

Skylight

News and Notes from the GTU

Fall 2018

Face to Face

A Conversation
with GTU President
Daniel Lehmann



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Photo by Dana Davis.

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From the President

DURING MY FIRST SEVERAL months as the new president of the GTU, I have had the privilege of meeting with students, faculty, deans, and presidents of GTU member schools and affiliates, as well as GTU trustees, alumni, friends, and supporters. I have been impressed by the passion, commitment, and intellectual depth across the GTU consortium. Add to this the diversity of religious backgrounds and academic interests, and the GTU emerges as a unique and powerful center of interreligious learning at the highest levels. I feel blessed to serve this unique hub of religious scholarship and leadership, and look forward to finding ways to enhance the GTU's reach by supporting existing programs and investing in new opportunities.

The nascent field of interreligious study is experiencing unprecedented growth in the academy. Among theological schools, the GTU is a thought-leader and a model of interreligious understanding and cooperation rooted in intellectual rigor. The GTU has a responsibility to the world beyond academia as well; we will find new ways to leverage the intellectual, spiritual, institutional, and financial resources to advance religious and spiritual learning and leadership for our pluralistic world.

Like its peer institutions in North America, the GTU is in the process of responding to complex challenges. Many institutions of higher education, especially those that specialize in religious studies, face shrinking enrollments and diminishing financial resources. At the same time, we are witness to a countervailing phenomenon of religious expansion and spiritual eclecticism throughout the world.



President Daniel L. Lehmann

Sociologists Peter Berger and Anton Zijderveld have written: "As one looks over the contemporary world, it's not secularization that one sees, but an enormous explosion of passionate religious movements.... If modernity, then, doesn't lead to secularization, what does it lead to in the area of beliefs and values? The answer, we think, is clear: *It leads to Plurality.*"

We will need to confront this changing context with entrepreneurial energy and spirit. The contemporary era calls for creativity and ingenuity as we build bridges between spiritual seekers and religious traditionalists, between the academy and congregations. The GTU is uniquely poised to actively engage the religious and spiritual diversity of our age by nurturing and unleashing the pluralistic potential in our community of learning.

Our society desperately needs mending; the tensions produced by polarized perspectives and ideologies threaten to pull apart the fabric of our democracies. It is a scary time, and religion is often seen as an accomplice to the destructive forces we witness throughout the world. But the GTU, through its distinctive culture of pluralism and interreligious scholarship, embodies an alternative paradigm, one in which mutual understanding, genuine curiosity, and sophisticated study join to create an environment of engagement across difference. We welcome your active involvement in this community, as together we explore the wisdom of the world's diverse religious traditions and the ways they can contribute to healing our wounded world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel L. Lehmann". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "D" at the beginning.

A Sacred Duty

A Conversation with President Daniel Lehmann

Our new president shares thoughts on interreligious education, diversity within community, and the mix of scholarship and religious commitment that makes the GTU unique.

Rabbi Daniel L. Lehmann became the eighth president in the fifty-six-year history of the Graduate Theological Union when he took office on August 1, 2018. President Lehmann brings to the GTU a profound passion for interreligious dialogue and scholarship, an entrepreneurial spirit, and significant background in program development, fundraising, and student recruitment. He has more than thirty years of experience as a leader and educator within the Jewish community, most recently as the president of Hebrew College outside Boston, where he also served as professor of pluralism and chaired the board of trustees of the multireligious Boston Theological Institute. SKYLIGHT is happy to share this conversation with the GTU's new president.

Tell us a little bit about yourself. How do your interests, background, and past experiences prepare you to serve as president of the GTU?

For the past thirty years, my career has focused on pluralistic Jewish education. The teachers who have most influenced my professional life have been theologians whose commitment to pluralism within the Jewish community led them to explore and engage the ideas, texts, and thinkers of other faiths.

I have been passionately interested in interreligious education since I participated in a Jewish-Catholic colloquium sponsored by the Lilly Foundation more than twenty-five years ago while I was living and working in Baltimore. Ever since, I have sought out opportunities to engage in interreligious dialogue, learning, and experiences that have expanded my religious horizons and brought me into contact with stimulating religious partners. During my time as president at Hebrew College, my involvement with the Boston Theological Institute as a member and chair of

its board of trustees provided experience in leading an interreligious consortium of theological schools and institutions. More generally, I see myself as an educational entrepreneur who believes deeply in developing bold visions that can transform the trajectory of academic institutions.

What has surprised you most during the first few months of your presidency?

The interconnectedness of the various institutions that make up the GTU is remarkable and something I did not fully appreciate before meeting faculty and administrators. So many people teaching and leading at the various GTU member schools and affiliates are GTU alumni. There is a great deal of affection and commitment to the GTU that is a natural outgrowth of having studied here.

I have also been most pleasantly surprised by the diversity of the student body and the number of different states, countries, and cultures represented. The



President Lehmann speaks with doctoral students. Photo by Dana Davis

GTU is truly a global community of scholars, learners, and leaders, and the cosmopolitan environment is incredibly exciting.

In what ways are the challenges at the GTU similar to what you faced as president of Hebrew College? In what ways are they different?

Hebrew College was in the throes of a major financial crisis due to its significant real-estate debt and bloated budget when I took over the leadership, and I needed to take drastic action in order to keep the institution afloat. Thankfully, the same issues of overwhelming debt and overspending do not exist at the GTU. But we do face financial challenges that we need to address, especially when it comes to student financial support and academic program endowments.

The Boston Theological Institute faced challenges similar to the GTU in that the needs of individual institutions often made it difficult to prioritize the needs and opportunities of the consortium. However, the common degree programs and close connections

among the schools at the GTU generate a cross-institutional collaboration that is much more intense and powerful than what I experienced in the Boston area. My experience with both institutions in Boston have taught me negotiation, diplomacy, and fundraising skills that I think will prove helpful as I navigate the complexities of the GTU.

What most excites you about the Graduate Theological Union? What concerns you?

I am most excited about the opportunity to share the GTU's distinctive interreligious conversation and the deep scholarship we nurture here with expanding concentric circles of learners. The GTU has so much talent within its faculty and student body that can engage people from across the religious-secular spectrum. As I meet our faculty and students, I am incredibly impressed by the sophistication of their scholarship and their commitment to explore the theological questions at the core of the religious quest.

Our students and faculty need more support, and

that becomes a major focus on of my energies as president. Housing costs in Berkeley and throughout Northern California make it very difficult for our current faculty and graduate students, and make it more challenging to attract those who want to study and teach at the GTU. I want to develop creative solutions to address this very complex issue.

How does the diversity of the GTU create particular opportunities and challenges for you and for the school?

I believe the cultural and religious diversity of the GTU is among its greatest strengths. In my previous positions, pluralism was a key component of the mission, but the emphasis was on forms of Jewish pluralism. The GTU requires a much more expansive vision of pluralism, and that is both challenging and very exciting to me.

