

TOWER NEWS

CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Leadership at Back Bay Mission Reflects CTS Vision

Shari K. Prestemon, Executive Director of Back Bay Mission



Shari Prestemon

The Rev. Shari K. Prestemon graduated from CTS with an M.Div. degree in 1993. She has since served in pastoral positions in two different congregations. In 2000 she began working as executive director of Back Bay Mission in Biloxi, Mississippi. The following is from an interview Shari had with Renee Yates, editor and CTS director of External Affairs & Publications.

What is the Back Bay Mission? What area does it serve?

Back Bay mission is a UCC ministry established in 1922. It began as an outreach to the poorest of the poor in Biloxi, Mississippi. Back Bay provides emergency assistance, clothing, food, and other assistance to anyone who walks in our doors. This includes the homeless, addicted, and impoverished. Back Bay also serves the community at large. We work to assess the needs of the community, identify gaps in services, and build bridges to create new, eventually independent, programs to meet those needs. The agencies birthed by Back Bay Mission's development work over the years now deliver \$13 million annually in aid and service, above and beyond our mission dollars. We also have a work camp program for youth and adult groups. Each year 20 to 22 groups come in to work on low-income housing efforts. It's a hope-filled and hope-renewing experience for the homeowners, a great learning and service experience for the workers, and an important connection to the wider church.

What are your future goals and visions for Back Bay Mission?

Our main goal is to continue doing the work we've always done, which is to be a prophetic, compassionate presence in the community and gather folks together to get things done. I have two personal priorities: housing and homelessness. The advent of the casino industry in the Gulf Coast area has many implications, and some of the most profound ones have to do with the issues of affordable housing and the rise of homelessness. I hope for Back Bay Mission to be at the forefront of authentic engagement with these issues, in partnership with others in our community, so we can constructively and creatively respond. I also hope that Back Bay Mission can imagine new ways in which to partner with the wider UCC church community, including the seminaries, so that we can work together.

How did your training at CTS influence your call and/or prepare you for your current work?

CTS is very oriented toward the work I do, social justice, or "ministry for the real world." Three things were important in my choosing CTS:

- First, it is located in a diverse, urban, multicultural setting.
- Second, CTS has a tradition of being on the cutting-edge of social justice issues, with faculty, such as President Susan Thistlethwaite, committed to social justice issues.
- Finally, CTS is an encouraging environment for those who want to actively consider the role of the church in society. Students learn to be actively engaged in church communities.

Ministry for the Real WorldSM

What's New at CTS?

Publications

Exploration Press has released a book to honor the scholarship and teaching of Professor Emeritus André LaCocque. *The Honeycomb of the Word: Interpreting the Prime Testament with André LaCocque*, was edited by Dow Edgerton, academic dean and associate professor of ministry. To order call: 800.777.1456.

A New Partner for The Center for Community Transformation

In the fall, CCT began its second year operating in communities and congregations in Chicago. It is a five-year research project currently funded by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc. CCT puts students and faculty teams into specific communities to study congregations that have been successful in partnering with community-based organizations and strategizing with political forces to improve and sustain their communities. This year, the program has two sites: a team in the Kenwood neighborhood is based at Kenwood UCC and a team in the Humboldt Park neighborhood is based at First Congregational Church of Chicago, CCT's newest partner.

New Students

A total of 46 students in six academic programs began studies at CTS in the Fall Quarter, 2001. They represent more than ten denominations and come from six different countries. Four more students were admitted during winter quarter.

New Appointment

President Susan Thistlethwaite has been appointed to the Advisory Board of the Garrett-Medill Center for the study of news media and religion.

New Student Organization

The Korean Students Organization (KSO) was approved by the CTS administration during 2001. CTS now has a total of eight active student organizations.

New Faculty

Timothy Sandoval joined the CTS faculty Fall Quarter, 2001 as instructor of Hebrew Bible and as faculty in the Center for Community Transformation. His doctoral degree will be conferred by Emory University, where he recently completed his dissertation. His concerns in research and writing center upon the study of biblical and early Jewish wisdom literature, and upon questions of biblical ethics as a potential resource in contemporary moral and theological deliberations.

New Grant

Chicago Theological Seminary and Elmhurst College, both

related to the United Church of Christ, have joined efforts to rebuild the church-to-college-to-seminary "pipeline" in order to identify and support Christian teenagers who might be interested in a career in ministry. To encourage this timely project, Lilly Endowment Inc. awarded CTS a \$30,000 planning grant on October 1, 2001. The three-phase research project includes surveying over 700 youth. Follow up focus groups consisting of youth, pastors, youth ministry leaders, seminary and college students will brainstorm to develop a ground-breaking program.

Professor Ted Jennings & the United Methodist Church

Ted Jennings, professor of biblical and constructive theology, plays a key role in the United Methodist Church's current effort to revitalize itself through a renewed commitment to children and the poor. The first week of May 2001, the United Methodist Council of Bishops announced a call to "Community with Children and the Poor." This document challenges the church to evaluate all its activities in light of their impact upon children and impoverished people. Jennings serves as a consultant to the United Methodist Church on issues related to children and the poor. The document can be reviewed in its entirety at: www.ctschicago.edu/news.html.

Phonathon

This annual event will take place on February 25 & 26. We will be calling alumni/ae and other constituents between 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. If you would prefer not to be called, please contact us with your gift intentions at 800-422-2871, ext. 273 or 773-322-0273. Thanks for your support.

