simones

St. Sophia Hellenic Orthodox Church
New London, CT

Faculty Notes



In late August, **Efrain Agosto** attended a Latino/a clergy lunch meeting which he helped organize at the Universal Health Care Foundation in

Meriden, CT. Early in the fall, Agosto attended major milestones of two historic Hartford Latino churches. Templo Fe celebrated its 40th anniversary as a church, all under the leadership of Pastor Julie Ramirez, a member of the PMH Advisory Council. Another member of the Council, Bishop Jeremias Torres, hosted the inauguration of a new building, at the end of October, for the church he pastors, Iglesia Casa de Restauracion (House of Restoration Church), located in the North End of Hartford. In November, Agosto attended the annual meeting of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. Agosto and Adair Lummis presented a paper on their study of Hispanic seminary programs. He also attended the Annual Meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature and American Academy of Religion, in Philadelphia. At this meeting, he had two responsibilities - (1) helping to facilitate a conversation between young Black and Latino theologians on behalf of the Hispanic Theological Initiative and the Fund for Theological Education; and (2) debriefing the presentation of a case study on pastoral theology in pre-World War II Germany at a meeting of the Case Teaching Institute.

In October, **Steven Blackburn** participated in a panel, chaired by Kelton Cobb, discussing "The Persian Contribution" at the Hartford Public Library. Students at the Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Middletown heard from Blackburn in November about the culture of North Africa and the Middle East. Drawing upon his family history as well as educational and work experience, five Social Studies classes studying the religion and history of the region got a personalized view of major portions of the Arab world. In the sector of public service, Blackburn accepted a gubernatorial appointment to the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority, where he serves on the Grants Committee. Blackburn also continues to preach occasionally in Congregational-Christian churches in southern New England, most recently at the Third Congregational Church of Middletown.

Carl Dudley was on a tour of Presbyterian and Reformed Heritage in Scotland and Ireland, September 19-October 3, 2005, and subsequently wrote an article "What the Celtic Cross teach-

es about Presbyterian Peace, Unity and Purity," *Presbyterian Outlook*, forthcoming. He delivered the keynote address at Like A Mustard Seed: Celebrating Small Church Leadership Conference, October 24-25, 2005, at Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama.

Heidi Hadsell reviewed "The Cross in Our Context: Jesus and the Suffering World" by Douglas John Hall in the November 2005 issue of *Conversations in Religion and Theology*. Her essay on "Politics of Responsibility and Responsibility of Politics: A Perspective of Political Ethics on the Presidential Election in the USA" was published in *Responsible Leadership: Global Perspectives*, Christoph Stückelberger and J.N.K. Mugambi, ed., (Acton Publishers, 2005). In October, Hadsell was the keynote speaker at the 7th annual Faith and the Common Good event at San Francisco Theological Seminary (Her talk was titled, "Worrying Out Loud: Some Thoughts on Citizenship and the Common Good.") and participated in the Board meeting of GlobEthics in Bangkok, Thailand. At the GlobEthics meeting, she chaired a panel on business leadership and delivered a paper on business responsibility. Hadsell was the lead instructor for a Seminary online mini-course on "Dignity at the End of Life" that took place October 24 - 28.

Sheffield Phoenix Press published **Uriah Kim's** first book, *Decolonizing Josiah: Toward a Postcolonial Reading of the Deuteronomistic History*. Kim also wrote several entries for *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (forthcoming). In August, Kim attended the Asian Pacific Americans and Religion Research Initiative's annual conference in Chicago. At Berkeley from September 28 to October 1, he was one of the speakers at the fifth-year celebration of Pacific School of Religion's PANA Institute. In October, Kim traveled to Atlanta to participate in a National Recruitment Conference sponsored by The Fund for Theological Education and hosted by Emory University; this conference is an on-going attempt to encourage racial/ethnic minority students to enter doctoral studies in religion, theology and biblical studies. He presented a paper at the annual meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature and American Academy of Religion in Philadelphia.

