

Graduate Intensive: Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry

July 17-21, 2017 Children's Defense Fund's Alex Haley Farm, Clinton, Tennessee

Please note: In order to receive credit for this course, you will need to pay tuition to one of the participating seminaries plus conference costs which include \$200 for registration and all meals; you will need to arrange for your lodging in nearby hotel (averages \$50/night if you share a room) and your transportation to and from the conference. See CDF's website: www.childrensdefense.org

“Mobilizing for Justice: Advocacy Ministry with Children and Youth”

Faculty:

Cristian de la Rosa, Assistant Professor of Contextual Theology and Practice, Director of Contextual Education and Community Partnership, Boston University School of Theology, National Director for Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy. cdlrosa@bu.edu

Leah Gunning Francis, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, Christian Theological Seminary, author: *Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community*. lgunningfrancis@cts.edu

Patrick Reyes, Director of Strategic Partnership for Doctoral Initiatives, Forum for Theological Exploration, author of *Nobody Cries When We Die: God, Community and Surviving to Adulthood*. preyes@fteleaders.org

Janet L. Wolf, Children's Defense Fund, jwolf@childrensdefense.org, 615-260-2894

Faculty Co-facilitators:

Greg Ellison, Candler School of Theology, professor and author, *Cut Dead but Still Alive: Caring for African American Youth*; see <http://fearlessdialogues.com/>; gelli01@emory.edu

Derek Hicks, Wake Forest University School of Divinity, professor and author, *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition*; hicksds@wfu.edu

Ched Myers, activist theologian, popular educator, author of many books, including *Sabbath Economics* and *Binding the Strong Man*; partner in Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries; 5th generation Californian; chedmyers@bcm-net.org

Christophe Ringer, Chicago Theological Seminary, professor and former pastor - “Necropolitics: The Religious Situation of U.S. Mass Incarceration” Christophe.Ringer@ctschicago.edu

Rodney Sadler, Associate Professor of Bible, Union Presbyterian Seminary at Charlotte; associate pastor, Mount Carmel Baptist Church; RSadler@upsem.edu

Charlene Sinclair, Union Theological Seminary, and founding director of the Center for Race, Religion and Economic Democracy, charlene@c-rred.org

Course Description and Core Components:

This course will be an intensive *Children's Defense Fund* (CDF) immersion experience for seminary or divinity/theological school students who wish to engage and cultivate necessary prophetic voices with communities on the margins of theological education—in particular, those communities contending against systemic injustices perpetuating the intersectionalities of racist and economic struggles that directly impact children and youth. The CDF immersion conference provides an alternative or liminal space to study justice ministries. We will consider and challenge Biblical and theological assumptions justifying institutional complicity with oppressive systems that create insular maintenance of churches quite disconnected effectively from folks on the margins. We will examine the present nature of theological education and consider pressing questions regarding public theology and contextual practice within the marketplace. The foci of this course underscore partnerships with local communities working with CDF, collaborating with those who are engaged directly in the struggles for social justice. We study, “How do we construct narratives of learning and justice ministries at the center of our theological training?” We also explore, “What is our theological voice in the public square; what are the possible roles of public theology?” This course will include contextual learning and research in forming public leaders to facilitate collective organizing/re-organizing of churches as justice-making communities to extend beyond the immediate concerns of philanthropy.

Learning Goal and Learning Objectives:

To reframe and to transform religious leadership in view of the sacrality and integrity of youth in our commitments to justice making—that is:

1. To build our understanding of the range child advocacy and to articulate theological, biblical, and historical mandates for child advocacy ministries;
2. To explore the theological foundations for justice and preaching ministries in the effort to build partnerships among faith communities and traditions, including with interfaith communities, and to build theological frameworks for these partnerships;
3. To cultivate contextualized teaching and learning that includes social analysis and interdisciplinary approaches involving theological, biblical, historical, political, and experiential studies, and practices of ministry (e.g. black preaching, pastoral and prophetic care ministries);
4. To introduce to students a range of nonviolent direct action organizing principles and to equip students with organizing models for collective action in congregational praxis and public theology.

