

# Skylight

News and Notes from the GTU

Fall 2017

## Knowledge & Diversity

The Center for Islamic Studies Celebrates Ten Years

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# Skylight

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On the Cover: A reflection of the GTU library's skylight is captured in the glass of this display case that's part of the *Knowledge & Diversity* exhibition celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Center for Islamic Studies. Featured in this display are Islamic patterns, and a Chinese font-style Arabic calligraphy that reads "Al-Ilm Noor" ("Knowledge is Light"). Artwork by Haji Noor Deen.

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## From the President

Welcome to *Skylight*, the new publication of the Graduate Theological Union.

At the heart of the library that all GTU scholars share is a skylight through which natural light pours into the building. This skylight provides the inspiration for our new GTU logo, which adorns these pages, our letterhead, and our newly redesigned website. For an interreligious and educational center, light streaming in and illuminating our learning space and human engagements seems appropriate. The logo's intersecting lines suggest the converging paths and diversity found here, as well as the energy that flows into and out of the GTU through its many programs and activities.

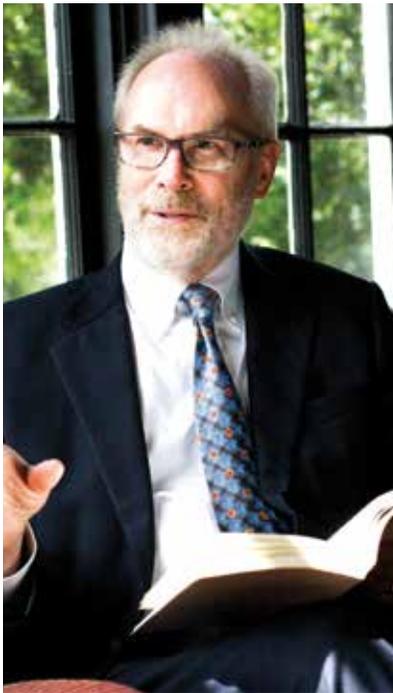
The development of our new logo was part of a rebranding process that began more than a year ago with focus groups sharing their experiences of the GTU and what it contributes to its students, faculty, local communities, and the wider world. Eventually, over many months, their feedback also led us to develop a new tagline, linked to our familiar GTU acronym:

*Grow in knowledge.*

*Thrive in spirit.*

*Unite in solutions.*

Our rebranding and website redesign represent efforts to convey our message in fresh ways amid a world of whirling change and generational shifts. But the GTU has been interreligious for a long time. This issue highlights our Center for Islamic Studies as it celebrates its tenth anniversary. In 2018, our Center for Jewish Studies will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. The GTU continues to grow as more of the world's great religious traditions take their seat at the table



and enliven conversations. At its meeting in October, the GTU board of trustees was asked to consider the candidacy of two schools seeking to become member schools of the GTU: the Institute of Buddhist Studies (currently a GTU Affiliate) and Zaytuna College, the first Muslim undergraduate liberal arts college in the United States, which will soon be starting an MA degree program. These are the first schools to seek member school status at the GTU since the 1960s. One of our strengths is the diversity that infuses everything we do, and the board voted to open this conversation.

I have announced that I will be retiring at the end of June 2018 at age 75. I have joyfully been part of what I consider a fertile period in the GTU's history. I am convinced that this school is uniquely poised to present the most forward-looking and substantive reflection and scholarship on issues of theology, ethics, and social justice. Our students are extraordinary and fully involved in the world they are intent upon improving.

A search committee representing many important constituencies is already busy searching for the next president of the GTU. I am certain many outstanding candidates will be attracted to the opportunity to lead this unique institution into the future. I am grateful for the outstanding faculty, staff, and trustees I have had opportunity to work with during my tenure, and for the faithful financial support of all our donors without whose generosity these dreams could not come to fruition.

# Knowledge & Diversity: The Center for Islamic Studies Celebrates Ten Years

Munir Jiwa



**E**NTER THE GTU LIBRARY THIS FALL, AND YOU’LL SEE scrolls of sacred texts, inspired art covering the walls, and display cases highlighting the work of students, graduates, faculty, and visiting scholars in Islamic studies at the Graduate Theological Union. This illuminating exhibition, entitled *Knowledge & Diversity*, marks the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Center for Islamic Studies at the GTU, and celebrates the many people who have contributed to the Center’s development and flourishing in its first decade.

The themes of knowledge and diversity, so pertinent to the work of the Center for Islamic Studies, are rooted in the Qur’an. The first verse revealed to the Prophet Muhammad begins with “*Iqra*” (“Read/Recite”), establishing knowledge as central to the Islamic tradition (Q 96:1-5). In another verse, we are reminded of our diversity and that we were created from a male and a female, and made into nations and tribes, so that we may know one another (Q 49:13).

Since its founding in 2007, the Center for Islamic Studies has sought to deepen scholarly engagement with the wisdom

of the Islamic tradition within the diverse, multireligious context of the Graduate Theological Union. CIS focuses research and scholarship on Islamic texts and traditions in contemporary contexts, supporting students pursuing Islamic studies at the master’s and doctoral levels, offering a certificate in Islamic studies, and providing graduate level courses on Islam and Muslims for students throughout the GTU consortium and the University of California, Berkeley. The Center works collaboratively with other GTU centers and member schools, and partners with a wide range of institutions and organizations in the Bay Area, nationally, and throughout the world.

## **Our Students: Scholars, Leaders, and Activists**

For ten years, the Center for Islamic Studies has provided a home at the GTU where scholars and students of many faiths can learn about the richness of the Islamic tradition and the diversity of Muslims in their theological, historical, and cultural contexts. CIS students contribute significantly to the interreligious environment that characterizes the GTU. While the Center continues to provide introductory and advanced courses in Islamic studies for students in degree programs across the entire GTU consortium and UC Berkeley, we especially celebrate the accomplishments of those GTU students and graduates whose scholarly work has focused on the Islamic tradition during the past decade.

Today, 14 PhD students and 8 MA students are pursuing degrees in Islamic studies at CIS/GTU and 3 more are currently working toward a certificate in Islamic studies. During our first ten years, we’ve seen 9 students complete the certificate in Islamic studies, 19 graduate with an MA in Islamic

**Our 45 CIS MA and PhD students and graduates, along with CIS faculty and visiting scholars, are representative of the global diversity of the Islamic tradition; they come from 17 different countries and speak, read, or write in 32 languages!**



CIS graduates at the 2017 GTU Commencement

studies, and 4 who have completed their PhD in association with our Center. Our 45 MA and PhD students and graduates, along with CIS faculty and visiting scholars, are representative of the global diversity of the Islamic tradition; they come from 17 different countries and speak, read, or write in 32 languages!

In May 2017, CIS students and graduates organized the First Annual CIS/GTU Islamic Studies Symposium, *Scholarship, Leadership, Activism: Islamic Studies at the Graduate Theological Union*. The event attracted more than one hundred attendees from the GTU and UC Berkeley academic communities, as well as from the broader public. Twenty-four students, graduates, faculty, and visiting scholars offered academic presentations during the day-long symposium, which explored five central themes: studying the Islamic tradition in academia, researching Muslim diversity and identity, teaching and pedagogy in Islamic studies, engaging the public sphere through activism, and expressing faith through creativity and the arts. The event built bridges between theological education and scholarship in Islamic studies in secular contexts, provided opportunities for networking, and contributed to strengthening academic and community connections. (For the full program, see [www.gtu.edu/events/first-annual-cis-student-symposium](http://www.gtu.edu/events/first-annual-cis-student-symposium).)

### **Ten Years of Partnerships**

An estimated quarter of a million Muslims live in the San Francisco Bay Area, positioning CIS as an important venue for deepening engagement with Muslims and the Islamic tradition in interreligious contexts. During the past decade, CIS has sponsored or co-sponsored more than 700 educational

programs, forums, and public events, which have attracted thousands of participants.

