

praxis

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*Lindsey Rebecca Paris-Lopez
Master of Arts*



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“Before I came here, my views of other religions were in many aspects biased. In particular, my view of Christianity was mostly negative and that Christians were in some sense culpable. By interacting with students and Christian professors, however, my perception of Christianity as a religion and Christians changed significantly.”

*Mirza Hadzirusevic
Master of Arts*



Brianna Johnston



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“Our world and our lives are filled with rich diversity, which God continues to create moment after moment. . . . Interfaith dialogue helps us to explore and to appreciate the diverse creation that is life and in turn helps us to help others to do the same.”

*Brianna Johnston
Graduate Certificate*

*Four Students Reflect
on Their Experiences
at Hartford Seminary*

Looking for Lost Alumni/ae

Hartford Seminary's Institutional Advancement Office, which oversees Alumni/ae Relations, is making a diligent effort to locate hundreds of Hartford Seminary alumni/ae we have lost touch with.

We are hoping to get folks back on our mailing list so we can keep them informed about the many wonderful programs and events that are taking place at the Seminary, including the upcoming week-long celebration of our 175th Anniversary, during the week of October 18 to 26.

In recent months we have sent postcards to last known addresses, asking the current residents for assistance. In many cases we have learned that those addresses were correct, but for unknown reasons mail was returned to us by the Post Office.

Currently we are doing internet searches in an attempt to find alumni/ae. But our most successful tool has been the lost alumni/ae list on the Seminary's website at <http://www.hartsem.edu/alumni/lostalumslist.htm>.

If you have access to the internet, please take a look at the list and let us know if you are in touch with anyone listed. Or let them know their name is there.

Since April 1 we have reconnected with 39 alumni/ae who are thrilled to be back in touch. We have also, sadly, been notified that 24 of the alumni/ae we had listed have passed away, some many years ago.

In both cases, we have received wonderful stories from many and we thank all of you who have taken the time to write. We look forward to reconnecting with many more.

If you have any questions, please send email to alum@hartsem.edu or call Mary Kalencik, associate director, at (860) 509-9520.



STUART GOLDENBERG

A R E Q U E S T

Please Send Us Your Email Address

Stay informed on a timely basis by sharing your email address with us.

Here at Hartford Seminary, we want to communicate better with you.

We would like to send out updates on what is happening at Hartford Seminary as well as information on our events and courses by email to those people for whom we have email addresses.

Right now we do not have any email

address for many of you, our alumni/ae and friends.

Please send your email to me at dbarrett@hartsem.edu or call me at (860) 509-9519.

By the way, Hartford Seminary has a strict privacy policy. We do not share or sell e-mail addresses to a third party.

Thank you.

David S. Barrett
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like more information about *Praxis* or about Hartford Seminary, please contact David Barrett at Hartford Seminary, 77 Sherman Street, Hartford, CT 06105.



Brianna Johnston
Graduate Certificate

What drew you to Hartford Seminary? Several ministers highly recommended to me Miriam Therese Winter's Women's Leadership Institute.

How did you learn about the Seminary? Several ministers suggested that I look at Hartford Seminary as a way to explore my spirituality. I was considering a 'vocation' in counseling, but at the same time I was being pulled by a new found spirituality. A dear friend, a United Church of Christ minister, suggested that I explore the two together as a Pastoral Counselor.

Why did you choose to attend this seminary rather than another? The aforementioned recommendations,

WLI, the Seminary's reputation and its course flexibility made Hartford Seminary a clear choice.

Was the commute to Hartford difficult or something you got used to? I live 10 minutes away, I am embarrassed to say.

What did you find is the most important influence on your experience at Hartford Seminary? All my professors have encouraged the respect of and the willingness to consider diverse spiritual and theological perspectives.

Please let us know about a specific enriching moment, in your own words, that you had during your studies at Hartford Seminary. Actually, the sum of many moments in discussion circles in which I witnessed spirituality take many forms has reshaped my appreciation for the positive power of the spirit that flows in acts of kindness, dignity and respect. Routine shared experiences, transformed into events of unspoken prayer, leave lasting imprints.

What disappointed you? I would like to see greater opportunities to share experiences and interact with professors

and students outside the classroom.

What did you find most fulfilling spiritually or in terms of service to others? Hartford Seminary has given me the experience to explore a new found relationship with God. What was just a new found relationship with God has evolved into a calling.

Did you form friendships that will last beyond graduation? I believe so, time will tell, but my sense is that I will always have a connection with the Seminary, so I hate to think of a moment when I 'graduate' and I like to think that existing and new friendships will continue to form.

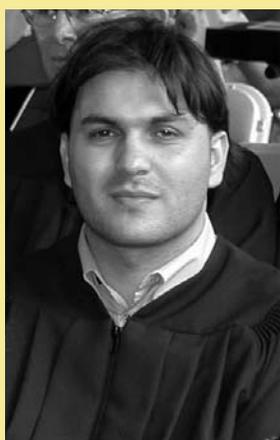
Hartford Seminary focuses on interfaith dialogue. How important is this emphasis to your decision to study here? This is an extremely important aspect of my faith studies. Our world and our lives are filled with rich diversity, which God continues to create moment after moment. Faith is just as dynamic. Interfaith dialogue helps us to explore and to appreciate the diverse creation that is life and in turn helps us to help others to do the same.

How did interaction with persons of other faiths influence you in your own faith? In your daily life and how you live it?

There was once a time when I wanted to become an ambassador in a career in foreign service. I've come to appreciate from my experiences at Hartford Seminary and a recent trip to India sponsored by the Seminary that we are ambassadors to our faith and our experiences with which God has blessed us. Importantly, we are not ambassadors in the stuffy sense of fancy dinners and formal summits, but in moments of everyday encounters with people on the streets, in churches, in stores, etc. by acts of kindness, dignity and respect.

How do you expect to use your degree from Hartford Seminary? This month I will be applying to the cooperative Master of Divinity program at Hartford Seminary and will be considering both Yale Divinity School and Andover Newton Theological School.

Brianna Johnston lives in Bloomfield, CT. She is a retired actuary. She received her Graduate Certificate in Spirituality.



Mirza Hadzirusevic
Master of Arts

What drew you to Hartford Seminary? Hartford Seminary is

one of the few schools in North America that primarily focuses on interfaith dialogue. The main reason that I came to Hartford Seminary was the interfaith relations between various religious denominations. Other than my own Muslim faith, I did not know much about other faiths and I wanted to learn more about them.

How did you learn about the Seminary? I learned about Hartford Seminary on the Internet.

Was the commute to Hartford difficult or something you got used to?

I commuted from New Jersey. In the beginning it was a little difficult; however, after a while I got used to it.

What did you find is the most important influence on your experience at Hartford Seminary?

One of the most important influences on my experience has been my perception of the other faiths. Before I came here, my views

of other religions were in many aspects biased. In particular, my view of Christianity was mostly negative and that Christians were in some sense culpable. By interacting with students and Christian professors, however, my perception of Christianity as a religion and Christians changed significantly. Studying Christian theology and history at Hartford Seminary, I have come to appreciate and understand Christianity positively and more fully.

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Please let us know about a specific enriching moment, in your own words, that you had during your studies at Hartford Seminary.

My most enriching moment at Hartford Seminary was my graduation day. It was a special day because I reflected on my experience and how much I have grown, both intellectually and spiritually during my two years of study at Hartford Seminary.

What disappointed you?

Nothing

What did you find most fulfilling spiritually or in terms of service to

others?

I found the diversity of faith traditions the most spiritually fulfilling. In today's world we witness so much religious and sectarian violence, and Hartford Seminary attempts to bridge the gap for common understanding among various religious traditions. I found this to be the most spiritually fulfilling at Hartford Seminary, where Jews, Christians and Muslims come to dialogue and understand each other.

Did you form friendships that will last beyond graduation?

Hartford Seminary is a friendly environment. I have formed friendships that will last beyond graduation with students and professors alike. I met various people from different

cultures and faith traditions. Despite our different experiences and faith traditions, I was able to relate with students and professors alike on a personal level.

Hartford Seminary focuses on interfaith dialogue. How important is this emphasis to your decision to study here?
Very Important. Hartford Seminary's commitment to interfaith dialogue was a major reason I decided to study here.

How did interaction with persons of other faiths influence you in your own faith? In your daily life and how you live it?

Interacting with persons of other faiths at Hartford Seminary allowed me to

appreciate the sincerity and conviction of other faith traditions. I also was able to relate my own faith experience with people of other faiths. I quickly realized that I was becoming more pluralistic and accepting of other faith traditions and that it was God's plan to create a world of diverse faiths.

How do you expect to use your degree from Hartford Seminary?
Earning an M.A. degree from Hartford Seminary will enable me to pursue my studies further in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations.

Mirza Hadzirusevic lives in Clifton, New Jersey. He was a full-time student. He received his M.A. in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations.



Lindsey Rebecca Paris-Lopez
Master of Arts

What drew you to Hartford Seminary?

I have been wrestling with questions of faith all my life, and when I re-embraced Christianity after eight years as a Muslim, I felt a passionate desire to continue to learn about and witness God's grace, and began looking for seminaries and divinity schools.

As Islam remains an important influence on my personality and spirituality, I hoped to find a seminary with a

range of courses in other world religions so that I could continue to study Islam and perhaps learn of its relationship with Christianity throughout history. Even as my faith in Christianity deepened, I felt a desire to help disperse some of the ignorance and hostility toward Islam that I had witnessed, particularly after September 11th, 2001. I never imagined that I would find a seminary that actually focused on interfaith dialogue, particularly between Christianity and Islam, so my discovery of Hartford Seminary was a joy and a surprise. It was exactly the kind of program for which my long and winding spiritual journey had prepared me. I believed then and I am certain now that God led me to Hartford Seminary little by little throughout my life.

How did you learn about the Seminary?

My best friend, who had unwittingly influenced

me in my re-embrace of Christianity, helped me embark on my search for the perfect seminary as she also looked for a seminary for herself. It was she who first found Hartford Seminary online, and she encouraged me to look at it. Once I saw the website for myself, it wasn't long before I determined that Hartford Seminary was the perfect place for me. I'm very grateful for my friend's internet-surfing skills!

Why did you choose to attend this seminary rather than another?

Although Hartford Seminary impressed me most initially, I also considered Vanderbilt Divinity School. However, when I asked a Vanderbilt professor if there were any Muslim students, I was told that there were few if any Muslims enrolled in the Divinity School. I knew then that Hartford Seminary was the better choice for me. Indeed, I have found that much

of what I have learned at Hartford Seminary has come from listening to and interacting with my fellow students, and I know I have learned more about Islam by taking courses with Muslims than I would have learned had I merely taken courses about Islam with other Christians.

Was the commute to Hartford difficult or something you got used to? For the first two years of my seminary career, I lived in New Britain, CT, which is only about 15 minutes from the seminary. I worked at different schools in different districts, but typically my commute to Hartford was no more than half an hour, and it was pleasant. For my final year, I lived in Queens, New York, but I spent the year writing my thesis and taking one online course per semester. The few times I did commute to Hartford Seminary were

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for special programs or to defend my thesis; I did not have a regular long-distance commute. It's a very pleasant, relaxing train ride from Grand Central Terminal to the station in New Haven and then again from New Haven to Hartford.