In August, **Yehezkel Landau** delivered a paper entitled "Dreams and Dream Interpretation in Said Nursi's *Risale-i Nur*: Islamic, Judaic, and Universal Resonances" at a conference in Istanbul. He also delivered two presentations on the Middle East conflict to host families in the Moderate Voices for Progress pro-

gram. In mid-September he facilitated a meeting between the MVP'ers and representatives of the local Jewish Community Relations Council, on whose Advisory Council he sits. Also in September, Landau participated in a "Peacemakers in Action" retreat, held in Manhattan under the sponsorship of the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding. In October, Landau gave a presentation on Jewish spirituality at the First Congregational Church in Lebanon, CT. During the second half of October, he was in Israel celebrating the festival of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles) with family and friends, and also recruiting students for the *Building Abrahamic Partnerships* program. November activities included: A lecture on "Grass-Roots Peacebuilding in Israel-Palestine" at the Interfaith Center in Cortland, NY; a lecture titled "Healing the Abrahamic Triangle: Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations After 9/11" at the Eitz Chayim Jewish congregation in Cambridge, MA; and, as a board member, a meeting of the American Friends of IPCRI, the Jerusalem-based Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information.

In September **Worth Loomis** led a group of senior managers at Capewell Manufacturing Company in a class on Business Ethics. Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez appointed Loomis chair of the Resource Development Committee of his Future Workforce Investment System, which aims to provide a summer job and job readiness training for every student in the Hartford School System. Loomis was part of the Hartford Seminary group that traveled to Turkey and Syria in October.

In August at the Association of Sociologists of Religion meeting in Philadelphia, **Adair Lummis** finished her term on the Executive Council, and presented two papers, "Mission and Ministry Involvements: In-Church, Out-Church, and Way-Out" and "Numinous Experiences and Reflexive Spirituality in the Formation of Religious Capital Among Feminist Women." In November, at the SSSR-RRA meetings in Rochester, NY, Lummis served on the Board of Directors for the Religious Research Association (RRA), and presented two papers: one for RRA: "Program and Policy Research Dynamics in Authority Contained and Dispersed Church Systems;" and one for the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion: "Fitting in Theologically: Consequences for Church and Personal Growth." She co-authored the paper presented by Efrain Agosto at another RRA session: "Education for Hispanic Ministry at ATS Seminars: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back, and Side Steps."

Ian Markham spent last summer doing a unit of Clinical and Pastoral Education

Continued on next page

Mattson Attends International Conference

King Abdullah II of Jordan gathered 170 Muslim scholars in Amman, Jordan, in July for an international Islamic conference on "True Islam and its Role in Modern Society." Professor Ingrid Mattson of Hartford Seminary was one of the scholars who attended.

The goal of the conference was for religious authorities from every branch of Islam to stand as one against extremist interpretations of Islam.

At the opening session, King Abdullah called on all participants to denounce the extremist interpretations that are leading Iraq to civil war and to re-affirm the underlying values and principles of Islam.

"The acts of violence and terrorism carried out by certain extremist groups in the name of Islam are utterly contradictory to the principles and ideology of Islam," the king said. "Such acts give non-Muslims excuses to attack Islam and interfere in the affairs of Muslim peoples."

In a concluding statement, the scholars agreed that fatwas, or religious edicts, should only be issued by clerics with religious authority. Press reports said that the announcement is meant to weaken statements by figures involved in fighting in Iraq who ordain violence.

The three-day meeting in Amman brought together representatives of eight Sunni and Shia Muslim schools of thought. They all also agreed that followers cannot label other Muslims as "apostates." A conference statement said the clerics agreed that an adherent of each of the eight schools of thought "is a Muslim."

Scholars came from all parts of the Islamic world, as well as America and Europe. They included the Grand Mufti of Egypt, the Mufti of Istanbul, and the Rector of Al-Azhar University as well as Sunni and Shiite religious authorities from Iraq, Iran and forty other countries.