Grants from several major foundations have enabled us to share in the rich potential of our region's resources to build networks among local Muslim organizations and engage local communities in support of interreligious programming. In 2009, a grant from the Carnegie Corporation seeking to address media and public policy questions concerning Islam and Muslims led to an important conference entitled, *Who Speaks for Islam? Media and Muslim Networks*. The following year, the Social Science Research Council provided a grant that enabled CIS to further expand this work. The resulting programs, *Media and Muslim Networks: Institution and Communications Capacity Building in the Bay Area*, strengthened the Center's partnerships with diverse Bay Area communities in academia, journalism, media, public policy, science and technology, and the arts, as well as with Muslim communities.

CIS has benefited from the early, strong, and consistent support of the Henry Luce Foundation. A significant three-year grant from the Luce Foundation in 2009 helped establish our MA program and enabled admission of our first cohort of students. A second three-year grant in 2013 further strengthened CIS's academic, public, and leadership programs. In celebration of our tenth anniversary, the Luce Foundation has provided additional funding to help CIS showcase, document, and evaluate our work. The generosity of the Luce Foundation has been central in supporting Islamic studies within the academy in the US, and in advancing broader understanding of Islam and Muslims in the wider public.

Funding from the Walter & Elise Haas Fund in 2016-2017



*Iqra Star* by Mamoun Sakkal

has allowed the GTU to strengthen its Madrasa-Midrasha program, established in 2009 through a partnership between the Center for Islamic Studies and the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies. This ongoing program seeks to advance study, dialogue, and understanding of Jewish and Islamic texts and contexts within academia and the larger public sphere by offering workshops, lectures, panels, and courses that explore the richness, diversity, differences, and commonalities of the Jewish and Islamic traditions.

Significant and ongoing collaborations with several partners including service on various boards and committees, have established CIS as a leading national and global center. These include our partnership for nearly a decade with the Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project at the Center for Race and Gender at UC Berkeley, work with the Public Theology Inquiry Group at the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion and the Haas Institute's Religious Diversity Cluster at UC Berkeley, academic and public programming with Zaytuna College in Berkeley, a decade of service on the Public Education Advisory Board of the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies at Stanford University, and serving on the Contemporary Islam Section and the Committee for Racial and Ethnic Minorities, both at the American Academy of Religion.

These foundations and academic and public partnerships enable us to enrich Islamic studies at the GTU, while strengthening interreligious education and dialogue. Now, CIS is in a leading position to move forward, broaden its

impact, and provide models for other institutions, bridging theology and academia.

### **Faculty and Visiting Scholars**

Among the faculty members who have been most instrumental in the work of the Center for Islamic Studies is Dr. Marianne Farina, CSC, a professor of philosophy and theology at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology and a core doctoral faculty member at the GTU. Dr. Farina's commitment and dedication has enriched and extended CIS academic and public programming throughout the decade, offering courses like *Christian-Muslim Dialogue* and *Religion and Peacebuilding* that are vitally important in our world today. Dr. Farina was a key figure in the establishment of the Center for Islamic Studies, working with the late Dr. Ibrahim Farajajé who led the Islamic Studies Task Force established by former GTU President James Donahue. Former GTU deans Arthur Holder and Judith Berling were also instrumental in the Center's founding, as was the significant financial support of John Weiser, to whom we are so deeply grateful.

Our outstanding faculty and visiting scholars bring a wide range of interests and perspectives within the broad field of Islamic studies to CIS and enrich discourse within the GTU community. Their academic expertise spans the breadth of Islam in many dimensions—from religious faith, belief, and practice in many cultures, to artistic, scientific, cultural, and political forms of expression.

Twelve visiting scholars have contributed to the diverse perspectives of our academic community in our first decade. Our visiting scholars have included university presidents, directors of departments and programs, curators, professors, religious leaders and filmmakers. They have come from diverse places such as Bosnia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, and Sudan, and have brought scholarly expertise in areas of Qur'anic studies, theology, law, spirituality, science, sustainability, the study of Islamic art, architecture, literature and poetry, questions of Muslim diversity and identity, works on countering Islamophobia, and institution-building and leadership. Their scholarship and service contributes substantially to the CIS and GTU, as they work with and mentor our students, provide opportunities for extended education, and share their learnings with a larger public.

### **Looking Ahead**

We live in perilous and precarious times. With the growing Islamophobia in the United States, the monitoring

and curtailing of religious and academic freedoms, and the consistent underrepresentation and misrepresentation of Muslims in mainstream media in a post-truth era, it is essential to reframe the stories about Islam. This means challenging the normative frames through which Islam and Muslims are most often represented. These frames are what Dr. Jiwa calls the five “media pillars” of Islam, namely: 9/11 as the predominant temporal lens through which we approach Islamic history and theology and Muslims in the United States; terrorism and violence; Muslim women and veiling, and more recent discussions of sexual minorities; “Islam and the West”; and finally the Middle East as the geographical lens through which we view the entire “Muslim world.” At the Center for Islamic Studies, we are engaged in numerous efforts to nuance and question these prevailing narratives, so Muslims can be understood through their diverse and intersectional histories and identities.

One example of the GTU’s effort to highlight contributions the Islamic tradition has made to the world was witnessed earlier this year in the exhibition *Reverberating Echoes: Contemporary Art Inspired by Traditional Islamic Art*, organized by the Center for the Arts & Religion and displayed in the new Doug Adams Gallery. This exhibition, curated by CIS research scholar Carol Bier, presented the work of seven American artists from diverse backgrounds, each of whom was inspired by the Islamic tradition in unique ways. This inspiration reverberates beyond the GTU, as it reminds us of the profound legacy of Islamic contributions to geometry, art, architecture, literature, the environment, science and medicine, innovative technology, and education, including the enormous contributions made by Muslim women such as Fatima al-Fihri, who established the first continuously running educational institution in 859 in Fez, Morocco. These gifts benefit all humanity.

CIS exemplifies the critical role that Islamic studies and Muslims play in theological schools and the larger academy. Islam is an American religion—here from the time African Muslims were enslaved during the Atlantic Slave Trade. It has a long and rich history on this continent, a history of African-American Muslims who have upheld the faith. Muslims continue to make significant contributions to how we reflect upon ourselves in profoundly new ways.

Islamic studies is integral to how we think about, teach, and practice interreligious studies. We need to study and reflect upon the Islamic tradition and diverse Muslim practices



CIS faculty and students at *Reverberating Echoes*

and expressions both in their own specificity and history, as well as in the context of mutually constitutive histories—histories of entanglement, overlap, and messiness, as well as of shared intellectual and spiritual learning. Advancing religious and interreligious literacy in theological schools, which includes understanding and appreciating people in their contextual and intersectional complexity, can open tremendous transformative potential.

As we reflect on the CIS’s first decade and think to the years ahead, we are deeply grateful to our many generous supporters, who provide inspiration and guidance, and trust us to forge forward with our important work. Addressing the challenges we face today, CIS provides and facilitates opportunities for dialogue at a time of heightened divisions nationally and internationally. CIS students, faculty, visiting scholars, and staff continue to serve as leaders in promoting a better understanding of Islam and Muslims. Through such efforts, the Center for Islamic Studies has established itself as a valued partner in the GTU consortium, working collaboratively as we seek together to *grow in knowledge, thrive in spirit, and unite in solutions* that promote a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

The Center for Islamic Studies is committed to advancing sound scholarship in Islamic studies, and to an ethical, aesthetic, and critical education that inculcates a love for learning, a demand for social justice, global awareness, our responsibility to all of humanity and the environment, and an education of excellence, *ihsan*. ♦

**Munir Jiwa** is the founding director of the Center for Islamic Studies and associate professor of Islamic Studies and Anthropology at the GTU.

# Academic Life and Scholarship as Spiritual Practice

Elizabeth Liebert, SNJM

**A**S A PASTORAL THEOLOGIAN WHO HAS SPECIALIZED in Christian spirituality for more than twenty-five years, I am deeply engaged with the role of spiritual practice. In this essay, I would like to explore the possibility that academic life, and scholarship in particular, *is itself* a spiritual practice. This claim may be self-evident to some; after all, the medieval university was originally staffed by religious persons who assumed that their scholarship was spiritual practice. But for others, living on this side of the Enlightenment, scholarship is simply (though profoundly) a professional calling, and we may not perceive it as having anything to do with our spiritual lives.

