Hope, Integrity and Imagination

2022 PATHWAYS TO MORAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, OCT 21, 2022 | 8AM-4PM
VANDERBILT DIVINITY SCHOOL

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE
MORNING SESSIONS

8:00am BREAKFAST (DIV 124)

8:30-8:45 am: WELCOME and CENTERING (DIV 124)
Graham Reside, CTPML Executive Director

8:45-9:00am OPENING REMARKS
Laine Walters Young, CTPML Assistant Director

9:00-10:00AM: MORNING KEYNOTE AND Q&A
Lama Rod Owens, Buddhist Minister, author, activist, yoga instructor, authorized lama Ador (MDiv ’25), VDS student

10:00-10:30AM: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS
Krista Westervelt, CTPML Grad Assistant

10:30-10:45AM: BREAK
SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP (DIV 124)
Jill Schock, End-of-Life Doula

SOCIAL COHESION AMIDST RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE (DIV 127)
Malak Elmessiry, Davis Glen Ellis, Namrah Ajmal, and Ethan Morris
Vanderbilt University Student Interfaith Council

Based off their popular Dialogue Dinners model of engagement, leaders will first share about their dialogue process and the rationale behind it before leading the group in story-sharing based on the conference’s themes of hope, integrity, and imagination.

CAL TURNER PROGRAM INTERPROFESSIONAL STUDENT MORAL LEADERSHIP FELLOWSHIP (DIV 114)
Laine Walters Young and Mediatrix Kisienya, CTPMML staff

The Cal Turner Program for Moral Leadership's Interprofessional Student Fellowship encourages and equips master's level professional students to transform latent moral agency into a disciplined, developed, and collaborative practice of moral leadership sustained over a lifetime. This session will provide an overview of the fellowship's aims and activities, as well as what makes for a good fellowship candidate.
MORAL IMAGINATION AND INTERFAITH CONFLICT (DIV 112)
Aaron Stauffer
Director of VDS Lifelong Learning and Louisville Postdoctoral Institute Fellow (Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice)

Are interfaith conflicts a failure of our moral imagination? How do faith and justice leaders build communities that have the capacity to hold theological difference? This workshop will explore the importance of moral imagination in the interfaith movement. Participants will learn and test out the importance of active listening, critically consider the time and tempo of social change, and how they can refine their skills in interfaith community building.

12:30pm LUNCH (DIV 124)

12:45-1:45pm AFTERNOON KEYNOTE (DIV 124): Sustainable and Community-Engaged Hope
Yara González-Justiniano, Assistant Professor of Religion, Psychology, and Culture with emphasis in Latinx Studies, Vanderbilt Divinity School

1:45-2:00pm BREAK
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (DIV 124)

- Travis Claybrooks, CEO of the Raphah Institute
- Graham Reside, executive director of the Cal Turner Program for Moral Leadership, assistant professor of Ethics and Society, Vanderbilt Divinity School

Being human means harming other people and being harmed. How we respond to this reality informs the kind of relationships we will have and the kind of society in which we will live. Restorative Justice practices have emerged as an alternative to responding to harm, across a range of institutional settings. In this workshop we will explore the insights from Restorative approaches to crime and education to develop a set of practices and dispositions that will help us live a more restorative life; one that takes harm seriously, but also takes recovering from harm as an elemental feature of the good life.

CULTIVATING A NONVIOLENT HEART (DIV 127)

Phillis Isabella Sheppard
E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Chair
Professor of Religion, Psychology, and Culture, Director of the James Lawson Institute for the Research and Study of Nonviolent Movements, Vanderbilt Divinity School

Cultivating a Nonviolent Heart concerns itself with public, spiritual, and social practices that work to undo the cultural formation toward violence. The workshop, then, offers a Theoretical ethical framework grounded in embodiment, reflection, and action.
TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE THROUGH LIBERATORY PRACTICES (DIV 112)
Ashley Brown, Director of the Vanderbilt University Student Center for Social Justice and Identity

This workshop will acknowledge our dedication to fostering inclusive communities and advocating for equity while centering healing and community liberation. Using Barbara Love and Bobbi Harro’s work on liberation research, we will discuss the role of liberation in social justice work and how liberation is a transformative tool for social change. This interactive workshop will use contemplative and art-based pedagogies as its teaching style.

