Racial Reconciliation and Evangelism
How the School of Theology is contributing a positive voice for change.
Grace to you and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord!

In my idle moments, often while driving to or from the Nashville Airport, I sometimes contemplate what it means to be a university. I believe it is to be a place for the formation of critical minds, undefended hearts, and reliable moral character. It is to be a crucible for shaping good citizens who share an irrepressible passion for the common good. It is to be a place that resists cookie-cutter, formulaic, dogmat- ic brainwashing in a particular way of thinking, but that stimulates the broadest possible engagement for the sake of the whole truth, not just a comfortable corner of it.

I contemplate even further, however, what it means to be a theological college within a university, a subset of the larger institution with a very particular brief: to prepare women and men “to be learned, devout, and useful,” as Richard Hooker once put it. Although framed by Christian faith and Anglican tradition, the principles are largely the same: critical minds, undefended hearts, and reliable moral character. It is about citizenship here and now, and the way of thinking that is the sign of God’s future. It is about living into a vocation that is profoundly concerned with the common good of both cities. It is about seeking the truth, wherever that leads us, however challenging the journey, in the sure confidence that when we find the truth we seek we will discover that we will have arrived home, secure in God.

Anglicanism is not only a Christian ecclesiastical tradition, it is also a Christian academic tradition. Both are our heritage. Both must shape our future. At their foundation, many of the great universities of the world were Anglican academic communities. Many of the great scholars that shaped the modern world were Anglican literary giants, scientists, mathematicians, inventors, philosophers, and theologians. Forming minds, hearts, and character in the pursuit of truth is for Anglicans about both faith and learning. The two go hand-in-hand, shaping a whole person prepared to make a difference. “One size fits all” has never been an Anglican virtue or an ideal to which we have aspired. What we do aspire to is finding ways to every person committed to our care to be the very best they can possibly be in mind, heart, and character. It is what makes Sewanee the splendid and life-changing place it is: a creative blend of Anglican faith and learning.

Such formation does not take place just at a university or a theological school. It is a lifelong process, one that is never complete. At the School of Theology, we have long believed that theological education is for everyone at every point in life. We never outgrow our need to learn. Deepening one’s faith commitment and service to Christ means renewing our minds, reviving our hearts, and restoring our character each and every day. The Beeken Center of the School of Theology is evidence of Sewanee’s commitment-learning that is truly lifelong. It is rooted in that deep Episcopalian commitment to the inseparable connection between faith and learning.

In this issue of From the Mountain, you will discover a goodly portion, but not all of any means, of what is happening these days at the Beeken Center. You will read about SUMMA, about Invite Welcome Connect, find updates on other programs, and get a good sense of all that is happening around the School of Theology. Of particular note, you will find a couple of articles that highlight some of the activities and conversations with respect to Sewanee’s own history of racism and racial reconciliation. These matters are a mission priority of our presiding bishop and we want to be a positive, contributing voice for change in this important area of our local, church-wide, and national life.

Blessings from Sewanee Mountain!

J. Neil Alexander
Dean of the School of Theology
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY NEWS

News Briefs

Maria Campbell Receives the 2018 DuBose Award for Service

On Sept. 26, the 2018 DuBose Award for Distinguished Service was presented to Maria Bouchelle Campbell of Birmingham, Alabama. The award, presented to Campbell during the DuBose Alumni Gathering banquet, recognizes the significant ways a person has served The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. The University of the South, also the recipient of the 2018 Woods Leadership Award from the School’s Dean, Neil Alexander.

Campbell’s contributions represent a lifetime of faithful service, and for that service, the Church and the University will be eternally grateful.

Nominations Are Invited for 2019 DuBose Award

The DuBose Awards Committee invites nominations from across the Church. The awards celebrate the ministries of both laypersons and clergy. Nominations are received from October to end of May the following year and the recipient(s) are announced during the annual DuBose Alumni Gathering banquet.

Qualifications

To submit a nomination, the nominee need not be an alumnus, but must be:
• an ordained member of the Episcopal clergy;
• a layperson who is a communicant in good standing of an Episcopal congregation.

Award Categories

• DuBose Award for Congregational Development: Candidates will have started a new mission or increased membership in existing parish;
• DuBose Award for Social Justice: Candidates will have made a significant difference in transforming unjust structures and promoted peace and reconciliation in their community;
• DuBose Award for Care of Creation: Candidates will have demonstrated commitment to the physical environment by utilizing parish resources to sustain and renew the life of the earth;
• DuBose Award for Service: Candidates will have exhibited distinguished service to The Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion, or the church ecumenical on behalf thereof.

Nominations and questions may be directed to Sautey Byerly, by email or phone, 931.598.1217.

School Receives Lilly Grant to Support Thriving in Ministry Program

The School of Theology recently received a grant of $999,976 to help establish the Thriving in Ministry Mentor and Continuing Education Program. It is part of Lilly Endowment Inc.’s Thriving in Ministry, an initiative that supports a variety of religious organizations across the nation as they create or strengthen programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as mentors and guide them through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry.

The Endowment is making nearly $70 million in grants through the Thriving in Ministry initiative.

The School of Theology’s program will center on building mutual mentoring groups for clergy serving in contexts where mentorship is known to be especially important. The project team will be seeking clergy serving in rural communities, clergy in Latino/Hispanic ministry, African American clergy, and clergy trained in non-traditional theological education programs, such as local formation or the School of Theology’s Non-Degree Theological Studies program. Recruitment efforts will focus in particular on female clergy across all four groups.

“We are thrilled with the partnership of the Lilly Endowment, Inc. as we look for new ways to serve the Church,” noted the Rt. Rev. Neil Alexander, dean of the School of Theology. “The Endowment has an inspiring vision for renewing the Church. We have great confidence that the program will enlighten and empower participants, and that as a consequence, we will form a network of clergy who are prepared to thrive in challenging times.”

The School of Theology is one of 78 organizations selected that are taking part in the initiative. The organizations reflect diverse Christian traditions: mainline denominations, independent, Restoration, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox.

Thriving in Ministry is part of Lilly Endowment’s grant-making commitment to strengthen pastoral leadership in Christian congregations in the United States. This has been a grant priority at Lilly Endowment for nearly 25 years.”

“Leading a congregation today is multifaceted and exceptionally demanding,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “When pastors have opportunities to build meaningful relationships with experienced colleagues, they are able to negotiate the challenges of ministry, and their leadership thrives. These promising programs, including Sewanee’s Thriving in Ministry network, will help pastors develop these kinds of relationships, especially when they are in the midst of significant professional transition.”

Seminarian Howell Receives Two Awards During DuBose Banquet

The School of Theology had a special surprise in store for Melissa Howell, T’20, during the 2018 William Porcher DuBose Lectures & Alumni Gathering banquet on Sept. 26. She was named the recipient of this year’s Freeman Award for Merit, an award honoring a rising middler student that has demonstrated outstanding academic performance and promise. The award was presented to Howell by the Rt. Rev. J. Neil Alexander, dean of the School of Theology.

She barely made it back to her seat before the dean announced that she was also the recipient of the 2018 Woods Leadership Award, presented annually to a middler seminarian who has successfully assumed a leadership role in the class during their junior year.

“I am honored and deeply grateful to Dean Alexander and to the faculty of the School of Theology for selecting me to receive these awards,” stated Howell upon receiving the news. “I am thankful for the formation and love I have received through my time at Sewanee. Particularly, I would like to thank my classmates and faculty for their friendship and encouragement in our life and work together. Lastly, I wish to thank the Freeman family and the Woods family for establishing these generous gifts in support of seminarians.”

Originally from Fairhaven, Massachusetts, Howell studied Hispanic languages and literatures and foreign language education at Boston University. She taught Spanish in Barnstable and Cambridge public schools for five years, and then worked as a clinical researcher in emergency medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital for nine years. She served as a hospice volunteer in the greater Boston area and completed a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education as a chaplain intern at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. At Trinity Church, she served as a small-group ministry leader, a lay Eucharist minister and visitor, and a visitor with Sunday Night Living Bread, providing sandwiches, socks, prayer, presence, and Sacrament to Trinity’s neighbors who are living with homelessness.

At the School of Theology, Howell is a Community Engagement Fellow partnering with Good Samaritan Ministries in Dandridge, Tennessee, a student co-director of the seminary’s Orientation program, a member of the Pastoral Care Committee, and a sacristan in the Chapel of the Apostles. She is passionate about healthcare chaplaincy and theology that explores the intersections of story, memory, and healing for individuals and communities.

Reed Freeman, T’96, T’05, and his wife, Nancy, established the Freeman Award for Merit in 1998. Freeman was a recipient of the Woods Leadership Award while he was attending seminary at the School of Theology.

