

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON ANTIRACISM

We, the Board of Trustees of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, have decided to take a stand against racism and the insidious structures of privilege and power. We are committed to identifying and dismantling all such structures in this Seminary. We make this commitment in full knowledge and understanding that it will involve uncomfortable and painful self-examination, both personal and corporate, and that it will require deep and difficult changes at all levels of our beloved institution, including this board. We are humbly yet firmly convinced that in making this commitment we are being led by the Spirit, we are demonstrating obedience to God's will and plan, and we are following the example of Jesus, Our Lord and Savior. We pray that God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer will redeem our sins and guide, bless and help our creative efforts to let God do a "new thing" at New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

Students & Faculty in Worship at a Multicultural Worship Service



The Work of ARTT

a prerequisite for transforming institutions. As students preparing to be leaders in the Church, it is essential that you understand and are equipped to address racism wherever you serve.

Those interested in becoming part of the ongoing conversation and participating in the work of NBTS' transformation into an anti-racist institution can speak with a member of the ARTT Leadership Team about training. Current Leadership Team members include: Dr. Willard Ashley, Sandra Austin, Dr. Warren Dennis, Dr. Joanne Noel, Cora Taitt (NY campus), and Vernon Williams.

Or you can send an email to arttleadership@nbts.edu. (Con't from page 3)

- Sandra Austin, ARTT Leadership

Students Stakeholders Committee Participants

Chris Brennan Glorya Johnson

Joanne Noel Raynard Smith

Marie Mainard O'Connell

Jesse Pettengill

Vernon Williams

bringing forth the beloved community

The purpose of the Anti-Racism Transformation Team Student Stakeholders' group is articulate, implement, and share the mission of ARTT throughout the seminary student body at both New Brunswick's and St. John's campuses. To achieve this goal, the Student Stakeholders' Sub-Committee has sought to be involved in the life of the seminary through a variety of initiatives. First, we have participated in the Fall and Spring new student orientations. Then during the **First Things First** worship services, the SSCARTT conducted two multicultural worship services in which we celebrated the

diversity of our student body at both campuses. At St. John's, Jessie Pettengill and Glorya Johnson (alumna) have been invaluable to maintaining the momentum. Also, ARTT commissioned the SSC to do a SWOT analysis of Sage library in which we sought to envision making the library (stacks and space) reflective of the diversity of our current student population which is diverse in gender, race, age, and denomination. We concluded our endeavors with the forums conducted this Spring by Marie O'Connell Mainard and Vernon Williams on the New Brunswick campus and Jessie Pettengill

and Dr. Richard Sturm at the St John's Campus. As leader of SSC, I thank Chris Brennan who shared the leadership with me and helped to keep the ARTT impetus going for this academic year. Also Glorya Johnson, Joanne Noel, Jessie Pettengill, Marie Mainard O'Connell and Vernon Williams deserve to be commended for the creative energy, leadership, and foresight that they brought to our meetings and the implementation of our objectives for this academic year. Through these activities, we have sought to 'bring forth' a glimpse of the Beloved Community. It is our hope that the NBTS community has benefited from our efforts.

-Dr. Raynard Smith, SSC Leader

THE ANTI-RACISM TRANSFORMATION TEAM
newsletter

ats and anti-racism

The Association of Theological Schools, which is the accrediting agency for more than 250 seminaries in the United States and Canada, is working hard on a new set of policy guidelines that would encourage its member schools to strive to become culturally competent communities. Since New Brunswick Theological Seminary is on the cutting edge of all seminaries in this regard, it would be helpful to assess our goals in reference to the evolving policy guidelines within the community of seminaries to which we belong.

It would be fair to observe that the guiding principles of ATS at the moment seem to focus primarily on the individual rather than the institution. There is one exception to this which is found in principle 8 which reads: "Personal, cultural and institutionalized

discrimination creates and sustains privileges for some while creating and sustaining disadvantages for others." The work of the Anti-Racism Transformation Team finds this principle to be at the heart of its work. While we certainly want to nurture a deep appreciation of the multitude of traditions represented in our richly diverse community, we particularly want to ferret out the systemic ways that racism still infects our common life.

