“Looking Back, Stepping Forward: A Photo Exhibition”

The Center for the Church and the Black Experience has served as a site of hospitality, inspiration, innovation and hope for black students, faculty, staff and community members since its inception fifty years ago. This photo instillation seeks to commemorate select historical moments that highlight the beauty and brilliance of Black life cultivated through the intentional work of the CBE. This instillation is not a full representation of the history of CBE. We know our history often goes beyond what is chronicled in archives, so we want acknowledge the unnamed faces, unheard voices, and personal stories of the Black folks unrepresented in the annals. We honor your intelligence, leadership, voices and bodily presence, because without the collective effort of each Black person existing and persisting at Garrett-Evangelical, we would not have made it to this fifty year milestone. So, we celebrate every Black body that has inherently radicalized G-ETS through irrevocable joy, artistic expression, Black brilliance, Black worship, impeccable fashion and style, bold leadership, transformative protest and communal love. Take a look back by re-membering the past as we step forward into a moment of redefining and reimagining Black life at Garrett-Evangelical for the days to come.

Curator: Gina A. S. Robinson
Creative Director: LaSheena Williams
1970's

If you're serious about black liberation, don't knock the black church. Prepare to take it ever—consider its professional ministry.

Interested? Fill out the card below or write to:

Dr. Howard D. John
Department of Social Relations
Howard University
Washington, D.C.

INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

Date: October 26, 1976

To: Al Caldwell

From: Hazel Gonzales, CRCR

Subject:

As per our telephone conversation, please arrange for the library to have on display books, periodicals, and other such materials relating to Dr. Howard John as an effort to not only publicize Dr. John's visit but as an educational resource to those who utilize the library facilities. Also, as was mentioned over the telephone, the Church and the Black Experience Center would like to reserve several dates for usage of the display case in the lobby for the following occasions:

- From the 26th of February to the entire month of February, 1979 - Black History Month
- From the 26th of April to the entire month of April, 1979 - Constitution (Harvey)
- The week of May 14, 1979 - Black Theological Scholars Consultation
- Early weeks in June, 1979 - African Study Tour Group

Please confirm these dates. Your cooperation is appreciated.
A DECADE
70's A BEGINNING NOW THE 80's
10 YEARS "Where to NOW. BLACK PEOPLE?"
1980's

Howard Thurman Consultation
Inaugural Program
April 18-20, 1983

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Evansville, Indiana

10th Anniversary
Day Long Program
December 5, 1980

Breakfast
6:00 a.m.

Class Visitations
9:00 a.m.

Communion
11:00 a.m.

Breakfast
Cafeteria

Morning Session

12:00 NOON

Presidential Address
Luncheon Speaker

Workshop

Free Time

1:15 p.m.

Dr. Gideon Berry, Moderator (75)
Pastor, New Stuyvesant UMC
Chicago, Illinois

Dr. Gregory Green (73)
Pastor, First Chapel AME Church
Chicago, Illinois

Rev. Willis Stepphen (79)
Associate Pastor
Junction United Christian Church
Chicago, Illinois

Week
2:45 p.m.

Panel (3) Small Group Discussions
7:00 p.m.

Room 101, 102, 201, 204, 211

Evening Session

5:30 p.m.

Whitney Marion
Church, Illinois

Leisure Time
4:00 p.m.

Treatment Outpatient
6:00 p.m.

Reflection Questions:
1. What are your group's strengths? How do you bring these to the church community?
2. What are your group's weaknesses? How do you work on these?
3. What are your group's opportunities? How do you take advantage of these?
4. What are your group's threats? How do you respond to these?

The Chicago Religious Institute

The Chicago Religious Institute is a community of scholars and professionals from a wide range of disciplines who are committed to the study and practice of religious diversity. The Institute was founded in 1978 to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and the development of new approaches to the study of religion. The Institute's work is grounded in the belief that the study of religion is essential to the development of a truly pluralistic society.