2001 Graham Taylor Award Nominee

CTS presented its Graham Taylor Award to Mr. Thomas M. Fulton at the Graham Taylor Award Dinner on October 11, 2001. The seminary honored Mr. Fulton for his work and commitment toward improving the lives of residents on the east side of Chicago Heights. Mr. Fulton is former president and CEO of Landauer, Inc.



Counter clockwise from left: (seated) William Fulton; The Rev. B. Lynn Cheyney; CTS board member, Gregory J. Pine; violinist, Rachel Barton; (standing) Mrs. Aleece Fulton; Thomas M. Fulton; CTS President, The Rev. Susan B. Thistlethwaite; CTS board member, Richard N. Peterson; Mrs. Movita Rice; Pastor John H. Rice, Sr.

Ministerial Institute 2002

What's New in Evangelism: Growing Inclusive Churches Committed to Justice and Peace

Evangelism is the theme for this spring's CTS Ministerial Institute and Homecoming, April 9-10. A keynote address will be given by the Rev. Janet Wolf who led the transformation of Hobson United Methodist Church, Nashville, from a small, dying, monochrome congregation into a growing urban community of faith that is multiracial, intentionally inclusive and committed to the health of the city.

The Rev. Stephen Camp (M.Div. 1982) will be the preacher for the featured worship service of Ministerial Institute and Homecoming, Wednesday's Alumni/ae Convocation. Presently serving as associate executive minister with Local Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ, Camp was pastor of Faith UCC, Dayton, Ohio, a multiracial, multicultural, open and affirming and accessible congregation that tripled in size after making its commitment to reach out in welcome to all.

A variety of workshops exploring strategies and disciplines of transformative evangelism will also be offered.

Look for a complete schedule of lectures, workshops and fees to be posted on the CTS website, www.ctschicago.edu, by the end of January. You may also contact the Rev. David Pattee, associate vice president, at 773.322.0261, or dpattee@ctschicago.edu.

In Thanksgiving and Rememberance

CTS Marks the Passing of Three Influential Leaders

CTS, held a service, November 7, 2001, to remember the lives of three former faculty and administrators. Dean Dow Edgerton spoke to honor former Dean Robert S. Moore; Professor Emeritus André LaCocque spoke to honor former President Howard S. Schomer; President Emeritus Kenneth B. Smith remembered the life and works of former President Shelby B. Rooks.

Robert S. Moore, former academic dean of CTS, died in Chicago, Illinois February 15, 2001, at the age of 83. Moore served as dean from 1955 to 1975; his tenure at the seminary was marked by fine scholarship, a lively consciousness of the world, and deep commitments to racial and economic justice. He helped lead integration struggles in Chicago in the 1960's and helped found programs for underprivileged children and handicapped adults. In addition to his work at CTS, Moore's career included several congregational pastorates, and service on boards for programs such as Upward Bound, Head Start, and homes for developmentally disabled adults.

Shelby B. Rooks, former president of CTS, died in Norfolk, Virginia May 19, 2001, at the age of 76. Rooks served as president of CTS from 1974 to 1984, and was the first African-American to lead a predominantly white theological school in the U.S. He made a tremendous impact in this position, overseeing an increase in the seminary's minority enrollment to 30% of the student body and helping to shape the seminary's commitment to diversity and multicultural education. In addition to his work at CTS, Rooks' career included congregational pastorates, work with the Fund for Theological Education, and numerous leadership roles in the United Church of Christ and the National Council of Churches. His last position before retirement in 1992 was as chief executive officer of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.

Howard Schomer, former president of CTS, died in Oakland, California June 28, 2001, at the age of 86. President of the seminary and professor of church history from 1955 to 1966, Schomer worked in close partnership with Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference during the civil rights movement, recruited Jesse Jackson, Sr. to study at CTS, and mentored a generation of religious activists in pursuit of justice and peace. In addition to his remarkable work at CTS, Schomer's career included coordinating American Congregational contributions to post-WW II European relief and reconstruction programs, serving as editor-at large for *The Christian Century*, working with the National Council of Churches in its Division of Overseas Ministries, and serving with the UCC Board for World Ministries. [*Contributions in their honor can be made to the CTS General Scholarship Fund. 773.322.0273*]

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Give and Get through Gift Annuities

by **The Rev. David Pattee,**
Associate Vice President & Campaign Director

The Reverends Robert (B.D. 1942) and Viola (M.A. 1942) Moore purchased their first Charitable Gift Annuity naming Chicago Theological Seminary as the remainder beneficiary in 1993. Through this investment managed by the United Church Foundation, Bob and Viola earned a quarterly income and took a charitable deduction on their income tax.


Bob, a beloved dean of students at CTS, 1955-75, died last February 15, but the annuity income continues for Viola, the primary beneficiary, throughout her lifetime with the remainder coming to CTS.

Just a few weeks ago, Viola purchased another Charitable Gift Annuity with CTS as the remainder beneficiary. Again, she receives an income (at the fixed annuity rate of 9.7%) and is able to claim a charitable deduction. It's a smart and simple way to make a substantial contribution to CTS with financial resources that continue to work for you as long as you need them.

A Charitable Gift Annuity managed by the United Church Foundation naming CTS as remainder beneficiary can be established with \$5,000 or more. For additional information please contact the Rev. David Pattee, tel. 773.322.0261, e-mail: dpattee@ctschicago.edu.

FOR CHRIST AND THE CHURCHES

WINTER 2002


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