Let's start by considering the term *practice*. In *Saving Work*, Rebecca Chopp notes that a practice is a "socially shared form of behavior . . . a pattern of meaning and action that is both culturally constructed and individually instantiated. The notion of practice draws us to inquire into the shared activities of groups of persons that provide meaning and orientation to the world and that guide action." Chopp, like others following Alasdair MacIntyre's treatment of *practice* in *After Virtue*, understands practices to be bodily, social, interactive, cooperative, and performed with rule-like regularities.

In terms of academic scholarship, this sense of practice makes perfect sense: What scholars do is shared broadly, over long periods of time, addresses human needs, and constitutes a way of life. Scholarship is bodily, social, interactive, and cooperative. We engage in actions such as research, writing, experimenting, drawing conclusions from data, and other methodologically consistent behaviors that others agree have a reasonable chance of advancing knowledge and/or uncovering truth—and, I would add, constructing something elegant and beautiful.

But what about the word *spiritual*? The first thing we might notice is that it is the adjective form of the noun *spirit*. In common usage, the English word *spirit*, from Latin *spiritus* ("breath"), usually refers to a non-corporeal substance, and is contrasted with the material body. It is understood as a vital force that constitutes the living quality of material beings. If we stay here, however, we can easily get lost in a dualism that we would do well to avoid.

**A**t this point, I have to claim my particular standpoint within Christianity. I ask those who profess other religious standpoints to critique the adequacy of my logic from within your own traditions.

Christian theology uses the term *Spirit* to describe a person of the Trinity, the "Holy Spirit," which is to say, to describe both God's reality and God's manifestations in creation. The term *spiritual* appears early in Christian texts, such as in 1 Corinthians 2:11-16, which helps to define "spiritual" as participating in the very life of the divine:

*For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also, no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.*

That is, according to Paul, only humans can know the human spirit, and likewise, only God (here: "Spirit of God") can know God's spirit. But God's Spirit has been given to us, so we can ourselves (at least begin to) interpret and participate in God's reality and activity.

For Paul, spirit is that gift given to humans that enables us to partake of the divine. So, the spiritual life joins us to God's creative activity toward that flourishing. And hopefully, we are at last coming to recognize that flourishing is very much material, bodily, fleshly, and earthly, as well as immaterial.

Paul's claim is that we have been given the enormous gift of participating in the very life of God ("But we have the mind of Christ," 1 Cor. 2:16). The spiritual, then, is what is open to the action of the Spirit that comes to us as gift. But, to have access to it, one must dispose oneself by means of practices (*askesis*, from which comes the word *exercise*, and carries the sense of bringing mastery via repetition).

It will help us in developing our larger argument on scholarship as spiritual practice to take a bit of a digression into the academic discipline of Christian Spirituality, as it has struggled over the years with various understandings of the word *spirituality*. To understand *spirituality*, I will offer a definition that our GTU colleague, Sandra Schneiders, included in her essay in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*. Spirituality is "the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives."

Walter Principe points us in the same direction in his 1983 essay "Toward Defining Spirituality": "A person's 'chosen ideal' and the striving to live toward that ideal is 'spirituality' at the existential level." Note that that "chosen ideal" need not necessarily be framed religiously.

**T**hese definitions remind us that spirituality is neither purely spontaneous, nor something done to us without our participation by another agent, nor simply a collection of episodic experiences. Instead, spirituality includes intentionality—conscious choice is integral to this understanding. We choose to engage in certain activities either because of their intrinsic value or because of where these actions lead. Those actions are determined in light of their end. Their final goal is something that is highly valuable, and indeed, sets the primary orientation and direction of one's life. Furthermore, this end is not purely self-referential, it's not about one's purely private satisfaction, but it pulls us out of our limited horizons, propels us beyond ourselves to attain this ultimate value.

Of course, one could put a less than altruistic goal at the center of one's life: pleasure, sex, money, and power all too frequently become enshrined in the position of "ultimate value that one perceives." Here, Schneiders insists that an adequate understanding of spirituality excludes such



Elizabeth Liebert. Photo courtesy of San Francisco Theological Seminary

negative life-organizations as addictions and exploitative projects that seek one's own good at the expense of others. The "ultimate value" must function "as a horizon leading the person toward growth." I want to underline that there is an inescapably moral dimension to this understanding of spirituality: true spirituality does not use power to dominate and destroy; rather it enhances individuals and communities, breaks down power differentials, and sets individuals and communities free to live deeper and fuller lives.

We can, I believe, connect Schneiders's definition back to Paul's use of the term *spiritual* as being of the mind of God, and then express this reality in a framework broader than the Christian distinctives that I used to construct it: that is, we can order our lives around searching out manifestations of the true, the good, and the beautiful to such a degree that these become our ultimate goal.

A spiritual practice, then, becomes the regular, repeated, intentional, embodied, actions that lead, step by step, toward enhanced good, true, and beautiful, shared with and evaluated within a community of shared practice according to agreed-upon standards of excellence.

Scholarship, in this understanding, can become a primary vocation, and its practice, indeed, spiritual.

Now that we have constructed a common understanding of spiritual practice and scholarship as spiritual practice, let me invite you into a spiritual practice that I believe can be embraced by scholars of many disciplines and religious traditions. It is the practice of *lectio divina*, or divine reading.

*Lectio divina* appears early in the Western monastic tradition and even earlier in Origen, Ambrose, and Augustine. (That means, incidentally, that *lectio divina* is “abroad in the land” during the rise of the Western university starting around the 11th century.) In the Benedictine context, *lectio divina* was the consistent reading and rumination, usually of the scriptures, that permeated the entire day. In the 12th century work *The Ladder of Monks*, Guigo II formalized these steps into the method often taught today as *lectio divina*:

*Lectio*/reading

*Meditatio*/ruminating

*Oratio*/praying

*Contemplatio*/resting

For our purpose of considering scholarly inquiry as a spiritual practice, let me offer a brief explication of these familiar steps. But first, a word about *intention*. This is a strategy for beginning any spiritual exercise that comes from Ignatius of Loyola. In every one of his *Spiritual Exercises*, he tells the one making the Exercises: “Ask for what you desire.” Asking at the head of the activity is a way to invite yourself to enter consciously into the practice, to dedicate it to the service of the Divine or of truth, and to begin to focus your attention—a very practical way to “show up” more fully. A basic intention that may work for you as scholar: follow the good, true, or beautiful wherever they take you—and share this journey with others.

The first step is *lectio*: In its origin, *lectio* was text-based, but we might extend to include placing loving attention upon whatever is the subject of study. You turn it around and around in your mind, imagination, and intuition, being exquisitely curious about it in all its particularity. (I am claiming something for *lectio* that bleeds over into *meditatio*, but bear with me, as I want to push the

analogy with *meditatio* to a different place.)

In “Reflections on the Right Use of School Studies with a View to Love of God,” Simone Weil invites us to develop the capacity for attention. She advocates attention in everything related to study, even such boring activities as grammar and algebra proofs. “Without our knowing or feeling it, this apparently barren effort has brought more light into the soul. The result will one day be discovered in prayer.” Helpfully, in the very next paragraph, she widens her perspective to include non-believers: “Quite apart from explicit religious belief, every time that a human being succeeds in making an effort of attention with the sole idea of increasing his grasp of truth, he acquires a greater aptitude for grasping it, even if his effort produces no visible fruit.”

Attention, according to Weil,

*consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object. It means holding in our minds, within reach of this thought, but on a lower level and not in contact with it, the diverse knowledge we have acquired which we are forced to make use of. Our thought should be in relation to all particular and already formulated thoughts. . . . Above all our thought should be empty, waiting, not seeking anything, but ready to receive in its naked truth the object which is to penetrate it.*

Weil claims that such attention is difficult, more difficult than simply working long hours. She believes that there is something in us that is repugnant to the laser-like attention she is proposing, and requires our vigilance. Clearly, this kind of attention, at this cost, is, for Weil, a spiritual discipline for students and scholars.