What did you find is the most important influence on your experience at Hartford Seminary? Since I enrolled at Hartford Seminary as a newly re-affirmed Christian, I must say that the most important influence on my seminary experience was my deepening faith in Christ. My growing faith in Christianity was the lens through which I viewed all my courses and relationships throughout my seminary career, and it encouraged me to be both bold in witness to my own faith and humble in the knowledge that even if I spend the rest of my life learning, I can only barely begin to comprehend the boundless love and wonder of the living God. This humility in turn opens me to learning from others, and I am further humbled by the sincerity of the love and devotion of my Muslim brothers and sisters who enrich my understanding of God.

Please let us know about a specific enriching moment, in your own words, that you had during your studies at Hartford Seminary. My clearest memory comes from the very beginning of my Hartford Seminary experience, on the first or second night of my Dialogue in a World of Difference class. The class was divided into groups, and I was sitting with a Muslim, another Christian, and a Unitarian. We were talking about all that we appreciated

about what our faiths have in common, and I was enjoying the conversation but also longing for the conversation to evolve into a more challenging discussion of how to deal with some of the difficulties involved in dialogue. Finally, I said that while I do appreciate all the similarities between our faiths, I am distrustful of a moral relativism that glosses over the differences between faiths, and I wanted us to talk about how we remain grounded in our particular beliefs while still respecting others. The other members of my group did not seem particularly interested in talking about differences, and when all the groups re-convened in the classroom, a member of my discussion group reported that she had sensed fear within our group – fear “some” of us had of opening minds and hearts and fear of rendering our traditions vulnerable if we should allow ourselves to learn about and appreciate others. I was a little bit hurt by the word “fear;” as the only dissenter within our group, I could only assume that this lady was talking about me. So I raised my hand and explained that I believe it is important, in dialogue, to wrestle with our differences as well as embrace our similarities. I then said that while some might see my struggle with difference as fear, I thought it was very bold of me to express my distrust of relativism and my need to reflect upon differences as well as similarities in such a pluralistic environment where embracing similarities feels so good that we may be tempted to ignore the differences. I remember that Ian Markham thanked me that day and again a few days later for my courageous honesty, and I think

I heard Jane Smith mutter “Go Lindsey” under her breath. This particular moment set the tone for my seminary education, inspiring me to be brave enough to ask difficult questions and speak up whenever I had a divergent point of view. The pride my professors expressed in my willingness to struggle with difficult issues inspired me to be respectful but not shrink from challenges or controversy.

What disappointed you? I really don't think of anything at Hartford Seminary as a disappointment, although there were certain things that I thought needed improvement. Although it was sometimes disappointing when I felt misunderstood by my classmates, I think one of the great things about Hartford Seminary is that we generally learned how to communicate and resolve misunderstandings respectfully. So while I had difficulties sometimes, I didn't have any memorable disappointments.

What did you find most fulfilling spiritually or in terms of service to others? In the spring of my first year, I took a course entitled Daily Space With God in which I was required to pray the daily office (at least three times daily following the church lectionary) and keep a journal, among other things. I found that having a prayer schedule created balance and focus in my life and helped me to focus on how I am blessed and how I am called to reflect God's blessing to others. My prayer life today is not quite as rigorous as it was when I took the class, but it is more regular and more focused, and that is a great blessing to me; it helps me keep my life in proper perspective.

Did you form friendships that will last beyond graduation? Unfortunately, while I got along well with my classmates and enjoyed their company, I doubt I will see much of them now that I have graduated.

Hartford Seminary focuses on interfaith dialogue. How important is this emphasis to your decision to study here?

As I have said before, Hartford Seminary's emphasis on interfaith dialogue is what made me choose this seminary over others. Hartford Seminary does more than praise the merits of interfaith dialogue; every course is an exercise in interfaith dialogue itself.

How did interaction with persons of other faiths influence you in your own faith? In your daily life and how you live it? Although I am profoundly grateful for the many Christian mentors among my family and friends, I am equally indebted to people of other faiths who have had a profound influence on my life and my spiritual development. While I came into Hartford Seminary expecting my education to prepare me for obtaining a Ph.D. and teaching theology and interfaith relations, I have since felt a call to ordained ministry. Not only do I have a unique perspective on Scripture shaped by my struggles and experiences, but I also believe I have a capacity for compassion and empathy that has been deepened by my Hartford Seminary experience. Learning to listen to so many perspectives and communicate honestly, respectfully, and constructively has provided me with essential skills in pastoral care and counseling which I hope

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to further hone when I pursue a Master's of Divinity.

Lindsey Rebecca Paris-Lopez lives in Queens, New York. She is seeking a job in a church or religious education setting. She received her M.A. in Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations.



Jim Johnson
Master of Arts

What drew you to Hartford Seminary?

Initially, I came because it was close and it afforded me an opportunity to try out what I had wanted to do since high school. In short order, it became the only place I wanted to be.

How did you learn about the Seminary?

I had attended some public lectures at Hartford Seminary previously.

Why did you choose to attend this seminary rather than another?

An interesting question. I initially took a course at HartSem (Fall 1998) to "test the water" as it were. I had been putting off seminary ever since high school. I felt

called to the ministry and after an event in our garden one day, it became clear to me that I could keep doing what I was doing, and be reasonably successful at it; however, I would become increasingly dissatisfied with it until I started taking steps toward a new career in ministry.

After the first ten minutes of my first class at HartSem, I knew that this was where I belonged despite my misgivings. After another class and the writing workshop, I decided to apply to Andover Newton Theological School (ANTS) in their Master of Divinity program. I was accepted there and began taking classes via the internet. I came to loathe "distance education." I also knew that I could not be gone from my office for the lengths of time I would need to attend classes at ANTS.

Working with my United Church of Christ in-care committee, I transferred from ANTS to HartSem - taking a different path toward ordination and an MA in Biblical Studies. The MA recently awarded is a major milestone in my journey toward ordination.

Was the commute to Hartford difficult or something you got used to? It was not that bad, especially after I found the "back way" from home to HartSem.

What did you find is the most important influence on your experience at Hartford Seminary? Diversity; inter-faith dialogue; intelligent, articulate, passionate faculty.

Faith, any faith, is a way of life and it is a very difficult journey on this beautiful blue-green orb. Faith is the first and last frontier. Want challenge, want to be counter-cultural, want to feel fulfilled - all at the same time? Be a person of faith!

Please let us know about a specific enriching moment, in your own words, that you had during your studies at Hartford Seminary. Answering this is a lot like asking me which of my children is my favorite! There were many "AHA" moments. Faith, any faith, is a way of life and it is a very difficult journey on this beautiful blue-green orb. Faith is the first and last frontier. Want challenge, want to be counter-cultural, want to feel fulfilled - all at the same time? Be a person of faith!

What disappointed you? I wish that the Christians were as "together" as my Islamic classmates were. But then this was perhaps because they are on-campus and the rest of us are commuters.

What did you find most fulfilling spiritually or in terms of service to others? The interaction and cross feeding between believers from the Abrahamic tradition.

Did you form friendships that will last beyond graduation? As an evening commuter student, there were limited opportunities. However, there are a few I see going out into the future. As a commuter, it is not like on-campus

students who literally see each other daily.

Hartford Seminary focuses on interfaith dialogue. How important is this emphasis to your decision to study here? It was an important consideration at the beginning; it became essential for me by the time I graduated.

How did interaction with persons of other faiths influence you in your own faith? In your daily life and how you live it? It broadened and deepened my faith as I saw the spiritual vitality of my Jewish and Islamic classmates and faculty.

How do you expect to use your degree from Hartford Seminary? It is a major step in what I feel is a "call" to ordained ministry. There a few other steps that I need to take as well e.g. CPE and Field Education. A new career beckons.

Jim Johnson lives in Southwick, MA. He retired as grants and contract officer at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, MA, in 2007. He received his M.A. in Biblical Studies.

Thanks for the Memories

By Jane I. Smith, Ph.D.

To my Hartford Seminary friends, colleagues and students, from Jane

Thanks for the memories....That's the way I feel about Hartford Seminary, which has provided me with far more wonderful memories than I can even remember! You all know that this strange circular journey of my professional life began right here (or rather right next door) when I was a student at the Seminary in its former digs. I never imagined that I would come back here to teach, or that the school would have evolved in such remarkable ways.

It is the students whom I will remember most vividly.

After my Seminary experience off I went to Harvard Divinity School, where I ended up spending quite a few years as student, member of the faculty, and administrator. Returning to Harvard now at this late stage of my career was never in my long-range plans either, but here I go again.

As July 1 approaches I know that leaving the Seminary this time (I will continue to live in Avon and "commute" to Cambridge) will be a lot harder than simply packing up my books. I care deeply for this institution, and am excited about the direction the Macdonald Center

will be going with new faculty members and the leadership of Ingrid Mattson. There is a wonderful spirit of energy here that will excite new students and reassure our friends and colleagues around the world that we remain in the forefront of interfaith relations.

It's a bit of an irony that when I graduated from Hartford Seminary so many years ago I had never taken advantage of any of the resources the institution already had then for learning about Islam – no courses on the Qur'an, no Arabic, no background in the field that was to become my lifetime endeavor. Little did I imagine that I would spend almost 13 years teaching at the same (but very different) institution in classes that often had more Muslim than Christian students.

Many things stand out as wonderful memories of this time at the Seminary: the staff who are always so extremely supportive and helpful; the Board of Trustees on which I sat for three years who are quite remarkably dedicated to the well-being of the institution; the fledgling PhD program that is now really starting to try its wings; the book-signing evenings that David Barrett forced me to do (I actually enjoyed them); the great programs we put on for the Luce Forum in Abrahamic Religions; covering for Warith Deen Mohammed when he failed to show at the last minute for a presentation at the State House; drumming with Jan and listening to the rhythms float up to the ceiling of the Meeting Room; working



Jane Smith receives a farewell gift from Dean Efrain Agosto at a staff dinner in June, before starting her new post at Harvard Divinity School.

with my colleagues at the Macdonald Center (what in the world would we do without Val?); editing interesting (OK, not always) articles for *The Muslim World* journal; hosting the international students for picnics and fireside dinners; getting to know colleagues from nine religions around Connecticut in the CCIU; and most fun of all – my 70th birthday party just a year ago.

But with all of that, it is the students whom I will remember most vividly. As our graduates walked off the platform with their diplomas a few weeks ago somebody called out "Go change the world!" And I thought to myself, "Yes, I believe they will." What an amazing treat it has been to be in the classroom with students from Turkey, Ghana, Italy, Indonesia, Nigeria, Bosnia, Liberia, Singapore, Pakistan, Lebanon, Burma, America, Germany, Korea, Palestine, Burkino Faso and many other places around the world.

I answered the phone the other morning and

heard a cheery "Hi Jane!" from Guat in Singapore. I take it as a great privilege to have been able to interact with such an amazing array of people who have come here to learn how they might, in fact, work for change in whatever situation they return to.

So it is with a mixture of sadness and thanksgiving that I leave Hartford Seminary. My thoughts and warmest wishes are with you all here. And how can I forget you when I am still advising theses for over 10 students? You haven't seen the last of me yet!

Jane I. Smith has been Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary since 1995. She served as co-director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations and co-editor of the Muslim World journal. On July 1, Smith became Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs at Harvard Divinity School. She wrote this farewell in June.

For Nothing?