NARRATIVE CIRCLE (DIV 114)
Hasina Mohyuddin
Assistant Dean of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at Peabody College

One of the fundamental beliefs driving this process is that the most important journey we take is the 18 inches between our head and our heart. In our daily lives, we are often so caught up in all the things we need to do and accomplish, that we often do not have the space for personal reflection or thinking deeply about how our feelings are affecting our lives. We also often do not have spaces for sharing those reflections or stories with others. When we have the courage to be vulnerable and share our authentic stories, that we have an opportunity to create deep connections with others. And those connections can often help us see ourselves in a new light.
3:30-3:40PM: BREAK (DIV 124)

3:40-4:00PM: REFLECTION INTEGRATION (DIV 124)
• Rev. Laura Cheifetz, Associate Dean of Admissions for Vanderbilt Divinity School
• Rev. Soren Hessler, Director of Recruitment and Retention for Vanderbilt Divinity School
Considered one of the leaders of the next generation of Dharma teachers, Lama Rod Owens has a blend of formal Buddhist training and life experience that gives him a unique ability to understand, relate and engage with those around him in a way that’s spacious and sincere. He invites you into the cross sections of his life as a Black, queer male, born and raised in the South, and heavily influenced by the church and its community.

Lama Rod Owens was officially recognized by the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism after receiving his teaching authorization from his root teacher the Venerable Lama Norlha Rinpoche when he completed the traditional 3-year silent retreat program at Kagyu Thubten Chöling Monastery (KTC) outside of New York City. It was during this time that he dealt with years of past pain and trauma and found forgiveness and compassion for himself, what he views as a critical step before truly being able to help others.

Since coming out of retreat he has completed his Master of Divinity degree at Harvard Divinity School. Lama Rod also practices, studies, and teaches secular mindfulness and is a teacher with Inward Bound Mindfulness Education (iBme) where he is also a faculty member for the organization’s teacher training program. He is also heavily engaged in social change activism and has just released a book with Rev. angel Kyodo williams and Jasmine Syedullah entitled, Radical Dharma, Talking Race, Love and Liberation.
Dr. Yara González-Justiniano is Assistant Professor of Religion, Culture, and Psychology with emphasis in Latinx Studies at Vanderbilt University. She received a PhD in Theological Studies with concentration in church and society from Boston University School of Theology, where she also received her Master of Divinity. At the University of Puerto Rico, Dr. González-Justiniano earned a B.A. in Audiovisual Communications with a concentration on film; she also double majored in theater and modern languages. Her educational journey of interdisciplinarity inform the ways in which she approaches theological studies.

Dr. González-Justiniano has served as the national director of the Raíces Latinas Leadership Institute, where she managed leadership development programming and served as an academic adviser to participants. She also served as assistant director and Senior Program coordinator in the Office of Contextual Education and Community Partnerships at Boston University School of Theology. Her research and teaching interests include Latinx theologies, Latin American Liberation theology, ecclesiology, memory studies, postcolonial and decolonial theory, popular culture and film, and popular religion and theologies of hope.

She is also currently under care in the ordination process with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the New England region.
Jill Schock is the owner of DDLA Death Doula LA (est.2016) She is a Los Angeles native with over a decade of experience in end-of-life care. She received a Master’s Degree in Ethics and Theology from Vanderbilt University Divinity School.

Jill is a certified clinical chaplain, spiritual counselor, and ordained minister. She identifies as “spiritual not religious.” Her core values are to honor and advocate for options and choice for ALL humans at end-of-life. She believes in empowering her clients to step away from the impositions, traditions, and negative stigma around death, and embrace personal choice and style as the chapter of life comes to an end.