Close to thirty years ago, Jesuit Walter Burghardt defined contemplation to be “a long loving look at the real.” I think Burghardt and Weil are talking about the same activity, the same quality of attentive openness to what is there, as it is, as unclouded by our own assumptions as we can allow it to be given our situated humanness. Weil suggests a more imageless path, and Burghardt a path that can be full of images—the traditional apophatic and kataphatic distinction. I don’t think we need to choose between them; the choice may

**“The careful work of the scholar can be transformative precisely in the way it brings us face to face with the radical otherness of what it is we study.”**

come precisely from the object of our attention, or it may come from the way our practice begins to open up with much repetition. In either case, says Weil, the object of our attention may reveal its bit of the truth to us—as a gift.

*Meditatio:* *Meditatio* was the continual rumination on whatever the text opened up. In the context of academic scholarship, the parallel, I propose, includes such activities as framing a line of investigation and formulating a research question, then deciding, given the question, on an appropriate method that balances one's own subjectivity with rigorous attention to what is really there. Then comes the long process of engaging that reality at depth, over time, and noticing what happens between you, the observer, and the observed (both are changed).

*Oratio:* The classic spiritual practice of *oratio* includes addressing God directly in light of one's *lectio* and *meditatio*. Similarly, scholarly practice entails engaging in dialogue about the reality one has been exploring through appropriate scholarly disciplines. It could be talking to oneself; it could be talking back to one's subject or writing about it. But it could also be teaching about it (how many of us test out what we are thinking in the classroom!) or speaking in public about the subject; here the scholar controls the exposition in large part.

But there is still another level: deep collegial sharing where each party engages as both initiator and receiver, listening together to how others see the same reality.

Quantum theorist David Bohm claims that this deep conversation, which he terms *dialogue*, furthers science, as it occurs when a group “becomes open to the flow of a larger intelligence.” In this dialogue, participants seek to participate together in a larger pool of meaning that is always developing. In this kind of dialogue, the whole organizes the parts, and it can form individuals into a powerful learning community. Scholarly *oratio*, perhaps?

*Contemplatio:* *Contemplatio* consisted of resting, present to all that is, in particular to the Divine hovering within and around. Is there an analogy in our scholarship?

I think this sense of simply being present brings us back to Simone Weil's understanding of absolute attention being prayer, and Walter Burghardt's description of contempla-

tion as a patient, leisurely, unhurried, loving look at the real, allowing ourselves to be open to it, to be captured by it, to accept it on its own terms, to love it, and to respond to it in such a way that the world becomes better.

In an early essay describing a spirituality of education, Parker Palmer offered some thoughts relevant not only to the contemplative dimension of scholarship but also to this

whole question of scholarship as spiritual practice. He observes:

*To know in truth is to become betrothed, to engage the known with one's whole self, an engagement one enters with attentiveness, care, and good will. To know in truth is to allow oneself to be known as well,*

*to be vulnerable to the challenges and changes any true relationship brings. To know in truth is to enter into the life of that which we know and to allow it to enter into ours. Truthful knowing weds the knower and the known; even in separation the two become part of each other's life and fate. . . . In truthful knowing, the knower becomes co-participant in a community of faithful relationships with other persons and creatures and things, with whatever our knowledge makes known.*

So, how is scholarship a spiritual practice? The careful work of the scholar can be transformative precisely in the way it brings us face to face with the radical otherness of what it is that we study. And in the very wrestling with this otherness, we might even be transformed. That is, not only might our scholarly opinions and conclusions be revised, but also the very way we act and live might also change. And the world itself. ♦

**Elizabeth Liebert, SNJM**, is professor emerita of spiritual life at San Francisco Theological Seminary and core doctoral faculty at the GTU. She is the author of many books including *The Soul of Discernment: A Spiritual Practice for Communities and Institutions* (John Knox Press, 2015). This article is adapted from her GTU Distinguished Faculty Lecture, delivered November 10, 2016. A complete version of her presentation will be published in Volume 3, Number 1 of *The Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology*.

**“A basic intention that may work for you as scholar: follow the good, true, or beautiful wherever they take you—and share this journey with others.”**



# Scientific Practice as a Spiritual Experience

A response by Robert John Russell



SEVERAL YEARS AGO, AS PART OF THE Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences' renowned "Science and the Spiritual Quest" program, we sought out a wide range of internationally recognized scientists in diverse fields who were also practitioners of one of the world's great religions. We asked each of them one central question: In your experience as an accomplished scientist and participant in a global spirituality, how is the doing of science a spiritual experience?

The responses from these scientists were profound. They included the following:

- science gives us knowledge about God's purposes in creating the universe and humanity's place, purpose, and destiny;
- nature is a form of divine revelation; we're reading the book of nature, God's second book;
- science discloses the mind of God through the laws of physics;
- science tells us the story of the cosmos as the history of God's activity in the world;
- science leads us to God, the ultimate

reality and source of the universe, and this God is present and immanent throughout the universe.

The discoveries from CTNS's "Science and the Spiritual Quest" harmonize wonderfully with Beth Liebert's central claim that "academic life, and scholarship in particular, *is itself* a spiritual practice." Drawing on Rebecca Chopp, Beth notes that practice is a "socially shared form of behavior . . . a pattern of meaning and action that is both culturally constructed and individually instantiated." How perfectly this describes the spiritual practice of science as a community project of international and intercultural dimensions, with shared history and normative paradigms that infuse the lives of individuals who, through rigorous methodologies, seek to discover for themselves science's truths about nature.

Beth also drew on the writings of our dear GTU colleague and mentor Sandra Schneiders, who defined *spirituality* as involving "conscious involvement, the project of life integration through self-transcendence . . .

pointed toward the ultimate value one perceives." To me, this fits nicely with science as a spiritual practice requiring one's total conscious involvement in its theories and experiments, demanding that one integrate personally all one learns objectively by giving oneself wholly to the rigors of scientific research, and finally reaching the ultimate value offered by science to its practitioner: discovering the all-encompassing reality of nature of which we are a part, its staggering intelligibility, and its endless-expanse and exquisite beauty, the natural context of our material existence, a universe whose very matter at last is seen as truly mattering.

Finally, Beth turned to the distinguished philosopher Simone Weil who points to "attention" as that which "consists of suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the object . . . ready to receive in its naked truth the object which is to penetrate it." What an apt description of the attention called for in both theoretical and experimental science.



# GTU

During my PhD work at UC Santa Cruz, I remember staring at a blackboard on which was written a single equation with only two Greek letters and an “equals zero” ( $\delta\delta=0$ ). This equation encapsulates all of the details of the 256 coupled equations at the core of Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity. I learned to dwell in and with these four characters and, through complex and demanding mathematical reasoning, to open up their secret contents, and to discover a representation of the physical universe contained within them.

In these situations I was engulfed by attention to the phenomena in nature, phenomena that lie way beyond ordinary human experience and hint at nature in her secret modes of being, and to the pure mathematics that embraces all we know empirically about the Big Bang universe. Truly, these were spiritual moments for me—moments in my long spiritual quest for reality, truth, goodness, and beauty expressed in the hidden folds of nature and by the contemplation of its most serene mathematical regularities. They were prized moments of *lectio divina* where the sacred text is the mathematics we write down and the endless universe this math reveals, a universe in which we “live and move and have our being,” a universe that science discovers through its direct, personal, and corporate experience as a “spiritual practice.” ♦

**Robert J. Russell** is director of the Francisco J. Ayala Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, and Ian Barbour Professor of Theology and Science at the GTU.

**T**he Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley is launching a search for its next president. The GTU is a unique consortium of some 20-member schools, centers, and institutes, with a world-class library. Founded in 1962, the GTU is the most comprehensive center for the graduate study of religion in North America, working in a deep collaboration with the University of California, Berkeley.