The Woods Award defines leadership as the ability to bring people together into a cooperative community to accomplish assigned tasks and to identify and implement strategies, goals, and programs. Established by Granville Cecil Woods and James Albert Woods, the award recognizes students of the School of Theology who make a significant contribution to the quality of the community’s life.

The awards’ recipients are decided by the dean and faculty of the School of Theology. This is the first time in nine years that a seminarian has received both of these awards.

Melissa Howell accepts the Freeman Award for Merit and the Woods Leadership Award from the School’s Dean, Neil Alexander.
Developing a Deeper Passion for the Latino Community

In August, the School of Theology hosted the Episcopal Latino Ministry Competency Course (ELMC), a nine-day intensive training for people who are involved in Latino/Hispanic ministries, or interested in learning more about them. Among the course participants were 10 seminarians from the School of Theology, as well as clergy and lay leaders from throughout the country.

The course was offered by the Episcopal Church Office of Latino/Hispanic Ministries, under the direction and leadership of the Rev. Canon Anthony Guillén, director of ethnic ministries and missioner for the Episcopal Church Office of Latino/Hispanic Ministries. According to Guillén, “ELMC responds to our current reality—a fast-growing Latino population in the United States; a fast-growing Latino ministry in The Episcopal Church; a shortage of Latino clergy; and many non-Latinos who feel called to Latino ministry but lack cultural competence.”

The first portion of the course took place in Sewanee. Over the first five days, participants attended lectures and participated in discussions on the history of Latino religion and culture in the United States, sociodemographic trends and analytical tools, the current state of Latino/Hispanic ministry, the Church’s strategic vision for Latino/Hispanic ministry, and strategies and resources for bilingual worship. They also participated in a lively Latino music workshop and enjoyed a movie night.

For the second half of the course, participants traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, to study immigration policy and advocacy, and to have a first-hand experience of Latino ministry. They visited Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport where they met with officials from Customs and Border Protection. They also met with representatives of several different immigrant advocacy and civil rights agencies. On Sunday, they attended a bilingual worship service at St. Bede’s Episcopal Church in Atlanta, after which they shared a meal and fellowship with the multicultural congregation.

One of the participants in the course was Melissa Howell, T’20, a melder at the School of Theology. She found the course to be a fantastic experience. “I appreciated that ELMC emphasized that Latino folks are already members of our beloved community and are our ministry partners.” The course reinforced for her the importance of deep listening and relationship-building in ministry. She explains, “ELMC helped me to discern that the ability to build lasting and loving relationships will be of most value in a multicultural, multilingual, and multigenerational parish setting.”

Kevin Antonio Smallwood, T’19, also learned a great deal during the course. He says, “ELMC captured the expansiveness of Latino ministry, the loving vibrations of Latino culture and hospitality, and the hope for The Episcopal Church.” He left the course with a deeper passion for the Latino community and a strengthened commitment to multicultural ministries.

The Episcopal Latino Ministry Competency Course has enhanced the School of Theology’s overall program in Latino/Hispanic ministry. Plans are underway for a future ELMC course to be held August 12–19, 2019.

“The cliché “God works in mysterious ways” might be overused, but it certainly describes Dr. Sheri D. Kling’s journey to her new role as the executive director of the Beecken Center and associate dean of the School of Theology. Though Kling began her duties as executive director back in July 2018, her time in Sewanee actually began a year earlier, when she took a job as associate registrar at the University of the South. When she took that job in 2017, Kling had expected that her role might evolve—she just didn’t think it would evolve quite so quickly. “I had no idea it would only take a year,” she said to me during a recent phone call, laughing.

Kling holds graduate degrees from both the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) and the Claremont School of Theology (CST) in California, and theological studies have always interested her. Thus a move from central campus over to Hamilton Hall had been on her radar from the start. When she saw the position posted for executive director of the Beecken Center, she knew right away that she had to apply. “This is perfect for me,” she thought. “And here I am. God does works in mysterious ways.”

So what was so mysterious about her being a good fit for a position at the Beecken Center? Long a fan of singer-songwriters like Mary Chapin Carpenter, John Gorka, and James Taylor, Kling had originally hoped for a career in music. Yet in the early 2000s Kling was working in Atlanta doing marketing and communication in the software industry. Worried that her dream of pursuing a career as a singer-songwriter might go unfulfilled, she issued herself an ultimatum: “I can’t make this career as a singer-songwriter work and pay the bills, then I will have to do something else.” She poured her heart and soul into a musical career, but despite some limited success, things just weren’t coming together as she had hoped. “I threw myself at the mercy of God,” she recalled, “and I just said ‘Please, put me where you want me! But what do you want me to do?’” The answer to that question came from an unlikely place.

As a musician, Kling was also leading spiritual retreats and workshops. One day, a local English teacher approached her with a unique opportunity that led to the development of a program for high-school English students that used music to talk about the hero’s journey, creativity, and finding one’s own voice. The success of this program prompted a friend to suggest that Kling go back to school, get a graduate degree, and consider a career in religious studies. Yet Kling didn’t feel that English was the right choice.

“I told my friend that if I were going to go to graduate school, I’d want to study theology,” she told me when recounting her conversation with her friend. Kling grew up Lutheran, and for years folks had told her she should go to seminary since she was always interested in theology and the church. In particular, she had a passion for interweaving Jungian psychology with theological and spiritual exploration. Though her “church nerd” bones fides seemed to point toward seminary as a sensical path forward, she didn’t think it was right for her. “I just really, never felt called to ordained ministry.”

Yet her feelings about seminary shifted when she realized she could study theology as an academic discipline without pursuing it...
News Briefs (continued)

a pathway to ordination. That’s when she enrolled at LSTC for her master’s degree before pursuing her Ph.D. in process theology at CST.

Kling applied to faculty jobs but she knew, that given her work experience, she might have more success if she opened her search to include administrative positions as well. The position in the registrar’s office at Sewanee fit her work background and interests almost perfectly—almost, in that it didn’t fully incorporate her theological interests. Her new role as the executive director of the Beecken Center does just that.

Despite the ostensibly circuitous route to her current role, Kling notes a through line that connects her work in marketing with her vocation as a musician and her vocation as a public theologian: “In a sense, so much of my life has been just about communicating ideas. Communicating ideas in a way that is compelling.” The idea that Kling now seeks to communicate in her role at the Beecken Center—the transformative power of the Gospel through an encounter with the living God—is rather compelling on its own.

“How can the work of the Beecken Center serve the mission of the Church and connect people with a transformative relationship with the living God? That is what we’re about. If the Beecken Center isn’t doing that, then what are we here for?”

As she looks to the future, Kling hopes to bolster the core programs of the Beecken Center (such as EFM, Invite Welcome Connect, and SUMMA) while also continuing to respond to the shifts in the religious landscape and equip folks in congregations—both clergy and laity alike—to respond to those shifts in ministry context. Kling sees a real need outside of the Church for the kinds of things that the Church at its best provides.

“We have a culture right now, Kling observes, “that is very fragmented and divisive—fragmented politically, fragmented socially—and you can just look at all the studies coming out about how lonely we are. There is so much evidence that people are in pain in our culture.” Yet Kling sees a powerful response to that pain in the heart of our faith. Drawing on the words of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, Kling notes that “the reality of this loving, liberating, life giving God has something profound to say to all of that.” How the work of the Beecken Center might address those things is precisely the kind of big question that Kling is interested in exploring as they begin a visioning process for the future.

Yet if Kling’s own story is any indication, one doesn’t always know what surprises God might have in store. From marketing to songwriting to theologizing, Kling brings a dynamism and flexibility to her role that should serve her and the Beecken Center well amidst the changing context of ministry in the 21st century. “I believe that no experience is ever wasted,” she says. “Maybe it’s unusual, but I feel so completely blessed by having the ability to be in a job now that pretty much uses everything I’ve ever done, even though my journey has not been a straight line by any stretch of the imagination.”

God works in mysterious ways, indeed.

Recommended Reading

Dr. Romulus D. Stefanut, Director, School of Theology Library; Assistant Professor of Theological Bibliography

Acting Liturgically: philosophical reflections on religious practice by Nicholas Wolterstorff (Oxford, 2018)

The Future of Mainline Protestantism in America ed. by James Hudnut-Beumler and Mark Silk (Columbia, 2018)

Adam and Eve in Scripture, theology, and literature: sin, compassion, and forgiveness by Peter B. Ely (Lexington Books, 2018)

The Rev. Dr. Rebecca Abts Wright, Professor of Church History and Director of the Advanced Degrees Program

Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution by Simon Schama (HarperCollins)

The Rev. Dr. Robert MacSwain, Associate Professor of Theology

The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels by Jon Meacham (Random House, 2018)

The Exaggeration of Music by David Brown and Gavin Hopps (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018)

The Rev. Dr. William F. Brosend, Professor of New Testament

The Biology of Desire by Marc Lewis (Public Affairs Books, 2015)

There, There: A Novel by Thomas Orange (Knopf, 2018)

How to Change Your Mind by Michael Pollan (Penguin Press, 2018)

The Rev. Dr. Julia Gatta, Bishop Frank A. Juhan Professor of Pastoral Theology


Dr. Cynthia Crysdale, Professor of Christian Ethics and Theology


Theology Library; Assistant Professor of Theological Bibliography

The American Revolution

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Bonhoeffer confessed that the service at Abyssinian Baptist Church was his first experience of “true religion.”