Continued from previous page

at Hartford Hospital as part of his ordination process. In September, he was the keynote speaker at Leeds Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom on 'Islam in the Modern World' and spoke on "Working at an Interfaith Seminary" at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Southington, Markham also spoke on "History of Christianity" at the Interfaith Association of Glastonbury and "Unlocking the Da Vinci Code" at St. James Episcopal Church, West Hartford. He led a film discussion at Real Art Ways in Hartford in October and in November chaired a session on the Future of Anglicanism at the Society for the Study of Anglicanism at the American Academy of Religion in Philadelphia.

Ingrid Mattson was on sabbatical for the fall semester, working on her upcoming book, "The Qur'an and its Place in Muslim Society."

Jane Smith was a member of the Paper Review Panel for the National Board of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Her speaking engagements in October included: "Sharing the Iftar" talk at interfaith Ramadan banquet, Wesleyan University; discussion of Asma Gull Hasan's "Why I Am a Muslim," First Presbyterian Church in Hartford; Presentation to World Affairs Council's Great Decisions Group on

American Islam; lecture on "The Perils and Pleasures of Interfaith Encounter," Ames, Iowa Interfaith Council; lecture on "Christian-Muslim Relations: Models for Encounter and Exchange," Iowa City Ecumenical Community Committee; "Can We Share the World? Hope for the Christian-Muslim Dialogue," Spaulding Lecture at the University of Iowa. In November, Smith made a presentation to the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education Religion Network, at Hartford Seminary, on interfaith dialogue in the classroom and beyond. She was a member of the Overseers' Committee to visit Harvard Divinity School and coordinator for "Can We Connect: Young Muslim and Christian Women in Conversation," at Brown University. Smith also spoke to the Lion's Club of Hartford.

Miriam Therese Winter celebrated the arrival of her latest publication, *eucharist with a small e*, at a book-signing event at the Seminary in September. The subject of the book is the focus of her Fall 2005 course in spirituality. She was also a recipient of the 2005 Mother Teresa Award from the St. Bernadette Institute of Sacred Art in Albuquerque in gratitude for her "untiring devotion and service to the people of God...as musician, composer, author, and educator." The *Mother Teresa Awards* recognize the achievements of those who beautify the world, especially in the fields of religion, social action, and the arts.

In August, **Cynthia Woolever** presented a paper on "Women of the Pew: Mobilizing Civic and Religious Capital" at the annual meetings of the Association of Sociologists of Religion, Philadelphia. In September, Woolever delivered the keynote presentation at the launch of the Timothy Project, an effort to revitalize congregations by the UCC Massachusetts Conference, and reviewed two journal articles (one for *Social Problems* and one for *Religious Research Review*) and a manuscript on Catholic religious women for Lexington Books. In October, Woolever attended the annual meetings of the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, Louisville, KY. She serves on the nominating committee of this group. Woolever also led four workshops at the "Doing Church" conference sponsored by the New York Episcopal Diocese and presented at New York's Trinity Church on the U.S. Congregational Life Survey. Last month, she presented a paper ("The Other Half of Health: Patterns of Lay Leadership in Declining Churches") at the annual meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion/Religious Research Association, Rochester, NY. She also was co-convenor of a session on "New Research from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey" and participated in a session on "Contributions of Synagogue Studies."



Hartford Seminary's January Intersession will run from Monday, January 23 through Friday, January 27. The Winter/Spring 2006 Semester begins on Monday, January 30 and ends on Monday, May 8. The Seminary's courses are open to members of the public on a space-available basis and carry three graduate level credits. Individuals

who do not wish to take courses for credit may apply to take courses as an auditor. For those enrolled in a three-credit course, the cost is \$1,360. The non-credit audit fee is \$575.

We now have a special audit rate of \$385 for: Persons age 62 and older; Graduates of Hartford Seminary degree programs or the Certificate of Professional Ministry; 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 learn more about Hartford Seminary and its faculty, visit our website: www.hartsem.edu. Course syllabi submitted prior to the semester will be posted on the website.

