WHY RELIGION AS SELF-HELP DOESN’T REALLY WORK

Many years ago I was involved in an earnest discussion among a group of young theologians. We were debating the question: What is the most difficult teaching that Jesus gives in the Sermon on the Mount?

Someone said that Jesus’ hardest saying was “If you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment.” (Matthew 5:22) Others thought of his teachings about lust in the heart being equivalent to adultery (5:28), or not worrying about tomorrow (6:34), or not judging lest you be judged (7:1).

But in the end we all agreed that my friend Melanie (who later became a United Church of Christ pastor) came up with the best answer when she said that the hardest teaching for her to follow was “When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.” (6:3) Doing good is hard enough, but doing good without expecting a reward—with even being aware that you are doing good—is the hardest thing of all.

I thought of Melanie’s insight this past week while reading Mark Vernon’s article in the British Catholic newspaper The Tablet (http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/162620). Vernon was responding to several recent books claiming that religion is good for you, including philosopher Alain de Botton’s Religion for Atheists. According to Vernon, de Botton agrees with “the positive psychologists that religious practices provide useful techniques for everything from building humane communities to tending attitudes of kindness.”

Then Vernon goes on to say: “What he misses, is that religions are good at building community and nurturing kindness because, paradoxically, they do not aim directly to do either. Rather, they aim to open adherents to that source of life, or spiritual sustenance, that is expansive of our humanity. They offer practices that, over time, transform the soul. It is variously called salvation, eternal life or enlightenment. Goodwill and well-being may follow. They also may not. But when they do, they are happy by-products of the main task, which is not actually to have a successful life. It is to come to know God. “

This makes sense to me because it fits with my own experience. I am happiest when I’m trying to make someone else happy. I am most content with my life when I am most absorbed in some cause or purpose that is greater than myself. I seem to do the most good in the world when my left hand doesn’t know what my right hand is doing. So why wouldn’t the same thing be true on a larger scale for religions and other human institutions? Perhaps even for seminaries and graduate schools!
JESUS IN CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM ESCHATOLOGY: MAY 3, 6:30PM

Thursday, May 3, 6:30-8PM: “Salvation History and the Role of Jesus in Christian and Muslim Eschatology,” part 2 of a 2-part Tolson Fellow lecture series by Professor Mahmoud Ayoub. Bade Museum, Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Avenue, Berkeley 94709. Refreshments served and all are welcome. Co-sponsored by PSR and the Center for Islamic Studies.

BLESSING AND COMMISSIONING OF GRADUATES OF COLOR

Everyone is invited to this event! The “Blessing and Commissioning of Graduates of Color” celebrates the achievements of our graduates of color at GTU. Graduating students of color will share reflections on their experiences at GTU and hopes for the future. You are invited to wear outfits from your cultural heritage.

DATE: Saturday, May 5
TIME: 10:30 am – 12:00 noon
LOCATION: PSR Chapel. Reception to follow in the Bade Museum.

This event is organized by SKSM, PSR, JST and many friends at the GTU community.

SUMMER LANGUAGE COURSES

The GTU will offer summer intensive language courses in French, July 23 through August 17, and German and Spanish, July 16 through August 10, 2012, Monday through Friday. French and German will be held from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon., Spanish will meet from 1 to 4 pm (Location to be announced.) Students are awarded 4 academic units for each course. The tuition for each course is $600 due by July 15th. A course will be cancelled if a minimum enrollment is not met. Students can certify proficiency in a modern foreign language by successfully completing the final exam in the GTU summer intensive language course. GTU students use Web Advisor starting on April 9 to register for this course. A PIN code is required. Forward registration questions to John Seal, GTU Consortial Registrar at (510-649-2462 or jseal@gtu.edu).

JESUS AND CONFUCIUS ON VIRTUE: MAY 1, 7PM

The Jesuit School of Theology presents: “Jesus and Confucius on Virtue: Bridging Christian and Confucian Ethics” on May 1st at 7pm. The presentation will be presented by Dr. Lucas Chan, S.J. Confucian Ethics enjoys growing interest in the Western world. Dr. Chan explores strong evidence for a rich comparative dialogue between Christian and Confucian Ethics.
The Elijah Interfaith Institute Two-Week Summer Session

The Elijah Interfaith Institute Two-Week Summer Session-Religious Leadership—A Multi Religious Perspective
June 11th -22nd, New York City