Chair: By the editorial board
Panel: Rev. Taylor

Sponsor: Announcement

This lecture is in memory of Rev. Dr. James H. Cone, an important figure in the movement for social justice and human rights in the United States. Cone was a theologian, activist, and educator who was committed to the liberation of oppressed peoples. He was a leader in the civil rights movement and a voice for social justice in the United States. His work continues to inspire and challenge people around the world to work towards a more just and equitable society.
1990’s

FALL QUARTER 1999

The Center for the Church and the Black Experience

DR. LINDA E. THOMAS
Assistant Professor of Theology and Anthropology

FALL FORUM
"Applying Eurocentric Theological Principles in the African American Church"
Tuesday, October 23, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

FALL LECTURE
DR. MICHAEL DYSON
Professor of Religion Studies, Senior Fellow of the DuSable Humanities Center, DEPAUL UNIVERSITY, CHICAGO
Wednesday, October 20, 9:30 a.m.

OPEN HOUSE
Thursday, October 22, 9:30 - 11:00 a.m.

CULTURAL SHARING
Rev. Sidwell Mosiqathu of Pretoria, South Africa
Tuesday, November 12, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Seminary welcomes new CBE director

When Linda Thomas takes over as director of the Center for the Church and Black Experience, she’ll be helping to nurture a vision that started almost 30 years ago, a vision that sought to develop African-American church leaders and integrate the African-American experience into the church as a whole.

In addition to acting as director of CBE, Thomas will be assistant professor of theology and anthropology. She comes to Garrett-Evangelical from Iliff School of Theology where she was assistant professor of anthropology and religion. Previously she was dean of students and lecturer at Wesley Theological Seminary, and she has been pastor of two churches in New York. Thomas has done extensive research in the congregational life among the poor in post-apartheid South Africa. That research was supported by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trust.

“I’m excited about being director of CBE because it will provide me an opportunity to offer leadership in implementing a dynamic model of leadership as we enter the 21st century,” Thomas said.

Thomas joins a notable list of past CBE directors, all of whom have worked to further CBE’s primary goal: to integrate the black experience into the total life and learning of Garrett-Evangelical. CBE was created in 1970 when Bishop Edsel Ammons, who was then on the Garrett Theological Seminary faculty, and several students conceived of a program that would improve the preparation and training of black church leaders, but also affect the entire seminary.

1998 Fall Lecture

Students, faculty, community come to hear Cornel West

By Betty Campbell

On October 14, 1998, the Garrett-Evangelical seminary community welcomed Professor West as its 1998 Fall Lecture speaker. The lecture was sponsored by the African-American Baptist Men and Women of the Church and the Black Experience Center. The lecture was entitled “Black Theology in the United States: How to Begin?”

West was the featured speaker at the 1998 Fall Lecture. The lecture was entitled “Black Theology in the United States: How to Begin?”

West has had a distinguished academic career, graduating from Harvard in 1973 and receiving his MA and PhD degrees from Princeton University. He has served as professor of religion and director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Race at Harvard University. He has been a passionate advocate for civil rights and social justice, working with organizations such as the NAACP, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Center for the Study of Religion and Race.

West has written numerous books, including “The Color of Water: A Black Man’s Education in the White racists.” His latest book, “Race Matters,” has been hailed as a masterpiece of American literature.

West is known for his insightful analysis of American society, his powerful oratory, and his ability to connect with audiences of all backgrounds.

The lecture was attended by students, faculty, and members of the community. It was a moving experience for many, as they reflected on the issues surrounding race and religion that are so prevalent today.

The Center for the Church and Black Experience is under the leadership of Linda Thomas, assistant professor of theology and anthropology. The Center is committed to fostering a dynamic model of leadership that integrates the African-American experience into the church and society. The Center is committed to offering leadership in shaping the future of the African-American church and society, and it welcomes students, faculty, and community members to participate in its programs and events.

By Betty Campbell

On October 14, 1998, the Garrett-Evangelical seminary community welcomed Professor West as its 1998 Fall Lecture speaker. The lecture was sponsored by the African-American Baptist Men and Women of the Church and the Black Experience Center. The lecture was entitled “Black Theology in the United States: How to Begin?”