Job 1:6–12

By Uriah Kim



The Question of Theodicy

In the movie “Bruce Almighty,” Bruce Nolan, played by Jim Carrey, is a reporter in a local TV station in Buffalo, New York, who feels that he is being picked on by God. The movie starts with this line: “Why do you hate me, God?” We learn that Bruce is a genuinely nice guy, unlike his nemesis, Alan Baxter, played by Steve Carell, who is portrayed as a backstabber. Bruce wants the news anchor position, but Alan Baxter gets the job. Soon after, one bad thing follows another, until Bruce’s life falls completely apart. He thinks he is being unfairly treated by God and demands that God answer his charges.

From time to time we also feel like Bruce Nolan whenever something bad happens to us. When we think that we have not been treated fairly or when we believe that our suffering is more than we deserve, we complain to God: “Why me, O God? This is so unfair. Why did you let this happen to me? Why are you picking on me?” We

question God’s justice, or theodicy, a term used by theologians to talk about God’s fairness.

The book of Job is in large part about theodicy: if God is just, loving, and all-powerful, then how do we explain the suffering of the innocent? In other words: “How do we explain why bad things happen to good people?” This has been a perennial problem for religious people who believe in one God.

There have been many explanations for unjust suffering in Judaism and Christianity over the years; at least five reasons are discussed or derived from the book of Job:

1. Unjust suffering has been explained as a way of disciplining those whom God loves; that is, it has a pedagogical purpose. “It’s for your own good that you’re suffering.”
2. It is due to an unknown or forgotten sin the sufferer is not aware of; that is, the sufferer deserves the suffering whether he/she realizes it or not.
3. The cause for suffering lies not with humans on earth but with spiritual beings above the earth, like evil spirits and devils.
4. The suffering of the innocent is explained as suffering for someone else’s sin; vicarious suffering, the belief that there is some redeeming value to one’s suffering.
5. It is justified by believing that the sufferer will be rewarded in the afterlife; in heaven God will make

up for his/her suffering on earth.

The book of Job makes it clear that Job is innocent, that his suffering is not related to what he has done. But his wife wants him to curse God and die. His friends who come to console him suggest, accuse, and then insist that Job must have done something wrong to deserve his fate. For about thirty chapters, Job and his friends engage in a heated debate over why Job is suffering. His friends do not compromise or modify their theology, their tradition, their understanding of God in light of Job’s experience. They believe that the human moral universe operates according to “Retribution Theology,” a theology that says the righteous are blessed and the wicked are punished by God. They abandon their friend in the name of God, maintaining that there is a logical connection between human behavior and God’s blessing/punishment. But Job holds on to his integrity, for he knows that his situation cannot be explained by the principle of retribution, and demands that God answer him.

In the movie “Bruce Almighty” God shows up to Bruce Nolan and claims that He is sick and tired of Bruce whining about how incompetent He is at doing His job. Then God endows Bruce with God’s power and wants him to run the world. Bruce finds out that it is not easy being God after all. After making a mess of the world and his own life even worse, he finally relinquishes his will to God with these words: “Not my will, but your will.” Bruce comes to a fresh understanding of himself and God after being in God’s shoes for a few days.

God appears to Job toward the end of the book and answers him similarly to the way God answers Bruce Nolan in the movie. God is quite upset and says, “I will question you, and you shall answer me” (Job 38:3). Surprisingly, God does not address whether God works according to the retribution principle. God completely ignores the problem that Job and his friends have been engaged in for the last thirty chapters. Instead, God asks Job whether he knows what it takes to run the universe. The fact that God is not like us is made very clear. God is not obligated to follow our moral principles and is outside our theological systems. We cannot contain God within our moral or theological frameworks. God seems to be saying: “My justice is not like yours; it is beyond your understanding; so deal with it!”

In Robert Frost’s book, *A Masque of Reason*, God thanks Job for the way in which he helped God make the point that the old reward-punishment principle of retribution simply does not hold. There is no logical connection between virtue and reward, wickedness and punishment, obedience and blessing, unfaithfulness and malediction. Apparently Job played a significant role in showing up the folly of this type of theology, and God thanks Job for freeing God from the bind in which Job’s friends clearly wanted to place God.

Job comes to a new understanding of himself and God through his experience and dialogue with God, and God admonishes his friends for holding on to a dogmatic view of God rather than coming to

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a fresh understanding of God through Job's experience.

The Question of Gratuitous Faith

As important as the question of theodicy is, there is another question that is just as important, if not more, in the book of Job. It is a question that the movie "Bruce Almighty" does not deal with; it is a question we seldom ask of ourselves. But it is a question that has been on God's mind from the beginning of human religiosity. We question God's justice, but there is something

God is not obligated to follow our moral principles and is outside our theological systems.

God wants to know from us as well: Why are humans religious? Why do you worship God?

In today's text, God is very proud of Job, a man who is honest and faithful, who reveres God and who is mindful of God in all his doing. God, like a parent with a wonderful child, shows off Job to the Satan (the adversary). But Satan responds with this question: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan makes a case that Job is faithful because God has blessed him with material wealth, wonderful children, good health, and honor. No wonder Job is so religious! Wouldn't you be faithful to God if you are given all that Job has? Satan accuses God of buying our love/worship with blessings; Satan claims that God is giving candies to children because He wants to be liked by us. How can anyone not love God who actually behaves according to the prosperity gospel? Satan challenges God

that humans would lose interest in God if God stops rewarding them for their religiosity. He argues that "disinterested faith" or gratuitous religion is not possible for humans! That humans love, worship, and believe God for what God does for them rather than for who God is.

"Why are humans religious anyway?" "Why do people worship God?" "Why do believers pray to God?" "Why do people give offerings?" "Why do we sing praises?" "Why do we even believe in God whom we cannot see?"

"Why, why, why?" God wants to know!

Would we still be faithful to God if what occurred to Job happened to us? Would we still love God if we lost some of our material possessions? How about all of our material possessions? Would we still be faithful to God if we lost our health? How about if we found out that we have a terminal illness? You don't need me to continue with this interrogation and make you feel uncomfortable. I'm sure you get the point.

We may be unsure whether disinterested religion is possible; at least, we don't want to go through what Job went through in order to test our faith. But there is good news in the book of Job! The good news is that God believes that we humans can have disinterested or gratuitous faith, that we can worship, love, and trust in God for nothing; that we can be

religious even if there isn't any benefit for us.

Gustavo Gutierrez in his book *On Job*, which has the subtitle, "To Speak of God from the point of view of the suffering of the innocent," asks, "How are the suffering poor of South America to talk about God?" Gutierrez testifies that it is difficult to do theology when there is so much suffering among the poor, but the fact is that they are talking about God when there seems to be no benefit that comes from engaging and worshiping God. Surprisingly, it is the most oppressed, the poor, the weak, the powerless who are talking about and with God, who are praying to God, who are praising and worshiping God when their conditions show that there is no benefit to their religiosity.

Conclusion

When God finally appears to Job, rather than answering Job's questions, God shows off His power and glory, all related to running the natural universe. God wants Job to see who God is, to take a panoramic view of God, rather than focusing on what God can do for him.

In the end, God is satisfied that Job somehow answered the question "Can humans love God for nothing?" with Yes. Perhaps it was because Job maintained his relationship with God, acknowledged God, continued to engage with God, like the suffering poor of South America and other parts of the world, even when he had nothing to gain by it.

The good news is that it is God who has faith in humans, in us, that we can practice disinterested religion, that we can love God

for who God is rather than for what God can do for us. In fact God became human to show that this can be done. Jesus at Gethsemane said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." Here is a model of gratuitous faith; Jesus maintained the relationship with God even when there was nothing but suffering to gain by it.

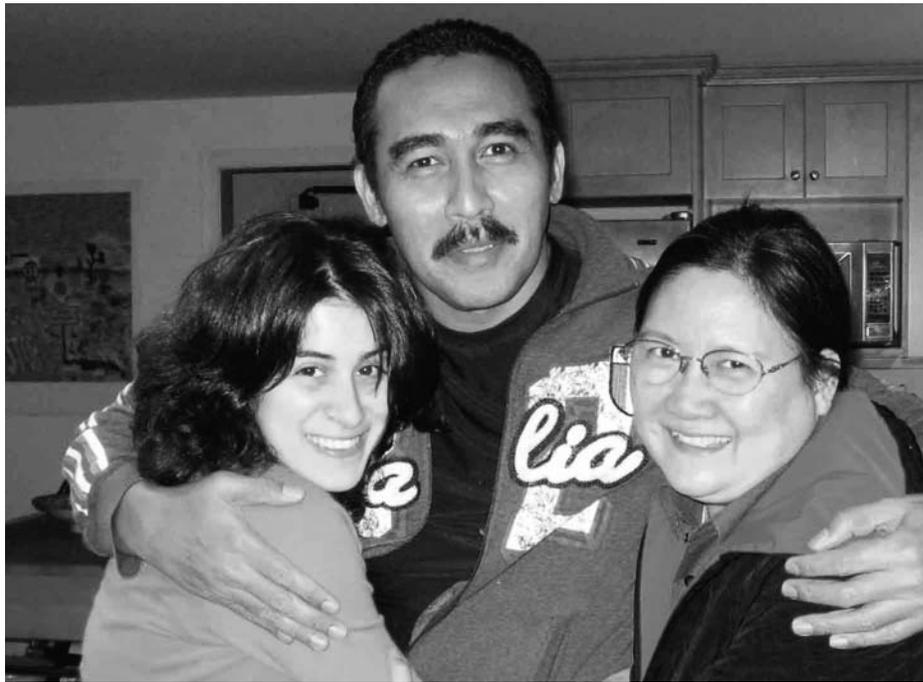
Finally, many Christians try to generate love for God from the notion of gratitude in response to God's salvific action: God saved your life, therefore love God. This is a flawed logic and a misguided theology. If someone saved my life, I would be very grateful to that person, but that person has no right to demand my love. Salvation is a chance at loving God for who God is rather than loving God for what God can do for us. For love comes from relationship with God, from knowing and experiencing who God is. God is confident that when we have relationship with God, when we know and experience God, we will in fact love God for nothing.

Prayer

O God, we pray, rather than questioning Your goodness or justice whenever things don't go well in our lives, from time to time, may we ask ourselves why we are faithful or religious when things do go well in our lives. We pray we may learn to love you not only for what you have done for us but also for nothing. Amen.

Uriah Kim is Professor of Hebrew Bible at Hartford Seminary. He offered this sermon during chapel services on Monday, May 12.

Strengthening Faith and Friendship



Left to right, Sharra Jazzar, Jacklevyn Manuputty, and Lily Kadoe

By Kim Weiner DeMichele

The school year at Hartford Seminary has come to an end. Tears of joy were shed on graduation day; tears of sadness then fell as friends departed for homes near and far. Throughout the year, friendships and faith were deepened and challenged. Indeed, formative leaning took place across the Seminary community while acts of nature changed lands around the world.

The Seminary community was touched, in particular, by the impact of cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. You see, one of our students this year was Lily Kadoe, a Congregational Relations Program (CRP) scholarship recipient, grandmother, and Dean of Students at the Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT). Lily returned home to her devastated village and damaged school. She left energized by her year in Hartford eager to revive hopefulness in her village. By next fall, when her seminary re-opens for classes, and at the behest of MIT's president, Lily intends to open an Islamic Research Institute and teach a

course she will model after Hartford Seminary's Women's Leadership Institute.

The *Congregational Relations Program* (CRP), which underwrote Lily's year at Hartford Seminary, is designed to teach religious leaders and social activists from overseas how to live faithfully in the midst of inter-religious conflict while engaging in productive interfaith dialogue. The program recruits students from countries where there is inter-religious discord. They spend one academic year at the Seminary on a full scholarship studying interfaith dialogue and Christian-Muslim relations. During their year at the Seminary, they become involved with local congregations where they experience American religious practices and they share their personal stories and pastoral wisdom. Upon completion of their year in Hartford, these students return home with the skills and knowledge to promote productive interfaith dialogue.