An institution of higher learning unlike any other, the GTU brings together scholars of the world’s great religions and wisdom traditions to grow in knowledge, thrive in spirit, and unite in solutions. We prepare master’s and doctoral-level students for academia, for service, for leadership. We advocate for a more just and compassionate world and for the care of the planet. We serve as a resource for our community, the nation, and the world. We seek partners of spirit and intellect—open, innovative, inspired—to share our mission.

We are seeking the next GTU president...

- ❖ one who promotes innovative change and inspires new paradigms
- ❖ one with an entrepreneurial spirit and attested financial management skill
- ❖ one who has a profound appreciation for the academic enterprise
- ❖ one who has an awareness of the religious and interreligious landscape, with a particular appreciation for the global diversity that entails
- ❖ one with a demonstrated capacity to expand the reach of fund development
- ❖ one who promotes expanding both the enrollment of and career opportunities for our students
- ❖ a collaborative leader and an excellent listener
- ❖ a strategic, visionary, and optimistic individual
- ❖ one with a terminal degree

We will greatly value those who are candid about their strengths and vulnerabilities, who have an articulated spiritual practice, and who possess a curious, creative, and service-oriented perspective.

The GTU is at a pivot point: We are seeking a wise and impassioned individual to decisively lead us into a deeper engagement with the work we are called to in a strengthened GTU.

For more information, please visit [www.gtu.edu/presidentialsearch](http://www.gtu.edu/presidentialsearch)

# Humility at the Heart of Interreligious Education

Henry S. Kuo

**A**s I move toward the completion of my doctoral work at the GTU, I am increasingly musing over questions about the nature of education—and particularly the nature of interreligious education. I believe teaching is part of my calling as a theologian, as it is for so many others here at the GTU. Often, we educators are concerned about pedagogy, about certain teaching and learning strategies, as well as more mechanical questions concerning syllabus construction, what readings to include, and whether dialogical approaches are more effective than lecture and discussion. But there's a more essential question I believe we should ask first: *What sorts of people do we want to come out of our classes?* It is easy to assume we all know the answer to this question, but we need to deconstruct this a bit, because the character of the people we hope to produce shapes the content of our classes and syllabi.

This question of character is more important than ever. In Confucius's time, the question of character weighed most heavily on the figure of the Emperor; the Emperor's authority was derived from heaven, and was contingent upon his or her character. The Emperor's lack of character would be matched by the requisite judgment from heaven, usually in the form of regime change. In 1927, the people of China took matters into their own hands and said, "No, thanks," to the corruption within the imperial administration. Hence, the Chinese Civil War that led to the Republic of China, and then to the People's Republic of China.

In a liberal democracy such as ours, the question of character weighs most heavily on the people, and we often assume, perhaps to our own detriment, that "we the people" possess the character and the vocabulary necessary to ensure a responsible democracy. The November 2016 elections have demonstrated that this assumption needs serious revision and critique; in the aftermath, our nation's dangerous memories of colonialism, racism, and violence against the marginalized have been resurrected into dangerous realities.

In the field of education, character is often shaped by the implicit or unspoken content of our pedagogies and curricula. So part of our duty, as theological educators, is to literally be a light in the midst of darkness by bringing the dangerous

memories of our traditions and cultures into the light, so we can name and confess our sins, repent of them, and join in works of reconciliation and reconstruction.

**T**he more specific question regarding the nature of *interreligious* education is an important concept that we at the GTU must work through rigorously. The worst kind of interreligiosity is one that aims for a thin and shallow exposure to the buffet of religions available in the religious marketplace, and ill-informed scholars are encouraged to pick and choose whatever they like from any religion and add it to their plates. But look beneath such buffet religiosity and you'll discover a religious neoliberalism in which the fundamentalist epistemology of the infallible self is the basis of religious reflection—if such reflection takes place at all. In our time of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, and misogyny, such religious neoliberalism is the last thing we need.

Unfortunately, such attitudes are quite commonplace among religious and theological research. During my three years as editor of the *Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology*, we've had to turn down several submissions that provided "critical" inquiry based on caricatured versions of different religions. This shallow approach to interreligiosity is one the GTU aims to resist as strongly as possible.

But what character does an interreligious education aspire toward? This is an ontological question that structures the required classes we teach. Of course, we can't teach everything within the span of a few months. But what are we leaving out, and why? And does our implicit or null curriculum support the interreligious character formation our programs seek to cultivate, or work against it?

**N**ow, I can't answer on behalf of all religions—or even on behalf of all Christians. But let me venture one possible answer—and note that this is *my* answer, not the official GTU answer. I believe theological education should inculcate the virtue of humility before that which we are studying. This is precisely what Stanley Hauerwas said in an interview on religious pluralism and interreligious work. The point of interreligious work, he says, is not a *kum-ba-ya* toleration—because one can only tolerate the other from a hegemonic position. The interreligious scholarship we need—and the kind I believe the GTU strives for—cultivates a humility when encountering other traditions. Within such an approach, we all do the work necessary to get a glimpse, as best we can, of other traditions from their points of view, and to see how they see us. When done well, this sort of education forms us into humble and hospitable scholars, by apprenticing ourselves to the wisdom and experiences of the religious, cultural, and social Other. Christian-Muslim dialogical work, for example, is a mutual invitation to sit at the feet of the wisdom of ancestors, to converse with wisdom and also to glean from it so we can confront the dangerous memories of our cultures and traditions in ways we could not do on our own. It is an intensely dialogical exercise requiring a lot of work from all involved. But when done well, this is what gives us the courage to stand in meaningful and effective solidarity with *all* our neighbors, particularly those under attack by oppressive regimes.

Let me close with a story from a movie. In the movie *Hero*, Jet Li plays an unnamed Hero who is sent to assassinate the Emperor of China. In the pivotal scene of the film, the Emperor examines a calligraphy the Hero has brought which reads *Jian* (“sword”). The Emperor declares that the calligraphy reveals the swordsman's highest ideal in stages. In the basic stage, warrior and sword become one so that even a blade of grass can become a weapon. In a higher stage, the warrior's sword rests in his heart so he can slay his enemy without any weapon. But the ultimate ideal is when the sword disappears altogether. The warrior embraces all around him, and the desire to kill no longer appears and peace remains. The ideal vision of just war, to paraphrase Mengzi, is harmonious peace.



Henry Kuo presenting at the 2016 Ecclesiology Investigations International Conference in Hong Kong

But to attain this harmonious peace, the warrior must submit to the greatness and force of the ideal. He or she must be humble before it. And, I suppose, that this is what interreligious education does. When done poorly, religion becomes a deadly weapon. Base fears are inflamed, reason is summarily dismissed, and walls of oppression in literal and political forms are quickly erected as security trumps rights and freedoms. But when done with humility, interreligious education disabuses the world of dangerous stereotypes. Dividing walls are torn down, and reason gives way to reconciliation. When practiced with the diligence, skill, and mastery it demands, interreligious education deepens our own traditions, making religion and theology become critical aspects for human flourishing. And, to quote the GTU's familiar tagline, what better way is there for “religion to meet the world”? ♦

**Henry S. Kuo** is a PhD candidate in Systematic and Philosophical Theology at the GTU. He is the founding editor of *The Berkeley Journal of Religion and Theology*, a GTU-based academic journal established in 2015. Learn more at [gtu-bjrt.wixsite.com/bjrt](http://gtu-bjrt.wixsite.com/bjrt). This article was adapted from Henry's presentation at the Asia Project's Student Colloquium in March.

# Beyond Tolerance to Communion

Pravina Rodrigues

**A**S A CATHOLIC WHO WAS BORN INTO a multireligious, multicultural context in Mumbai, I have always found both Islam and Hinduism mysteriously beautiful. From a young age I was privileged to experience peaceful relations with Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, yet I've also wrestled with questions of religious diversity. Science reminds us again and again that diversity is intrinsic to the natural world, but what about the diversity of religious belief? Is there one path to the Divine, or are there many? After completing my Bachelor's in Theology at St. Pius X Seminary in Mumbai, and my Master's in Theological Studies at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, I decided to delve more deeply into this question by pursuing a PhD at the Graduate Theological Union, focusing on comparative theology and interreligious dialogue, with a particular emphasis on comparing Hindu and Christian theologies.