A “death doula” is someone who serves as a navigator, advocate, and experienced professional for the dying and their loved ones. Death Doula services range from pre-planning to education/support throughout the dying process, and after-death rituals and home celebrations.

Jill is a member of the National Home Funeral Alliance, and on the Advisory Board at End Of Life Choices California. She has been featured in The Los Angeles Times, NPR, Spectrum News 1, Parade, Wired, Goop and more! She is also a frequent guest on podcasts and speaks to groups at conferences and universities.
Travis Claybrooks is the founder and CEO of Raphah Institute. Raphah Institute confronts and solves root causes of social harm in the urban South. Travis completed his bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies at Thomas Edison State University and his Master of Divinity at Liberty University. He is currently pursuing his Doctorate in Strategic Leadership from Liberty University.

His eclectic background includes service in the public sector as a police officer and as a soldier in the U. S. Army, as well as in the nonprofit sector as a child advocate. He is an active community volunteer, holding membership on the First Horizon Bank Community Advisory Board, the Nashville Chamber of Commerce Education Report Card Committee, and the Partners in Care Stakeholder Committee. He has previously served as a member of the Restorative Justice Working Group at the United States Department of Justice.

Travis enjoys endurance athletics and weekend outings with his family. He is a Nashville native, currently residing in White House, TN, and can be reached at travis@raphah.org.
ADOR is a visual artist most widely known for his work documenting LGBTQ+ individuals in the Bible Belt - Divine Beings. His work often explores themes surrounding the queer identity.

Before becoming a photographer he served in the Navy and has since advocated for transgender service members throughout New York City.

After earning his BA in Visual Arts at Fordham University he spent a year at a wilderness school in the pacific north west. He lived in a natural made log cabin with no running water or electricity. This experience of coming back to nature and letting go of comfort in excess has created new curiosities to explore things such as, ancient DNA, somatic healing, and the wisdom and patterns of nature.

MALAK ELMESSIRY is a senior undergraduate majoring in Neuroscience and minoring in Language Sciences. Outside of her involvement in the Interfaith Council, she is a research assistant and a learning assistant. She enjoys exploring Nashville and its vibrant concert scene in her free time.

NAMRAH AJMAL is a senior undergraduate studying biomedical engineering and math. Outside of class they are very involved in religious life on campus and enjoy jigsaw puzzles and ping pong with friends.

ETHAN MORRIS a sophomore double majoring in oboe and philosophy. In his free time, he likes painting, playing ukulele, and talking about philosophy and religion.
AARON STAUFFER
is the Louisville Institute Postdoctoral Fellow at Vanderbilt Divinity School, working primarily with the Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice. A recent PhD graduate in social ethics at Union Theological Seminary in the city of New York, his dissertation was on the political role of sacred value in broad-based community organizing. He argued for the importance of religious values in the practice of community organizing.

Before his doctoral work and his seminary degree, Aaron organized with the Industrial Areas Foundation in San Antonio, Texas. Between his seminary degree and his doctoral work, Aaron led a national anti-Islamophobia initiative based in the Southeast, the Our Muslim Neighbor Initiative, and Aaron helped found Faith and Culture Center, a local non-profit that continue this work today.

PHILLIS ISABELLA SHEPPARD
is the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of Religion, Psychology, and Culture at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and Graduate Department of Religion and Graduate Department of Religion. In July 2020, she was appointed to serve as the inaugural Director of the James Lawson Institute for the Research and Study of Nonviolent Movements at Vanderbilt University. She holds the Ph.D. from Chicago Theological Seminary in Theology, Ethics and the Human Sciences, the M.A. in Theology from Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and earned a certificate from the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis in Adult Psychoanalysis. She is ordained and is a commissioned Community Chaplain in an Inclusive Catholic Community. Dr. Sheppard holds a deep appreciation for the multiple spaces where one may experience the sacred.
ASHLEY BROWN

is originally from Texas and spent the last 5 years living in Atlanta before recently moving to Nashville. As a first-generation college student, she earned her Bachelor of Public Administration from Texas State University and her MA in College Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University. Dr. Brown finished her EdD in Student Affairs Leadership at the UGA, where she studied undocumented students’ sense of belonging on college campuses. Dr. Brown’s research interests are related to cultural competency, art-based pedagogy, social justice education, and liberation pedagogy. Dr. Brown is a proud member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and a mom to a rescue dog named Lucy.