This year, in addition to Lily, we met Sharra Jazzar, a young Lebanese sociologist, who returned

home four weeks ago just days after violence erupted on the streets of Beirut. Our third CRP student was Jacklevyn Manuputty, a dynamic minister and social activist from Indonesia. Jacky lived through a house fire set by Muslim vandals four years ago. Before departing for Hartford last fall he saw the grassroots Christian/Muslim peace talks he helped coordinate result in reconciliation in his village, and an apology from the youths who were responsible for the arson.

The participation of CRP students with congregations in greater Hartford helps make the far reaches of the world, and the challenges of our brothers and sisters who live there, more relevant and accessible. These connections provide an impetus to stretch and grow spiritually in relation to others with an unfamiliar culture, language and religious practice.

My personal experience with the CRP has been transformative. As I learn about the strife and limited opportunity in places around the world due to the lack of religious freedom and democratic process, I

have gained a renewed appreciation for the foundation of our American way of life. I have also become sensitized to the fact that not all Americans enjoy the same freedom and possibilities that our constitution promised. Religious prejudice and social injustice remain national challenges to our own culturally diverse and religiously plural country.

This moment in history is particularly ripe for realizing the great advantage to be gained by bringing together peace-seeking people of faith around a common vision for justice and peace. Hartford Seminary is in a unique position to help congregations and individuals faithfully respond to such challenges and opportunities.

I look forward to the year ahead when the CRP will welcome four new ambassadors of peace. The students we anticipate meeting in September and about whom you will learn more in the next edition of *Praxis* have significant work experience in inter-religious program development. Building upon the students' skills and Hartford Seminary's resources, we hope to facilitate meaningful inter-cultural and inter-faith engagement opportunities with participating congregations. I welcome ideas and involvement from individuals in the Seminary community who wish to realize these objectives in your own community of faith.

Kim Weiner DeMichele (kdemichele@hartsem.edu) is Congregational Relations Program Coordinator. The Congregational Relations Program is made possible through the support of participating churches, and The E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation and The David E. A. Carson and Sara F. Carson Fund.

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Jane and Bill Inderstrodt



Jane and Bill Inderstrodt (seated, center) hosted an April 2007 gathering of New England-based alumni/ae at their home in Maine.

Jane and Bill, like many couples of their generation, met at Hartford Seminary. Bud Heckman, Chief Development Officer, recently interviewed them, having heard so much lore about their generation at Hartford Seminary. What follows is a series of excerpts from that conversation.

Jane Sattler Inderstrodt came from Washington, D.C. to Hartford Seminary in 1949 and received her M.A. in Religious Education in 1951. Since Professor Helen Edick was returning to Union Seminary to work on her doctorate, Jane was asked to stay and be on the faculty to teach several courses and be responsible for some of the fieldwork supervision. After two years she returned to Washington, D.C., to accept a call from the Baltimore Conference of the United Methodist Church, working with 500 churches in the areas of childhood and junior high education.

Bill Inderstrodt was working in the Westmoreland Congregational Church in the D.C. area. One thing led to another and they were engaged and then married in 1954. She was active

in the Christian Education division of the Washington Federation of Churches, hosting a television series for children and participating in leadership education conferences and seasonal workshops.

After two years they moved to Washington, CT. Jane then was invited to return to the Seminary on a part time basis, working on educational activities. While in Washington, she was elected to the Board of Education and became Chair of the Board during the regionalization of the high school with the adjoining towns of Roxbury and Bridgewater.

While working with the Connecticut Council of Churches, Jane and Bill edited a series of devotional booklets for children titled "Thoughts of God for Boys and Girls." She also served on the committee of the Ministry to Persons of Special Need and did some teaching at Southbury Training School. They lived in Washington, CT, for sixteen years.

While living in North Haven, when Bill was on the Conference staff,

Jane was elected to the United Church Board for World Ministries. She worked on the Middle East Committee and later became Chair of the Board of Directors. It was there that she worked closely with Dale Bishop who later taught at Hartford Seminary. She also received a call to do part time teaching in religious education at Berkley Divinity School at Yale, and was an educational consultant in several churches in the New Haven area.

Bill continued his interest in elderly housing when they moved to Danbury. Jane became a program director at a 100-unit elderly community in Fairfield. She enjoyed the work because it was a form of adult education. They both had been involved in the Elderly Housing Management programs of the New Samaritan Corporation of the Connecticut Conference.

When they moved to York, Maine, Jane was involved with the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ. After serving on several committees of the Board, she became President of the Maine Conference.

What brought you to Hartford Seminary?

After graduating from American University, I was asked by my church to become a parish worker which included quite a bit of religious education. I realized that if I were going to be a professional religious educator, I would need more education. It seemed that Hartford was the best school from which to receive a graduate degree in religious education.

I discovered at Hartford that the focus was not only on Christian education but also on the educational traditions of other religions. I'm glad I went to Hartford.

What are your fondest memories of Hartford Seminary?

The wonderful thing about Hartford Seminary was the fellowship that existed among all four schools. Though diverse with many different cultures and interests it was a great experience to be a part of the Hartford Seminary family. We have through the years kept in contact with so many of our Hartford friends.

What are the most important things you learned through your educational experience at Hartford Seminary?

One of the most important is that people learn through doing – being involved in activities that are meaningful to them and that will enrich their lives. To be aware of the needs of others and to be able to respond to those needs is an important factor. Also diversity is important in our lives and we should accept it in the lives of those around us.

How did your time at Hartford Seminary prepare you for your career?

All of the courses in the Religious Education

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School were excellent in preparing a student for future work in the church. The professors were exceptional and the “learn by doing” emphasis invaluable.

In my first year of fieldwork I was involved in teaching a second grade class in the first hour of Church School and a ninth grade class in the second hour at the West Hartford Congregational Church.

In my second year of fieldwork I worked with several Methodist churches in the Hartford area, meeting with the Church School superintendents and education committees to assist them in their planning.

What kind of things changed at the Seminary since you were there?

I think when the subject of changing the Seminary’s focus in the ‘70s first came up, some of us questioned what would be lost, such as the Social Work component and the emphasis on Religious Education. We were asking, “how are all these things going to be continued?” As it has developed over time I think the Seminary is doing well with the new emphasis. It has responded to changes in society.

What advice would you give to people who are entering the ministry?

I would say that it is a challenge but do it! Be sure to go to a seminary that will provide differing opportunities for learning,

Hartford Seminary really prepared us for our professions and that is why we are glad to support it in its effort to prepare people for various kinds of ministry today.

Bill Inderstrod grew up a Quaker in Indiana

and graduated from Earlham College. He attended Hartford Seminary from 1949 to 1952 and graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree. He began his ministry as a Minister of Education at Westmoreland Congregational Church in Washington, D. C. and after four years became Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Washington, CT. His Dean at the Seminary, Tertius van Dyke, had served that church years before and had retired to Washington. Tertius was named the part time Associate Minister and worked with Bill a little over a year before his untimely death.

One summer Bill served Christ Church of the Church of Scotland in Bermuda. While in Washington, through the generosity of a parishioner, one of two other Hoosiers in town, Jane and Bill received a grant to travel abroad. They traveled extensively in the Middle East, visiting the missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission; studied at Oxford and then traveled behind the Iron Curtain.

In 1972 Bill went on the Connecticut Conference staff as Minister to Business and Government where among other ministries he built and managed senior housing for those with moderate income. He then, under loan from the Connecticut Conference, became Interim Deputy Director of the Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ in New York City. Bill then became Senior Pastor of the First Congregational Church in Danbury, CT. And with a summer home on the coast of Maine he was delighted to accept a call to be Pastor of the historic First Parish

Church UCC in York, Maine. After nine years there, he and Jane retired.

What drew you to Hartford Seminary?

I went to Hartford Seminary because the Old and New Testament departments were chaired by Quaker scholars, one of whom graduated from Earlham College and the other at one time taught there. My first day at Seminary was almost my last. I was assigned as my advisor a new bright young New Testament professor straight out of Scotland, whose orthodox theology was thicker than his brogue.

In my initial interview with him his first question was: “You’re going to be a minister, aren’t you?” My answer was simply, “I’m not sure, Sir.” (Note the use of “Sir” when addressing a Presbyterian.) His next comment was, “Then, what are you doing here at Seminary?” I excused myself and returned to my room to pack and go back home to Indiana. It was obvious to me that Hartford was not the place for me. My roommate intervened and suggested that I go talk to Moses Bailey, the Quaker Old Testament Professor. I made an appointment and went to see Professor Bailey. After hearing my tale of my encounter with my advisor, Moses Bailey set back in his chair and said, “William, thee needs to pack up and go home because thee learned the first day here at seminary the most important truth this institution has to teach and that is we don’t all think alike or believe the same things.” I stayed.

What memories do you have regarding the Seminary?

My fondest memory is that the Seminary was a family; a diverse family of staff, students and faculty with students

from all over the world. What fellowship we had!

You said you met a young student who became a friend and later became famous?

I’m sure that young student, now famous, would verify this experience. It was September and the opening of a new year at seminary. It was one of those gorgeous autumn Connecticut days and the new students were arriving. My roommate and I were standing on the steps of the men’s dorm. (That was back in the dark ages when there were men and women dormitories.) A handsome young man came across the campus with two suitcases in tow. We introduced ourselves as did he. I then said to him, “Are you here to get a wife or escape the draft?” (The draft was still in effect and those studying for the ministry were exempt from the draft.) “I’m not here to go to seminary,” he responded firmly, “I’m studying to be a social worker.”

The next day he went and registered as a student in the seminary. I guess my humorous questions indicated to him that all theological students are not overly serious and pious. That young man who became a minister rather than a social worker was Andrew Young.

What were the most important things you learned through your educational experiences at Hartford Seminary?

The great thing about Hartford Seminary was its ecumenism. You lived and studied with students from every Christian denomination and students from other world religions. If you wanted to have a theological or biblical fight you didn’t have to go to another seminary. All you had to do is go down the hall and dialogue with a student.

Continued on next page

Three Hartford Seminary Students Named Muslim Chaplains



Omer Bajwa



Sohaib Sultan



Abdullah T. Antepi

Hartford Seminary has had three of its Islamic Chaplaincy students named to new positions as Muslim leaders at prestigious universities this spring and summer.

At Yale University, Omer Bajwa will be Coordinator for Muslim Life. This newly created full-time position began on August 15.

Bajwa previously served as the Interim Muslim

Chaplain at Cornell University and holds two Masters from Cornell as well, in Near Eastern Studies and Communications.

Bajwa will be working closely with the Muslim Students Association, Muslim faculty and staff and be a full participant on the chaplaincy team helping to foster the vision of an inclusive scope of programs and

support services for the Yale religious and spiritual communities.

Sohaib Sultan has been named Muslim Chaplain and Muslim Life Coordinator at Princeton University, starting in the 2008-2009 academic year.

Sultan is an Islamic Chaplaincy student at Hartford Seminary, and is scheduled to graduate in Spring 2009.

Duke University has named Abdullah T. Antepi, associate director of Hartford Seminary's Islamic Chaplaincy Program, as the school's first Muslim chaplain, effective July 1.