Questions we will explore include:

- Who are we in justice work, God's work, in our communities?
- What structures perpetuate poverty? Mass incarceration? Systemic oppression?
- What theologies perpetuate poverty, mass incarceration, racism, oppression?
- How can we move faith communities from charity to justice?
- How can we develop strong and effective interfaith partnerships to seek justice for all of our children?
- How do we listen to and learn from and with young people? What can we learn from their stories and leadership?
- How can we work through collective nonviolent direct action organizing to disrupt and dismantle the cradle to prison pipeline?
- How do we become partners WITH instead of planning programs FOR young people who are wounded by the structural violence of poverty, racism, inadequate public education, zero tolerance discipline policies and the juvenile justice system?

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

1. To engage voices of children and youth, especially those most impacted by systems of oppression - this includes conference experiences but also concrete work to listen to and learn from children and youth in your community before you frame your final project (25% of grade)
2. To engage the required texts through critical reflection. For each of the 9 required books, please turn in a two page reflection paper by July 10th. What surprised you? Challenged you? What did you find most helpful? Disturbing? Prophetic? How does the reading push you to change, to work in new ways? Bring your notes and books with you and be prepared to engage the class and speakers. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Children's Defense Fund website and the assigned articles/video. (20% of grade)
3. To develop and to present an Action Plan/project strategy – initial ideas will be presented during the Institute and final draft is due July 30th so that you can get feedback before completing your final project. (10% of grade)
4. To produce a final project framed by the course core components, learning goals and objectives, questions we explore and discussions. This can be a collaborative group project or individual. Due August 15th. (45% of grade)

The emphasis must be on:

- A. Listening to and learning from and with children and young people
- B. Working/partnering with those struggling with oppression vs. programs for or to
- C. Addressing systemic, structural oppression vs. individuals only
- D. Engaging in justice rather than charity

Examples of past projects include:

- Initiating a listening circle and restorative justice process, including a website, to deal with conflict around race/class bias against youth in neighborhood

- Creating a triptych of paintings with a companion narrative exploring experiences of young people, structures of oppression and possibilities for hope as model for listening to young people and redefining youth ministry
- Creating an ongoing listening circle process for transgender youth in partnership with a community youth center
- Designing partnership for work around gardens, food culture, memories and art with young folks and their families near Latino community center
- Creating booklist, training curriculum and support process for work with parents considering transracial adoptions through local adoption agency

Required Texts include our 2017 speakers:

www.childrensdefense.org with special attention to Child Watch Columns

<http://jjie.org/delinquent-by-reason-of-poverty/>

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/why-mass-incarceration-defines-us-as-a-society-135793245/?no-ist>

https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice?language=en

Campbell, Simone. (2015) *A Nun on the Bus: How All of Us Can Create Hope, Change and Community.*(Book 1)

Daley-Harris, Shannon. (2016) *Hope for the Future: Answering God's Call to Justice for Our Children* (Book 2)

Emdin, Chris. (2016) *For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Ya'll Too: Reality Pedagogy and Urban Education* (Book 3)

Fluker, Walter. (2016) *The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post Racial America* (Book 4)

Francis, Leah Gunning. (2015) *Ferguson & Faith: Sparking Leadership & Awakening Community.* (Book 5)

Haynes III, Frederick. (2008) *Healing Our Broken Village.* (Book 6)

Powery, Luke. (2012) *Dem Dry Bones: Preaching, Death and Hope.* (Book 7)

Reyes, Patrick. (2016) *Nobody Cries When We Die: God, Community, and Surviving to Adulthood.* (Book 8)

Wong, Kent, Ana Luz Gonzalez and James M. Lawson Jr. (2016) *Nonviolence and Social Movements: The Teachings of Rev. James M. Lawson Jr.* (Book 9)