Witnessing the joyful worship of the Abyssinian congregation, and the efforts of the men and women who were motivated to work for others by a sense of shared identity as children of God, an idea began to take hold in Bonhoeffer. Perhaps there was a different sort of Christian sensibility, more appropriate to the faithful, than the detached and austere ethos he was accustomed to in Germany? Those seeds of thought, planted during Bonhoeffer’s time in New York, took root during his post-Union trip through the Deep South, where he witnessed firsthand the oppressive cruelty of the Jim Crow laws, and worshipped in numerous black churches.

When the Bonhoeffer archives, including the personal papers of his closest friend, Eberhard Bethge, were made available at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin in 2007, Marsh was granted access to thousands of documents. These documents included personal ephemera, like bank statements, clothing receipts, and automobile documents, as well as more significant papers, such as correspondence with Mahatma Gandhi. Marsh studied them all, and in so doing, was astounded by the sheer number of articles, notes, and essays regarding American race relations that Bonhoeffer had collected, which far exceeded the volume of papers on any other subject. Furthermore, Bonhoeffer had written often and excitedly from the United States, particularly to Bethge, relaying his experience of the black churches he visited as being filled with joy and Christly grace, where Christ existed as community.

There is no doubt that Bonhoeffer was profoundly changed by his immersion in race relations in the U.S.,Marsh explained to Thinking in Public. “When he returns to Germany after this 10-month stay in Union, he returns with dramatically transformed perception of his vocation as theologian, really as his whole identity as a Christian. He falls in love with the Bible. He falls in love with the Sermon on the Mount. He begins to develop these sorts of the American worker. Witnessing the joyful worship of the Abyssinian congregation, and the efforts of the men and women who were motivated to work for others by a sense of shared identity as children of God, an idea began to take hold in Bonhoeffer. Perhaps there was a different sort of Christian sensibility, more appropriate to the faithful, than the detached and austere ethos he was accustomed to in Germany? Those seeds of thought, planted during Bonhoeffer’s time in New York, took root during his post-Union trip through the Deep South, where he witnessed firsthand the oppressive cruelty of the Jim Crow laws, and worshipped in numerous black churches.

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of networks of Bible studies in Berlin. He starts attending church with an uncommon devotion." For Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the lived theology he experienced in America would dramatically alter the trajectory of his life.

**Civil Courage, Costly Discipleship**

Back in Germany, Bonhoeffer became increasingly distressed by the lack of opposition to the Third Reich, particularly the manner in which the German church was silent, if not overtly, complicit in the state’s subsummation of the church. He watched with horror as Hitler replaced the tenets of faith with a shared commitment to living in the way of reconstruction. His interest in networks of Bible studies in Berlin. He started attending church with an uncommon devotion.

For Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the lived theology he experienced in America would dramatically alter the trajectory of his life.

**Are We Still of Any Use?**

Bonhoeffer described as a “view from below.” The efforts of the conspiracy were discovered, however, and on April 5, 1943, Bonhoeffer was imprisoned by the Nazis. In a 2014 interview with The Baltimore Sun, Charles Marsh told the story of his research into Bonhoeffer’s life, particularly through primary sources, led him to the irrefutable conclusion that Bonhoeffer was deeply affected by the people he met in America. Returning to Germany from his experiences in New York and throughout the South, Marsh said, “Bonhoeffer would never again consider theology to be an activity confined to the academy, but part of the lived life of Christ.”

**A Return to His Southern Roots**

Or Mars, the life and legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer has been an academic study, albeit an inspiring and profoundly spiritual one. His interest in the Civil Rights movement, however, is more personal. Charles Marsh grew up in Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia. He spent the bulk of his school years in Laurel, Mississippi, a town the FBI characterized as the “epicenter of southern terrorism” during the Civil Rights era. Marsh’s father was the minister at the First Baptist Church of Laurel, a church whose congregation included Sam Bowens, the first Imperial Wizard of the White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. For young Marsh, God was everywhere; not only in his home and his father’s church, but in the rhetoric of Mississippi after the publication of his book Strange Glory, Marsh explained how his research into Bonhoeffer’s life matters today. In a 2014 interview with The Baltimore Sun, Marsh told the story of his research into Bonhoeffer’s life, particularly through primary sources, led him to the irrefutable conclusion that Bonhoeffer was deeply affected by the people he met in America. Returning to Germany from his experiences in New York and throughout the South, Marsh said, “Bonhoeffer would never again consider theology to be an activity confined to the academy, but part of the lived life of Christ.”

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disenters to see or discern in national socialism the presence of false gods. There is actually a strong parallel between the whole German racial ideology and the theological underpinnings of the beloved community. This was a movement grounded in the face of oppression, Martin Luther King Jr. also began his career determined to avoid entanglement with the demonizations taking place in his new hometown of Montgomery, Alabama. Fresh out of seminary and in his first posting as a preacher, the expectations of King's father and grandfather, also ministers, weighed heavily on him, and King had no desire to jeopardize what he had only just begun. As Marsh recounts in The Beloved Community: How Faith Shaped Social Justice, from the Civil Rights Movement to Today, King had to be talked into taking leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which he did only after being assured, erroneously, that the Montgomery Bus Boycott would be short-lived. Despite historians' attempts to portray the motivations of King, like Fannie Lou Hamer and so many other members of the Civil Rights movement, as something other than theological, there can be no doubt, Marsh says, that for King, the Civil Rights movement began as a spiritual undertaking: “Until 1964,” Marsh says, “the Civil Rights movement in the South was unified by its vision and pursuit of the beloved community. This was a movement grounded and animated by the energies and convictions of the black freedom church.” To see King's theological understanding of events, Marsh says, one only needs to look at his reaction to the jubilant crowd in Montgomery after the Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education, in which King reminded the assembled that while victories such as this one were indeed meaningful, the end goal was redemption and reconciliation, and creation of the beloved community. History has largely redacted the theological underpinnings of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, as well, Marsh says, but the first meeting of the SNCC in November of 1961 invited “those who love the Lord” to come listen and learn. “SNCC embodied a theology of Christian eclecticism,” Marsh explains, “a gumbo of exotic flavors and influences; nevertheless, the organization was undeniably grounded in Christian beliefs. Marsh believes that Dietrich Bonhoeffer would have found, in the Civil Rights efforts between 1954 and 1964 and in the same question that spurred Marsh to revisit his childhood and interview Sam Bowers: How could both sides of the Civil Rights issue claim God? James Cone, whose work formed the foundation of Christian eclecticism, a gumbo of exotic flavors and influence, grounded in Christian beliefs.
liberation theology, often wondered how the white Christian churches could have enslaved blacks and kept them in inhu-
mane conditions, all the while proclaiming God, and he argued that this question was more pressing, and larger, than any other post-Reformation theological question.

Marsh, whose childhood memories were haunted by this question, agrees. His quest, as he told The Baltimore Sun, has been to understand “how passions for one God could have risen out of the souls of both white and black folks with the force of a tempest, setting neighbor against neighbor, empowering civil rights activists as well as stoking what would later be called racial riots.”

The question of how Southern whites could claim to do God’s will and work was a question that Martini Luther King Jr., as well, and is reflected in the speeches he made after 1968, when his vision be-
came centered not on the beloved commun-
ity, but on the kingdom of God breaking into towns and cities, bringing judgment and upheaval. King did not believe in the existence of a hell of fire and brimstone, as he explained in an interview that appeared in the January 1961 edition of the magazine, but felt instead that hell was something much more commonplace: “I do not believe in hell as a place of eternal burning fire. Hell, to me, is a condition of being, out of fellowship with God. It is man’s refusal to accept the grace of God. It is the state in which the individual continues to experience the frustrations, contradictions and most of all, the judgment of God would be the natural outcome of the white Christian’s persistent and dehumanizing treatment of African Americans.

Yet despite the anger and hatred and violence he encountered, Marsh asserts, King held onto a hope for the future of the world. Beyond sin and judgment, was still the possibility of an awakening to repentance, and the po-
splendor in the world. Beyond sin and God, he held onto a hope for the return of the American.