West has had a distinguished academic career, graduating from Harvard in 1973 and receiving his MA and PhD degrees from Princeton University. He has served as professor of religion and director of the Center for the Study of Religion and Race at Harvard University. He has been a passionate advocate for civil rights and social justice, working with organizations such as the NAACP, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Center for the Study of Religion and Race.

West has written numerous books, including “The Color of Water: A Black Man’s Education in the White racists.” His latest book, “Race Matters,” has been hailed as a masterpiece of American literature.

West is known for his insightful analysis of American society, his powerful oratory, and his ability to connect with audiences of all backgrounds.

The lecture was attended by students, faculty, and members of the community. It was a moving experience for many, as they reflected on the issues surrounding race and religion that are so prevalent today.

The Center for the Church and Black Experience is under the leadership of Linda Thomas, assistant professor of theology and anthropology. The Center is committed to fostering a dynamic model of leadership that integrates the African-American experience into the church and society. The Center is committed to offering leadership in shaping the future of the African-American church and society, and it welcomes students, faculty, and community members to participate in its programs and events.
The Center for the Church and Black Experience Family Reunion Conference:
“Renewing our Commitment to Theology, Preaching, and Social Justice”

brought home black alumni from near and far spanning classes over the last 55 years. We were reminded that The Center for the Church and the Black Experience, initiated over 20 years ago by the leadership of Bishop Austin and President Mathew Norton and created by the late Reverend Russell T. Trawick, founded by a dedicated black student body including George Perry and Herbert Meaux, who in its early days was opposed and even closed down by a white governor. The conference was an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come since the pre-CBE days when two black students would graduate per year and when there were no black faculty. Both Dr. Perry and Meaux were honored because their work and contributions to the group that those fortunate to be “servants in the big house” of our institutions must constantly work for others and remain rooted in black people’s realities.

The reunion conference, featuring several of our graduates serving with excellence in the church and academy, was marked by several events:

- The Joseph Harrison Jackson Lecture

James Hal Cone

Wednesday, April 26, 2000 at 7:00 p.m.
"God and Black Suffering"
Chapel of the Unnamed Faithful

Thursday, April 27, 2000 at 4:00 p.m.
“The Vocation of a Theologian”
Chapel of the Unnamed Faithful

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Evanston, Illinois

Dr. James H. Cone
Alumn of Garrett-Evangelical
Charles A. Briggs Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology
Union Theological Seminary, New York City
The Center for the Church and the Black Experience (CBE), founded in 1970, offers the seminary and the broader community opportunities for understanding Christian faith via interracial and cross-cultural perspectives. It also seeks to facilitate greater understanding of religious leadership dynamics, organizational change, and public outreach and witness of black churches in relation to the broader religious and social context. Black faculty members and other scholars operating through CBE provide research, mentoring, and training via classroom teaching, publishing, seminars, workshops, and consultation to churches, community agencies, and the Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary community. Courses taught by CBE faculty are open to all students and are designed to be fully integrated into the overall curriculum of the seminary. CBE recognizes a responsibility to highlight the richness of the African American religious experience while at the same time enabling students and church leaders in general, to maximize their broader theological learning and equip themselves for effective professional leadership in increasingly multi-cultural ministry contexts.
“If it wasn’t for the women…”

Rev. Dr. Cheryl Townsend Gilkes
Helen Fannings Ammons joins husband in retirement

Helen Fannings Ammons retired at the end of October just as past director of student life. She and her husband, Bishop Edsel Ammons, have devoted an impressive number of years to Garrett-Evangelical. Bishop Ammons' years after seminary included three years as a student pastor in 1948 and ending in 1957, eight years as a faculty member (1966-74), and five years as a seminary president (1972-77). He has also been an administrator since 1979. Index was in use for five years (1977-77 and an administrator for 25 years (1977-99).

See inside article for more information on the retirements of Helen Ammons and two other administrators.