Antepi, an imam, has a Master of Arts in Islamic

Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations and a graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary. He currently is a Doctor of Ministry student at the Seminary.

At Duke, Antepi will provide services ranging from pastoral care to teaching about Islam. He will focus on three primary areas: religious leadership for Duke's Muslim community; pastoral care and counseling for persons of any faith, or of no ascribed faith; and intra- and interfaith work. Antepi will also teach two introductory courses on Islam.

Continued from previous page

Did that shape your leadership experience as a minister: that is, being with different faith traditions in the same place of study?

One learns to appreciate other faith traditions and cultures when you live together, study together, worship together and play together; when you're a family. That's what Hartford Seminary was: a diversified family. Isn't that what a parish is? Isn't that what a neighborhood needs to be and a community? It makes life more interesting and exciting.

How did your time at seminary prepare you for your calling?

There was a good balance between the academic and the practical. Of course, the academic study didn't quit when we left seminary. I was always impressed with the purpose of the Baldwin Boot Fund that provided each graduate of the seminary with funding to purchase basic books for his/her library. Many of us served churches far

from a great library such as the Seminary's.

Do you remember some of the places you had fieldwork?

In my senior year I worked at South Church, New Britain, and upon graduating was invited to become the Associate Minister. I appreciated the invitation and the confidence but did not accept the call. One summer I worked at the Hartford YMCA camp in New Hampshire, and one year in a church along the canals of Holyoke served by an eighty-four year old minister.

I accepted a call to a recently relocated church in the Washington D.C. area. It was a time when churches were desperate to find a minister, especially one who was interested in being an Associate who wanted to focus on education and youth work.

I recall well the reason I chose Westmoreland over several other invitations I received. The minister, in my

initial interview, stated that we would get along. When I asked him why he answered, "I have been at the church for only four years and have gone through three associates. Members of the congregation were beginning to say that the senior minister was the real problem and not the associates."

Four years later he came to me and suggested that I go back to Connecticut, and get a church and learn my craft, preaching every Sunday. He said, "More members of our congregation are beginning to like you than they like me." I followed his sage advice. No one could have had a finer relation than I had with him.

What do you think of the ways that Hartford Seminary has changed since you studied there?

The changes have been good, despite our unhappiness about many of them when they happened. It's responding to the needs and conditions of these times. And it's far ahead

of the other seminaries in being relevant and providing needed ministries in a changing world.

What advice would you give to people entering the ministry today?

I think those planning to enter the ministry should be aware of the limited opportunities in parish ministry. It also would be helpful for them to have a secondary profession or craft since more and more pastoral ministries are part time. On the other hand there are many forms of ministries yet to be developed. Ministry is more of a challenge with limitless opportunities for experimenting in new forms and expression of ministry.

Has the nature of ministry changed?

No, the nature of the church and the world has. We need to develop ministries to meet those needs of our times. And it appears that more and more of those ministries are being met by lay ministers rather than ordained ministers.

Schellsburg Meets the World



Hartford Seminary students gather with members of the United Church of Schellsburg, during a visit in May.

By *The Rev. Ruth E. Shaver*

The world met Schellsburg, PA, back in 1964 when the town's four churches, each a mainline Protestant congregation that shared pastors, merged to create a new congregation. *Time* and *Redbook* covered the story, as did several of the church-related publications of the day. The United Church of Schellsburg, United Church of Christ, began life as a grand experiment in Christian unity with support from the National Council of Churches. As a congregation, we continue to learn how to live together for mission, service, and worship despite the diverse theological, social, and political beliefs of our members.

Because of its history, the United Church of Schellsburg is much more like an urban or suburban church in its attitude toward ecumenism and interreligious relationships than many rural churches. As the pastor I appreciate this outward and forward vision. Our many ecumenical relationships are long-standing. However, in

this part of west-central Pennsylvania, we have few opportunities for interreligious relationships – we just do not have many representatives of religious traditions other than Christianity in our area, so we have few chances to meet the religious world in personal ways.

I had no idea when I visited the Hartford Seminary campus back in April that within six weeks I would have the opportunity to bring the world to Schellsburg to have the interreligious conversation of a lifetime. Thanks to Vanessa Avery-Wall and Nevzet Celik, a group of international students made the 375 mile trek to our little corner of paradise to help us put names, faces, and facts to what we thought we knew about Islam in general and Christianity in other parts of the world. Members of the United Church of Schellsburg and several other churches in our area gathered on a beautiful spring night in May to learn – and, surprisingly, to teach.

We used the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10 as the basis for our conversation, which

led immediately to one common practice of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: charity. From there, we moved to such topics as the treatment of women, tolerance for divergent beliefs and practices, political uses of religious organizations and beliefs, violence, and even the First and Second Amendments to the Constitution.

While we are envied broadly for our freedoms of religious practice, speech, and assembly, I could not help but hear genuine bewilderment as we were asked to explain how our society manages to have so much freedom of speech as to allow both insults and blatant untruths to go unchecked. As to our laws about gun ownership...well, this is hunting country and we take the Second Amendment very seriously. Even so, as a hunter in my congregation said, we need to acknowledge that the right to own lethal weapons should probably not be absolute, but finding the appropriate balance has been and will be difficult for many years to come.

Joe Puleo, who is pastor of another UCC church in the area, has said to

me numerous times since that evening how much more understanding and appreciation he has for other faiths since our encounter. He came expecting to ask questions and found himself answering as many or more questions in a true conversation about the importance of faith.

For Joe, the importance of knowing and claiming his own faith while respecting the faith of others has become a priority after hearing from both Muslim and Christian students how confidence and knowledge has led to good relations between people who practice different faiths in their countries. It is easier to find common ground when you know the ground around you well enough to recognize similar ground around others.

In a perfect world, this would be an annual event. Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to the similarities and differences between religions in the world today; when I found out how much I don't know, particularly about the role of women in many Islamic cultures, I felt humbled. It helped me to realize that any hope we have for long-term peace in the world will come from this kind of small group interaction where questions can be asked and answers can be given with candor and in safety. It is the only way to make the "other" into "friend" – and we do not go to war with friends.

Thanks to Hartford Seminary, Schellsburg has met the world and made friends.

The Reverend Ruth E. Shaver is the Pastor and Teacher of the United Church of Schellsburg UCC, with ministerial standing in the Juniata Association of the Penn West Conference.

**Hafid Abbas,
noted
international
peacemaker,
awarded
honorary
degree**



Prof. Dr. Hafid Abbas received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree at Hartford Seminary's graduation ceremonies on May 30. Dr. Abbas is Director General of Research and Development in the Ministry of Law and Human Rights (HRRDA), in Indonesia. In this role, Dr. Abbas serves as coordinator of research and development for the numerous governmental ministries in Indonesia. In these photos, Efrain Agosto, academic dean of Hartford Seminary, places a doctoral hood on Dr. Abbas and Heidi Hadsell, president of the Seminary, congratulates him.

New Staff



Sage M. Crary of Broad Brook is the new Recruitment Associate, working with David Barrett, director of public and institutional affairs. Sage, who has completed two years in the Cooperative Master of Divinity program at Hartford Seminary, has spent the past eight years in a variety of management positions, including a bank, jewelry store and restaurant. She earned a B.S. in Cytopathology and Oncology, with a minor in Judaic Studies from the University of Connecticut. She is an active member of Center Congregational Church in Manchester, CT, and was accepted In Care of the Hartford East Association in May of 2007. Sage will be seeking ordination in the UCC upon completion of her Master of

Divinity degree. She co-facilitates the Youth Ministries program at Center Congregational and also is involved with the Praise & Worship team. For the 2007-08 academic year, she was the Hartford Seminary representative on the Council for Global Ministries for the UCC. In her spare time, she rides horses, hikes, plays the viola and enjoys time with her two cats Ashton and Foster.



Yvette Law of West Hartford is the new Administrative Assistant in the Communications Office, working with David Barrett, director of public and institutional affairs. Yvette is a licensed massage therapist with a private practice in West Hartford and spent the past seven years working in the Admissions Department at the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy (CCMT) where she graduated in 2000. She has a B.A. in Accounting from Western Connecticut State University. She is an active member of the Buddhist Faith Fellowship of Connecticut that meets at Wesleyan University in Middletown. In addition to her study of Buddhism, she enjoys reading, biking, hiking and

spending time with friends and family.

Carpenter Awards \$100,000 To Hartford Seminary

The E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation has awarded Hartford Seminary \$100,000 for an additional three years to continue the Congregational Relations Program.

Students enrolled in the program have been Christian leaders from overseas settings in which there is interreligious conflict. They spend an intensive year studying interfaith dialogue, and leave with the skills and knowledge to engage in productive interfaith dialogue at home. This year the Seminary has expanded the program to include Muslim leaders.

Gehman Receives Grant For Curriculum Development

Hartford Seminary's unique interfaith environment caught the eye of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice as it sought proposals from institutions best suited to develop curriculum on reproductive justice in Western and Non-Western religious traditions.

Heidi Gehman, faculty associate in theology and ethics, has been awarded \$9,000 to develop and teach a course on Global Perspectives on Reproductive Justice. This course will be taught at Hartford Seminary during the summer session of 2009.

Students Win Scholarships

Four Hartford Seminary students have won 2007-08 Merit Scholarships.

Jan Youga, a Master of Arts student, will receive a scholarship from the William Thompson Fund, as a degree program student who "has demonstrated notable proficiency or interest in the field of biblical studies." She won the award for her paper, "The Journey to Be Among Them: How John's Gospel Went from Heresy to Canon."

Karen Fischer, a Master of Arts student, will receive a scholarship

from the Hartranft Scholarship Fund for demonstrating "excellence in written expression." Fischer won for her paper, "Toward a Contemporary Understanding of Original Sin."

Sandra Fischer, a Master of Arts student, and Lydia Ford, a Black Ministries Program student, will receive scholarships from the Bennett Tyler Scholarship Fund for excellence in written expression. Fischer won the award for her paper, "An Analysis of S. Mark Heim's Theory of Atonement in Light of the Book Proverbs of Ashes by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker." Ford won for her paper, "Exegesis of II Samuel 11."

Seminary Receives Grant To Fund Faculty Position

The Alavi Foundation has agreed to give Hartford Seminary a total of \$175,000 over five years to fund a faculty position at the Seminary that will promote a better understanding of Shi'ite Islam.

Mahmoud Ayoub, a pre-eminent scholar in Islam and interfaith dialogue in the United States and around the world, has been named Faculty Associate in Shi'ite Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary, starting July 1, to fill the position.

At the Seminary's Macdonald Center, Dr. Ayoub will teach, advise students in the international Ph.D. program, and continue his research projects. In the fall semester, he will teach a course on Shi'ite Islam.



Graduation 2008

Ra'ufa Tuell and Lina Stas, Women's Leadership Institute graduates, participate in the procession during Hartford Seminary's graduation ceremony on May 30. After the ceremony, Tubanur Yesilhark and Zalman Putra Ahmad Ali, both Master of Arts graduates, receive congratulations from Professor Jane I. Smith.