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devotion to Jesus. What are these essential affirmations? Practicing hospitality to strangers; affirming the sacred character of all created life, learning how to engage the world as healers and participants rather than as manipulators or as people who control the script; learning to be still in God’s presence; keeping the mysteries of the faith from proliferation; remembering our citizenship in the grace-centered Body of Christ by living as builders of just and human community and working, and being admonished in the Body of Christ by the sermon at the end of the 1956 Mont-
gomery Bus Boycott, toward redemption, and the mannered stillness of beloved community. Learning to be peculiar rather than to be relevant.”

G

Even the unrealized objectives of the Civil Rights era, and the fractious times we live in, how does Charles Marsh imagine we might progress, as Christians, towards reconciliation? He explained the foundation of his vision in an interview with The Other Journal. “[I]f we have any hope of moving forward we must reaffirm the Christian faith’s essen-
tial affirmations and seek to live in simple devotion to Jesus. What are these essential affirmations? Practicing hospitality to strangers; affirming the sacred character of all created life, learning how to engage the world as healers and participants rather than as manipulators or as people who control the script; learning to be still in God’s presence; keeping the mysteries of the faith from proliferation; remembering our citizenship in the grace-centered Body of Christ by living as builders of just and human community and working, and being admonished in the Body of Christ by the sermon at the end of the 1956 Mont-
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Charles Marsh explains, we should learn to value stillness, in our own lives, and in the still moments of fellowship that occurred in the Civil Rights move-
ment. “Sitting in silence, not knowing what you’re doing next, talking on porches, playing Mary and Joseph, laying oneself open to a literal hour in America.” But he points out that white Christians can include the “phraseological to the real.” That’s the vi-
sion of our Project on Lived Theology. It’s to create spaces within a major research universe of scholars and theologians that work alongside each other and can turn the phraseological into the real. Fannie Lou Hamer is another in-
spiration. She once said that Christ was “out there, where it was happening,” and Marsh believes it’s still true. He finds hope in places like Will Campbell, the recently deceased Nashville pastor. After Camp-
bell’s death, The Tennessean reported, “Through the lens of history, the struggle at this point seems clearly divided: Good versus evil, black versus white. Campbell aligned himself with good but refused to dismiss the humanity and essential worth even of those whom many in the move-
ment considered, with good reason, to be the villains.” Thus Campbell, who worked for Civil Rights at great personal peril, also pastored members of the KKK. He

been footnoted by historians. It is a mistake, Marsh argues. “So many of the activists told me that because Koonoina Farm was footnoted by historians. It is an essential experience, and a chance to rest in the comfort of what was possible.”

Yes, and Amen.

T

he transformation Dietrich Bon-
hoeffer experienced after his time in the United States inspires much of Marsh’s work at the University of Virginia, as he explained to Read the Spirit “The Project on Lived Theology began as a way to bring back the theological convictions that animated the Civil Rights movement, and restore them to the narrative.”

Marsh is fully aware that Sunday morning remains, as Martin Luther King Jr. once characterized it, “the most segre-
gated hour in America.” But he points out that we have to find a way to step into the sanct-
tuary, “Marsh says, “you’re stepping into something much bigger, which is the global body of Christ, a fellowship of astonishing diversity.” Church, he says, reminds us that we are members of this fellowship, and in the case of white Christians, not even the majority member. “We’ve lost the imagin-
a of the Kingdom of God,” Marsh says, “but church reminds us, and reorients us, to the Kingdom perspective.

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At first glance, Invite Welcome Connect seems like a simple framework. Yet, its adaptability—born of this simplicity—can accommodate a complex array of ministry contexts. In essence, this simplicity works because it calls us back to the fundamentals of the Church’s engagement with the world—evangelism, hospitality, and involvement.

We have all heard the troubling numbers regarding church decline. With each new Pew Research Poll also comes a hoard of articles analyzing the numbers in detail. While most lament the decline of organized religion in America, many attempt to argue that the decline is not the fault of their faith tradition, but rather as some thing which is unavoidable, ascribing it to particular qualities of a new generation, advancement in technology, or perhaps, most importantly, the problems that arise from fostering an individualistic culture that downplays the need for community. Yet out of these fears of decline are also born the stirrings of hope. Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, representing The Episcopal Church during his Royal Wedding homily to Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, proclaimed the message of what he has termed, “the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement. Someone once said that Jesus began the most revolutionary movement in all of human history. A movement grounded in the unconditional love of God for the world. And a movement mandating people to live that love and in so doing to change not only their lives, but the very life of the world itself.” Curry emphasizes that although our culture may demand individualism, the Gospel shows us the need for community. This need to spread the Gospel and change the world is the responsibility of all Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation.

Curry’s contextual setting of The Episcopal Church as a part of the Jesus Movement lends importance and urgency to the issue of decline. Fighting decline is not just about the survival of churches or of church buildings, but also the importance of the “power in love to show us the way to live.” The Episcopal Church is steeped in tradition. Its long history and complex liturgical practices can seem imposing to the casual visitor, especially when a church relies on tried and true bulletins and books that in and of themselves beg explanation. In many ways, because Episcopalians are so well-versed in their own liturgy, it can be difficult to understand the ways in which the motions, prayers, creeds, and Eucharist can be introduced or explained to a visitor other than through an immersion that takes time and dedication—a dedication that many young people are perceived not to have. Because many in The Episcopal Church assume that dedication to tradition necessitates a steep entry curve, they also assume that their dwindling numbers are an inevitable loss to the more approachable, “seeker-friendly” models proposed by Evangelical megachurches across the country. Alternatively, some Episcopal churches have added more contemporary liturgies to try and attract groups of young people who supposedly need these more accessible services, but adding services demands resources. And with much of the Church occupying rural areas of the country, led by largely non-stipendiary clergy, ditching the tradition in favor of a more Evangelical style of worship is untenable for many congregations and, ultimately, will not save The Episcopal Church.

Although there is no silver bullet for the problem of church decline, Invite Welcome Connect seeks to provide a way for finding answers and solutions as to how we can spread the Gospel and strengthen our Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement.

Founded by Mary Parmer, Invite Welcome Connect was born out of her 10-year experience in newcomer ministry at St. Stephen’s in Beaumont, Texas. The
methodology was piloted in 2010 in four Diocese of Texas congregations, and within seven years Invite Welcome Connect grew to reach 72 dioceses. In 2015 there were more than 45 dioceses, including the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe. Partner dioceses integrate the methodology into the network she developed as director of the School of Theology's Beekman Cen- ter, where it held its most recent summit this past summer on the campus of the University of the South. In speaking of her work, Mary Parmer writes: "We need to be agents of imagination in our communities and empower people to take risks, try new things for the sake of the Gospel. In order to expand this important work, a home for Invite Welcome Connect that honors this approach was needed. I am confident the Beekman Center is just the right place for this ministry to thrive, to develop, and to grow!"

Through its summits and workshops, Invite Welcome Con- nect provides training for all levels of ministry within the church—bishops, priests, deacons, and lay—on fundamental aspects of growing parishes by empowering congregations to formulate an authentic and approachable representation of their culture. At the core of Invite Welcome Connect remains the Gospel-centered message that Logue has emphasized; yet, the principles extend beyond the specific beliefs and values of The Episcopal Church and enter the more general realm of hospitality—engaging with newcomers in a way that openly shares the best of The Episcopal Church and to occupy the important role of The Episcopal Church and to occupy our history as part of spreading the Invite Welcome Connect message is to provide support to participating parishes and dioceses. Coach- ers will be trained to conduct intensive workshops around the country and

The lessons of hospitality that one learns from a wide topic of discussions, some of which are discussed in a paper by Michael Holcombe and Matt MacGregor, the Rev. Matt MacGregor, the Rev. Matt MacGregor, the Rev. David Romanik, the Rev. Chris Harris, and the Rev. Brent Owens, Jim Goodwin, and Dr. Courtney Cowart. Classes range from addressing church signage and websites, others addressing programming and organization, and yet others addressing general church culture. In MacGregor’s class, “Greeting is More than Hello,” the class also held practice sessions in which participants could approach common scenarios and troubleshoot potential solutions. Holcombe in his class, “Are You Ready?” talked to participants about the hard realities of inspiring change in churches. Encouraging leaders to “focus on transition, not change,” Holcombe talked through the stages of grief as they might appear in a church attempting to rebuild its culture of hospitality. Meanwhile, Miller walked her classes through the actual process of inviting. These workshops in a discussion on how to transform digital presence, signage, and advertising in her class “Grazing.” Logue noted that “The typical negative feedback is ‘we tried it and it didn’t work,’” but in church, where “people are emotional about the Gospel, it is a matter of a shift in thought because of the way we interact and the importance of our faith community.”