In partnership with Auburn Seminary and Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, and with support from the Henry Luce Foundation, The Elijah Interfaith Institute will conduct a two-week interreligious summer school session on the topic of Religious Leadership—A Multi Religious Perspective. The summer school will bring together Jewish and Christian seminarians (and future religious leaders and scholars from other traditions as well), in an intensive study and dialogue program. The program includes lectures, text study, dialogue and a variety of activities outside the classroom. The program is tuition free, and students must commit to the entire program. (GTU students may be eligible for up to $500 in travel assistance from the Elijah Interfaith Institute.) The program will take place on the campuses of Auburn and Union Theological Seminaries in Manhattan (121st and Broadway). It will use the lens of religious leadership as a means of presenting and exploring the particularities of several religious traditions, Abrahamic and Eastern. The Elijah Interfaith Institute is an internationally respected leader in interreligious education and especially in cross-faith theological exploration. For more information visit http://www.elijah-interfaith.org/news/single/news/interreligious-summer.html

To apply, please send a 1-2 page statement detailing your previous experience and interest in interreligious dialogue and how you might benefit from this program to Alon Goshen Gottstein, Executive Director, Elijah Interfaith Institute, at gogo@elijah-interfaith.org.

Western Association of Women Historians: May 3-5

The Western Association of Women Historians will be holding their 44th Annual Conference May 3-5 at the Doubletree Hotel by Hilton at the Berkeley Marina. Please see website for information at Wawh.org. Our keynote speaker, Vicki Ruiz, one of the founders of the field of Mexican American women’s history, contributes to this theme, presenting the speech “Las Dos Luisas: Latina Feminist Thought, 1900-1930.” Finally, this conference, following a WAWH tradition, offers a session about life for women in the profession; this time, we look at how one might balance motherhood and career. GTU History area doctoral students, Ashley Bacchi and Susan Aguilar will be presenting.

GTU STUDENT TRAVEL GRANT CYCLE #1 DEADLINE: SEPT 17, 2012

Mark your calendar! The first cycle deadline to compete for a GTU Student Travel Grant is Monday, September 17, 2012 at 3pm in the GTU Dean’s Office. GTU doctoral students who are presenting papers at the AAR and SBL Annual Meetings along with other comparable national conferences and meetings before January 31, 2013 are eligible to apply for the first cycle. Additionally, the GTU Student Travel Grant Application form must accompany supporting materials (proof of acceptance to conferences and paper précis). It is available through the GTU Dean’s Office and the GTU webpage. For more information, please consult the 2011 Doctoral Program Handbook (p. 77), call the GTU Dean’s Office (649.2440), or email amunoz@gtu.edu.
FALL 2011 AND SPRING 2012 GRADUATES

**Doctor of Philosophy:**

**Ajit K. Abraham**

*Alternative Narratives in Contemporary Globalization: A Case Study of Visthar and Sebastian Kappen*

Interdisciplinary Studies
Philip L. Wickeri (Coordinator)

**Raymond Carr**

*Barth and Cone in Dialogue on Revelation and Freedom: An Analysis of James Cone's Critical Appropriation of “Barthian” Theology*

Systematic and Philosophical Theology
Michael J. Dodds, O.P. (Coordinator)

**Young Hyun Choi**

*Hans Frei’s Postliberal Theology and Its Application to Korean Protestant Preaching*

Homiletics
Jana Childers (Coordinator)

**Rebecca M. Berru Davis**

*Women Artists of the Early Twentieth Century Liturgical Movement in the United States: The Contributions of E. Charlton Fortune, Ade Bethune, and Sister Helene O’Connor, O.P.*

Art and Religion
Michael T. Morris, O.P. (Coordinator)

**Elizabeth Ford Friend**

*The Writing Life: Narrative, Metaphor, and Emotion in the Spiritual Autobiographies of Teresa of Avila and Sarah Edwards*

Christian Spirituality
Arthur G. Holder (Coordinator)

**John T. Handley**

*Bodying-Forth Ultimate Concern: Human Existence, Transcendence, and Religious Dimensions in the Art of Stephen De Staebler*

Art and Religion
Michael T. Morris, O.P. (Coordinator)

**Daniel J. Issing**

*Institutional Identity as Catholic at Catholic Colleges and Universities: A Theological and Ethical Analysis and Proposal*

Ethics and Social Theory
James A. Donahue (Coordinator)