A multireligious community like the GTU creates exceptional opportunities to celebrate commonalities as well as to engage in serious conversations about difference. We are able to tackle difficult issues here, to engage in tough conversations, because we are devoted to one another's positive growth and development. True pluralism demands both a commitment to particularity and an openness to hearing others, including those with whom we may have serious disagreements. I believe we are able to discern the divine voice more fully by hearing a multiplicity of human perspectives.

It is one of my top priorities to nurture a GTU culture in which every voice is valued and respected, in which we can push one another in an atmosphere of trust and open inquiry. I feel blessed to be leading an academic community where interreligious conversations already happen regularly, and I consider it a sacred duty to sustain and encourage such a spirit throughout the GTU.

You are the first GTU president whose primary religious background isn't Christian. In your opinion, why is this significant for the GTU?

The fact that the GTU hired a rabbi and life-long Jewish educator is a strong endorsement of the GTU's commitment to interreligious learning and leadership. GTU was founded in the early 1960s as an ecumenical bridge between Catholics and Protestants. But the interreligious conversation at the GTU began early in its



history with the establishment of the Center for Jewish Studies in 1968, and has continued to grow through nearly four decades of affiliation with the Institute of Buddhist Studies, the creation of the Center for Islamic Studies in 2007, and the founding of the Center for Dharma Studies in 2015. These centers have brought world-class scholars and students from numerous traditions to the GTU.

As we make our way through the twenty-first century, America is becoming much more religiously, ethnically, and culturally diverse. The GTU's evolution and expansion to include Eastern and Western religious traditions is a recognition of the need to widen the bridge and allow for a more complex conversation. By choosing a president from a minority religious tradition, the GTU is making a bold statement about the need for openness to religious diversity and difference.

After thirty years of working to strengthen the Jewish community through education, I feel blessed to be in a position to support and lead the process of interreligious learning that is at the center of GTU's mission and to help shape the future of interreligious engagement in this country and around the world. I am grateful for the religious freedom that has been a hallmark of our American democracy and want to ensure that the religious freedom we enjoy here can be the catalyst for profound



"As I meet our faculty and students, I am incredibly impressed by the sophistication of their scholarship and their commitment to explore the theological questions at the core of the religious quest."

difference and diversity are hallmarks of the GTU. I am committed to continue the tradition of openness, generosity, and hospitality established by my Christian predecessors.

You have said you believe creativity is a "religious imperative." What do you mean by that? How does this commitment to creativity shape your approach as GTU president?

I view human creativity as a divine gift and an invitation to partner with the Divine in perfecting the world. It is my firm belief that religious traditions have the capacity to unleash and inspire powerful creative resources within the human mind, heart, and soul. The GTU is an environment in which the creative impulses that lie deep within the different religious traditions of the world come to the surface and interact with one another in ways that expand the creative potential at the core of our humanity. We need to find new ways to share the creative juices that flow from our traditions and help them interact to generate new forms of creative, religious expression.

You've spoken about your desire to expand the reach of the GTU. How do you hope to do that?

One way is through digital media and online learning platforms. We are living in an era in which the cell phone is the most ubiquitous and powerful portal to learning, and the GTU should take full advantage of the digital opportunities. The global village is connected digitally in ways that provide great opportunity for the GTU to reach many more people and deepen our impact. We need expanded online programs that can serve students globally. Our exceptional library needs

Continued on page 20

A Magical Place

Remembering the GTU Bookstore

For 35 years, the GTU Bookstore was among the finest theological bookstores in the country and an essential gathering place for GTU students and the Berkeley community

By Lydia Webster

THIS SUMMER MARKED THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF the opening of the new Doug Adams Gallery on the first floor of the GTU's LeConte Building at 2465 LeConte Avenue. With its relocation to this beautiful, new exhibition space in 2016, the Center for the Arts & Religion (CARe) came to the heart of the GTU, where it now shares a home with the GTU student lounge, the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies, and the offices of the dean of students, admissions, and financial aid. But what was in this spectacular space before CARe moved in? While those new to the GTU may not know, many who were part of the GTU community between 1973 and 2008 have fond memories of this space as home to the GTU Bookstore, one of the finest theological bookstores west of the Rockies.

The LeConte Building itself has a long and interesting history that precedes the GTU's establishment. It was constructed as part of the building boom immediately after the Great Berkeley Fire of 1923, and was originally the home of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity at the University of California, Berkeley. The building was designed by San Francisco architect J.K. Ballantine, who also designed several other distinctive buildings in North Berkeley. The original blueprints for the structure show a living room with a hearth, preserved in what is now the student lounge. The gallery space was once the fraternity dining room, while the CARe office is located in the former kitchen. The building was home to Alpha Tau Omega for more than thirty years, until



The LeConte Building in the 1980s

all U.C. Berkeley fraternities and sororities were moved to the south side of the campus in the late 1950s.

The Graduate Theological Union acquired the building in 1964, only two years after the Union was established. In the second edition of the GTU catalog, issued for 1964-1965, the building is listed as housing the Office of the Dean and the GTU "Bibliographic Center."

In the early 1970s GTU member schools began negotiations to merge their individual bookstores to create a single store to serve consortial students and faculty. John Rawlinson (PhD, '82), who served as president of the GTU's Graduate Student Association from 1972-73, remembers that the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) and its bookstore figured prominently in early conversations about the merger. Because the Shires Bookstore at CDSP was believed to be the only seminary bookstore that was not losing money, an initial proposal sought to create a consortium-wide bookstore by merging the stores of other GTU schools into the existing store at CDSP. But two obstacles soon arose.

First, it quickly became clear that the cramped quarters of the CDSP basement could not provide adequate space to house the proposed GTU Bookstore. Space concerns were a significant factor in the decision to locate the new store in the unused space on the first floor of the LeConte building.

But a second issue faced the administration as plans got



The GTU Bookstore in the 1980s. Photo from GTU archives

underway. It was revealed that, in fact, the Shires Bookstore was also in debt and could not serve as the single stable entity into which others could merge. The negotiation process had to start anew.