Coming Up

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

God's Word in Greek: Reading The Gospel of Matthew

With *The Rev. Edward F. Duffy*, Minister of the First Presbyterian Church of Fairfield, CT, and Adjunct Professor of New Testament Greek at Hartford Seminary
Tuesdays, September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The Bible Institute: Understanding the Bible

With *Uriah Kim*, Professor of Hebrew Bible at Hartford Seminary, and *Efrain Agosto*, Academic Dean of Hartford Seminary and Professor of New Testament
Friday, September 12, 6 p.m. - 9 p.m., and Saturday, September 13, 9 a.m. - noon

A Drumming Circle

With *Jan Gregory*, owner of the Renaissance Center: A Conservatory of Music in Southbury, and Director of Music Ministry, Congregational Church of Easton, UCC
Mondays, September 22, October 13 and 27, and November 10 and 24
Basics: 6:30 p.m. - 7:15 p.m. on Sept. 22 and 6:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. in October and November
Beyond Basics: 7 - 8:30 p.m.

A SACRED TRUST: A FALL FORUM ON RELIGION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Religion and Ecology: The Problems and the Promise

Keynote Address: *John Grim*, Senior Lecturer and Research Scholar at Yale University and Environmental Ethicist-in-Residence

at Yale's Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics. He is the co-founder of the Forum on Religion and Ecology.
Wednesday, September 24
4 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Co-Sponsor: Interreligious Eco-Justice Network
Location: First Church of Christ, Congregational, West Hartford

Corintios: ¿Modelo para iglesia y liderasgo hoy? [Corinthians: Appropriate Model for Church and Leadership Today?]

With *Efrain Agosto*, Academic Dean of Hartford Seminary and Professor of New Testament
Tuesday, September 30
7 p.m.

Know Where You Preach: How Sermons Connect with Contexts

A workshop with *James Nieman*, Professor of Practical Theology at Hartford Seminary and author of "Knowing the Context: Frames, Tools, and Signs for Preaching"
Wednesday, October 8
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Inter-religious Abrahamic Dialogue: A Tool of Transformation in the Local Church

With *The Rev. Dr. Mark Heilshorn*, pastor of the First Congregational Church of Woodbury (UCC)
Monday-Friday, October 13-17,
ONLINE

An Islamic "Theology"? Why?

With *Yahya Michot*, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary
&

Towards a Framework for Interfaith Dialogue: Globalism or Pluralism

With *Mahmoud Ayoub*, Faculty Associate in Shi'ite Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary
Monday, October 20
7 p.m.

Sacred Compass: The Way of Spiritual Discernment

With *J. Brent Bill*, Executive Vice President of the Indianapolis Center for Congregations and previously a local church pastor, seminary instructor, book review editor, and denominational executive
Tuesday, October 21
7 p.m.

The Practice of Reconciliation Leadership

With *Virginia Swain*, M.A., Co-Founder and Director of the Center for Global Community and World Law and the Institute of Global Leadership, and *Sarah Sayeed*, Ph.D., Program Associate at the Interfaith Center of New York, and formerly an assistant professor at Baruch College, School of Public Affairs
Thursday, October 30
6:30 p.m.

Miriam Therese Winter Celebrates

the publication of new editions of three of her best-selling books

- The Gospel According to Mary: A New Testament for Women
- The Chronicles of Noah and Her Sisters: Genesis & Exodus for Women
- WomanPrayer, WomanSong: Resources for Ritual

Miriam Therese Winter is Professor of Liturgy, Worship and Spirituality at Hartford Seminary and director of the Women's Leadership Institute
Wednesday, November 19
7 p.m.

InterActive Faith: Inter-religious Community Building

With *the Rev. Dr. Francis V. Tiso*, Associate Director of Interreligious Relations at the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Responses by *The Rev. Bud Heckman*, Chief Development Officer at Hartford Seminary, and *Rori Picker Neiss*, program coordinator for the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance.
Wednesday, December 3
7 p.m.

The Basics of Christian Education: A Continuing Education Course for Church Educators

With *The Rev. Charles H. Ericson*, pastor of the Bolton Congregational Church UCC, and director of the "Associates in Christian Education" (ACE) program which is co-sponsored by Hartford Seminary and the Connecticut Conference of the UCC
Monday through Wednesday, January 5 - 7, 2009
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

In Memoriam

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

The Rev. Dr. Eleanor Seaton Ebersole, '51 M.A. and '53 B.D., died on April 29 of complications from Parkinson's Disease. She was 83.

The Rev. Alvar W. Gustafson, '82 D.Min., passed away on April 9 from injuries received in an accident. He was 87. Rev. Gustafson was a member of the Seminary's President's Council and a former member of the Board of Trustees. He was a native of Worthington, MN, received his B.A. Degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN, and was ordained from Augustana Lutheran Seminary in Rock Island, IL. In addition to Hartford Seminary, he also studied at the University of Chicago and at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. He served on the Board at Gettysburg Seminary. Rev. Gustafson served at Trinity Lutheran Church and Concordia Lutheran Church in Chicago and he was Senior Pastor at First Lutheran Church in New Britain for 29 years, retiring in 1985. He then served as Interim Pastor and Associate Pastor at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Forestville for five years and was a member there. He was a member of the New Britain Museum of American Art, the New Britain Art League, and the New Britain Camera Club. He also served on the New Britain Zoning Board of Appeals under three mayors.

We have been notified by Mr. Stanley L. Hoskins that his wife, **Mrs. Shirley H. Hoskins**, '42 BRE, passed away on April 2. After Mrs. Hoskins obtained her Bachelor of Religious Education from the Hartford Theological Seminary in 1942, she earned her advanced certificate in occupational therapy from Columbia University, New York, in 1945. She worked for more than 50 years as an occupational therapist, including many years in Syracuse, N.Y. She was listed in the "Who's Who of American Women," 1977-1978. Mrs. Hoskins was always involved in music and her church — from her junior/senior high school years in orchestra, band, chorus and the church choir to directing the church handbell choirs in Syracuse and Orlando and as a Presbyterian elder and deacon. She is survived by: her husband of 60 years, Stanley; son, David and wife Carol, Orlando, Fla.; daughter, Susan, Elmira, NY; and five grandchildren.

Dr. Kazuyoshi Kawata recently informed us that his wife, **Mrs. Marion J. Kawata**, passed away on June 8, 2007. Dr. and Mrs. Kawata are both '51 alumni/ae of the Kennedy School of Missions.

Professor David A. Kerr passed away on April 13 at the age of 63. Dr. Kerr served as the Director of Hartford Seminary's Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations from 1989 to 1996. He was one of the most significant figures in the contemporary encounter between Christianity and the world of Islam. After initial work with the BBC, he became an academic, and taught in Birmingham, Hartford, and Edinburgh, before his final post as Professor of Mission at the University of Lund,

in Sweden. In 1976, he founded the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations at the Selly Oak Colleges in Birmingham. Generations of students, both Christian and Muslim, have been grateful for his unbounded commitment to his students and his capacity to draw out of them much more than they realized was there. His commitment to teaching limited his output of publications, but extended his range of sympathy and understanding of the way in which other minds work. After a first degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies in London, Dr. Kerr read theology at Oxford, and took the ordination course for URC ministers at Mansfield College, although he was never ordained, having eventually found his vocation in teaching. After his Ph.D., he worked in the Arabic service of the BBC. At Edinburgh, he was the first Professor in the Study of Non-Western Christianity. Almost immediately after his arrival in Sweden, he was diagnosed with motor neuron disease, and he was still supervising doctoral theses, using a voice-activated computer because his hands would no longer work, when he passed away. He is survived by his wife Gun Holmström, a Swedish-speaking nurse from Finland. They had two children, Simeon and Anna.

Former faculty member, **Dr. David Thomas Shannon, Sr.**, passed away in March in Atlanta after a period of declining health. He was 74. Dr. Shannon began preaching when he was 12 and was licensed as a preacher at 16 by Fifth Baptist Church in Richmond. He completed several degrees, starting with a Bachelor's degree from Virginia Union University. He

received a Master's of Sacred Theology at Oberlin Graduate School of Theology and doctorates from Vanderbilt University in 1974 and the University of Pittsburgh a year later. In 1960, Dr. Shannon became pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Richmond until leaving to become East Coast director of higher education services of the American Baptist Convention in 1969. Prior to returning to VUU as the university's eighth president in 1979, Dr. Shannon was a biblical scholar at Hartford Seminary, known then as Hartford Seminary Foundation. He led Virginia Union until 1985, when he resigned his post to become vice president for academic affairs at the Interdenominational Theological Seminary in Atlanta. Dr. Shannon retired in 1997 as president of Allen University in Columbia, SC. He remained active, giving lectures across the country, and was researching and writing a book on George Liele, a former slave who is considered to be Georgia's first African-American preacher. In addition to his wife, Averett Powell Shannon, Dr. Shannon's survivors include two daughters, Vernitia Shannon and Dr. Davine Sparks; a son, David Thomas Shannon Jr.; and six grandchildren.

The Rev. Dr. Donald A. Simpson, '47 B.D., passed away on February 27 at the University of Massachusetts Memorial Healthcare. He was 88. No further details were provided. Dr. Simpson was predeceased by his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth "Betty" Willard (Brown) Simpson, who passed away on October 18, 2007 at the age of 87. The Simpsons resided in Worcester, MA.

Friend of the Seminary, **John P. Breasted** from Great Barrington, MA, recently wrote, "Enclosed is a small donation in appreciation for my receiving Praxis. I lived in Hartford for 19 years and often came to public programs at the Seminary; I never have taken a course there. I read several pieces in the April issue last night, finding them very interesting."

Ms. Joan L. Carlton, M.A. '83 and WLI '97, has retired after 40 years in Religious Studies at Bishop Miege High School; 20 years as Department Chair.

The Rev. Dr. Jay F. Ebersole, '53 B.D., notified us that his wife, **The Rev. Dr. Eleanor Seaton Ebersole**, '51 M.A. and '53 B.D., passed away in April. Dr. Ebersole wrote, "Our Hartford Seminary days introduced us to each other, and we always rejoiced in our frequent memories of those days with our classmates,

faculty and community friends."

The following note was received along with a generous gift to the Annual Fund: "**Corrie (H. Corinna Hillman)** graduated from Hartford Seminary Foundation in 1952. We were married in 1953. I graduated from Hartford Seminary Foundation in 1954. The Hartford experience will always be with us!" From **The Rev. Hugh E. Gackle**

The Rev. Dr. David H. Graham, B.D. '67, recently wrote along with his gift to the Annual Fund, "... I love that place for how it shaped my life in ways that no other Seminary did for some of my colleagues."

With a recent Annual Fund gift, **Marie T. Hilliard, Ph.D.**, '93 M.A., wrote, "Thank you for my education!"

The Rev. James Humphrey, '63 B.D. and '64 M.A., and his wife Faye recently wrote, "We encourage Alumni to return to

HSF as we did for the Luncheon at the 50th Anniversary of the UCC. Great friends and staff!"

Mrs. Kathleen S. Johnston, '50 SRE, writes, "I am 95 years old and in a retirement home."

Dr. Kazuyoshi Kawata, '51 KSM, recently wrote that he and his late wife Marion J. Kawata spent one year in the Kennedy School of Missions in preparation for missionary service in India. He has been a professor at The Johns Hopkins University for 23 years after returning from missionary service.

Chris Seethaler-Tobis, WLI '07, writes, "My studies at Hartford Seminary have opened up broader roads for my spirit, intellect, and heart; I'm very thankful for you!"

The Rev. Oliver N. Thomas, '55 B.D., writes, "In the early 50's Andy Young and I were room mates. We really had a good time there. Carol sends her regards, too."

Annual Fund 2008 Update

Thank you! We would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2007-2008 Annual Fund. A few highlights for the year include:

- 80 of our 650+ donors gave gifts to the Annual Fund for the first time (68 individuals, 5 faith communities, 3 businesses, 2 non-profit organizations, and 2 matching gift companies).