**Bitna Kim**

*Shimjung Counseling: An Indigenous Pastoral Counseling Model for Koreans*

Interdisciplinary Studies
Lewis R. Rambo (Coordinator)

**Jung Hyung Kim**

*Cosmic Hope in a Scientific Age: Christian Eschatology in Dialogue with Scientific Age Cosmology*

Systematic and Philosophical Theology
Ted Peters (Coordinator)

**James F. Lawrence**

*And Speaking of Something Else: Biblical Allegories, Swedenborg, and Tradition*

Christian Spirituality
Arthur G. Holder (Coordinator)

**Sang hak Lee**

*Reclaiming the Understanding of Sin and Salvation from a Korean Experience of Han*

Systematic and Philosophical Theology
George E. Grijner, S.J. (Coordinator)

**Richard A. Lindsay**

*The Camp and the Kerygma: Queer Readings of Hollywood Biblical Epics*

Art and Religion
Michael T. Morris, O.P. (Coordinator)

**W. Eugene McMullan**


History
Randi Jones Walker (Coordinator)

**Catherine Passantino Mitchell**

*“Cum enim Ecclesiae causas agimus”: Rescriptive Form and Claims to Dual Responsibility in the Ephesian Correspondence of Leo I*

History
Eugene M. Ludwig, O.F.M. Cap. (Coordinator)

**Sang-Kyu Park**

*Spatial Eschatology: A Reading of the New Temple of God in the Fourth Gospel*
THE GTU COMMENCEMENT IS MAY 10TH AT 4 PM IN THE PLTS CHAPEL. A RECEPTION FOLLOWS THE CEREMONY OUTSIDE THE CHAPEL. COMMON MA AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS PLANNING ON PARTICIPATING IN THE GTU COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY SHOULD REPORT TO GIESY HALL FOR ROBBING AND PROCESSION INSTRUCTIONS BY 3:15 PM. FACULTY ARE ASKED TO REPORT TO GIESY HALL BY 3:30 PM. CONTACT MAUREEN MALONEY, GTU DEAN OF STUDENTS, (510) 649-2464 FOR INFORMATION.

Biblical Studies
Jean-Francois Racine (Coordinator)

Heather W. Reichgott
A Political Theology of Baptism
Systematic and Philosophical Theology
Michael B. Aune (Coordinator)

Malik JoDavid Sales
Saving Possibilities: Salvation, The Holy Spirit, and Variegated Resistance
Systematic and Philosophical Theology
Marion S. Grau (Coordinator)

Nicanor Sarmiento Tupaypanqui
Interdisciplinary Studies
Eduardo C. Fernandez, S.J. (Coordinator)

Peggy Vernieu
The Muting of Samaritan / Ephraimic Voices in the Gospel According to John
Biblical Studies
Mary A. Tolbert, (Coordinator)

Daeseop Daniel Yi
An Enriched Christian Understanding of St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises Through the Process of Passing Over and Coming Back with Visuddhimagga: Path of Purification
Christian Spirituality

Elizabeth Liebert, S.N.J.M. (Coordinator)

Master of Arts:

Abdel Ali
Islam, Race and the Maliki School: Racialized Thinking in Islamic Theological Reflection
Starr King School for the Ministry
WITH HONORS
Ibrahim Abdurrahman Farajjé (Coordinator)

Jeremy Arnold
Watching the "Wandjina Watching": Exploring Cultural Difference in the Appropriation of an Indigenous Australian Icon
Pacific School of Religion
Rossitza Schroeder (Coordinator)

Ali J. Ataie
Finding Muhammad in the New Testament: An Orthodox Muslim’s Interpretive Methodological Approach to the Christian Scriptures
Pacific School of Religion
Tat-Siong Benny Liew (Coordinator)

Tracy Colleen Barnowe
A Refugee is a Blind Man: A Critical Study of Blindness as Cognitive Metaphor in the Old Testament
Pacific School of Religion
Aaron Brody (Coordinator)

Kathryn Bilotti-Stark
Compassionate Awareness and Transformation: The Relevancy of Mindfulness Teachings and Practices in Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care
Institute of Buddhist Studies

Daijaku Kinst (Coordinator)

Marina Zilbergerts Bitzan
Visions of Paradox: Redefining the Human in Modern Hebrew literature on the Living Dead
WITH HONORS
Center for Jewish Studies
Naomi Seidman (Coordinator)