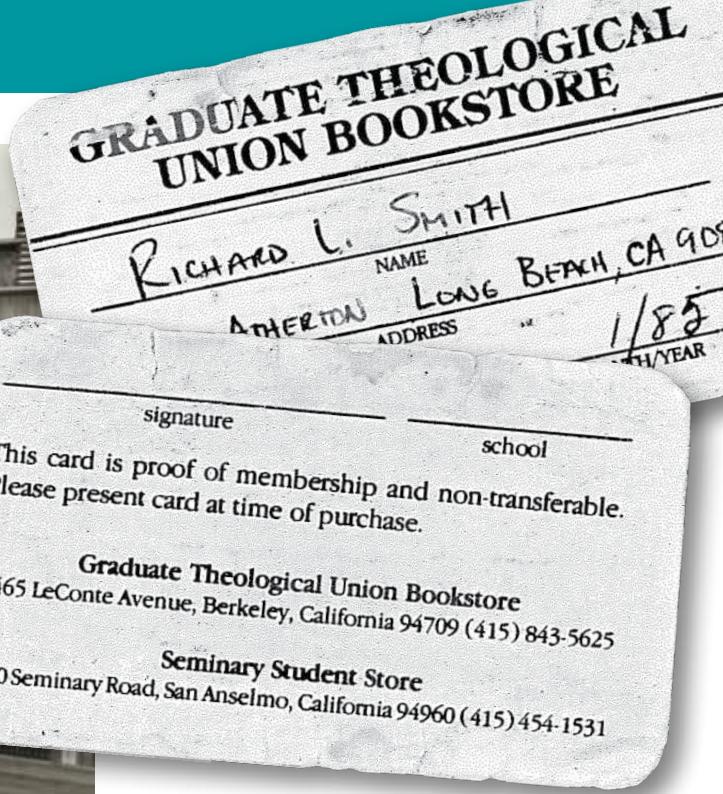
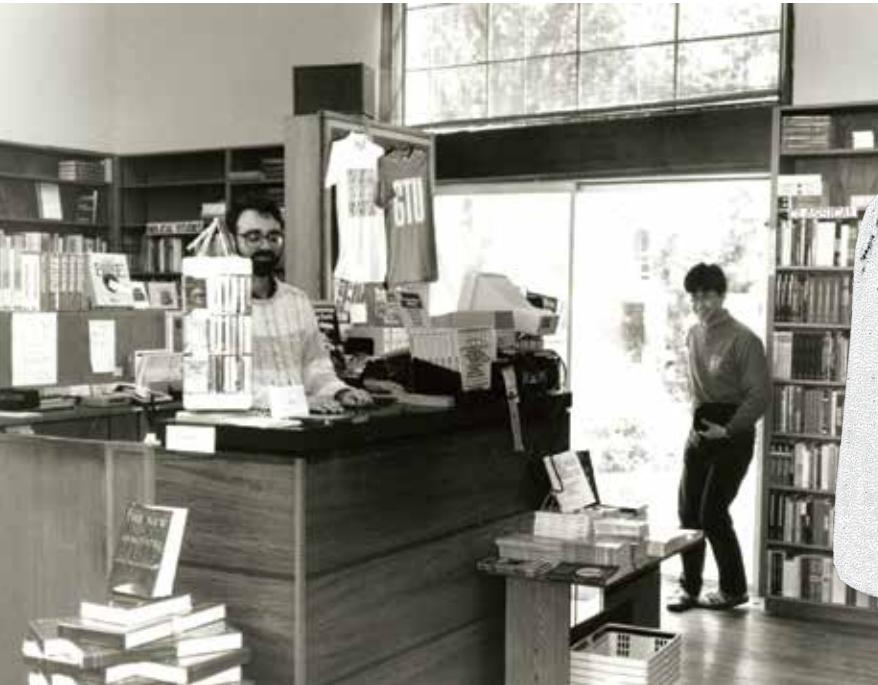
Eventually, the idea of a bookstore membership was devised as a way to recoup costs. By purchasing a membership for \$15, students, staff, or faculty would receive a discount on all bookstore purchases. The introduction of membership cards marked the opening of the new GTU Bookstore on LeConte Avenue on February 1, 1973.

Once opened, the GTU Bookstore enjoyed a thriving trade. Rev. Dr. Nancy E. Hall, associate professor of ministry and congregational music at American Baptist Seminary of the West (ABSW), worked at the bookstore from 1980 to 1988. She remembers it as “the hub of all things literary and theological” for many in Berkeley. Nancy began working at the bookstore while studying for her MDiv at ABSW. As a part-time work-study employee, she served as part of the

bookstore’s accounting department, working “up in the rafters” of the LeConte building alongside GTU administration and staff. Through her work, she learned basic bookkeeping, which, in the age before computers became mainstream, was all done using huge handwritten ledgers and a mechanical adding machine.

Nancy fondly remembers the laid-back nature of the bookstore, led by its knowledgeable and easygoing manager, Terry Huwe. She recalls a feeling of family among her co-workers. Nancy connected most with one particular colleague, the bookstore’s assistant manager, Mark Theodoropoulos, who had briefly attended Pacific School of Religion. Nancy and Mark began dating in the summer of 1981 and were married in January 1983. Nancy commented, “ours was not the only staff wedding the bookstore celebrated!”

The GTU’s current registrar, John Seal, joined the bookstore team in 1989, and eventually became store



manager. Having left a job at Stacey's, a large bookseller in the heart of San Francisco's Financial District, John brought to the GTU a life-long love of books and reading. But as a person of no fixed religion, John says working at the GTU Bookstore "wasn't an easy or comfortable fit at first." Yet he grew to love the place. He recalls "building an absolute mountain of New Revised Standard Versions" after the new Bible translation was published in 1989. "Eventually, we sold thousands of copies!"

Dr. Kathleen Kook was a frequent bookstore visitor after she became the GTU's director of admissions in the mid-1990s. Today, as dean of students, Kathleen has an office directly above the old store. She recalls the sense of community that the bookstore provided for the GTU. There was a real "buzz of activity" at the beginning of each semester, as students rushed to buy textbooks for their upcoming classes. But the store offered far more than just textbooks. Its inventory included more than 1500 book titles, as well as a wide range of fun, beautiful, and sometimes irreverent gifts from a large number of faith traditions. This selection reflected the creativity of the bookstore staff, and provided an attraction for prospective students.

Another bookstore regular during his days as a GTU doctoral student was Uriah Kim, now GTU dean and vice president for academic affairs. Dean Kim reports that he spent more time in the bookstore than almost anywhere

else on campus, and was deeply saddened at its closing, saying that it "marked the end of an era." Hours of browsing books about all religious faiths lead him to many spur-of-the-moment theological conversations with friends and faculty among the stacks. Like Kathleen, who remembers the delight of exploring different worlds in the bookshelves, Uriah describes the bookstore as a "magical place," where he would go not only for his own studies, but to discover a world of religiously oriented texts.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the bookstore faced increasingly difficult economic challenges. The high retail prices on essential textbooks were a frustration to students and staff alike. Concerns deepened with the advent of online retailer Amazon in the late 1990s. John Seal remembers the "deep sense of unease" the bookstore staff felt at the time, as online purchasing increased and many independent bookstores were facing closure. The "Amazon effect" increasingly took its toll on the GTU Bookstore, leading to dwindling sales and employee layoffs. Eventually, the GTU Bookstore had to admit defeat and closed its doors for good in May 2008.

In a memo to the GTU community at the time, GTU President James A. Donahue noted: "The GTU Bookstore has served thousands of faculty, students, and members of the public for the past 35 years. It has enjoyed a very good reputation among its customers and has been widely

"The bookstore's legacy as a space that brought together the GTU's diverse community lives on in CARE's Doug Adams Gallery."



recognized as one of the finest theological bookstores in the country. All of us owe its dedicated staff and managers a debt of gratitude for their contributions to the academic greatness of the GTU these years.”

After the bookstore’s closure, a portion of the first-floor of the LeConte Building was quickly renovated to become the existing student lounge. But the space where the Doug Adams Gallery is now located sat dormant for eight years, closed off by plywood and used for storage. In fact, Dr. Elizabeth S. Peña, director at the Center for the Arts and Religion, says she hadn’t realized there was anything behind the plywood paneling keeping the space a secret. Walking through the narrow door, however, she could immediately tell this space had potential; the high ceilings, large windows, conveniently located office, and unobstructed wall space combined to make the room the perfect candidate for a new gallery.