January Intersession

Building Abrahamic Partnerships

Sunday, January 22 – Sunday, January 29 (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. *Yehezkel Landau, Faculty Associate in Interfaith Relations*

Contemporary Islam: Reform and Discontent

Monday, January 23 through Friday, Jan. 27, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. This course looks at contemporary efforts to reform Islam, focusing on Shariah and women's rights. It will look at ideas of mainstream Islamic movements and the emergence of liberal Islam in Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey and Morocco. It will also examine the reformist ideas of the lecturer, and explore the future of Islam through interactive, visionary workshops. *Ziauddin Sardar, Bijlefeld Lecturer and author of "Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim"*

Winter/Spring Semester

ARTS OF MINISTRY

Ministry in Daily Life

Wednesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:50 p.m., beginning Feb. 1 This course provides an introduction to the biblical and theological basis for ministry, with special emphasis on ministry in daily life. The seminar also explores possibilities for integrating theory and practice by means of an appropriate spirituality and assists students in assessing their personal call to ministry. *J. Alan McLean, Adjunct Professor in the Arts of Ministry*

Victim Care: Issues for Clergy and Faith-Based Counselors

Tuesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:50 p.m., beginning January 31 The purpose of this course is to assist clergy and faith-based counselors to consider and discern the profound issues facing vic-

tims of crime. *Benjamin K. Watts, Faculty Associate in the Arts of Ministry and Senior Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church, New London*

True Confessions: A Study in Practical Theology

Tuesdays from 7 p.m. to 9:20 p.m., beginning January 31 Our everyday lives depend on publicly accountable words, ordinary forms of truth-telling that give reliable knowledge and support trustworthy relationships. Whether on the witness stand, in the political arena, or during a counseling session, the pervasive practice of "testimony" has striking similarities along with important distinctions. We will study this practice from the perspectives of law, philosophy, marketing, holocaust studies, and more to sense what is fully involved when we know something through testimony. *James R. Nieman, Professor of Practical Theology*

ETHICS

Theological Ethics and the Personal Life

Mondays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:50 p.m., beginning January 30 In this course we will survey models of our common life that have prevailed in western Christianity in the modern period, reflect on the religious symbols, stories, practices and habits by which we make sense of what is going on in public life, and consider what possibilities exist for fostering a civil society. *Heidi Gehman, Adjunct Professor in Theology and Ethics*

Introduction to Islamic Law

ONLINE

This course will provide a critical overview of the history and practice of Islamic law. *Ingrid Mattson, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations*

HISTORY

Religion and Protest

Wednesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:50 p.m., beginning Feb. 1 From the Church of England dissenters in the 1620s to the Waco separatists of the 1990s, religion has been a locus of dissent and counterculture in the United States. This course will examine that creative (and destructive) potential in American religions, with special focus on the abolitionist reformers of the 19th century, the temperance activists of the early 20th century, and the religious counterculturalists of the 1960s. *Mark Oppenheimer, Adjunct Professor in History*

MASTER OF ARTS

Religion in the 21st Century

This course will be at the First Church of Christ, Congregational, Glastonbury, CT, **Wednesdays from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., on February 1, 8, 15 and 22, March 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 and April 5. The final session will be at Hartford Seminary.** This course will provide anyone interested in the dynamic of religion in the modern world the opportunity to explore a select set of themes surrounding theology and ethics, Scripture and interfaith relations. *Heidi Hadsell, Professor of Social Ethics and President of Hartford Seminary, will lead the course; other Hartford Seminary core faculty will teach individual sessions.*

RELIGION AND SOCIETY

The Religious Experience of Indigenous People

Thursdays from 7 p.m. to 9:20 p.m., beginning February 2 This course will examine the kinds of religious experience found among some indigenous (or native aboriginal) peoples. *Kevin Ward, Adjunct Professor in Religion and Society*

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

Flea Market Jesus: Popular Religion and American Individualism

ONLINE

This course will examine the mixture of folk beliefs and 20th century fundamentalism practiced by so many Americans today, paying special attention to the religious and spiritual underpinnings of hyper-individualism. *Arthur E. Farnsley II, Adjunct Professor in Religion*