Robin Braverman
The Halakah of Hasaqtot Gevul: Authentic Jewish Boundaries for Mothers and Step Mothers in Divorced Families
Center for Jewish Studies
Deena Aranoff (Coordinator)

Kristin M. Casey
Towards Internarrative Dialogue: A Story of the Culture War In America
Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University
Jerome P. Baggett (Coordinator)

Diandra Chretain
Deborah’s Conflicted Relationship with Patriarchy: A Feminist Critical Analysis of Gender Roles in Judges 4:1-22
Pacific School of Religion
Aaron Brody (Coordinator)

Benjamin Cudlip
Epictetus On Education
San Francisco Theological Seminary
Christopher Ocker (Coordinator)

Hilary Dotters
"Religion is for God, the Fatherland is for Everyone": The use of Spare in Iraqi Jewish Literature
Center for Jewish Studies
Naomi Seidman (Coordinator)
Janet Ferree
The Need for Diocesan Awareness and Education in the Fight Against Human Trafficking
Jesuit School of Theology
William R. O’Neill (Coordinator)

Koji Fukaya
The Conversion of Joseph Hardy Neesima: A Critique of Tokuda Yukio’s Theory
Pacific School of Religion
Randi Jones Walker (Coordinator)

Tyler Duane Gardner
American Literature and A Secular Age: Emerson, Thoreau, and Melville
Pacific School of Religion
Devin Zuber (Coordinator)

Jakob Hero
Virtue Ethics and Transsexual Flourishing
Pacific School of Religion
Randall Miller (Coordinator)

Benjamin Heykes
American Baptist Seminary of the West
Margaret McManus (Coordinator)

David Mark James
Agony Without Ecstasy? Discernment of “The Dark Night of the Soul” in Historical and Theological Context
Franciscan School of Theology
William J. Short, O.F.M. (Coordinator)

Carmel Rose Javier
Dialogue and Mission: Reform in the 20th Century
Franciscan School of Theology
Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M. (Coordinator)

Cecilee R. Jones
Families of Faith: A Snapshot of Muslim-American Motherhood
Jesuit School of Theology
Jerome P. Baggett (Coordinator)

Derrick Leung
Rahnerian Anthropology and Human Identity Today
Franciscan School of Theology
Joseph P. Chinnici, O.F.M. (Coordinator)

Alex McDermid
Gender in Jodo Shinshu Temple Families
Institute of Buddhist Studies
Lisa Grumbach (Coordinator)

Kyung-A Park
In Search of the Feminine: Individuation through Study of the Symbol of Good and Evil in Genesis 2:46-3:24
San Francisco Theological Seminary
Robert B. Coote (Coordinator)

Robert Peach
Raids on Theology: Thomas Merton’s Raids on the Unspeakable as Political Theology in a Metzian Key
Jesuit School of Theology
Bruce Lescher (Coordinator)

Jonathan Potter
Time, Social Order and the Episcopate: Samuel’s Seabury and the Age of Mobilization
Church Divinity School of the Pacific
WITH HONORS
Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski (Coordinator)

John Franklin Rhodus, Jr.
Keys to the Revival: An Analytical Study of the Architecture of Al Ghazali’s Ihya’ ‘Ulum Al-Din
Center for Islamic Studies
Munir Jiwa (Coordinator)

Scott Riley
Martyrdom and Agency: The Agentic Turn and Narratives of Martyrdom
Church Divinity School of the Pacific
Marion S. Grau (Coordinator)

Rachel Roseman
Family as Spiritual Practice: A Philosophy and Curriculum of Home-Based Jewish Family Learning
Center for Jewish Studies
Naomi Seidman (Coordinator)

Kelsey Lynne Schleusener
One Love, One Heart: The Trinitarian Pneumatology of Jurgen Moltmann
Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
Carol Jacobson (Coordinator)

Susan Shay
San Francisco Theological Seminary
WITH HONORS

PhD Student Election Results:
Doctoral Council Student Representative: Corinna Guerrero (BIBL)
Student Advisory Committee: Laura Guerra (THEO), Tripp Hudgins (LITG), and Christopher Moreland (HIST)
Student Representative to the Society of Biblical Literature: Philip Erwin (BIBL)
The competition’s purpose is to reward the thoughtful, creative work of students who are seeking authentically to bring together theological (including ethical, Biblical, constructive) reflection on the topic of “Religion and Economics.” For more detail on the criteria of the essay competition, please see the 2011 Doctoral Program Handbook (p. 76) — there is no application form.