The creation of the new gallery could not have happened without the efforts of the GTU’s previous Vice President of Finance and Administration Steve Argyris and Building Engineer C. Osborne, both of whom worked hard to make CARE’s vision for the gallery come true. Osborne oversaw all renovations of the space, including the filling in of the stairs leading to the basement, the painting of the walls, the office clean-up, and installations of gallery light-

ing, a security system, a projector, and glass doors. CARE remains grateful to Osborne for his help.

While the bookstore is missed by many, its legacy as a space that draws together the GTU’s diverse community and its ability to transport visitors to different worlds lives on in CARE’s Doug Adams Gallery. Since opening the new space, the gallery has held six exhibitions and welcomed almost three thousand visitors. From luminous landscape paintings to mixed-media works influenced by Islamic visual heritage, from religiously inspired protest art to Greek Orthodox liturgical vestments, a diverse array of contemporary art has been made available to the GTU community and beyond. In much the same way the GTU Bookstore once added to the learning of students and faculty alike, the gallery now serves as a place of communion, where lively discussions can be held. The GTU and its Center for the Arts & Religion are delighted that this once thriving bookstore space can have a new lease on life as the place where the arts and religion unite. ♦

Lydia Webster is assistant curator of the Doug Adams Gallery. Thank you to David Stiver for digging through the GTU archives to find photographs and blueprints that haven't been seen in many years. Thanks also to John Rawlinson, Nancy E. Hall, John Seal, Kathleen Kook, and Uriah Kim for sharing their memories of the GTU Bookstore.

Interreligious Learning in Civic Spaces

By Carrie Sealine

Bill Zangeneh-Lester and other GTU students and alumni are working to expand religious understanding among the diverse populations at a local community college.

BILL ZANGENEH-LESTER IS A MAN WITH A MISSION: a mission to bring the GTU's model of interreligious and interdisciplinary engagement to the 30,000 students at American River College (ARC), a community college in Sacramento. Even as he completes his GTU dissertation on the topic of interreligious learning in civic spaces, Zangeneh-Lester is already putting this scholarship into action as chair of the Department of Humanities and Religious Studies and director of the Honors Program at ARC, where he has taught since 2015. In the process, Zangeneh-Lester is furthering the impact of the GTU's work to expand interreligious dialogue and understanding, while also creating a path for other GTU students and recent graduates to teach in this culturally diverse college community.

Understanding the central role that religion has played in shaping culture and history around the globe, Zangeneh-Lester has invited GTU PhD students and MA graduates with diverse religious and scholarly backgrounds to teach classes in the humanities, give guest lectures, and participate in panel discussions at American River College. The impact of the GTU scholars' presence at ARC extends beyond the students in their courses. For example, when the Muslim student group on campus organized a panel discussion, "A Bigger Table: Abraham and Hospitality," GTU doctoral student Susan Aguilar (Historical and Cultural Studies

of Religion, Center for Jewish Studies) and graduate Daniel London (PhD '17, Christian Spirituality) joined Zangeneh-Lester and a local imam to discuss the commonalities of the Abrahamic faith traditions before a packed room. In addition to Zangeneh-Lester, Aguilar, and London, three other scholars from the GTU have taught classes at ARC: Rania Shah (MA '16, Center for Islamic Studies), Cogen Bohanec (doctoral student with the Center for Dharma Studies), and Daniel Moceri (doctoral student in Interdisciplinary Studies).

As department chair, Zangeneh-Lester has created and grown a program at ARC that recognizes the significance of the world's religions in shaping the humanities, at a time when programs in religious studies are being closed or cut at other colleges and universities. With 55 percent of all current undergraduates in the U.S. attending community colleges, the program could also build valuable connections to the GTU in terms of future recruitment. "Students go on to Stanford, Columbia, and Yale after attending ARC," Zangeneh-Lester said. "Why not the GTU?"

Zangeneh-Lester himself is a product of community college, having attended Sierra Community College in Rocklin, CA. He pursued his teaching at American River College with the support of his GTU advisors Fr. Eddie Fernandez (GTU/Jesuit School of Theology) and the late Ibrahim Farajajé (GTU/Starr King School of

"You're not just teaching fact-based content, but religious literacy. . . . This fosters respect and curiosity about other faith traditions."

—Susan Aguilar,
GTU doctoral student



(l-r) The GTU's Bill Zangeneh-Lester, Susan Aguilar, and Daniel London joined a local imam for an interreligious panel at American River College

the Ministry). “There’s no such thing as a standard path in the community college world,” he said. “At ARC, over half of the students are the first generation in their families to attend college; 60 percent are from historically underserved and underrepresented groups, mostly working-class folks.”

“The students at ARC are varied in terms of age, ethnicity, and religious background, but they are all very interested and curious to learn, receptive, and responsive,” said Susan Aguilar, who taught “Introduction to World Religions” at ARC as a summer intensive and is teaching it again this semester. “You’re not just teaching fact-based content, but religious literacy. You really get the opportunity to foster interreligious dialogue, to think critically about what you see in the media and become an educated and informed member of the community. This fosters respect and curiosity about other faith traditions.”

One of four colleges that make up the Los Rios Community College District, American River College is home to a diverse student community. Students come from all over the globe and from many cultures and faith traditions. The local area includes the largest group of Afghani refugees in the country, as well as many Russian Protestants. Other than English, the most common languages heard on Los Rios campuses

are, in this order, Urdu (Pakistan), Farsi (Afghanistan and Iran), Arabic, Russian, and Spanish. No matter where their students came from or what, if any, religion they practice, Zangeneh-Lester and his colleagues from the GTU see firsthand the huge need for education that enhances interreligious understanding.

Daniel Moceri believes religious literacy is particular important in the current political environment. Moceri acknowledges the sensitivity required to be an effective educator in the ARC community. “Alongside the more ‘conventional’ recent high-school graduates, we also have students from populations that are typically underserved: combat veterans, those returning from incarceration, recent immigrants, displaced workers, along with working adults from lower socioeconomic locations seeking professional advancement,” he said. “Bill [Zangeneh-Lester] understands these complexities and values innovative pedagogy, diverse viewpoints, and the creation of a safe classroom environment. As someone who is very concerned with justice issues around identity, I am grateful to be teaching at ARC and hope that my work contributes towards increasing harmonious and compassionate relations.”

Zangeneh-Lester believes the presence of GTU scholars who are deeply rooted in their own religious and cultural traditions encourages students to come to terms with their own religious backgrounds. “Young



"Young people have religious identities, yet students often feel they have to conceal these identities in secular spaces. . . By creating a space where religious identities are explicitly included in dialogues, the personhood of the student can come forward in our classrooms."