One of the first things I discovered is that the term *comparative theology* itself is a bit misleading. Theologians

do not compare to discover which religion is better but to be illumined by the religious "Other," while remaining rooted in their own traditions. Study of another religious tradition is neither a rejection of one's faith nor a dilution of its unique claims to truth. Instead, such study is an invitation to a deeper appreciation and understanding of oneself in relation with the Other. Just as in a marriage, self-understanding and growth takes place not in a vacuum but through engagement in activities, dialogue, and even disagreements with one's partner. The relationship acts as a catalyst for mutual illumination and growth.

**T**hanks to my advisor Professor Rita D. Sherma, I have further discerned that religions, particularly Hinduism and Christianity, are not—and do not need to be—commensurable and reconcilable; it is not necessary to view Christ as Krishna or the reverse. Although the differences between traditions may be significant, this does

not mean the Divine is exhausted by or present in *only one* religious tradition. I like to think of religions as colors, each with a beauty of its own that can neither be fully described nor compared to another. Studies that seek to examine multiple religions by creating a hierarchical structure that places one's own tradition on top are, arguably, biased. Moreover, we must be wary of comparisons that do disservice to the Other by creating hegemonic methodologies that "prove" the Other is inferior.

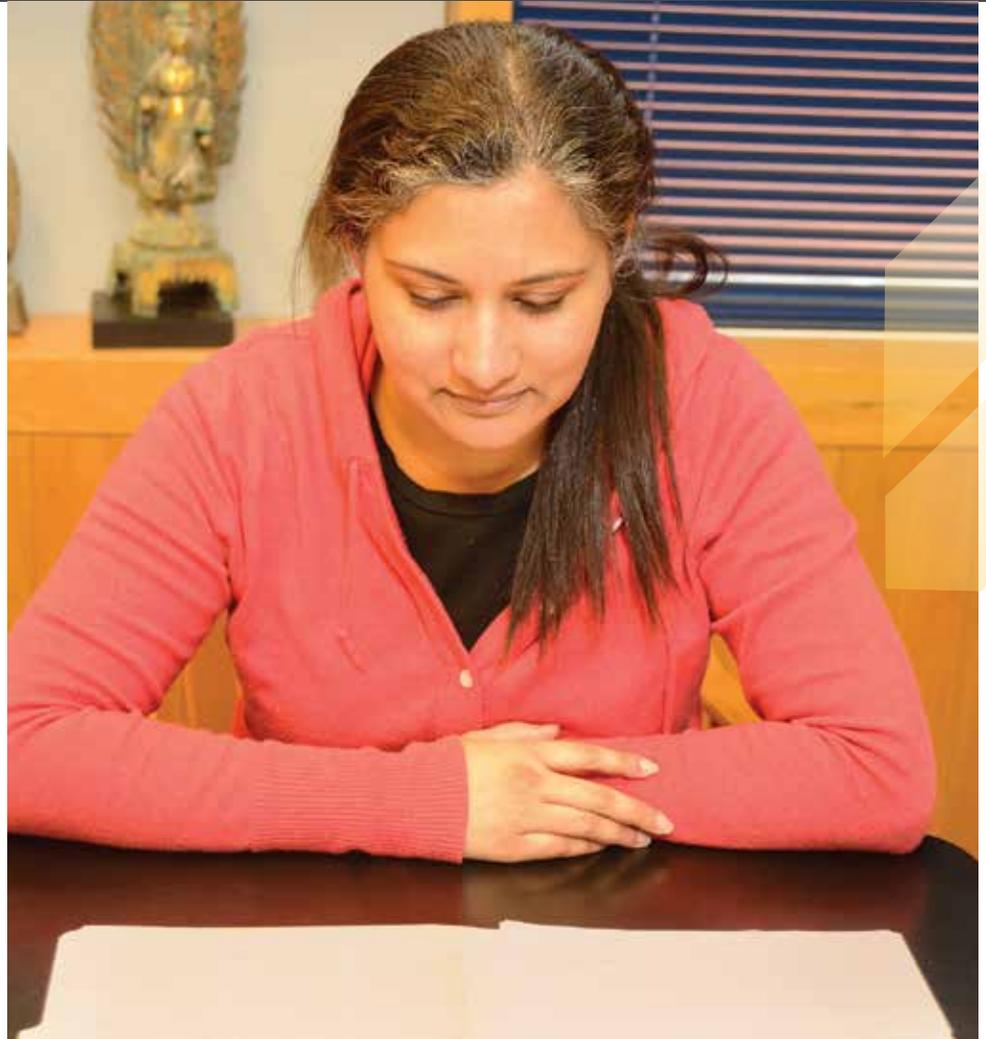
Most importantly, on this journey I have come to understand the difference between tolerance and understanding. If we engage only in interfaith activities geared towards juxtaposing religious texts and engaging in debate (or even dialogue), we may continue to find ourselves rooted in "us versus them" thinking that, at best, maintains a position of tolerance. I argue that the best way to move beyond tolerance is through communion. The word *communion* comes from the Latin meaning "sharing in common." I contend that

**“Theologians do not compare to discover which religion is better, but to be illumined by the religious ‘Other,’ while remaining rooted in their own traditions.”**

a more authentic understanding of another faith tradition can take place only when we make an effort to see and experience another tradition from the inside. My understanding of such interfaith communion encompasses engagement in the intellectual, charitable, and devotional activities of the religious Other, so that one might experience the Divine through those activities and begin to see what the Other sees.

**T**his path of communion is much more than a simple sampling of another tradition in order to borrow whatever religious beliefs one may choose. True communion is not flirting with another tradition, but *committing* oneself deeply to the *whole* tradition with one’s heart, mind, and body. Not only does it require hard work and rigor, it requires integrity and humility.

I confess that my comparative theological endeavors have broadened my outlook in life while shaping



Pravina Rodrigues in the GTU library

my entire being. Like the famous theologian Raimon Pannikar, I contend that my current theological studies have helped me discover that I am Hindu without ever ceasing to be a Christian. Some may find this position syncretistic or relativistic, but it reflects the both/and philosophy that is fundamental to religious engagement in India and contradictory to the either/or philosophy of the West.

Finally, I thank God for my current position as office manager and program coordinator at the GTU’s Center for Dharma Studies. In this role I have had opportunity to engage the Hindu tradition in the area of service as well as theological study.

Such interreligious engagement challenges me to deepen my own beliefs. I am reminded of my Hindu friend Sonal Ranadive who once jokingly remarked, “People from your Church are looking for you. . . . They think you have gone too far.” My response to her echoes the words of J.R.R.Tolkien, “Not all who wander are lost.” ♦

**Pravina Rodrigues** is a doctoral student in the Department of Theology and Ethics, with a concentration in Comparative Theology. She also works as office manager and program coordinator at the GTU’s Mira and Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies.

# Riddells Support GTU Scholarships with \$5.7M Estate Gift



**Y**ou can support future generations of interreligious leaders in the same way Robert and Kathryn Riddell have. A planned gift is a wonderful way to sustain groundbreaking interreligious education and leave your legacy at GTU, while meeting your own financial goals.

Planned gifts can be used to support our centers of distinction, provide funding for faculty positions, or create student scholarships. Undesignated gifts enable the GTU to respond to changing needs and new opportunities. Your gift will support and inspire students, faculty, and the GTU for generations to come.

If you would like more information on planned giving, or if you have already made a planned gift to GTU, please contact us. We look forward to working with you and welcoming you into the GTU's Legacy Society.

**R**obert and Kathryn Riddell were faithful supporters of both the Graduate Theological Union and Pacific School of Religion for more than fifty years. After Kathryn Riddell's death earlier this year, the schools learned that this incredibly generous couple had bequeathed more than \$5.7 million to the GTU and over \$900,000 to PSR through their estate and planned gifts. The Riddell family's gift is the largest donation in the history of the GTU.