DOCTORAL CANDIDATES & GRADS: OPEN A DOSSIER (FREE SERVICE)!

GTU doctoral candidates and graduates are invited to open a Doctoral Placement Services dossier file. The Dossier Service includes weekly job announcements (via email) and the ability to request all or parts of a dossier be sent to institutions with job openings. Call the Dean’s Office (649-2440) or e-mail amunoz@gtu.edu for more information.
This is a reminder to return all library materials before you graduate in May. If you are a returning student, please remember to either return or renew all library items before the summer. You can check your library record online by going to http://grace.gtu.edu to see what books you have checked out and when they are due. Your renewal options include renewing online or calling the Circulation Desk at 510-649-2500 or coming into the library and speaking with someone at the Circulation Desk. Please let us know how we can help you.

Summer Library Hours 2012
(May 21-September 3)

- Monday and Tuesday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
- Wednesday and Thursday, 8:30 am to 7:00 pm
- Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm
- Saturday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm
- Sunday, Closed

Special Closings: May 19 and 20 (end of semester), May 26-28 (Memorial Day Weekend), July 4 (Independence Day), September 1–3 (Labor Day Weekend)

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**LIBRARY NEWS**

GTU’s Special Collections and Archives presents a new online exhibit, *Elsie Thomas Culver: A Journey Through Post-World War II Europe* (www.gtuarchives.org/ culver/). The exhibit features the travels of Culver (1898-1988), a Congregational minister and a publicist for church relief services in New York, through Europe from September to December 1945.

Culver traveled by troop carrier to England in early September. From there, she took a ship to Le Havre and then traveled mostly by train and sometimes by air through France, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Switzerland. She visited hospitals, schools, relief centers—wherever reconstruction work was going on—taking hundreds of photographs. She returned home in late December, arriving just before the end of 1945.

A graduate of Pacific School of Religion, Culver (1898-1988), worked as a publicist for the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction during World War II. A few years later, she accepted the position as Director of Public Relations for Church World Service under the National Council of Churches.

She returned to Berkeley after retiring in 1957, where she was active in issues of aging and the churches’ responsibility to older persons. She continued to write for various organizations and publications, including some work for the GTU, and participated in the Center for Women Affairs. Of her three books, she is best known for *Women in the World of Religion* (Doubleday: 1967).

This online exhibit joins others on Doug Adams, Robert McAfee Brown, GTU Art Exhibits, Oral History of the Sanctuary Movement, Thomas Starr King, the Berkeley Free Church and the 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible. For additional information on the Culver collection, follow the link on the online exhibit page to the finding aid or visit the GTU Archives.

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**THE NEXT MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXAMINATION IS WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, FROM 1:00 P.M. TO 4:45 P.M. IN THE DINNER BOARD ROOM. STUDENTS SHOULD REGISTER WITH FREDONIA THOMPSON, RECEPTIONIST AND STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE MANAGER, FTHOMPSON@GTU.EDU, 649-2400, AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE EXAM.**
HONORABLE MENTION

MA STUDENTS
Theses Successfully Defended
Jeremy Arnold, PSR
Benjamin Heykes, ABSW
Kelsey Schleusener, PLTS
Susan Shay, SFTS*
Janet Ferree, JST
Clark Chapman, PLTS*
*Approved with Honors

Biblical Languages Oral Exams Successfully Passed
Christina Siva, PSR
Karen Hastings-Flegel, PSR

PHD STUDENTS
Comprehensive Proposals Approved
Laurie Garrett-Cobbina, IDS
Sung Ho Lee, THEO
Izak Lattu, IDS
Jong Ho Kim, HOM

Oral Comprehensives Passed
Daniel Robinson, HIST

Advance to Candidacy
Katherine Hennessey, ETHC
Trisha Williams Akbeg, IDS
Mohamad Som Pourfarzaneh, CHSR
Patricia Sullivan Vanni, IDS

Oral Dissertation Successfully Defended
John Handley, ART
Peggy Vernieu, BIBL

THE DEAN’S NEWSLETTER
The Dean’s Newsletter is for official notices from the GTU Dean’s Office regarding academic affairs and for announcements of educational events (lectures, conferences) focusing on academic research and thus of particular interest to faculty and MA and PhD students. Send submissions to Angela Muñoz, amunoz@gtu.edu.