— Bill Zangeneh-Lester,
GTU doctoral student, on teaching at American River College

people have religious identities, yet students often feel they have to conceal these identities in secular spaces," said Zangeneh-Lester. "An African-American woman student told me she had pretended to be an atheist because she didn't realize that a person of faith could be a scholar. A Jewish student told me he felt he had to hide his Jewish identity from his peers. An atheist white student thought he should present himself as a Christian because his atheism was so strongly rejected by his family; he feared his colleagues or instructors would react as his family members did. The common denominator is that everybody feels they need to pretend to be what they're not. By creating a space where religious identities are explicitly included in dialogues, the personhood of the student can come forward in our classrooms."

He continued, "The country is fearful; for many identities this is an oppressive time politically. People are suffering quite a lot. Serving historically underserved populations in the spirit of social justice can be a practice of spirituality. We are reaching out to people who are frequently excluded in the education process. As Americans we have a responsibility to learn about religious diversity and to understand that religious identity is often misrepresented in the media. One of my Muslim students told me, 'I have to hold the door open for other students and look them in the eyes and smile to reassure them that I am not a terrorist.'"

A 2016 MA graduate with the GTU's Center for Islamic Studies, Rania Shah said that putting together her course on "Humanities of the Middle East" was a fascinating learning project. "I had never before put all the pieces together, but the faculty at the GTU and at UC Berkeley (where Shah is now an undergraduate student

advisor in the department of Near Eastern Studies) were all very supportive." She continued, "You might think that seeing the history of the Ancient Near East come together might make you more secular, but it has strengthened my faith. Literature, written language, architecture, and art all began in what is now Iraq: Babylon and Persia. The stories of Gilgamesh and the flood are five thousand years old and shared throughout the Abrahamic religions. Even the earliest forms of Orientalism come from here, as the Greeks wrote about their encounters with these 'exotic' civilizations."

Shah finds teaching nineteen-year-olds to be enjoyable and entertaining. She takes full advantage of the digital classroom to bring the ancient world alive for her students. An experienced early childhood and elementary teacher, Shah understands that it is important for students whose families come from the Near East—as well as those who don't—to appreciate the region and its contributions to history. (Her own family comes from Pakistan.) Shah, whose MA work at the GTU focused on Islamophobia (a topic she addressed in a talk at ARC), is excited to be part of the academic community in Sacramento, her hometown. "I love being able to tie all the history together into how religion developed in the Middle East, especially now that so many places in the 'Cradle of Civilization' have been destroyed."

Many ARC students report that Zangeneh-Lester and his GTU colleagues are among the first people they've encountered with academic backgrounds. Zangeneh-Lester takes full advantage of this opportunity by structuring the program so that the ARC classroom looks and feels like a GTU classroom in many ways.

"You might think that seeing the history of the Ancient Near East come together might make you more secular, but it has strengthened my faith. . . . I love being able to tie all the history into how religion developed in the Middle East."

— Rania Shah (MA, '16)
on teaching "Humanities of the Middle East" at ARC



"We read, talk, and discuss Talal Asad, bell hooks, Diana Eck, Diane Moore, Eboo Patel, Stephen Prothero, Paolo Freire, and Judith Berling. Once you hear it, you can't unhear it. When students hear what the GTU has to offer, that's the basis for some serious change—and some serious validation for our religiously diverse students."

Daniel London felt that the panel discussion on the Abrahamic faiths was publication worthy. "The event was well attended," he said. "The students and community asked engaging questions, and it was a pleasure and privilege to participate with Bill and Susan as well as Muslim clergy colleagues." London, who recently accepted a pastoral position at Christ Episcopal Church in Eureka, CA, reports that the evening included the uncomfortable but rewarding experience of having his perspective challenged by a Muslim leader. While such interactions may be difficult, London recognizes that true interreligious dialogue demands an openness to learning from one another and having our own perspectives challenged.

PhD student Cogen Bohanec is teaching a class at ARC on Humanities of Religions of Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia—in other words, the dharmic traditions. Before beginning his doctoral work in coordination with the Mira & Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies at the GTU, Bohanec earned a degree at the Institute of Buddhist Studies, a GTU affiliate. Like Zangeneh-Lester, Bohanec is a community college graduate, but says he struggled to study religion through history in the absence of classes in religious studies. "It's great," he said, "that the hybrid GTU culture, which has no taboo against the emic (inside) perspective, is foundational to ARC's really interesting program. I'm

able to present the traditions in a way that people from those traditions would recognize and approve."

Bohanec values the GTU's academic atmosphere for the unique way in which it holds the paradox of epistemological pragmatism, by challenging the idea that the etic (outside) perspective provides the only effective mode of understanding. He observed, "Bringing the radical epistemology of the GTU to the grass-roots level institutional setting promotes dialogic understanding of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and other dharma traditions. Mondays start off dragging, but the students are excited by the end of the day."

Can interreligious learning happen in public spaces commonly defined as "secular"? Bill Zangeneh-Lester believes that it can: "When I tell a student at ARC that I go to the GTU, it opens the door to further conversation. It provides an opportunity for students to take ownership of their own religious identities in conversations with me." He sees the role of encouraging religious literacy as essential in today's culture: "The goal is not to erase fundamental differences so we can all hold hands and sing "It's a Small World (After All)"; rather, this work is a commitment to promoting a culture of engaged civic pluralism and mutual respect, in which people can work together, in the fullness of their identities, across the reality of their differences, for the common good." ♦

Carrie Sealine is a doctoral student in the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies in Religion, with a concentration in new religious movements. She is a 2017 graduate of the GTU's MA program in association with the Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies.

Teaching to Learn

Celebrating Dr. Jean-François Racine, winner of the
2018 GTU Excellence in Teaching Award

By Doug Davidson

WHEN JEAN-FRANÇOIS RACINE HEARD HE'D BEEN selected to receive the GTU Excellence in Teaching Award at the 2018 GTU Commencement in May, he couldn't have been more surprised. "I'd heard the list of finalists for the award, and thought, 'Well, these are people I've been admiring for years. I don't stand a chance.'" But his colleagues disagreed, choosing Racine to receive the honor, which recognizes a GTU faculty member for exemplary embodiment of interreligious sensitivity and commitment, interdisciplinary approach to religious studies, and creative and effective classroom pedagogical methods and performance.

Since 2002, Dr. Racine has taught at Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, where he is assistant professor of New Testament. A native of Canada, Racine earned his MA at Université Laval in Québec, and his doctorate from University of St. Michael's College in Toronto. He has written extensively in both English and French.

Although trained as a New Testament scholar, Racine thinks of himself primarily as a theologian, understanding biblical studies as one of the disciplines within theology. "I think theology is there to respond to questions of a specific place and time," Racine says, emphasizing the ongoing nature of the theological task. "I don't believe we can expect sixth-century theology or medieval theology to really respond to today's questions. These theologies can give us models about how to think. They can show the way by addressing the questions of their own times; sometimes, they are very bold in doing so. But we shouldn't expect a thirteenth-century theologian to answer the questions of the twenty-first century." Racine contends that religious scholars need to be equipped to reflect theologically on the central concerns of today.

