

Collegium 2011 Précis

George Kimmich Beach

Panelist, "The Living Legacy of C. Conrad Wright: A Memorial Forum," sponsored by Harvard Divinity School and the UU History and Heritage Society, at Harvard Divinity School, October 26, 2011. My remarks, "Conrad Wright's 'Search for a Useable Past'," will appear in revised form in a forthcoming issue of The Journal of Unitarian Universalist History.

Lecture, "'What's Past Is Prologue': James Luther Adams and the Unitarian Universalists," James Luther Adams Forum on Religion and Society," sponsored by the JLA Foundation, at Andover Newton Theological School, November 10, 2011; Prof. Michael Hogue and Rev. Thomas Schade, respondents.

Book MS in progress, tentatively titled, The Seminal Gospel: A Personal Commentary on the Gospel of Mark.

Blog on "religion and social development," with monthly postings since January 2011, www.campicello.wordpress.com; includes a "James Luther Adams Workshop" page, which will carry the text of my JLA Forum (2011) lecture.

Alison Downie, Ph.D. downie818@comcast.net

I am teaching out of the Religious Studies and Philosophy Departments at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. My paper reflects my specialization in Christian feminist theology and my interest in spirituality and interreligious dialogue. I am also very interested in feminist perspectives in ethics.

In addition to these areas, I am very interested in the scholarship of teaching and learning. I continue to learn and study about best teaching practices, especially for underprepared students, and hope to pursue reflective writing on the spiritual dimensions of teaching.

Helene Knox, Ph.D., M. Div. **Independent Scholar** hknox@juno.com www.KnoxProEditing.com

I am honored to have been selected to make two presentations of my scholarly work at the 2011 Collegium at Los Gatos.

First Presentation: "Chronology of the Radical Reformation in Transylvania"
Format: A scholarly narration with endnotes, in an unusual format

This 20-page paper can be read online or on paper, and presented orally to an audience, inviting response and feedback. The Chronology was published in 2004 by Starr King School for the Ministry as an invited article in *The Role of the Dissenter in Western Christianity: From Jesus Through the 16th Century*, a book based on the Fifth Earl Morse Wilbur History Colloquium, in Berkeley in 2003. Its editor, the Rev. Dr. Alicia McNary Forsey, has told me I may present my own paper elsewhere, like at Collegium. As a professional editor, I compiled the Chronology by carefully selecting information from reputable scholarly sources and weaving it into a coherent summary, supported by 90 notes. The factual information is presented in a comfortable storytelling voice, year by important year. (For example: 1557, June: One of Isabella's first acts at the Diet of Torda of 1557 was to issue a decree providing equal toleration to both Catholics and Protestants. Given the proportion between them now, however, Wilbur judges that it seemed intended to secure the Catholic minority from further attacks by the Lutherans.) With careful attention, most readers can understand who Francis David was and what the Protestant Reformation and the Radical Reformation were all about.

Second Presentation: "Snapshot Poems of Our Universalist and Unitarian Forebears"
Format: A Creative Work in Progress, presented as an oral Poetry Reading

I am grateful to the Program Chair, Dr. Rosecrans, for soliciting alternatives to the standard formats, "even creative work," which my second proposal is, though it is grounded in knowledge of UU history. I received a Feminist Theology Award in 1991 for this project, from the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, to encourage me to continue to write my relatively short poems of UU historical figures, in a way that would be historically accurate, emotionally moving, and accessible to people having little acquaintance with history or poetry. But above all, my aim and that of the UUWF was to create a book that would put the Universalist, Unitarian, and Unitarian Universalist women into UU history. I am still writing more of these poems. At previous Collegium meetings, I have presented some of them for the assembled scholars, to favorable response, and the poems have been enthusiastically received in UU congregations. I have also been invited to teach both poetry and UU History at the UU Church of Berkeley, CA.

When I was finishing my time at Starr King, I was chosen to be the first Intern for the Unitarian Universalist Women's Heritage Society, then under the leadership of the Rev. Dorothy Emerson in Medford, Massachusetts. I learned a great deal from my internship, and helped Dorothy finish what she called "the anthology," published by Skinner House in 1999 as *Standing Before Us: Unitarian Universalist Women and Social Reform, 1976-1936*. As a Contributing Editor, I was responsible for the religion section of the book, 150 pages out of over 600.

Bob Lane

I have a varied background in law, literature, and theatre. My past scholarship has been in historicist literary studies, examining the intersection between literature and sociopolitical dynamics.