Women, Religion and the Future of USA Churches

ONLINE

Setting the context for on-line discussion of women in the future of USA churches, the course will begin with a brief overview of women in world religions. Attention will next be focused on the history of women's participation and leadership in American congregations over the last two centuries, to stimulate a discussion of what themes and trends might be predicted for the 21st and 22nd centuries. *Adair Lummis, Faculty Associate in Research*

SCRIPTURE

Hebrew Bible Survey II

Thursdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:50 p.m., beginning February 2 An introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures, this course will apply historical-critical methods of study to develop a framework for understanding the origins of the texts and the relationship of the texts to one another. Survey II will examine the prophetic corpus, poetry wisdom and the rest of "the writings" in the Hebrew Bible. *Uriah Kim, Professor of Hebrew Bible*

Reading Scripture Through Jewish Eyes: From Creation Through Sinai

Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on January 31, February 28, March 14, April 4 and April 25 Using scripture as their blueprint, the Rabbis of the Talmudic period (c 200 BCE-550 CE) shaped much of Jewish thought as we now know it. With the help of their Jewish eyes, we shall search the essential religious messages that emerge from the biblical stories from creation to the revelation at Mt. Sinai (Genesis 1 – Exodus 24). *Stephen Fuchs, Adjunct Professor in History and World Religions and Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel*

New Testament Survey

Tuesdays from 7 p.m. to 9:20 p.m., beginning January 31 This course introduces the student to the study of the origins of Christianity by means of its canonical literature, the New Testament. We will undertake a historical study of the New Testament documents, seeking to understand their plan, origin, purpose and content within their broader historical and cultural context. *Efrain Agosto, Professor of New Testament*

Engaging the Book of Genesis: The Text in the Context of Our Own Lives

Wednesdays from 7 p.m. to 9:20 p.m., beginning February 1 This course will examine the Book of Genesis as a touchstone for understanding "sacred story" as a motif in our own lives. The accounts of the biblical patriarchs and matriarchs will be read as guides to our own God-wrestling challenges. *Yehezkel Landau, Faculty Associate in Interfaith Relations*

THEOLOGY

Modern Theology

Thursdays, from 7 p.m. to 9:20 p.m., beginning February 2 This course examines the development of western Christian reflection from the late Renaissance through the present. *Ian Markham, Professor of Theology and Ethics and Dean of Hartford Seminary*

Christian-Muslim Relations: The Theological Dimension

Wednesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:50 p.m., beginning Feb. 1 The course is designed to look at the ways in which Christian and Muslim perceptions of their respective religions and their relationships to one another have evolved through history, in conflict and in concord, contributing the conceptual "theological" heritage with which Christians and Muslims operate in the modern world. *Jane I. Smith, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations*

LITURGY, WORSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY

Islamic Spirituality

Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., beginning February 1 (10 weeks) This course explores Islamic spirituality by going through mystical interpretations of both the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet. We will also look at the development of Islamic spiritual thought and practices in history. *Steven Blackburn, Faculty Associate in Semitic Scriptures, and Kemal Argon and Colleen Keyes, Adjunct Professors in Islamic Studies*

Daily Space with God: The Practices of Personal Devotion in Mainline Protestant, Roman Catholic and Evangelical Traditions

Tuesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:50 p.m., beginning January 31 Personal devotions are the engine of faithful living. The goal of this course will be the enable the student to reflect on the different types of daily devotions and the ways in which the devotions underpin faithful living. (This course was a winner of the "Faith as a Way of Life Project" based at the Yale Center for Faith and Culture 2005). *Ian Markham, Professor of Theology and Ethics and Dean of Hartford Seminary*

Living Liturgy

Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on January 31, February 28, March 14, April 4 and April 25 This course will bridge the gap between formal ritual worship and the liturgy of life. In the context of a community of believers we will explore diverse ways of knowing and naming God within the dynamics of praise, namely, story, song, symbol, sacramental justice, and creative celebration. *Miriam Therese Winter, Professor of Liturgy, Worship and Spirituality and Director, Women's Leadership Institute*