Suggested Readings and Resources: Those in bold indicate author will be at Proctor 2017

- Video: Civil Rights | Watch Makers: Women who Make America on Women in the Civil Rights
- *Eyes on the Prize* documentary series.
- Allen, Ronald, Dale P. Andrews, Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm. (2011, 2012, 2013). *Preaching God's Transforming Justice, Lectionary Year[s] A, B, and C.*
- Anderson, Victor. (1999). *Beyond Ontological Blackness.*
- Anderson, Victor. (2008). *Creative Exchange.*
- Andrews, Dale P. (2002). *Practical Theology for Black Churches.*
- Andrews, Dale P. and Robert London Smith Jr., editors. (2015). *Black Practical Theology.*
- Barber II, William J. (2016) *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement.*
- Black, Daniel. (2016) *The Coming.*
- Brueggemann, Walter. (2001, 2nd ed.) *Prophetic Imagination.*
- Douglas, Kelly Brown. (2015) *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God.*
- **Edelman, Marian Wright. (1993). *The Measure of Our Success.***
- **Ellison, Gregory. (2013). *Cut Dead but Still Alive.***
- Harding, Vincent. (2010). *Hope and History.*
- Harding, Vincent. (2008). *Martin Luther King Jr.: The Inconvenient Hero.*
- Heschel, Abraham. (1962, 2001). *The Prophets.*
- **Hicks, Derek S. (2012). *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition.***
- **Lindner, Eileen. (2006) *Thus Far on the Way: Toward a Theology of Child Advocacy.***
- Marbury, Herbert. (2015). *Pillars of Cloud and Fire: The Politics of Exodus in the African American Quest for Freedom.*
- McMickle, Marvin. (2006). *Where Have All the Prophets Gone.*
- **Moss III, Otis. (2015) *Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World: Finding Hope in an Age of Despair***
- **Myers, Ched. *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics, 4th printing.* Oak View, CA: Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, 2006.**
- **---*Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.**
- **Myers, Ched, Marie Dennis, Joseph Nanble, Cynthia Moe-Loeboda and Stuart Taylor. "Say to This Mountain" *Mark's Story of Discipleship.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996.**
- **Myers, Ched and Elaine Enns. *Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Volume I: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking. Volume II: Diverse Christian Practices of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009.**
- **Myers, Ched. With Matthew Colwell. (2012) *Our God Is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigrant Justice.***
- Otfinoski, Stephen. (1991). *Marian Wright Edelman: Defender of Children's Rights.*
- Parker, Evelyn. (2010). *The Sacred Selves of Adolescent Girls: Hard Stories of Race, Class, and Gender.*
- Pearse, Angie. (2010). *Doing Contextual Theology.*

- **Pierce, Yolanda. (2005) *Hell Without Fire: Slavery, Christianity and the Antebellum Spiritual Narrative.***
- Ross, Rosetta E. (2003). *Witnessing & Testifying.*
- Sheppard, Phillis. (2011). *Self, Culture, and Others in Womanist Practical Theology.*
- Salvatierra, Alexia. (2014) *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World*
- Smith, Linda T. (2012, Revised 2nd ed.). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*
- Stevenson, Bryan. (2014).
- **Taylor, Mark Lewis. (2015, Revised and Expanded, 2nd Ed.) *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America.***
- Thurman, Howard. (reprint, 1949) *Jesus and the Disinherited.*
- Tubbs Tisdale. (2010). *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach.*
- Wallis, Jim. (2016) *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America.*
- Washington, James M. (2001 ed.). *A Testament of Hope.*
- Wimberly, Anne. (2005). *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education.*

Tentative outline of our time together:

Monday, 9-12 Building Community, Defining Our Work Together

Monday 12:15-2 Session with Eileen Lindner

Monday, 2:15-6:15 Reading reflections and discussion

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 4:15-6:30 Processing what we are hearing, learning

Friday, 11:30-2 Evaluation, defining projects and next steps