When it comes to the field of biblical studies, Racine believes one of the most important things he teaches his students is to question interpretations. He recalls his MA thesis, which was focused on the section in the Book of Romans that urges readers to be subject to governing authorities, because authority comes from God. "For the project, I focused on the passage itself: the wording and social context of the time it was written. But as I was finishing the project, I kept looking at the history of the interpretation of that passage. In some ways, I've never really been out of that MA project!" Acknowledging the recent citing of the passage by U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Racine notes, "It is amazing how this text has been put to work to justify all sorts of regimes. The apartheid system in South Africa had that as one of their favorite prooftexts. So the issue of questioning the power that comes with interpretation has been a focus throughout my teaching career."

When asked about changes he's seen at the GTU during his sixteen years, Dr. Racine emphasized the school's growing interreligious emphasis. "I'm really pleased that the GTU has become not just ecumenical but increasingly an interreligious institution," he says. "When I arrived here in 2002, there was the Center for Jewish Studies, and the Institute of Buddhist Studies was an affiliate, but we didn't have the kinds of seminars we now have in which students who are Buddhist or Islamic, or who are studying texts from those traditions, are working closely alongside students focused on the Hebrew Scriptures or the New Testament."

Racine believes the GTU's living fully into its interreligious identity is an ongoing task. Over the past two years as chair of the Department of Sacred Texts and Their Inter-



Dr. Jean-François Racine (left) with GTU Dean Uriah Kim

pretation, Racine has seen the department wrestle with how the full inclusion of multiple faith traditions shapes their work: “The question is really how best to include people from all the traditions represented at the GTU. So those of us who were formerly in the Biblical Studies area are asking, how do we need to change our way of looking at ourselves? What kinds of things do we plan as a department to better integrate all traditions? I’m not sure we’ll ever be done figuring it out. But these are questions that weren’t even on the table three years ago.”

Dr. Racine acknowledges that the GTU community has shifted the emphases of his academic work. “Anyone who comes to the GTU and takes the culture of the place seriously will find that it shapes his or her research agenda, and I am no exception. When I came to the GTU, I was mostly a text critic. But during my time here I have become much more interested in effects of colonialism. I’ve become interested in literary studies in ways I never would have imagined, as well as in the anti-Jewish discourse within the New Testament. Questions about economy and social justice have become more important to me as I listened to my colleagues and to our students. Not that I’ve written extensively on all these subjects, but when I teach, I am far more aware of these concerns.” ◆

Racine credits a former student in Canada with sparking his interest in biblical aesthetics, the topic of his 2013

book, *Beauty and the Bible: Toward a Hermeneutics of Biblical Aesthetics*. “We were studying the Book of Ruth, and one student said, ‘Oh, this passage—this is just beautiful!’ The other students nodded, but I was speechless. Because in our training in biblical studies . . . well, the word *beautiful* doesn’t come up at all,” he laughs. “But she was absolutely right. That is what I’d thought every time I’d read that passage. We often read poetry, including the poetry in the Bible, because it can move us. There is something beautiful in the words themselves, even in just the sounds of the words. But as biblical scholars we often put this aside and work on other questions. But if this is a well-shared effect of the text upon the readers, how do we speak about it?”

“Sometimes I think the reason I teach is because I want to learn,” he reflects. “Have you heard the saying, ‘If you are the smartest person in the room, you may be in the wrong room?’ Well, since I came to the GTU, I’ve almost never felt like I’m the smartest person in the room!” he laughs. “And I think there are many different kinds of intelligence. Here at the GTU, you get all these people, with all these different backgrounds, who are all smart in one way or another. And you’re sitting in the classroom and you’re tapping into all this. That is what makes teaching here so interesting to me.” ◆

Doug Davidson is director of communications at the GTU.

News from the Center for Dharma Studies

Through a wide range of publications and programming, CDS faculty and students are deepening the study of the dharma traditions

Since its founding in 2015, the GTU's Mira and Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies (CDS) has established itself as a leader in the scholarly study of the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions—three distinct yet interrelated religious traditions that emerged in ancient India. In addition to supporting GTU PhD and MA students in concentrations like Hindu Sacred Texts and Yoga Studies, the CDS plays a leading role in the publication of several academic journals, a book series, and numerous edited volumes. These publications not only advance the diverse and growing field of Dharma Studies, but provide significant opportunities for GTU students to gain experience and showcase their own work.

The *Journal of Dharma Studies: Philosophy, Theology, Ethics, and Culture* (Springer), co-edited by CDS Director Dr. Rita Sherma and Dr. Purushottama Bilimoria, is the flagship journal of the CDS and the primary journal in the field of Dharma Studies. The journal's mission is "to employ theoretical and empirical



methodologies for the intersubjective understanding, and real-world applications of the conceptual resources, textual sources, and experiential practices in order to foster critical-constructive reflections on Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist traditions." These three distinct religions emerged in ancient India and share 2.5 millennia of mutual engagement. Currently, *JDS* is the only academic journal published by an eminent global publisher that gives primacy to the thought, values, and praxis of these religions that are now global in scope. In addition to well-known scholars from across the country, several GTU doctoral students serve on the editorial team of *JDS*, including editorial manager Laura Dunn, and assistant editors Cogen Bohane and Thomas Calobrisi.

Sophia: International Journal of Philosophy and Traditions (Springer), was founded in 1962, and is currently edited by Dr. Bilimoria, a distinguished teaching and research fellow and core doctoral faculty at CDS/GTU. *Sophia* is a ranked journal with a fifty-six-year reputation in the

field of philosophy and religion. The vision of *Sophia* has also born fruit in the book series, *Sophia Studies in Cross-Cultural Philosophy of Traditions and Cultures*, which now includes nearly thirty books that "encompass global traditions, and critical treatments that draw from cognate disciplines, inclusive of all...religions and cultures."

Rita Sherma and CDS visiting professor Graham Schweig also serve as senior editors for the *Journal of Vaishnava Studies*, the only academic journal dedicated to Vaishnavism, one of the largest branches of Hindu theology and practice.

CDS has also played a primary role in several edited volumes (current and forthcoming), including the *Routledge History of Indian Philosophy* (Routledge, 2018), *Vivekananda: His Life, Legacy, and Relevance* (Lexington, 2018), *Prayer, Worship, Ritual & Contemplation in the Hindu World* (Routledge, 2019), and *Prayer, Veneration, Ritual & Contemplation in Jainism* (Routledge, 2019). The upcoming essay collection, *Sustainable Societies: Interreligious, Interdisciplinary*

Responses (Springer, 2018), co-edited by Sherma and Bilimoria, with associate editor Pravina Rodrigues, a GTU doctoral candidate, is the outgrowth of a successful two-day GTU conference and features essays by numerous GTU faculty and students.

Rita Sherma notes that the Mira & Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies "represents the leading edge in interdisciplinary academic study of the dharma traditions, highlighting social-scientific as well as theological, ethical, aesthetic, and applied approaches." The CDS also houses the GTU's Dharma & Sustainable Societies Initiative, which Sherma says, "brings the principles, practices, and potential for engagement of Hindu thought into dialogue with discourses on contemporary challenges."

Through its prolific publications and a diverse array of academic programs, public events, and research projects, the Mira & Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies provides global leadership in the scholarly study of the dharma traditions, and offers the entire GTU family an enriching and engaging avenue for meaningful cross-cultural and interreligious dialogue and experiences.