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In his paper presented to National Episcopal Historians and Archivists conference this year, the Rev. John Runkle relates an event that occurred in July of 2016 at the gathering of the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE). The gathering was held in Christ Church Cathedral in New Orleans, Louisiana, and at the opening Eucharist, the bishop of Louisiana, the Rt. Rev. Morris K. Thompson, expressed some of the significance of the Cathedral’s hosting of the meeting, addressing the congregation:

"Today we gather with the heirs of the African Diaspora, in the Union of Black Episcopalians, to celebrate, to grieve, to confess, and to move a step closer towards God’s vision of reconciliation and wholeness."

Hosting the UBE in the New Orleans Cathedral, though, went beyond a simple act of solidarity. As Thompson explained in his address, there was a great wrong that needed to be righted at Christ Church. In the church, in the midst of this gathering of faithful men and women descended of Black Episcopalians, to celebrate, to grieve, to confess, and to move a step closer towards God’s vision of reconciliation and wholeness.

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Bishop Leonidas Polk for his use in fulfilling his duties as Bishop of the Diocese of Louisiana, [was] a physical reminder of our complexity in this evil system.

Thompson proclaimed repentance, prayed for forgiveness, and begged for purification on behalf of the Church for its complicity in the sinful acts of slavery and racism. The culmination of these words was a powerful sign of reconciliation. Thompson motioned Presiding Bishop Michael B. Curry to be seated in the cathedra saying, "My brother, on behalf of the clergy and people of this diocese please be seated, that today we may continue the work of reconciliation, that this symbol of authority may be redeemed as a true symbol of unity in this house of worship." Curry himself then began the Eucharistic prayer:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; write us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This event—and specifically this moment—Runkle calls “a powerful expression of collective reconciliation. The congregation, consisting of both black and white Episcopalians, joined together in acknowledging and confessing the sin of racism before God and each other. The cathedra, made by the hands of enslaved people, [was] re-consecrated by an African American bishop, a descendent of slaves, who then [took] his rightful seat in it.”

The “physical reminder” of the Church’s complicity in slavery and racism would no longer be tolerated, or ignored, or even hidden away in shame; instead, the reality of the evil was brought to light and the cathedra—which should always have been a sacred, holy item—was cleansed, renewed, and redeemed.

This story, from more than two years ago, is important to the University of the South’s School of Theology for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that as Episcopalians, we rejoice when any step is taken toward justice and reconciliation in society and in our Church. Even more directly, though, it is a potent reminder that we, too, are complicit in the legacy of slavery and racism. Bishop Leonidas Polk was a founder of the University, who consecrated the 1860 cornerstone of the school. Polk and others like him originally founded and planned to build the University of the South on a slave-based economy and were defenders of slavery—Polk himself died as a Confederate general in the Civil War. Polk’s friend and co-founder of the University, Bishop Stephen Elliott, called slavery a “sacred charge” and “a great missionary institution ... arranged by God.” At the time of the second founding, however, in 1866, slavery had been abolished in the aftermath of the Civil War. In the past, the University has, understandably, sought to downplay its historic connection to slavery and slaveholders, but that is beginning to change. Instead, it is joining a growing movement within The Episcopal church, a movement that shows itself in events like the UBE gathering and, more recently, during this year’s General Convention, where TEConversations were held to discuss race and racism. It is a movement toward racial healing, reconciliation, and justice, to help us become what Curry calls “the Beloved Community.” Key
The Kirby-Smith monument was installed in 1939 and was dedicated by then Vice-Chancellor Guerry in 1940. The plaque was removed to the cemetery on Oct. 26, 2017.

The Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation began (and continues) a deep-dive investigation of the founding of the University of the South in 1868 and its legacies will enable us to understand the University as a place where the truth-telling begins with intentions to do the work of reconciliation—beginning with the historical work, the truth-telling that needs to happen before Sewanee can be a truly welcoming place. University’s history is Episcopal Church history, and it affects a lot of us.” Pommersheim is optimistic that the University can become a leader in efforts toward racial reconciliation by “doing the work that leads to concrete changes in how we interact with each other.”

Bringing a Dark History into the Light

That truth-telling begins with intensive research. Register says that the main building block of the project is the “vigorous research that expands the scope of historical investigation of the founding of the University [in order to] answer some of the most important questions, so we understand our history better.” To that end, the working group began (and continues) a deep-dive into primary sources that shed light onto the founding of the University of the South as (according to the project’s website) “an institution of The Episcopal Church that was founded by slaveholders, for the benefit of slaveholders, and to serve and advance a slaveholding society—a civilization based on bondage.”

This research closely mirrors the efforts going on at the national level within The Episcopal Church. For example, Curry led a pilgrimage to Ghana to visit the slave-forts or “castles” where captured Africans were held before embarking on the horrific trans-Atlantic journey toward slavery. The Anglican Church actively blessed these slave-forts; in fact, services were held in a chapel that sat above a dungeon where captured slaves were tortured. In a video series sharing the pilgrimage experience, Curry, as well as the Right Rev. W. Andrew Waldo, Bishop of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina, and the Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, the Presiding Bishop’s Canon for Evangelism, Reconciliation, and Creation Care, express the profound意义 of their visit. Curry says in the video that he hopes that “this journey will help us to reclaim and relace a common history—a painful past...to turn in a new direction and face a new future.” Spellers adds that “race is so hard for us to work with in America...because there’s still so much we have not talked about.” The pilgrimage and the resulting video is an example of profound truth-telling necessary for change to occur.

There are many examples of the same kind of truth-telling on the University’s campus. For instance, King is supporting the project’s efforts by researching the ways in which Bishop Charles Quintard campaigned for funding among Anglicans in his two trips to England after the Civil War. Some people may be familiar with the complicated relationship that the Church of England has had with slavery. The country itself remained neutral during the U.S. Civil War, and never recognized the legitimacy of retaining the antibellum racial order even though slavery was gone, while others gave because of the catholic vision of the Anglican Communion that Quintard represented.

In addition to the work that has come out of the project to find and make public examples of how the University of the South was complicit in racist policies, the project also seeks to broaden its connections with the larger University community and the region, as well as the work of The Episcopal Church. Most recently, it partnered with the University of Tennessee Chattanooga (UTC) and the Ed Johnson Project in Chattanooga to host a series of events called “The Lynching of Ed Johnson in Chattanoogas: A Critical Discussion of the History of Racial Violence in the U.S.” The series—two lectures and a documentary—brought awareness of the horrific mob lynching of a man wrongly accused of rape in 1926, but was also meant to “inspire awareness about continuing issues of retelling the antibellum racial order even though slavery was gone, while others gave because of the catholic vision of the Anglican Communion that Quintard represented.”

“old news,” but what hasn’t been explored, he says, is “the centrality of slaveholding to the founding of the University. There’s more that we need to know about the men who pledged sometimes their lives but definitely their wealth to the creation of the University of the South.” Just as it is in the Church’s path toward racial reconciliation, exposing and acknowledging—essentially, confessing—Sewanee’s historical connection to slavery and racism is the foundational step to meaningful repentance and change. As Pommersheim, a member of the Project’s working group, points out, it is “during the historical work, the truth-telling that needs to happen before Sewanee can be a truly welcoming place.”

To these efforts are four main frameworks: telling the truth, proclaiming the dream, moving to the cemetery and the dream; proclaiming the dream; telling the truth; proclaiming the dream; telling the truth; proclamation of God.”

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surrounding racial injustices in the Chattanooga area,” according to Susan Edelmann Bergfel, assistant professor of history and director of the African American Studies program at UTC, as quoted in the press release for the event.

Campus, Community, Church

Register is enthusiastic about the reception the project has received on campus, in the community, and even within the Church, especially because the project has only just finished in first year of a six-year endeavor. A student version of the project is already in preliminary stages; the Rev. Dr. Robert Lamborn, T’94, the rector of Otey parish in Sewanee, wants to develop a collaboration, and the church has hosted campus forums on race and reconciliation, and Dr. Catherine Meeks, executive director of Absalom Jones Center for Racial Justice in Atlanta (and who also spoke during General Convention) is very supportive of the project, coming to speak at Sewanee and allowing Register to come to the Center to discuss it. Meeks is eager for the Center to help spread the word about the work that’s being done at the University because it is so interconnected to what’s happening at Abolam Jones.

She hopes that “Episcopalians would be convergent in the history and history that’s being done [for the project] and will ask themselves ‘what does this mean for us as Episcopalians going forward toward racial healing?’”

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The University’s six-year Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation commits to not only confronting our past, but to using that knowledge to inform our future. The process, then, has ranged far beyond the location of memorials because the new knowledge about our past, present, and future, and what it can empower us to understand our city, feels far more consequential.

The Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation reflects that same level of commitment to not only confront our past, but to use that knowledge to inform our future. To that end, Pommersheim and Day received a Gessell Fellowship for a project on Confederate imagery in Episcopal parishes. They are developing a curriculum to train parish leaders—clergy and laymembers of the various congregations within the community on what to do with the memorials. Their object is to teach best practices for getting community support for reflecting faithfully about the memorials, but also to create strategies for groups that can’t simply remove offensive images. “What if you’re a smaller parish that can’t afford to take a window out? What if you don’t have a lot of memorials? What kind of options do you have?”, Pommersheim points out. She and Day are hoping to get grant money to implement the curriculum. Whatever the University decides to do with its Confederate imagery—whether they are removed as the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. is currently doing, or are redeemed as Christ Church Cathedral, New Orleans, re-sacralized the bishop’s cathedra—they can certainly play a role in helping us understand our role in the pain inflicted on millions of God’s children through the sins of slavery and racism.

Nevertheless, Register is adamant that the leadership of the project’s success is the community’s. “What the community decides to do with the knowledge it receives from the historical research will have to be decided together, with strong input from people of color, because they are the ones who have suffered most from the legacy of slavery and racism that has haunted not just the school, but the entire community. It could be that the ubiquitous Confederate memorials and tributes will be taken down, as they have been in the public spaces of Baltimore, another place where racial tensions run high—breaking out in violence after the death of Freddie Gray. Bishop Eugene Taylor Sutton, the first African American bishop of the diocese of Maryland, supported the move to take down Confederate imagery in diocesan liturgical and Episcopal clergy speak at their dedications) saying in a recent interview, “Now that the statues are removed, the space is clear for us to tell a more complete, more hopeful story.”

The University’s All Saints’ Chapel, where there are a number of Confederate images throughout the stained glass windows, may follow the lead of St. Paul’s Cathedral in Richmond, Virginia, where School of Theology alumn, the Rev. Molly Bosscher, T’08, serves as associate rector. Once known as the “Cathedral of the Confederacy,” the church has worked hard toward racial reconciliation, forming the History and Reconciliation Initiative in 2015, after the shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston. South Carolina. St. Paul’s chose to remove a small number of items featuring Confederate imagery, but as Linda Holt and Charles Graham, two leaders of the initiative, put out in a 2017 op-ed: “The key is that we have not let the addition or subtraction of memorials be the sum and signal of our work. That would have been hollow work indeed. Instead, we stepped back and opened ourselves to learning. Our
It’s July 17, a beautiful day on the campus of the University of the South, and 51 high-school students are arriving to debate a controversial resolution. What that resolution is, they don’t yet know. Since its beginning in 2012, the SUMMA Student Theological Debate Society, a program of the School of Theology’s Beecken Center, has had a tradition to not reveal the question up for debate until the first day of the summer camp session.

On the afternoon of their arrival, before the big reveal, the campers move in small groups from their residence halls to the welcome area in Hamilton Hall to shady spots outdoors, meeting their counselors and fellow campers. All the campers have changed into SUMMA t-shirts, colored according to how many times each student has come to camp. The 19 returning campers by name a litany of camp friends, but I feel like these people will be my life-long friends. As cliché as that sounds, it’s still really important to me.” Fox says. Wills’s second-year student from Shreveport, Louisiana, and one of the most confident of debaters, is much more enthusiastic about this summer than he was the last time. He hadn’t wanted to come at first. “My grandmother told me about SUMMA,” Wills says. Wills’s grandmother, who lives in Chattanooga, found out about the camp from friends of hers who are Sewanee alumni. She thought it sounded like a good opportunity for Wills to open his mind and grow in his faith. “She made me apply,” says Wills, “which I’m happy for now, even though I wasn’t too happy about her forcing me. After I stepped into Quintard Dormitory, and I was greeted by the counselors yelling, ‘Hey!’—you know, that energy, that enthusiasm. I opened myself up to meeting new people. I’m glad that my grandmother introduced me to SUMMA.”

Wills echoes Fox in talking about what a unique arena for thoughtful debate and theological growth SUMMA has become for him. When he’s not at camp, what Wills misses in discussions with classmates and others is “actually sitting down with one other person who doesn’t believe the same thing as you and getting to the truth. Debate is two people trying to find out the truth. Most of the time argumentation is ugly and uncultured, results in yelling and insults. It’s very polarizing when people don’t agree. What I miss is the environment of peace and love fostered by SUMMA.” Such an environment will be much needed for the debating of this year’s resolution.

The Very Rev. Dr. Christoph Keller III, SUMMA’s founder and dean of Trinity Cathedral in Little Rock, Arkansas, gives the opening presentation on the camp’s mission, its day-to-day activities, and the kind of debate practiced here. As slide after slide goes by with rules, policies, and schedules, the campers look around restlessly, leaning towards their neighbors to whisper guesses at what the resolution might be. Some reflexively reach into pockets to pull out their phones, but to no avail: campers are not allowed to use them during the educational sessions. Anticipation builds.

Keller seems to enjoy the electricity in the crowd, stalling a little longer than necessary before he pulls up the long-awaited next slide, which reads, “RESOLVED: Churches should be gun-free zones.” A few groans and exclamations of “What?” go up from the crowd, and at least a few of the students shake their heads or hang them in their hands. In the words of one camper, this resolution feels “a little too real.” Although their backgrounds and experiences are remarkably diverse, that reaction is shared by many. This year they have come from 14 states, the District of Columbia, and the People’s Republic of China. Some are Episcopalians, some from other Christian denominations, some other religions, and some with no religious affiliation at all. They range from ninth to 12th graders and across the gender and sexual orientation spectrum. Yet they now hold at least two things in common: they have willingly opened their minds and hearts to considering the complex issues, the campers look around restlessly, leaning towards their neighbors to whisper guesses at what the resolution might be. Some reflexively reach into pockets to pull out their phones, but to no avail: campers are not allowed to use them during the educational sessions. Anticipation builds.

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reaction to the resolution. “I’m from Mississippi,” he said, “I don’t talk to anybody about gun control.” Wills was also hesitant about the political pitfalls of the resolution. “If this was an academic camp, it would be very simple: you’d have the Democrats over here and the Republicans over here, and I probably wouldn’t even know half of the other campers.”

In contrast, Emma Spicer of Eagle Lake, Texas, daughter of Amy and Stephen Spicer, ’14, remembered thinking, “Ooh—this is going to be fun.” This is Emma’s first year at SUMMA. She first heard about SUMMA from her parents when they returned home from the DuBose Lectures with Rowan Williams in October 2016, but Emma was not able to attend until this year. “At home,” she said, “I’m not part of a debate group. I’m homeschooled, and so my friend group is relatively small and mostly younger than I am. In order to have an intelligent conversation, I have to go to adults, who often don’t trust me as an equal, or I don’t feel like I can debate with them. Or I don’t have those discussions at all.” She feels comfortable debating with her father and her youth group, and now with other campers, “people,” she says, “whom I’ve grown to care about and trust and really respect.”

That mutual care, trust, and respect is fostered by design at SUMMA camp. Every day begins and ends with worship modeled on the College of Arts and Sciences, jam sessions, and college free time activities to choose from: flag football, hiking, admission visits to the College of Arts and Sciences, jam sessions, and hammock time. They are allotted an hour-and-a-half before supper for individual debate preparation.

Many of the students look forward to the evening activities, which bring together every camper and counselor for one purpose: sheer adolescent fun. Thursday features a massive kickball scrimmage and ice cream sundaes. Another favorite is movie night at the SUT (aka the Sewanee Union Theatre). The undoubted highlight, though, is the camp talent show, SUMMA’s Got Talent! In addition to the to-be-expected yet unexpectedly good songs and skits, there are other, more eccentric acts: a Mongolian throat-singing rendition of the Lord’s Prayer in Aramaic; a live ASMR experience (it stands for Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) and describes the tingling sensation created by recordings of very soft, repetitive noises—just look it up on YouTube; and one camper’s demonstration of perfect pitch. More remarkable than the diversity of offerings, however, is the overwhelming show of support from the audience of fellow campers. Standing ovations are more the rule than the exception, and every performer leaves the stage beaming.

The energy level is high the night before their first debates. The spiritedness of the talent show is in contrast to the sobriety and professionalism of the debate tournament. Students trade their t-shirts and shorts for suits, ties, skirts, and dresses. Debates are conducted according to strict rules of competitive debating in front of a judge, who offers no feedback during the debate. Some rounds draw an audience of nearby family members or faculty and staff of the School of Theology, but the debates are not concluded with applause. Instead debaters and audience wait in patient, nervous silence, while the judge tallies points and then finally announces, “Congratulations to both sides. This was a win for the affirmative.”