- 52 Corporators contributed \$15,047, compared to \$8,580 contributed by 45 the year before.

- 100% of our faculty, staff, and trustees contributed to the 2007-2008 Annual Fund.

- Donors who contributed at the \$300 level will be invited to a Donor Appreciation Reception, scheduled for Thursday, October 23, 2008, as will those who give to the 2008-2009 Annual Fund at that level between now and then.

Thank you in advance for your gift to the 2008-2009 Annual Fund, which runs from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. Questions about the Annual Fund can be directed to the Institutional Advancement Office at giving@hartsem.edu or (860) 509-9520.



Trustee Honored The Rev. Dr. Barbara Headley retired from the Board of Trustees in May after a decade of service. In this photo, President Heidi Hadsell congratulates Headley and awards her a commemorative plaque in appreciation of her contribution to Hartford Seminary.

Hartford Seminary is pleased to welcome these new corporators:

- **The Rev. Dr. Dean C. Ahlberg**, Redding, CT
- **Mr. Sajjad B. Chowdhry**, Valley Stream, NY
- **Mrs. Harriet H. Gardner**, West Hartford, CT

Efrain Agosto completed his year as interim dean on June 30 and began officially as academic dean of the seminary on July 1. In May, his second book, *Corintios*, a Spanish-language lay commentary on Paul's Corinthian letters was published by Fortress Press in their Know Your Bible Series. In April, he delivered a talk on interfaith perspectives on health care for the statewide Interfaith Fellowship for Universal Health Care. On May 27, Agosto traveled to Boston to deliver a lecture on Latino Christology for a conference on Global Christologies sponsored by Gordon College and Eastern Nazarene College. In June, he conferred the Doctor of Ministry Degree on Beverly Prestwood-Taylor at North Hadley Congregational Church in Massachusetts (June 15) and attended the Biennium of the Association of Theological Schools in Atlanta (June 20-23). He also traveled to Yale Divinity School for a conference sponsored by the Capitol Region Conference of Churches, to give a talk entitled "Prophetic Rumblings in the Public Square" to a group of faith-based community workers. At the end of July, Agosto traveled to Indiana for a Colloquy on Latino/a Theological Pedagogy at the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology.

Steven Blackburn presented a series of lectures and led a number of Bible studies for Muslims, as well as Qur'an studies for Christians, at the fourth annual Pastors' Institute for Muslim-Christian Understanding, co-sponsored by

Hartford Seminary and Georgetown University. Blackburn's lecture topics included the Qur'an and its Interpretation, the Qur'an and Its Place in Muslim Societies, the Early History of Islam (the foregoing for Christian participants) and the Reformation, Contemporary Christian Thought, and Christianity in America (the final three topics for a Muslim audience). Blackburn continues to lead book discussion groups for the Connecticut Humanities Council, the most recent being at the Granby Public Library on the topic of Orhan Pamuk's Istanbul. In the field of teaching, Blackburn is currently engaged in an evaluation of the Arabic language program at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT. He is the new teacher of Prayerbook Hebrew at the Reconstructionist synagogue in Winsted, CT. Blackburn was named the new Treasurer for the Council of Connecticut Academic Library Directors as of July 1.

Kelton Cobb continues to serve as editor of the journal *Conversations in Religion and Theology*, and has recently written the entry on "Paul Tillich" in the *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Theologians*. With his wife, Heidi Gehman, he spent two weeks at Holden Village, an ecumenical Lutheran camp in Washington state, teaching a workshop on "Theology and Popular Culture."

Heidi Gehman has been appointed as Faculty Associate of Theology and Ethics, effective July 1. She will continue as Associate Director of the PhD Program. In April, Gehman received a grant from

the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice to develop and teach a course on Global Perspectives on Reproductive Justice. This course will be taught at Hartford Seminary during the summer session of 2009. This July, Gehman taught a one-week adult education course on Augustine's *Confessions* at Holden Village, an ecumenical Lutheran camp on Lake Chelan in Washington State.

Heidi Hadsell was on sabbatical in the spring semester. She taught a course on Christian Social Ethics in the Master of Arts program of the Department of Religious Studies at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora in Brazil. She also did research on Public Theology in Brazil.

In May, **Uriah Kim** preached twice at the Monday morning chapel of Hartford Seminary and completed the manuscript of his second book entitled *A Postcolonial Reading of the David Story*. From May 22 to June 1, Kim visited Korea for the first time in 32 years. He gave lectures at Yonsei University, one of which he will revise and publish as "David of Theology, History, and Postcolonial Imagination." Kim also wrote several book reviews and one editorial for *Reviews in Religion and Theology* and, in July, wrote an article entitled "Barack Obama and King/David" for *The Progressive Christian*.

In April and May, **Yehezkel Landau** taught a four-week *Beit Midrash* course entitled "A Debate for the Sake of Heaven: Jewish Sources on Land and Peace" for the Greater Hartford Institute of Adult Jewish Studies.

During April, Landau co-led a Jewish-Muslim dialogue on Israel/Palestine sponsored by the Connecticut Council for Interreligious Understanding; gave a joint presentation with Abdullah Antepli on "Can Jews and Muslims Get Along?" at the Chai Center in Avon, CT; spoke at Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY, on "Peacebuilding in Israel/Palestine: A 30-Year Retrospective"; was a guest on the "Live with Lisa Wexler" radio program on WYBC in New Haven, CT; and spoke on "Israel at 60" to the students at the Chase Collegiate School in Waterbury, CT. In May, Landau joined Harvey Cox and Reza Aslan for an interfaith panel on "Religion and Human Rights" at a Nieman Foundation conference for journalists at Harvard University; delivered the keynote address at a conference of Reform rabbis and lay leaders in Baltimore on "How to Speak to Christians and Muslims about Israel"; joined Sandy Tolan, author of the book *The Lemon Tree*, for a dialogue in Northampton, MA, on the Middle East and the Open House Peace Center in Ramle, Israel; co-facilitated an interfaith educational event at St. Patrick's and St. Anthony's Catholic Church in Hartford, part of the "House of Abraham" project of Habitat for Humanity; co-led two study sessions on Jewish-Christian relations for seminarians and rabbinical students at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT; and lectured on "Grass-Roots Peacemaking in Israel/Palestine" at the Duncaster Retirement Community in Bloomfield, CT. On May 11, Landau's interfaith peacebuilding work in

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Israel/Palestine was the subject of a front-page article in the *Hartford Courant* devoted to Israel's 60th anniversary. In June, Landau spoke on "God the Bedrock for Overcoming Oppression" as part of a Muslim-Jewish dialogue at the Mohammed Islamic Center in Hartford.

Ingrid Mattson was appointed Director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, effective July 1. In June, Mattson taught a summer class, "Contemporary Islamic Ethics." Earlier, in April, Mattson participated in the "Seeds of Compassion" event in Seattle, speaking in workshops and on a panel with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, among others. Later that month, she spoke at the New Hampshire Humanities Council. In May she gave a keynote address at the Lubar Institute at the University of Wisconsin (Madison), gave a sermon at Beth Hillel in South Windsor, CT and represented Hartford Seminary at the launch of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation in New York City. In June, Mattson returned to work with the Leadership Group of the U.S.-Muslim World Engagement Project to finalize their report which will be released to the public on September 24, 2008. At the end of July, Mattson presented a paper at the "Common Word" international conference at Yale University.

James Nieman presented several workshops in early April at the Institute for Liturgical Studies at

Valparaiso University. Under the Institute theme of "Worship and the Public Square," he focused on congregations and preaching in relation to various publics. During May, Nieman interviewed all of the applicants for the Doctor of Ministry program and is happy to report that a new cohort of fourteen students will begin in the fall of 2008. In June, he led a two-day Educational Outreach conference entitled "Church Challenges." The first day of the event involved a panel of seven denominational judicatory leaders addressing issues they face with congregations and church leadership, while the second day included presentations by two renowned scholars of ecclesiology, Dr. Roger Haight of Union Seminary, New York, and Dr. Nicholas Healy of St. John's University, New York. At the end of July, Nieman joined the rest of the Congregational Studies Project Team for their summer meeting on Cape Cod. For over twenty-five years, the Team has been a national leader in exploring congregations, and now is involved in mentoring pre-tenure scholars interested in learning how better to understand faith communities.

In April, **David Roozen** met in Cleveland with the Evaluation & Policy Committee of the Executive Council of the United Church of Christ to review his report on the 50th Anniversary, State of the Church National survey of UCC Congregations, conducted by our research institute in partnership with the UCC research office.

Later that month, he met in Chicago with a coalition of Muslim groups to finalize planning for the first ever census of all Masjids in America. The census was conducted this summer, and our research institute is one of the sponsoring partners. On June 20 Roozen attended an initial meeting hosted by Intersections to create a partnership for the first ever national survey of American attitudes and predispositions toward interfaith issues. Two follow-up studies were also discussed – one a survey of clergy capacity to address interfaith issues with their congregations' members; the second, a survey of related seminary and other clergy training opportunities. On June 27 he finalized arrangements for the REVEAL research team of Willow Creek Church to discuss their spiritual life survey process with the Cooperative Congregational Studies Partnership/Faith Communities Today annual meeting in August. CCSP/FACT are not-for-profit entities of Hartford Seminary and the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

Scott Thumma was on sabbatical until June. Along with colleagues from Leadership Network, he was engaged in another national study of megachurches in North America. In addition to this, he did field studies of 12 megachurches around the country. Thumma is working on a book about what churches of all sizes can learn from large church success. Thumma also gave major presentations on megachurches at an international missions conference, at the

Indianapolis Center for Congregations and before 75 church leaders. He recently consulted with four megachurch pastors, participated in a panel at the Association for Sociology of Religion conference in Boston and gave a research report at the Cooperative Congregations Study Partnership in Chicago, in addition to teaching a summer course on growing healthy congregations. Thumma spent the summer writing 12 individual reports to the 12 megachurches that participated in the national study and releasing the findings from both his sabbatical projects.

In April, **Miriam Therese Winter** led an evening of reflection and celebration at St. Matthias Church in East Lyme, CT, to benefit "A Sacred Place," the non-profit organization that works to support women incarcerated in Niantic. They surprised her by naming her a recipient of The Sister Patty Cook Prison Ministry Award for her twenty years of "faithful, passionate, and tireless devotion to the women and men of God who are in prison." In June, Winter celebrated the Golden Jubilee of her vowed life as a Medical Mission Sister in a special liturgy at the community's motherhouse in Philadelphia. At the end of June she led a day-long reflection on "Spirituality in a Quantum Universe" at a conference entitled "Women's Voices Rising," an annual event sponsored by the Center for Spiritual Development in Orange, California.

Hartford Seminary's Fall Semester will begin Monday, September 8 and continue through Thursday, December 18. 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 \$1,630. 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 up to three specially designated members of churches that participate in the Congregational Relations Program of the Seminary. There is a limit of one course per academic year to receive the special rate except persons 62 and older, for whom there is no limit.

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.