TRAVEL SEMINAR

Transition and Democracy: Human Rights, Economics & the Role of the Church in China and Hong Kong

May 22 – June 5, 2006 The Plowshares Institute, Columbia Theological Seminary, and Hartford Seminary are co-sponsoring this traveling seminar to Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China. The seminar, which is part of the Seminary's 2006 Summer Session, will examine leadership changes in China, renewed global engagement with the UN and North Korea, and the world's most robust economy. Cost is \$3,800, which includes housing, all meals and airfare from the West Coast. An additional \$680 will be assessed for those taking the trip for credit. For more information about the travel seminar please contact the Plowshares Institute at (860) 651-4304. For more information about receiving graduate level credit please contact Karen Rollins, Registrar, at (860) 509-9511 or krollins@hartsem.edu. Deadline to apply: March 1, 2006.

Coming Up This Winter and Spring

Hartford Seminary will present lectures, seminars and special events for people of all faiths starting in January. For more information or to register for any of the programs listed below, please call the Public and Institutional Affairs Office at 860-509-9555 or send an email message to events@hartsem.edu.

God’s Word in Greek: Reading the Lectionary to Prepare for Preaching

With the Rev. Edward F. Duffy, minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Fairfield, CT
Wednesdays, January 11, February 8, March 8, April 12, May 10, and June 14
1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

BIJLEFELD LECTURE
Rethinking Ourselves: Islam and the West

With Ziauddin Sardar, writer, broadcaster and cultural critic and author of “Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim”
Tuesday, January 24
7 p.m.

Special Lecture and Book Signing

Religious Leadership Today: Lessons from Jesus and Paul

With Efrain Agosto, Professor of New Testament at Hartford Seminary
Thursday, January 26
7 p.m.

The Hartford Religious Landscape From Within: On Site, In Person

Led by Faculty at Hartford Seminary, Trinity College and the University of Connecticut
Mondays, February 6, 13, 21 (Tuesday in lieu of President’s Day) and 27 and March 6, 13, 20 and 27
Noon to 2 p.m.

Two Children of Abraham: Learning to Co-Exist

With Rabbi David Leipziger and Abdullah Antepli, chaplains together at Wesleyan University in 2004-05
Wednesday, February 15
7 p.m.

A Drumming Circle

With Jan Gregory, executive director of the Renaissance Center: A Conservatory of Music in Southbury, CT, and director of music ministry, Congregational Church of Easton
Mondays, March 13 and 27, April 10 and 24, and May 8 and 22
7 p.m.

Being Quiet: Quaker Silence as a Spiritual Practice for Everybody

With Brent Bill, executive vice president, Indianapolis Center for Congregations, and author of “Holy Silence: The Gift of Quaker Spirituality”
Monday April 3
7 p.m.

Interpreting the Story of Joseph from Three Religious Traditions

With Stephen Fuchs, Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel, West Hartford, CT; Uriah Kim, Professor of Hebrew Bible at Hartford Seminary, and Ingrid Mattson, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary
Tuesday, April 18
7 p.m.

Why Religious People Quite Like Conspiracy Theories: An Analysis

With Ian Markham, Dean of Hartford Seminary and Professor of Theology and Ethics
Wednesday, April 26
7 p.m.

Book Signing and Panel Discussion

Muslim Women in America Today: Challenges and Opportunities

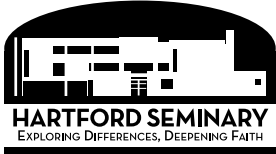
With Colleen Keyes, Diana Hossain and Noora Brown, and introducing Jane Smith’s new book, “Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today”
Tuesday, May 9
7 p.m.

A Beginner’s Guide to the Qur’an

With Sohaib Sultan, Hartford Seminary Islamic Chaplaincy Student and author of “The Koran for Dummies”
ONLINE, May 22 – 26

The Spirit of Science and the Science of Spirit

With Diarmuid O’Murchu, priest and social psychologist and author of “Quantum Theology”
Tuesday, June 13
7 p.m.



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