Between rounds the campers get updates from their friends, work on debate prep, or try their best to relax. As in the talent show, though, every student shows support and respect and receives it back. The way SUMMA decides the winners and losers of the tournament restrains the students’ existing competitiveness. Rather than a knockout tournament in which winners advance to the next bracket and losers quit debating, campers debate as team members of their small groups. Each debater argues both the affirmative and the negative. The two teams with the best combined record are recognized, as are individual debaters who go undefeated. The highest honor of the camp, however, is the SUMMA Prize, which is given to a debater who has best expressed the spirit of “speaking truth in love” while debating with skill and intellectual distinction. The campers, counselors, and others elect the SUMMA Prize winner, who receives a trophy with a cash scholarship and who is recognized at the camp’s closing Eucharist. In the case of a tie the prize is shared.

While the prize went to only one student this year, third-year camper Ellie Robinson of Orange, Virginia, the values it celebrates were visibly apparent in many other campers. Although this year’s resolution was exacting to debate, and although it has a tragic urgency for teenagers in our current state of affairs, it is encouraging to see them engage it faithfully and theologically among friends and trusted teachers. When I asked Emma what she would take home after SUMMA, she told me “I think I’ll take back my arguments. The conversations I have are like this. They’re theological, but they’re also largely based in the world, in the world but not exactly of the world.”

It’s like a shepherd defending the flock. The main thing I’ll take back is just seeing the argument from the other side, seeing it from the side you don’t necessarily agree with. Having been around people who empathize with that other side of the argument, you can empathize with them.”

Fox, “Sometimes religion seems to be far away from the world. Theology can be in its own realm and not always applied to the real world. This topic of guns? St. Augustine, Tom Aquinas, Karl Barth, they don’t talk about it. Not even the Bible! What I’m taking away from this topic is a strengthening of my opinion and also deeper sensitivity and understanding. I know now what my heart tells me to believe.”

SUMMA has given these remarkable students a way to find their own strong voices. Their voices are theologically-grounded, faithful, and speak with empathy, sensitivity, and understanding. In short, they speak with love. What is now more needful than that?
EfM’s Intersects ‘The Way of Love’

By Kevin Cummings

Where are you in your feelings today?
What kind of tree do you feel like?
What kind of spice?

The “icebreakers,” or initial introductions that begin every Education for Ministry (EfM) gathering can vary, but the questions allow for creative exploration of what each group member feels in the moment. What follows are myriad discussions of theology, faith challenges, ministry, and Christian tradition, all in the goal of building a stronger spiritual foundation and clearing a path—a path that coincides nicely with the current Jesus Movement in the Episcopal Church known as “The Way of Love.”

The Way encourages Episcopalians to “turn, learn, pray, worship, bless, go, and rest.” Presiding Bishop Michael Curry says outlining the formula in seven simple steps: “‘Turn’ is the desire to take stock of where you are and see—features in abundance. ‘Learn’ step, which EfM—founded at the School of Theology in Sewanee, Tennessee—features in abundance. ‘Go’ may the most important aspect of EfM and the Way of Love encourages, “cross boundaries, listen deeply, and live like Jesus.”

The Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life

Presiding Bishop introduced the Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus-Centered Life to The Episcopal Church during the opening Eucharist at the 79th General Convention in Austin, Texas, this past July. It is designed to be spare and spacious, so that individuals, ministry groups, congregations, and networks can freshen it out in unique ways and build a church-wide treasure trove of stories and resources. Resources, both printed and online, supporting the practice may be found at episcopalchurch.org/explore-way-love.

“Go is also about relationship building, reaching out to others, and not staying in your safe place,” Meredith said. “It’s about noticing where the world is broken and looking for ways to repair that brokenness. In EfM we talk about being called to journey with God in addressing the needs of the world.”

People do not have to wait until they graduate from EfM to do ministry. Meredith noted, adding that people are performing and developing ministry the entire time they are in the program.

“Part of what we are doing is identifying the gifts and strengths of one another,” she said. “We might identify something that someone has been talking about for a while and recognize that this is a call and affirm that call.”

A few examples of calls answered by past EfM participants and graduates include working in hospice care, serving in public office, and starting a food assistance program that distributes expired, but still good, food from a retail-store chain.

“Ongoing discernment, that listening for God’s call and ongoing attention to where faith and your life intersect, are part of living into the ministry that God calls us all to at Baptism,” Meredith said. “That is why EfM functions in some ways as a rule of life while people are in it and why we encourage people to develop their own rule of life in the course of the program, so that when they go out from EfM they have a structure or way of thinking about how to be intentional about continuing to follow Jesus.”

Admittedly, the “rest” aspect may be the weakest link between EfM and the Way of Love, but Meredith said the importance of taking a break, playing, and rejuvenating yourself is an aspect EfM recognizes as vital to the “go” part of ministry. II

EfM they’re actually addressing all of these areas that are in the Way of Love and we do it in our own particular way, centered on our rhythm of study, reflection, and worship,” she said. “I’m not just educating myself for ministry, I’m living into this way of love.”

EfM is a four-year program for lay people that focuses on the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, the history of Christianity, theology, and ethics. Each week for 36 weeks, groups of up to 12 people gather for introspection, theological reflection, and discussion of weekly readings.

A prime example of the program’s congruency with The Way of Love is evident in the first step, “turn,” which encourages people to “pause, listen, and choose to follow Jesus.”

“What is the desire to take stock of how you’re living and to adjust to be more in line with how Jesus asked us to live,” Meredith said. “EfM does that by thinking theologically, by putting the whole of our life into conversation with the whole of the Christian tradition and saying, ‘How do these things together tell me the right way to live? How do I make good ethical decisions about my life? How do I know when I need to change?’

Theological reflection, a key and constant component of EfM, addresses these questions to help people decide on the faithful way to live. A commonality of people who join EfM is being at a crossroads, at a point of turning in their lives, Meredith noted, adding that at General Convention she often hears stories from people about how the program changed their lives.

Another part of the Way of Love is the “learn” step, which EfM—founded at the School of Theology in Sewanee, Tennessee—defines as “sharing faith and unselfish life is one that’s oriented toward what Jesus advocated, which was the flourishing of creation, harmony, care for all creation and being aware of who’s on the margin and making room in the middle so the people on the margin can come into the center.”

“Bless,” which the Way of Love literature defines as “sharing faith and unselfish giving and serving,” is another vital part of EfM.

“Bless is a way of talking about evangelism as well as the Jewish concept of being a blessing to others,” Meredith said. “When we practice sharing our stories and listening to stories of others, we are practicing forming relationships that extend us to other people, crossing boundaries, allowing us to hear a different perspective, ministry with rather than ministry to. It kind of gets us outside of our own selfishness, where we think the world revolves around us.”

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Two Million Dollar Gift Supports New School of Theology Building

Upon her death in September 2017, Mabel Hancock Holt left a bequest of approximately $2 million to the University of the South, a gift that, because of her many contributions to church life, will be designated for the School of Theology building project. She was an accomplished and generous woman who was an educator, a scientist, a photographer, and a musician. She was known for her love of books and life-long learning, her wonderful sense of humor, and her strong faith. Her participation in Education for Ministry (EfM) inspired her gift to the University.

Holt grew up in Martinsville, Virginia, and completed a two-year degree at Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri. She then returned to Virginia and completed an undergraduate degree at what is now James Madison University. She was a popular and active member of the Tri-Sigma Sorority and was elected president of her senior class. After college, Holt worked at Yale University in charge of the chemistry and photography labs in the zoology department, but after two years, she returned to Virginia. There she attended every session of a life-changing, two-week seminar at a local Episcopal church at which a number of well-known theologians spoke. She was especially interested in hearing discussion of the scripture “Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord …”. It was to be key in helping her to resolve her issues in blending her beliefs in science and religion. Following that study, she earned a second undergraduate degree in religion.

Holt made scores of friends throughout her life wherever she played, studied, or worked. People who knew her delighted in her finely tuned sense of the ridiculous, which could border on hilarity. She was a cause of joy wherever she went.

Continuing to explore her faith, Mabel graduated from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education with a master’s degree in English Bible in 1957. Shortly afterwards she completed coursework at Southern Baptist Seminary and accepted a position as circulation librarian with Union Theological Seminary. That job inspired her to return to school to earn a master’s degree in Library Science at Drexel University, specializing in theology. After earning the MLS in 1966, she took a position at the Richmond Public Library as head of the reference department. She was regarded there as having a scholar’s knowledge in her chosen field of theology. After thoughtful soul-searching and discussion with her childhood Baptist pastor, Holt changed her church membership, with her pastor’s blessing, to The Episcopal Church in 1968.