ARTS OF MINISTRY

Mental Health: An Islamic Perspective

ONLINE

This course will familiarize students with the basic concepts of mental illness to facilitate their communication with multidisciplinary teams including both health and mental health professionals, and help them to gain an awareness of the cultural factors particular to the Muslim community. Students will obtain skills including when to make referrals and how to approach individuals in a mental health treatment context. *Hamada Hamid, Adjunct Professor of Arts of Ministry and Fellow, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding.*

DIALOGUE

Understanding Christianity: Rumor and Reality

Thursdays from 1:15 to 4:15 p.m., beginning Sept. 11 (10 weeks)

This course is an introduction to the Christian faith, intended for those from other traditions. While global Christianity through the centuries has been expressed in many institutional forms and with diverse beliefs, there are also many beliefs, doctrines and practices that are shared throughout the Christian tradition. The course will focus on those shared elements and enter into the world of Christianity through texts, audio-visual materials, discussion, reflection and analysis. *The Rev. Molly F. James, Adjunct Instructor of Theology and Ethics and Associate Pastor, St. John's Episcopal Church, Essex*

Dialogue in a World of Difference

Mondays from 6 to 9 p.m., beginning Sept. 15 (10 weeks)

Students and faculty in a collegial setting will explore in depth the principles and the practice of dialogue

in a pluralistic world through dialogical listening and cross-cultural conversations in a context of diversity. *Heidi Hadsell, Professor of Social Ethics and President of the Seminary; Ingrid Mattson, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations; and David Roozen, Professor of Religion and Society*

ETHICS

The Theology and Ethics of the Niebuhr Brothers

Wednesdays from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., beginning Sept. 10

This course will examine the works of Reinhold Niebuhr and H. Richard Niebuhr, arguably the most influential American Protestant theologians over the last hundred years. Their impact continues to be felt in theology, social ethics, and sociology of religion. Having been formed under nearly identical personal, historical, and religious conditions, but embarking upon divergent paths in their theological and ethical reflections, differences that occasionally erupted into public debates, studying the two of them in tandem is an opportunity to think through the complexities of the church and its role in society over the course of the 20th century. *Heidi Gehman, Faculty Associate in Theology and Ethics*

HISTORY

The Early Church

Thursdays from 7 to 9:20 p.m., beginning Sept. 11

This course will trace the growth and development of Christianity from its earliest beginnings in the first century to the great councils of the fourth and fifth centuries, stopping en route to examine selected texts from the New Testament, early Christian and Roman documents, the writings of the Fathers and the earliest creeds, ranging from the Gospels and St. Paul to Ignatius, Justin, Origen, Basil, Augustine, and Nicea. *Wayne Rollins, Adjunct Professor of Scripture*

Writing Congregational Histories

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 16 and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Oct. 7 and 28, Nov. 18 and Dec. 9

Many who are members of religious communities have discovered what interesting histories they possess. But many congregations have neither an intentionally written history nor one that is available and up to date. This course will offer concrete help to those who are either interested in writing the history of their congregation or those engaged in that process. Individual projects will be discussed and building blocks and critical questions necessary to the completion of any project will be offered. Writing congregational histories can be a daunting task, but the rewards are great. *The Rev. Dr. Ralph Ahlberg, Adjunct Professor of History and Minister Emeritus, Round Hill Community Church, Greenwich, CT*

Shi'i Islam

Tuesdays from 7 to 9:20 p.m. beginning Sept. 9

This course will be based on the assumption that Islam is both a belief system and a world civilization. Therefore, all movements, sects and schools of thought will be treated as an integral part of Islam, broadly understood. We will study Shi'ism in Muslim history from its beginning to the present. *Mahmoud Ayoub, Faculty Associate in Shi'ite Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*

Islam in Modern Europe

Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:50 p.m. beginning Sept. 9

This course considers historical and current realities of Muslims in the West, including the development

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of Islamic institutions and forms of leadership, Muslim worship and devotional life, Islamic education and the range of issues involved in living as Muslims in western society. *Davide Tacchini, Adjunct Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations*

SCRIPTURE

Hebrew Bible Survey I

Wednesdays from 7 to 9:20 p.m., beginning Sept. 10
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. Attention will be given to contemporary theories of biblical interpretation. Survey I will cover the materials in the Torah and Prophets (Genesis-Kings). *Uriah Kim, Professor of Hebrew Bible*

Reading the New Testament Through the Eyes of the Oppressed

Thursdays from 4:30 to 6:50 p.m., beginning Sept. 11
This course in New Testament hermeneutics - the art of interpretation - will focus on recent developments in African American, Latino and feminist readings of the Bible. In particular, we will explore how Black and Latin American liberation theology movements have read the New Testament as well as feminist, womanist (African American women's) and mujerista (Latina) perspectives. *Efrain Agosto, Professor of New Testament*

Reading the Story of David for Our Time

Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., beginning Sept. 10 (10 weeks)
King David as depicted in the David story (1 Samuel 16 to 1 Kings 2) invokes awe and adoration on one hand and profound sympathy on the other and has captured the imagination and heart of a countless number of people over the years. But David was also a Machiavellian man of "loyalty" and sword who utilized his men, his wives and even God to achieve his goals. This course will not try to validate one image over the other; instead it will examine some features in David that are relevant and worthy to be imagined and practiced by individuals and communities of our time. The course material will be organized into twelve episodes or lessons so that the students can adapt it for bible study lessons and sermons. *Uriah Kim, Professor of Hebrew Bible*

The Relevance of Biblical Women

Wednesdays from 6 to 9 p.m., beginning Sept. 10 (10 weeks)
Women of the Bible seem so remote - mired in anonymity, buried in a text - yet their relevance is astonishing when seen through a different lens. Step inside their stories to receive fresh insights into issues we wrestle with today. You will be surprised at how much we can learn from an ancient sisterhood. *Miriam Therese Winter, Professor of Liturgy, Worship and Spirituality*

Readings in Pauline Theology and Ministry

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on September 16 and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Oct. 7 and 28, Nov. 18 and Dec. 9
This advanced course in Pauline studies will explore recent scholarship in Pauline theology and its implication for ministry and religious leadership today. *Efrain Agosto, Professor of New Testament*

THEOLOGY

Introduction to Black Theology

Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:50 p.m., beginning Sept. 9
This course will examine the human condition in light of God's liberating activity. Liberation theology, womanist theology, and the theologies of oppressed peoples will be explored as a method of investigating, explicating, and critiquing religious thought. *Benjamin K. Watts, Faculty Associate in the Arts of Ministry and Senior Pastor, Shiloh Baptist Church, New London*

Introduction to Islamic Theology

Wednesdays from 7 to 10 p.m., beginning Oct. 1 (10 weeks)
This course explores the content and structure of Islamic belief, as elaborated by Muslim classical thinkers (7th-15th centuries), in relation to a selection of representative texts. *Yahya Michot, Professor of Islamic Studies and Christian-Muslim Relations*

Pluralistic Monotheism and the Abrahamic Faiths

Mondays from 6 to 8:20 p.m., beginning Sept. 15
This course will explore theological questions posed by religious plurality, especially the diversity among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The primary lens for this exploration will be Jewish tradition, with readings from the Hebrew Bible, Rabbinic and medieval texts, and contemporary writers examined for insights. Guest facilitators will be invited to address these questions, drawing on perspectives from Christianity and Islam. *Yehezkel Landau, Faculty Associate in Interfaith Relations*

Theology of Popular Culture

Thursdays from 7 to 9:20 p.m., beginning Sept. 11
This course will explore various theological and religious meanings that are carried in popular culture, and specifically in phenomena that are not ordinarily thought of as religious. Through reading several "theologians of culture," we will examine contemporary novels, films, music, television, and tourism with the intent of developing ways to discern transcendent longings, anxieties, and visions of good and evil that operate below the surface of our common cultural life in the U.S. *Kelton Cobb, Professor of Theology and Ethics*

Theology of the Wesleys and its Wider Religious Impact

ONLINE
John and Charles Wesley were theologians and religious leaders who expressed their convictions by creating a vibrant popular movement - Wesleyan Methodism. This course will examine some of the sermons of John Wesley and the theologically rich hymns penned by Charles Wesley, in order to understand the theological significance and enduring appeal of their work. *Brian Clark, Adjunct Professor of Theology*

WORSHIP & SPIRITUALITY

Fundamentals of Worship: Practice and Theology

Wednesdays from 4:30 to 6:50 p.m., beginning Sept. 10
What is Christian worship, and how is it effectively and meaningfully led? This course will explore the theological underpinnings of the community gathered for worship, study the elements of regular and special services (including baptism, marriage and funeral), and provide practical guidance for developing worship experiences appropriate to both congregation and leader. *The Revs. Jonathan Lee and Donna Manocchio, Adjunct Professors of Liturgy, Worship and Spirituality and Pastors at Rocky Hill Congregational Church*

FAITHFUL TRADITIONS IN DIALOGUE: PREPARING PEACEMAKERS FOR 175 YEARS

• Saturday, October 19 Our anniversary week begins by honoring our roots in the Congregational tradition. First Church, Simsbury, joins with us to present a bus tour of historically significant sites, with our tour guide, Ken Minkema, Director of the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale School of Divinity. The tour concludes with tea time at Hartford Seminary.

• Monday, October 20 ... The work of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations is featured as we welcome and introduce our two new faculty members to the Center, Mahmoud Ayoub and Yahya Michot. Dr. Ayoub will present a lecture entitled "Towards a Framework for Interfaith Dialogue: Globalism or Pluralism" followed by Dr. Michot speaking on "An Islamic Theology? Why?". The evening will include a reception honoring the contributions of outgoing Center Co-Director and Alumna, Dr. Jane Smith.

• Tuesday, October 21 ... Author Brent Bill visits the Seminary for a reading and signing of his new book, "Sacred Compass: the Path of Spiritual Discernment." Meet the author at a reception.

• Wednesday, October 22 ... Jazz in the Stacks. Mix and mingle with music while you discover and discuss the intriguing and unusual in an exhibit of artifacts from our archives. Portraits of prominent leaders from our past are on display for the first time in our Library.

• Thursday, October 23 ... President Heidi Hadsell moderates a panel presentation on the nature of theological education, featuring past presidents of Hartford Seminary. How does theological education address the needs and issues of our time? The discussion continues over desserts following the panel presentation.

• Friday, October 24 and Saturday, October 25 ... A two-day opportunity to explore the topics and expertise available at the Seminary during our Hartford Seminary Sampler. Workshops, lectures, and tours, open to the public, fill both Friday and Saturday afternoons along with special gatherings for our alumni/ae and donors. We invite you to sample a drumming circle, walk a Labyrinth, and let the spirit move you in a doll-making workshop. Interact with our faculty following presentations on such topics as Creation, Interfaith Dialogue, Religion and the New Science, and many others. We are honored to present The Rev. Dr. James Deotis Roberts as a featured alumni speaker. Author of the book, "King and Bonhoffer: Speaking Truth to Power," Dr. Roberts is, and has long been, one of the foremost American voices in Black Theology.

• Sunday, October 26 ... An Interfaith Service of Celebration is a fitting finale for this historic week. Immanuel Congregational Church, Woodland Street, offers up its magnificent sanctuary for this special service. Voices from Muslim, Christian and Jewish traditions provide inspiration as we gather together for this final offering of the 175th Anniversary Week, an uplifting and memorable experience to send us all forward with renewed courage and commitment.

In a world divided by differences, Hartford Seminary makes a difference. We invite you to join us as we commemorate 175 years of faithful, innovative traditions in dialogue.

Be a part of our Anniversary Celebration: interact with our world-class faculty dedicated to preparing peacemakers and promoting vital faith communities, explore new ways to meet the needs of our pluralistic, multi-faith world, join the conversation.



Hartford
SEMINARY

Exploring Differences, Deepening Faith

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