Visit www.gtu.edu/cds/publications for links to these CDS publications. ♦

Laura Dunn is a PhD student in Hindu Studies in the Department of Historical & Cultural Studies of Religion and editorial manager of the Mira & Ajay Shingal Center for Dharma Studies.



Sacred World Art Collection Finds New Home



After many months of careful cataloging, the GTU Collection of Sacred World Art is now accessible to the GTU community!

Visitors to the library this fall may have noticed two new storage cabinets on the main floor. Over the last few months, nearly half of the more than three hundred items in the GTU Collection of Sacred World Art have been brought from temporary storage and relocated to a permanent home in these state-of-the-art archival storage units. Constructed by Delta Designs, these cabinets are used by museums nationally and will provide secure housing for the Collection of Sacred World Art.

Many of the world's religious traditions have in common a vibrant material culture that's reflected in the collection. Lanier Graham, a professional curator, professor of museum studies and world religions, and president of the Institute for Aesthetic Development, generously donated the collection several years ago in order to enhance the GTU's focus on interreligious study and dialogue. From Neolithic Hongshan jade figurines to Ashanti ceremonial masks, the GTU Collection of Sacred World Art represents one collector's quest to represent the breadth of sacred art from around the world.

GTU students and faculty may borrow items from the collection for research, classroom use, or other educational purposes. Other researchers may access the collection on site. Items can also be displayed in GTU offices or public places with permission.

Members of the GTU community and other scholars interested in accessing the collection can contact Clay-Edward Dixon, director of library services, at celdon@gtu.edu. A complete object list is available by contacting the assistant curator at the Center for the Arts & Religion, Lydia Webster, at lwebster@gtu.edu.

Learn more at www.gtu.edu/sacred-world-art. ♦

Continued from page 7

to have a larger digital footprint, and our accessibility to the broader public can grow exponentially through more online learning platforms. We can make more of the stimulating public programs the GTU sponsors available to a global audience via livestream and our website. Making our digital resources even more robust is an important way to advance our mission.

We also need to gather additional professional resources to focus on our marketing and institutional advancement functions. The GTU should be a larger presence in the interreligious communities of San Francisco and Silicon Valley in addition to our active programming in the East Bay. We also should expand our connections to the UC Berkeley community with more cosponsored programs and collaborations as well as proactive marketing of our programs to the Cal campus.

What would you say to a prospective student who is considering the GTU? Why should that student come to Berkeley?

First, the GTU is unique in that it values both rigorous scholarship as well as deep religious commitment. The environment created by those complementary values makes the learning at GTU compelling, personal, and transformative. The diversity of the students and faculty is unparalleled; the library resources are among the best in the world, and the variety of courses and perspectives is unmatched. The GTU offers exceptional opportunities to delve deeply into a single religious tradition or to engage in interreligious work. Through academic centers like the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences and the Center for the Arts & Religion, we are building interdisciplinary bridges between religious and secular fields of study. In addition, the collaborations and cross-registration with UC Berkeley bring even more opportunities for exceptional academic experiences. Berkeley itself is an incredibly beautiful and stimulating place to learn and live. The GTU is able to draw upon so many academic and religious institutions in the area; I think there is no better place to be if graduate religious and theological study is your passion.

You've arrived during a year when the GTU's Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies is celebrating its 50th anniversary. As the first Jewish president of the GTU, do you have particular hopes for the work of that center?

The Center for Jewish Studies has been a leader in the development of academic Jewish studies in this country. Our faculty have been prolific and prominent scholars who have produced important contributions to their fields and have attracted talented students. Many alumni hold prestigious academic appointments and share their passion for Jewish study in academic institutions and throughout the broader community. I want to ensure that CJS remains on the cutting-edge of scholarship and that it has an even greater impact throughout the community. The Madrasa-Midrasha program cosponsored by CJS and our Center for Islamic Studies offers numerous public events each year and is a paradigm of interreligious learning and conversation. I hope we can expand it and bring the program to more communities throughout the country and world.



"A multireligious community like the GTU creates exceptional opportunities to celebrate commonalities as well as to engage in serious conversations about difference."

If your presidency is a success, what do you envision for the GTU ten years from now?

I envision that the GTU will be known throughout the world as the premier center for the study of religion and the acknowledged leader in interreligious learning. Scholarships and fellowships for students will increase. Our faculty will expand and be strengthened with more resources for academic programs. Our centers, schools, and affiliates will generate stimulating conversations and projects with the worlds of science, arts and humanities, law, education, and technology. We will have created an interreligious residential village for students and faculty that will be a model of interreligious learning and living. The GTU consortium of schools and affiliates will be more closely aligned, and the collaborations will strengthen the individual institutions as well the GTU as a whole. More people will participate in GTU programs, and we will generate a new interest in interreligious learning and conversation across the country and throughout the world. ♦



Art @ the GTU



Gestures to the Divine: Works by Hagit Cohen

Doug Adams Gallery, Center for the Arts & Religion
2465 LeConte Avenue, Berkeley

This fall, nature is on display at the Center for the Arts & Religion's Doug Adams Gallery. In "Gestures to the Divine," artist Hagit Cohen encourages us to focus on the world around us, presenting photographs that stretch the imagination. Images of seed pods, large in size but minimalist in aesthetic, draw us in with the detail of their textures and the mystery of their shadows. An altar, suspended in mid-air, provides a reality check by displaying some of the actual seed pods. Breezy silk panels bear the imprint of aspen leaves.

The effect of the exhibition is serene and spiritual—but with a scholarly angle, thanks to the many GTU faculty and students who work on topics related to eco-spirituality. Some of these experts have contributed essays to the exhibition catalog, *Gestures to the Divine: Reflections on Eco-Spirituality*. The essays vary in their perspectives, from theological to historical to political, but all enrich our experience and expand the art beyond the exhibition. The catalog is available for \$25 + tax, or as a thank-you gift with a CARE membership (\$100). Visit www.gtu.edu/care/membership.

The exhibition will be on view through December 13 in the Doug Adams Gallery, open Tuesday-Thursday, 10am-3pm.



Revelations: Across Borders

Jesuit School of Theology-SCU
1735 LeRoy Avenue, Berkeley

This special exhibition features the creations of students from several GTU member schools who are currently enrolled in "Composing Sacred Spaces," a course taught this semester by Dr. Kathryn Barush (GTU/JST). Inspired by both the liturgical calendar and the fall season, students created the artwork, then organized the pieces into an exhibition on the theme of crossings and transitions, both literal and figurative. The exhibition is on display in the Manresa Room at JST-SCU (open all day, Monday-Friday) through November 14.

Gestures to the Divine: Reflections on Eco-Spirituality

features full-color artwork by Hagit Cohen and essays by seven GTU scholars: Faculty members Jay Emerson Johnson (PSR), Rita Sherma (CDS), Cynthia Moe-Lobeda (PLTS/CDSP), and Devin Zuber (CSS/GTU), and students Matthew Hartman (GTU PhD student), Keyona Saquile Lazenby (PSR student), and Yohana Junker (GTU PhD candidate).