This commitment has caused the team to review the hiring practices of the seminary and the important ways that we will require all of our employees to become culturally competent and agents of change. It has caused us to begin to review the policies that govern our admissions and our financial aid. It has caused us to initiate difficult conversations

about where power is located in our community and who is at the table when important decisions get made. It has caused us to look closely at the three policy groups, the Faculty Council, the Administrative Council and the Board of Trustees and ask how each asks the essential question: Does the action we are considering advantage some and disadvantage others?

While there is little doubt that ATS has begun to take the issue of cultural competency seriously for its 250 seminaries, NBTS began this difficult process more than five years ago and thus has much to share with others who seek to move toward more just and fair communities of faith and learning and a more just nation and world in which to live and serve.

-Dr. Gregg Mast
President of NBTS

GRADUATION GREETINGS

HAPPY GRADUATION TO ALL NBTS' GRADUATES. MAY THE SPIRIT OF GOD FILL YOU & MAY GOD DIRECT YOU AS YOU GO OUT INTO THE WORLD TO SERVE. -From NBTS' Anti Racism Transformation Team



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shaping an anti-racist church
new book by Joseph Barndt.
In bookstores by June 1, 2010.



NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
DR. JOANNE NOEL
SSC PARTICIPANT

eternal disruptions

During the multicultural worship service coordinated by the Student Stakeholders Committee of the Anti-Racism Transformation Team (SSCARTT) at NBTS' New Brunswick campus, Dr. Jessica Davis, Dean of Students, delivered the following sermon based on John 4:20-26:

As I looked at the text for tonight, the Well spoke to me in a way it had not before. This story is not just about the Samaritan woman as described by the commentaries that have unpacked her personal life.

The Well spoke to me in a new way. We all know that the Word speaks to all of us in different ways at different times on our life journey. It is a living word!

The well spoke to me and said, "Meet me here and tell others to come." So tonight, I invite each of you to "Meet me at Jacob's Well."

So, what is the Well? Why are we here at the Well tonight? Jacob's Well represents the past and speaks to the possibilities of our futures. This Well is an institution. It has been institutionalized.

It is not just a well, the biblical text says, It is Jacob's Well. It speaks to power. It says come to me and I will quench your thirst. I will not ask why you are thirsty, I will just quench your thirst as long as you come to me.

It will not question why it only sees you at noon. It will give you what it was

created to give you and nothing more. Jacob's Well is an institution. Jacob's Well has been institutionalized. Jacob's Well represents a meeting place for institutionalized racism to manifest.

But something happens. This Well meets with eternal truth and will never be the same. Jesus disrupts this meeting place.

Why are we here tonight at Jacob's Well? We find ourselves at this meeting place because of what the break between the Samaritans and the Jews in 300 BCE as first narrated in 2 Kings 17. The Samaritans were the descendants of the surviving Israelites of the Northern Kingdom who intermarried after the Fall of Samaria in 722 BCE. The Samaritans built and worshipped at a shrine outside of Shechem. The shrine competed with the Temple in Jerusalem. The shrine was eventually destroyed by Jewish troops in 128 BCE. Seven hundred years of religious and racial prejudice separated the Jews and the Samaritans.

Why are we here tonight at Jacob's Well? In 1619, the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia received a Dutch vessel whose crew was starving. There were twenty captured Africans aboard the ship. The crew exchanged the Africans for food and money. Slavery had come to North America in that moment.

Then Jesus showed up and change came to Jacob's Well. Jesus engaged in an eternal disruption. If you want to see

"Jacob's Well represents a meeting place for institutionalized racism to manifest."

change at NBTS, engage in eternal disruptions. If you want to see change in your churches and communities, engage in eternal disruptions.

How? Jesus broke the protocol of the day on his way to Jacob's Well. He broke protocol at the Well. This moment was scandalous. A Jewish man speaking with a Samaritan woman is scandalous. A Jewish teacher/ rabbi speaking with a woman in public is scandalous. A Jew drinking from a Samaritan's vessel is scandalous.

This was an eternal disruption. Jesus came to disrupt. Jesus speaks truth to power. Jesus says this well will never satisfy your thirst because it does not have the capacity. But what I have will satisfy.