The \$5.7 million gift will support student financial aid at the GTU through the Riddell Presidential Scholarship Fund.

In addition to the presidential scholarship established in their name at the GTU, the Riddells' faithful contributions have funded a chair in Biblical Archeology at PSR (currently held by Dr. Aaron Brody), and have provided student scholarship aid at PSR. Kay and Robert Riddell were also supporters of the Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, the Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology, and the Center for the Arts & Religion.

Beyond the GTU, Kay and Robert Riddell were major contributors to their church, First Congregational Church of Berkeley. They also established the Robert and Kathryn Riddell Fund at the San Francisco Foundation, which has provided hundreds of children in the Bay Area with opportunities to engage in environmental education programs.

GTU President Riess Potterveld said: "I had the pleasure of working with the Riddells for three decades. They had a passion for flowers and gardens and maintained an incredible garden of various rhododendrons next to their hilltop home. Kay was a long time docent at the Oakland Museum and had a deep and abiding love for culture, art, and the environment. Bob helped revitalize the University of California Botanical Garden. If you want a model for good and gracious stewards of resources, you could well start with the Riddells. Thanks to their generosity, countless students and future leaders will be supported through the reduction of their educational costs." ♦



# Art @ the GTU

Art galleries on the GTU campus give students, faculty, staff, and guests the chance for a contemplative experience among the press of academia. Art can be both relaxing and stimulating. It offers the opportunity for both private meditation and for connection with community. A visit to the art gallery draws out our personal stories, as we experience the art in our own ways.

While many GTU member schools display artwork, changing exhibitions can be found at CARE's Doug Adams Gallery, at the GTU Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, and at the Blackfriars Gallery at the Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology. In addition, the Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology at the Pacific School of Religion presents exhibitions about the ancient world. The ever-changing content and form of the exhibitions provides a wealth of choices for art experiences at the GTU.

## ***Seeds of Contemplation: Works by Arturo Araujo***

through December 8 (T, W, Th 10am-3pm or by appointment)  
Center for the Arts & Religion, Doug Adams Gallery,  
2465 LeConte Avenue

In his book *Seeds of Contemplation*, Catholic theologian Thomas Merton refers to spiritual sowing. The reader is the soil in which the seeds are planted, and the reader's spiritual life and relationship with God stands for the resulting harvest. In adopting Merton's title for this exhibition, Arturo Araujo, SJ, encourages gallery visitors to be attentive to their own seeds of contemplation. The three installations that comprise the exhibition draw visitors' attention in different ways. Walking the labyrinth ("Walk As If You Are Kissing the Earth With Your Feet") fosters both contemplation and enjoyment; navigating the beautiful hanging banners ("Flying Seeds"), visitors are immersed in an inspiring environment; concentrating on the print mural ("Dancing in the Wind, Clapping Her Hands for the Birds") reveals both continuity and layers of complexity. Each installation is accompanied by thoughtful interpretive labels by GTU faculty members, demonstrating that while Arturo approaches his art from a Jesuit perspective, his work is open to all.

## ***Ecce Homo: Devotional Expressions of Hardship and Healing in the Americas***

(M-F, 9am-5pm), Dominican School of Philosophy & Theology, Blackfriars Gallery, 2301 Vine Street

What is a human person? What is suffering? This exhibition explores those questions, theologically and artistically, through the presentation of Spanish Colonial and



*Walk As If You Are Kissing the Earth With Your Feet* corn labyrinth



*Ecce Homo* carved wooden sculpture

Mexican traditional and folk art. Based on the collection assembled by the late Michael Morris, OP, the exhibition centers on three sculptures: one depicting Jesus on a donkey, another of Jesus after being scourged, and a third depicting Mary as the Sorrowful Mother. Crafted by local artisans rather than professional artists, these three pieces present a window into the passion of Jesus and his Mother as seen and experienced by local people.



*Ancient artifacts on the theme of "hospitality"*

### **Hospitality in the Near East**

Mondays, 10am-2pm  
Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology, Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Avenue

**T**he Badè Museum is home to collections from Tell en-Nasbeh, an Early Bronze Age/Iron Age (3100-586 BCE) archaeological site not far from Jerusalem. The current exhibition showcases artifacts from Tell en-Nasbeh that illustrate the theme of hospitality, including gift-giving, meal-sharing, and foot-washing. As Natalie Gleason, the Badè Museum's Collections Manager, explains, "In today's world, with so many displaced people seeking refuge, there are relevant lessons we can learn from these ancient cultures which valued hospitality so highly."

### **Fellow Travelers:**

#### ***A Photographic Memoir by Mark Thompson***

through December 20 (during library hours)  
GTU Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, second floor outside conference room, 2400 Ridge Road

**I**n celebration of American Archives Month and Theological Libraries Month, PSR's Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Religion (CLGS) has joined with the GTU Library to present a group of arresting photographic portraits by Mark Thompson, from his book *Gay Soul*. Thompson was a prolific writer and an accomplished photographer who, along with his husband, Episcopal priest Malcolm Boyd, focused on documenting and advocating on behalf of the gay community. Several years before his death, Thompson generously donated photographs and research files to CLGS; these materials are now curated by the GTU Archives.

### **Knowledge & Diversity: Celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the Center for Islamic Studies**

through January 19, 2018 (during library hours)  
GTU Flora Lamson Hewlett Library Gallery, 2400 Ridge Road

**O**ver the past ten years, students, faculty, and visiting scholars and artists have contributed to the mission of the Center for Islamic Studies. This exhibition recognizes and celebrates their role in shaping CIS. In addition to information on student theses, faculty research, and collaborative projects, the exhibition includes artwork by CIS associates with a focus on the art of calligraphy. For more information, see pages 4-7.

**For more on art at the GTU, visit [www.gtu.edu/events/exhibitions](http://www.gtu.edu/events/exhibitions)**

## Sacred Garments around the World

After this summer's exhibition at the Doug Adams Gallery, *Sacred Garments: Orthodox Christian Vestments from Around the World*, Dr. David Steward, one of CARE's founding board members and professor emeritus at the Pacific School of Religion and the GTU, responded by sharing a fascinating personal history, evoked by the photographs of the stunning garments in the exhibition catalog.

Many of the vestments, which were generously lent to CARE by the Metropolitan Nikitas of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute, were from Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. The colors and motifs of the garments recalled family history for Dr. Steward, whose parents had been dedicated missionaries in China, despite war and internment for his father. The family collected a few art objects, including some silk tapestries with embroidery reminiscent of the Metropolitan Nikitas's garments.

For Dr. Steward, who now lives in Sitka, the vestments recalled the regalia of the Tlingit people of Alaska. The Chilkat robe is woven from cedar bark and goat hair, and carries the totem signs of the important person who wears it. Some years ago, Dr. Steward and his wife Marge had the privilege of meeting the Jacksons: Nathan, the premier Tlingit carver, and

Dorica, a weaver. Dorica re-learned the traditional skills to create the first Chilkat robe in recent times. The Stewards became part of the movement to help Native women become teachers in SE Alaskan villages—often to instruct Native children in the Tlingit language and lore. As Dr. Steward explained, "Within the context of Tlingit culture, the Chilkat Robe is the closest thing they have to vestments. Like the vestments in your exhibition, the Chilkat Robe is intricate and beautiful, and announces the spiritual context for the community of the leader who wears it. I would label it a 'sacred garment.'"

Chinese silk sakkos



The "Sacred Garments" catalog is available as a gift for CARE members. For more information, contact [info@care-gtu.org](mailto:info@care-gtu.org).

## Upcoming at the Doug Adams Gallery



### Religion & Resistance

February 6 through May 25, 2018 (T, W, Th 10am–3pm or by appointment), Center for the Arts & Religion, Doug Adams Gallery, 2465 LeConte Avenue

Religion and protest have always been intertwined; in many faith traditions, the promotion of social justice values is paramount. In this exhibition, archival posters and photographs attest to the use of religion in past protests, while new protest signs speak to the role of religious themes in confronting today's struggles. Exhibition highlights will include photographs by Ken Light, posters from the collection of Lincoln Cushing, a giant puppet of Archbishop Oscar Romero from Bread & Puppet, and inspiring posters, banners, and T-shirts from current activists.