My present work grows out of my conviction that our current political conflict poses the question, not of *how* we will be together, but *whether* we will be together at all; whether there

are or will be social or political institutions of consequence that recognize and embody our essential connectedness. Because our life together is a sacred embodiment of our humanity, this conflict is at its heart a religious one. If our theology is going to have a bearing on this struggle, I believe we must deepen our understanding of how this connectedness manifests itself in social dynamics and institutions, articulate its shape and importance in compelling terms, and offer concrete ways for people to live into the faith of our common humanity, especially in collective action.

Dan McKanan
Ralph Waldo Emerson UUA Senior Lecturer
Harvard Divinity School
45 Francis Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
dmckanan@hds.harvard.edu

My big news for this year is the November 1 publication of *Prophetic Encounters: Religion and the American Radical Tradition*. This book explores the interrelationship between religious and radical traditions in the United States from roughly 1800 to the present, with strong emphasis on labor and socialist movements, abolitionism and anti-racism, feminism, and peace. I seek to show that a wide variety of faith traditions have been integrally related to all aspects of the left, including those conventionally perceived as “secular.”

Since finishing work on this book, I have been playing catch-up on various projects, helping Harvard Divinity School prepare for our upcoming accreditation visit, and beginning to prepare for my next major research undertaking. This will be an extended study—perhaps encompassing two or more books—of the social teachings of esoteric and metaphysical traditions in the United States (such as spiritualism, New Thought, Theosophy, Anthroposophy, and New Age movements). Though these traditions have often been perceived as individualistic and socially disengaged, they have been very close to the left at certain moments, and at other times have proposed alternate paths to radical ends. In exploring these traditions, I hope to build bridges of dialogue between them and both Christian and post-Christian liberationist theologies. Finally, I am embarking on a project to create a new collection of primary sources for UU, about which I will have more to say at Collegium.

Rev. Myriam Renaud
Ph.D. Candidate in Theology
University of Chicago's Divinity School
Chicago, Illinois
mrenaud@uchicago.edu

Earlier this year, I co-taught a course in liberal theology with Mike Hogue (Associate Professor of Theology) at Meadville Lombard. The course, a five-day intensive, had over forty seminarians! Starting in January 2012, I will serve as Adjunct Professor at Morton College in suburban Chicago where I will teach two sessions of world religions.

I completed my dissertation proposal to the satisfaction of both of my co-advisors, William Schweiker (University of Chicago) and Kathryn Tanner (Yale), and of my reader, Sharon Welch (Meadville Lombard). I received official notification of my Ph.D. Candidate status in June. I have been hard at work on my first chapter. It analyzes the three phases of Gordon Kaufman's theological method with a special focus on his constructive approach to the symbol "God." I will complete this chapter and present it for review in early January.

Two columns that I wrote were published in the *UU World*—the first on "God" (Spring 2011 issue) and the second on "grace" (Fall 2011 issue).

I taught an online theology class for The Church of the Larger Fellowship. The class started in mid-September and ran for five sessions. I developed a syllabus, selected all of the reading materials and wrote a 4-5 page reflection guide for each session.

I will have the honor of presenting the members of the panel who will speak at the AAR 2011's UU Scholars and Friends. The theme which I broached in my own presentation in 2010—ritual—was chosen as the theme for this year's panel.

I continue to blog at TheNakedTheologian.com and to preach at various congregations across the country.

Rev. Sheri Prud'homme

sprudhomme@uuma.org

I am in my second year of a doctoral program in Interdisciplinary Studies in History and Theology at the Graduate Theological Union. I am working on the development of Unitarian and Universalist theologies of nature, particularly in the American West, 1850-1910. This spring I plan to propose my comprehensive exams. Prior to returning to school, my work had been in the ministry of religious education. My doctoral work is inspired, in part, by the hunger for deeper understanding of our theological heritage that I encountered in my ministries, especially among youth and young adults.

Arliss Ungar

arliss@ungar.us

I am a former Trustee of Starr King School for the Ministry, from which I hold an honorary doctorate, and where, as a volunteer, I head the Balázs Scholars Program which each year brings a Transylvanian Unitarian Minister to study at the school and preach throughout the country. I wrote a book on the history of the school, *With Vision and Courage: Starr King School for the Ministry, The History of its First 100 Years, 1904 – 2004*. My work as a lay historian is often about persons associated with the seminary: Rev. Thomas Starr King, Rev. Aron Gilmartin, Rev. Josiah Bartlett, Francis Cutting.