"The Global Celebration," Salma Aratsu

Salma Aratsu: Seeking Oneness

GTU Flora Lamson Hewlett Library
2400 Ridge Rd., Berkeley

Seeking Oneness," featuring the flowing, graceful paintings and sculptures of Salma Arastu, is on display at the Flora Lamson Hewlett Library through January 11, 2019. Salma relies on a beautifully subdued color palette, often employing Arabic calligraphy and dancing figures to express her message of human universality as inspired by Rumi's poetry. While her work acknowledges the challenges to "oneness" in pieces such as the evocative "As if killed entire humanity," Salma's optimism shines through in "Home of Peace" and other paintings. "Seeking Oneness" is made possible by the Jane Dillenberger Fine Arts Endowment Fund, and is open during regular library hours.



"God is Close," Salma Aratsu

To Everything There is a Season

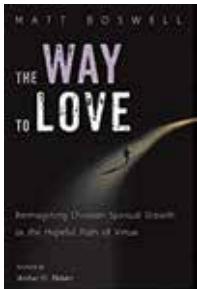
Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology
1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley

Reflecting on the passage of time, seasonally and annually, this exhibition of artwork by Naomi Teplow is on view at the Pacific School of Religion's Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology through December 17. Teplow's brightly colored and finely detailed ketubot (marriage contracts), illuminated manuscripts, and paintings celebrate her homeland of Israel and her appreciation for Jewish tradition. The Badè Museum is open on Mondays, 10am-2pm.



"Shanah Tovah Shalom," Naomi Teplow

Alumni News



Matt Boswell (PhD, '16) celebrated the publication of his first book: *The Way to Love: Reimagining Christian Spiritual Growth as the Hopeful Path of Virtue* (Cascade Books, October 2018), a revised version of his GTU dissertation. Boswell is pastor of Camas Friends Church, a Quaker meeting in Camas, Washington.

Erin M. Brigham (PhD, '10) published a revised edition of *See, Judge, Act: Catholic Social Teaching and Service Learning* (Anselm Academics, September 2018). Brigham is director of The Joan and Ralph Lane Center for Catholic Social Thought and the Ignatian Tradition at the University of San Francisco.



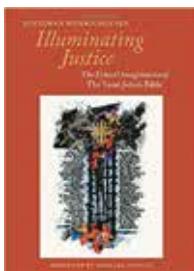
Merissa Nathan Gerson (MA, '13) is the founder of Ken Means Yes, an emerging effort to increase consent language in the Jewish community by educating persons in Talmudic ideas of safe and consensual touch. She is a trained rape-prevention worker and sex educator whose GTU studies focused on sex and gender as well as inherited trauma.

Jonathan Homrighausen (MA, '18) published his latest book, *Illuminating Justice: The Ethical Imagination of The Saint John's Bible* (Liturgical Press, July 2018). Homrighausen is pursuing a PhD in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament at Duke University.



Jennifer Howe Peace (PhD, '05) is one of the coeditors of *Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New Field* (Beacon Press, June 2018). The anthology also features essays by GTU alumnae **Kate McCarthy** (PhD, '94) and **Lisa Dahill** (PhD, '01), as well as **Martha Stortz**, a former faculty member at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary.

Micah T.J. Jackson (PhD, '12) became president of Bexley Seabury Seminary on June 1, 2018. His upcoming book, *Preaching Face-to-Face: An Invitation to Conversational Preaching*, is scheduled for release in June 2019 by Church Publishing Incorporated.

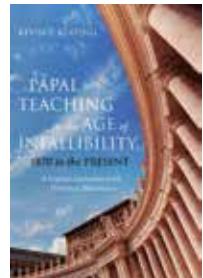


Kevin T. Keating (MA, '75) published *Papal Teaching in the Age of Infallibility, 1870 to the Present: A Critical Evaluation with Historical Illustrations* (Pickwick Publications, June 2018). Keating is an attorney in the Chicago area.



Nancy Pineda-Madrid

(PhD, '05) received the 2018 Outstanding Educator Award from Latina Center MARIA in Boston for her service to the Latino/a communities. She is associate professor of theology and Latino/Latina Ministry at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.



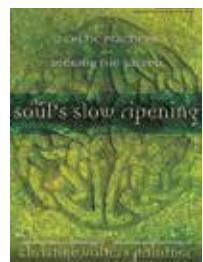
Jhos Singer (MA, '12) was named one of SVARA's inaugural Transformative Talmud Teaching Fellows for 2018-19. Singer is the Maggid for Chochmat HaLev in Berkeley, and the JCC of San Francisco.



Harry H. Singleton III (PhD, '98) published his third book, *Divine Revelation and Human Liberation* (Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, June 2018). Dr. Singleton is professor of religion and theology at Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina.



Gregory E. Sterling (PhD, '90), the Reverend Henry L. Slack Dean of Yale Divinity School, was named the GTU's 2018 alumnus of the year. He will be honored on Saturday, November 17, at the GTU Alumni Reception during the Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and Society for Biblical Literature in Denver, Colorado.



Christine Valters Paintner (PhD, '04) published her latest book, *The Soul's Slow Ripening: 12 Celtic Practices for Seeking the Sacred* (Sorin Books, September 2018). She is the online abyss for Abbey of the Arts (www.abbeyofhearts.com), a virtual monastery offering resources on contemplative practice and creative expression.

Rich Wood (MA, '89) was named interim provost at University of New Mexico effective September 1, 2018. Wood is a professor in the sociology department at UNM, and became senior vice provost in 2017.



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“So much of the suffering in the world is that we don’t seem to know how to engage in interreligious dialogue. We need to be able to learn from each other, and I think that’s the most valuable thing about the GTU. We have to learn how to have these conversations, these intellectual explorations. The GTU is leading the way in this—and that makes me hopeful.”

—Dr. Suzanne Holland (PhD, '97)
Professor of Science and Values, University of Puget Sound

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Give online at www.gtu.edu/give or mail your donation to Office of Advancement, GTU, 2400 Ridge Rd., Berkeley, CA 94709.

Upcoming Events

Follow the Women: Freeing Dialogue

Dr. Marianne Farina, CSC (DSPT) offers the Distinguished Faculty Lecture; Response by Dr. Rita Sherma (CDS)

Tuesday, November 13, 6:30 pm

Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley

GTU Alumni Reception at AAR-SBL

Connect with GTU alumni, faculty, and students; meet President Daniel Lehmann; and honor 2018 Alumnus of the Year, Dr. Gregory E. Sterling

Saturday, November 17, 7:00 pm

Embassy Suites Downtown, Denver, CO

Holocaust Memory in Poland

A CJS event with Dr. Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs

Thursday, November 29, 6:00 pm

Flora Lamson Hewlett Library, 2400 Ridge Rd., Berkeley

Islamic Studies in Interreligious Contexts

The Center for Islamic Studies 2018 Student Symposium

Thursday, December 6, 12:00 noon

GTU Student Lounge, 2465 LeConte Ave., Berkeley

For more events, visit www.gtu.edu/events