In 1970 Holt moved to the Chester branch of the Chesterfield County Public Library (CPPL), initially as a branch librarian. She was interviewed during that time and was quoted as saying, “I really think … of libraries as being almost living things.”

Holt retired in 1988 as coordinator of adult services and head of the reference department of CPPL’s Central Library. She then volunteered to establish a library, from scratch, at Richmond Hill, an ecumenical retreat in Richmond, Virginia. During the same period, she also volunteered at the Virginia Historical Society. In 1991, Mabel moved to The Colonades retirement community in Charlottesville, Virginia, where she kept an active social life for many years, including completing the four years of study in Education for Ministry. She continued to enjoy singing, scheduled activities, and especially being outside on walks and drives in the countryside until the end of her life.

Stronger Truer Sewanee Campaign

God is so good! When we started the School of Theology part of the Stronger, Truer, Sewanee campaign, the original target was between 15 and 18 million. We decided to take a leap of faith and try to raise 25 million. Thanks to the faithfulness of God’s people—inviduals, parishes, and dioceses—we have crossed that threshold. We have surpassed our goal! But we are still at work to achieve even greater things for the future of God’s mission at the School of Theology.

If you look at the chart below, you’ll see that we have exceeded our goal in every area except for facilities. Scholarships and program development are mission critical. Undesignated gifts are essential for healthy operations. But we are still about four million short on what is needed to move the School of Theology back to the physical center of the University. We are not discouraged! God has blessed us and led us this far and we will make it all the way. You are reading this because you are interested in the School of Theology. Have you made your best gift? Might you introduce us to someone who might be interested in being our newest benefactor? God is so good … and God has just begun to show us his greatness!
The New Zealand Prayer Book offers a couple of deceptively simple prayers about generosity: Jesus, Receive our love and worship. Show us how to give what you have, for nothing is too big or small for us to offer, or for you to use. (p. 584)

Christ of the new covenant, give us the happiness of knowing to be with you, with full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, all that you give us. (p. 416)

Indeed. Whether you received as I did: my full seminary education paid for by Sewanee's benefactors, or what you received was partial scholarship support to make what you had enough, or even what you received was not financial support but the fullness of your theological education and transformation into a priest, my hope is that you prayerfully and generously give "what you have" back to Sewanee. No gift is too big or small. It has been my happiness to share on a monthly basis some of my treasure with the school that helped form me, and I pray it is yours as well.

Peace and blessings,
The Rev. Vicki Tucker Burgess, ’51

1950s

The Rev. Loren Benjamin Mead, C’51, ’54, died on May 5, 2018, at age 88, in Falls Church, Virginia. He received a bachelor’s degree from the University of the South in 1950, and was a 1955 graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary. He was ordained deacon in 1955 and became a priest in 1955. He was a master's degree from the University of South Carolina, and was a 1955 graduate of Sewanee. He was a 1955 graduate of Virginia Theological Seminary.

The Rev. John Coming Ball, Jr., T’53, died Aug. 18, 1998, at age 69 in Atlanta, Georgia. He graduated from Western Kentucky University in 1970, received his M.Div. from Vanderbilt University in 1973, and received his D.Min. from the School of Theology in 2003. He served as a first lieutenant submariner in the U.S. Navy during WWII. As an Episcopalian, he became a priest in 1975. He graduated from the School of Theology in 1970. He served as a Navy Reserve Chaplain. Following his retirement, he lived in New York, North Carolina, before moving to Washington, North Carolina.

The Rev. Charles Jonathan Cowan Clark, T’03, died March 2, 2018, in Winchester, Tennessee. He graduated from Sewanee when the program started in 1975. He became an EfM mentor in 1990. He was ordained by the Princeton Kentucky Presbytery in April 1975 and pastored several parishes.

2000s

The Rev. Marcus Thomas Cunningham Jr., T’06, died Aug. 25, at age 55 in Ripon, Wisconsin. He graduated from the Univer- sity of Wisconsin, Green Bay, and received an M.Div. from the School of Theology in 2006. He served congregations in Ohio and Kansas, was rector of Trinity, Osh- kosh, and then rector of St. Peter, Ripon and St. Mary Chapel, Wautoma. He also served as chaplain for various police forces.

Fontaine: a Bright Light for EfM

When Fontaine Fontaine died on April 18, 2018, she left behind not only a legacy as a priest and social justice activist, but also as a long-serving force for Educa- tion for Ministry (EfM).

Fontaine, 76, was passionate about lay ministry and for almost four decades dedicated her heart and energy to EfM, an international four-year pro- gram of discernment and theological study for laity. Fontaine was involved in the program for as far back as the 1970s and began mentoring in 1984.

John de Bees, a veteran mentor trainer who first met Fontaine in the 1980s, said she found her outlet in EfM.

“She had a lot going on inside of her and was having a hard time giving voice to it. Of course, that wasn’t true for most of her life,” he said laughing.

“She was really thoughtful and very well read and had a huge heart for other people.”

EfM not only allowed Fontaine to express and understand her own spirituality, but she loved fostering the spiritual education of others.

“It gives laity a good grounding in their theology. It makes it their theology rather than just something they receive,” she said in an interview with The Episcopal Church’s website in 2005. “They begin to operate out of that stance. … EfM makes for more re- spective people in the world, in all kinds of settings.”

She asked most of her church ca- reer in the Diocese of Wyoming before moving to the coast of Oregon (her home state) around 2012, where she left retirement to be an interim priest at several parishes.

Suzie Wile, who has served as both EfM interim director and director of training from 2004–11, noted that Fontaine was a pioneer in developing the EfM online program. Fontaine men- tioned the very first class, which graduated in May 2005, according to The Episcopal Church’s website.

Fontaine also served on a strategic planning committee for EfM, Wile not- ed, adding that she was a tremendous resource for other mentors.

“She was always giving of her time to help someone else understand an aspect of the program that was a ques- tion for them,” Wile said. “She looked beyond her own territory or locale and wanted to help the program in such a broad way.”

Kay Flores, who worked with Fontaine in an EfM training network, first met her longtime friend when Fon- taine served as the interim priest at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Casper, Wyoming.

“Fontaine was a good friend, and I miss her,” Flores said. “The world of EfM and the world of The Episcopal Church seems eerily quiet without her regular sharing of news and informa- tion with all of us.”

Mary Thomas Watts, who lives in Ohio, worked in the EfM office in Sewanee when the program started in 1975. She became an EfM mentor in the late 1970s, worked as a trainer until 2013.

“Fontaine was abundantly dis- cerning, patient, kind, forthright, and ever and always generous,” Watts said. “Her passion for EfM and her dedica- tion to her students, fellow mentors, and colleagues in the training network strengthened the program and enriched the wider Episcopal Church and her candor, and that she welcomed the candor of others. She was my favorite kind of friend.”

Fontaine started seminary at Harvard University when she was 50 years of age and was ordained a priest in Lander, Wyoming, in 1996. A native of Portland, her parishioners and rich network of friends held remembrances in both Oregon and Wyoming after she died.[]
EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

Theological education is the birthright of all the baptized.

EfM is a unique parish-based program of theological education designed to help laity to become theologically informed and articulate. Through study of scripture, history, theology, ethics, and spirituality, small groups read and reflect on how God is calling them to work in the world.

THEOLOGICAL DEBATE CAMP

SUMMA camp offers an opportunity for high school students to build their faith through intellectual channels. Campers learn theology, critical thinking, and public speaking while engaging with cutting-edge topics in science, social ethics, and religious.

THEOLOGICAL DEBATE SOCIETY

Sewanee: The University of the South
The School of Theology

OUR FACULTY HAS BEEN BUSY!

Check out these new publications from William Brosend, Julia Gatta, Benjamin King, and Robert MacSwain.

EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

Invite Welcome Connect is a transformational ministry that equips and empowers clergy and lay leaders to cultivate intentional practices of evangelism, hospitality, and connectedness. Our tools and resources will help your congregation invite new members to church, welcome those who are coming, and empower members both new and old to connect the gifts God has given them to do the work of the Church in the world.

INVITE WELCOME CONNECT

Theological Debate Summer Camp

SUMMA camp offers an opportunity for high school students to build their faith through intellectual channels. Campers learn theology, critical thinking, and public speaking while engaging with cutting-edge topics in science, social ethics, and religion.

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2018 School of Theology Graduating Class

The School of Theology’s 2017–18 academic year came to a close May 11 with a Convocation for the Conferring of Degrees in All Saints’ Chapel. The joyous two-hour service convened with incense and all of the pomp and circumstance that The Episcopal Church has to offer. The School of Theology conferred various degrees on 29 students. Seniors Jeremy Carlson and Melanie Rowell graduated optime meritus.