-Dr. Jessica Davis, Dean of Students

SUMMER READING

*Sue Annis Hammond and Andrea B. Mayfield: *Naming Elephants: How to Surface Undiscussables for Greater Organizational Success*

***Preparing for 2040: Enhancing Capacity to Educate and Minister in a Multiracial World* from the *ATS Journal on Theological Education*, Vol. 45, Number 1, 2009.

multicultural forum at St John's

In a continuing effort to root out the harmful effects of institutional racism at New Brunswick Theological Seminary and its satellite locations the Student Stakeholders Committee of ARTT held a student forum at the St. John's University NBTS campus in Jamaica Queens on Monday May 3rd. The goal of the forum was to introduce the mission of ARTT, to encourage student

involvement in ARTT, and to explain the commitment of the seminary to work with the Crossroads Anti-Racism consulting firm to end institutionalized racism at New Brunswick Seminary. Twenty students attended the forum. The students participated in a discussion of internalized racial oppression and internalized racial superiority and spent time sharing their

own definitions and experiences of racism.

Present at the meeting were former as well as current active members of ARTT: Barbara Felker, April Beckles, and Jesse Pettengill.

Also present at the forum were St. John's Campus director, Dr. Richard Sturm, and adjunct professors: Dr. Laura Sinclair and Dr. Jennifer Thweat-Bates.

-Jesse Pettengill
SSC Participant

artt at work

A major accomplishment of ARTT this academic year was that the Board of Trustees approved ARTT's recommendation to update the mandate of ARTT in January of 2010. The mandate now empowers ARTT to examine and make recommendations concerning all policies and practices within the seminary, and instructs all policy-making bodies to engage the recommendations in a spirit of trust, hope, openness and sincerity. However, if you are having trouble getting your arms around the idea that racism is imbedded within the NBTS institution, it is likely

because practices and attitudes of racism have become invisible, "like the air we breathe"—it's just the way it is. Institutional racism is imbedded within all institutional structures, including the Church. Therefore, everyone in the seminary community is strongly encouraged to participate in the next 2-1/2 day training that we hope to schedule in August or September. This training helps participants to see with new eyes and hear with new ears, and gives them the language with which to engage in this

Important conversation and work. It is transformational, and transformation of individuals is



Members of the Anti-Racism Transformation Team

-CON'T ON PAGE 4

how effective is multicultural worship?

The Student Stakeholders Committee sponsored the **First Things First** worship service on Tuesday, March 23rd at the New Brunswick Campus. Once again, the team was interested in providing a multicultural worship experience. However, the team also wanted to evaluate the effect of these services on the community, and thus decided that a survey was the most appropriate tool for measuring the impact of these services. Inspired by team member, Dr. Joanne Noel's D. Min survey tool, the team developed an 18-question survey regarding the seminary's experience of multicultural worship. Respondents were

asked to rank their agreement on a five-point scale to statements such as, "These services have enhanced my own ideas regarding worship" and "I felt valued and appreciated after a multicultural service." In addition, respondents were asked specifically about our most recent **First Things First** service, and responded to statements regarding the use of multiple languages in worship and other aspects of the service. We hope that through this survey we are better able to understand how our community responds to a multicultural model of worship, and help us consider how we might celebrate our blessed diversity in worship in the

"how might we celebrate our blessed diversity in worship in the future?"

future. We would like to thank all our respondents--and if you did not reply, but would like to share your opinion with us, please send a note to kmainardo@students.nbts.edu for a copy of the survey.

-Marie Mainard O'Connell
SSC Participant

a swot of sage

A SWOT analysis which examined the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the Gardner A. Sage Library was done this semester. During the discussion some of the strengths identified were: the archives of the RCA located there and the rich and deep collections in many areas. Conversely, some of the weaknesses were: the mono-cultural feel of the library, and its lack of depth in certain traditions represented in the student body. One of the opportunities identified was the need for more and better space, and one of the threats that the SWOT recognized was the fact that the tradition and history as reflected in the art gallery make persons of color uncomfortable.

SSC had an opportunity to review these points to determine what were easily fixed, what required long-term solutions, and what might be topics for further discussion. For example, the lack of climate control or handicapped accessibility will need to be addressed in the campus planning conversations involving land use. The lack of depth in certain traditions can be addressed in drawing on the expertise of faculty and published bibliographies to build up the collections. Much conversation centered on the gallery, and how it can be used to visually interpret a broader history of the Seminary, more reflective of the various constituencies that are now represented here. The issue will be further discussed in ARTT caucuses and in the larger team.

-Chris Brennan, SSC Participant