Religion is sometimes a divisive element in current politics; through this exhibition, we see the use of religion as a link to well-established—and possibly sacred—social values.

©Ken Light/What's Going On?

# Alumni News

**Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu** (PhD, '07) has been named a director of the Ignatian Solidarity Network. She is associate professor of theological studies at Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts, Loyola Marymount University.

**Wendy Arce** (PhD, '16) is now serving as assistant dean for academic affairs at the GTU.

**Virginia Burrus** (MA, '84, PhD, '91) was named the GTU's 2017 alumna of the year. Dr. Burrus is professor of religion and director of graduate studies at Syracuse University. She will be honored at the GTU alumni reception at AAR-SBL on November 18, and featured in the Spring 2018 edition of *Skylight* magazine.

**Corrine Carvalho** (MA, '84) is serving as the interim dean in the School of Social Work at University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN.

**Susan Chorley** (MA, '03) has been named executive director of Exhale, a nonprofit that seeks to address the emotional health and well-being of women and men after abortion.

**Michael Crosby** (PhD, '85), passed away after a brief illness on August 5, 2017. A Capuchin friar, he will be remembered for his tireless activism in corporate boardrooms and in basilicas, bringing his faith to the service of socially responsible investment practices by corporations.

**Faustino M. Cruz** (MA, '88) was named dean of the Graduate School of Religion and Religious Education at Fordham University. Fr. Cruz served as executive vice president and academic dean of the Franciscan School of Theology at the GTU from 2005-2011.

**Eileen Donahoe** (PhD, '06) began a new position as executive director of the Global Digital Policy Incubator at Stanford University's Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law in April. She previously served as director of global affairs for Human Rights Watch (2014-2016), and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva (2010-2013).

**Steve Georgiou** (PhD, '04), who broke ground at the GTU by teaching the first graduate level course on poet, mystic, and sage Robert Lax, won the Catholic Press Association's Book Award, First Place for Poetry, for his book on Lax, *In the Beginning was Love: Contemplative Words of Robert Lax* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Templegate 2015).

**Joseph Glick** (MA, '16) has been awarded the prestigious Wexner Graduate Fellowship for rabbinical studies at Hebrew College.

**Christina Hutchins** (PhD, '08), was selected as the 2017 Poet in Residence at The Frost Place at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. Her second full-length poetry collection, *Tender the Maker*, won the 2015 May Swenson Award.

**Carmen Lansdowne** (PhD, '16) is serving as executive director of First United Church Community Ministry Society in Vancouver, BC. An ordained minister in the United Church of Canada and a member of the Heiltsuk First Nation, Lansdowne speaks and publishes on issues of indigenous theology and indigenous-Christian relationships.

**Kristin Johnston Largen** (PhD, '02) is now serving as associate dean of religious life and chaplain at Gettysburg College. In December she completes her term as co-dean of United Lutheran Seminary (Gettysburg/Philadelphia), where she will continue as professor of systematic theology after a year-long sabbatical.

**Sr. Terese Maya** (MA, '91) began a year-long term as president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in August.

**Marcia McFee** (PhD, '05) is serving as resident Ford Fellow at San Francisco Theological Seminary for the 2017-18 academic year. McFee is a renowned expert in worship design who has worked with more than 700 congregations.

**Margaret Miles** (PhD, '77), emerita professor of historical theology and former academic dean at the GTU, published *The Long Goodbye: Dementia Diaries* (Cascade Books).

**Cia Sautter** (PhD, '00) published *The Performance of Religion: Seeing the Sacred in the Theatre* (Routledge).

**Angela Yarber** (PhD, '10) and **Elizabeth Lee** (PhD, '11) were featured in a summer episode of the hit TV series *Tiny House Nation*, where they discussed their creation of an ecofeminist retreat center in Hawaii. Find out more about their work at [www.holywomenicons.com](http://www.holywomenicons.com).

**Laurie Zoloth** (PhD, '93) is now serving as dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School.



During his September trip to Korea, academic dean **Uriah Y. Kim** (PhD, '04) enjoyed dinner with a group of GTU alumni spanning the classes of 1992 through 2017. Front row (left to right): **HeeCheol Lee, SooYoung Kwon, ChongHun Pae, Uriah Kim, HeupYoung Kim, SeongHyuk Hong**. Back row (left to right): **SungUk Lim, KangHack Lee, YongHan Chung, DaeKyung Jung, HyungShin Park, ChungHyun Baik, SungHo Lee, HeeJung Ha, SeHoon Park, JooHyung Lee, Hyeokil Kwon**.

## Alumnae: Please Share Your Stories

At the GTU, we celebrate the strong presence of women in graduate theological education. We're proud of the high percentage of women among our current students, faculty, and graduates, particularly when compared to our peer schools. We are launching a campaign to collect and share 100 stories (or more!) of women scholars at the GTU, and we need your help. We invite you to share a short (100-word) paragraph reflecting on some aspect of your experience at the GTU—when you began to think of yourself as a scholar, when you felt mentored by a professor, or how the GTU supported your formation during your time here—plus a current photo and a one-line description of what you are doing now. We will highlight these stories on the GTU website and in social media. Please share your story by e-mail to [admissions@gtu.edu](mailto:admissions@gtu.edu). Thank you for your consideration, and for being part of what makes the GTU great! See below for an example from a recent graduate, Beth Anderson (PhD, '17).

**M**y learning at the GTU was shaped not only by my academic mentors but also by my co-workers in the Student Services office and friends and colleagues from across the consortium. One story stands out: During the week preceding my oral comprehensive exams, a colleague from PSR noticed my stress levels rising and offered to give me a blessing just before the start of my exam. More than anything, her generosity and calm presence assured me I was in the right place. I successfully defended my work, and the experience became a touchstone for me as I moved on to writing my dissertation."

**Beth Anderson** (PhD, '17) coordinates a writing program in one of Berkeley's public schools.





# GTU

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*Dr. Jennifer Davidson (center) with 2017 graduates at ABSW*

*“With more than 40 women on the full-time faculty, the GTU is a place where women scholars can thrive. As a GTU student, I learned to trust my own theological voice through the women here. Today, I seek to offer the same opportunities and support to others. Your gift to the GTU lifts up the voices of women in our religious and academic communities.”*

—Jennifer W. Davidson (PhD, '11)

*Associate Professor of Theology and Worship, ABSW  
Core Doctoral Faculty and Chair of Women's Studies in Religion, GTU*

By donating to the GTU, you support a diverse and vibrant scholarly community that makes a difference in our world. Give online at [gtu.edu/give](http://gtu.edu/give), or mail your gift to Office of Advancement, GTU, 2400 Ridge Rd., Berkeley CA 94709.

## Upcoming Events

### Luther Out of Germany

The Muilenburg-Koenig History of Religion Workshop featuring Christopher Ocker (SFTS), Kirsi Stjerna (PLTS), and other GTU scholars.

**November 14-15** (see [sfts.edu](http://sfts.edu) for session times)  
Scott Hall, SFTS, 101 Seminary Road, San Anselmo

### Seeing as Believing: Watching Videotaped Interviews with Holocaust Survivors

Jeffrey Shandler discusses Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age at this CJS event

**Thursday, November 16, 5:30 pm**  
Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, 2400 Ridge Rd., Berkeley

### GTU Alumni Reception at AAR/SBL

Connect with GTU alumni, students, and faculty, and honor our 2017 Alumna of the Year, Dr. Virginia Burrus.

**Saturday, November 18, 8:00 pm**  
Westin Copley Place, 10 Huntington Avenue, Boston

### CARe Brown Bag Lunch

PhD candidate Yohana Junker presents on “Land Art in the American Southwest”

**Friday, December 1, 12:00 noon**  
Doug Adams Gallery, 2465 LeConte Avenue, Berkeley