HASSINA MOHYUDDIN

is the Assistant Dean of the Peabody Office of EDI, as well as a Research Associate and Lecturer in the Department of Human and Organizational Development. She received her PhD in Community Research and Action (CRA) program at Vanderbilt University. Prior to joining the program, she received a BA in Economics from Yale University and an MBA from Vanderbilt University. Her dissertation research explores the religious identity development for Muslim American youth in the context of widespread negative stereotypes of Islam and Islamophobia. As a Research Associate, Hasina is currently serving as the PI on a study on digital inclusion and equity in Nashville. She is also an active member of the Muslim community, and currently serves on the boards of the Maddox Foundation and PENCIL. Hasina has been married for over 25 years to her husband Shuaib and has three sons – Ibrahim, Mohammed, and Isa.
LAURA MARIKO CHEIFETZ
came to Vanderbilt in 2019 from prior work in reproductive justice, religious publishing, and theological education. She is a queer biracial Asian American of Japanese and white Jewish descent, a double-pastors’ kid from the west coast, and an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA). Her most recent published work is the Leader Suggestions in the Presbyterian Women Horizons Bible Study, and she is co-editor of “Race in America” from Westminster John Knox Press and “Church on Purpose” from Judson Press. At work, Laura finds deep meaning in being a part of the journey of prospective and current students toward making a difference in the world. In her free time, Laura and her spouse Jessica take their two rescue dogs for long walks in a desperate attempt to tire them out.

SOREN M. HESSLER
is the Director of Recruitment and Admissions. He is an ordained elder in full connection in the West Ohio Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and holds a PhD in practical theology with a concentration in leadership and administration from Boston University School of Theology. Soren’s scholarship emerges at the intersections of theological education administration, interreligious studies, and Wesleyan studies. Soren serves as a peer reviewer for the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools and is an active advisory board member for the Journal of Interreligious Studies. In fall 2022, he was elected to a two-year term as treasurer of the Alpha of Tennessee Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa at Vanderbilt University.
GRAHAM RESIDE

is the executive director of the CTPML and assistant professor of the practice of Ethics and Society. He also serves as the convenor of VDS's Prison and Carceral Studies concentration and is one of the principal investigators of Vanderbilt University's Initiative in Race Research and Justice. In his work, Graham explores the relationships between social institutions and religious values. How is it that religion shapes our understanding of just punishment and how do our penal practices inform our deeply held religious and moral convictions? At present, Graham is especially focused on the interplay of religious conceptions of punishment, sin and forgiveness within the context of the institution of criminal justice in the US, exploring its religious, racial dynamics.

LAINÉ WALTERS YOUNG

has over 15 years of experience creatively engaging people on issues of cultural difference and moral leadership across religion, region, and racial background in both immersive and classroom settings. Since joining the CTP in August 2019, she has enjoyed dreaming up, designing and running the day-to-day operations of the Moral Leadership program. The best part of her position is working with the fellows, community partners, and the many interested faculty and staff members who are part of the CTP network across Vanderbilt's professional schools. Laine's charisms include working with students from around the world, emotionally and socially supporting change-agents, and spending time with her husband and ever-curious toddler Theodore.
MEDIATRIX KISIENYA
is the Co-Director of the Cal Turner Program’s Interprofessional Fellowship. She considers herself an ethicist and a theological/religious scholar. She comes to CTP with a background in medicine and pastoral/church leadership. She has nine years of experience in clinical medicine with a focus on the prevention of mother-to-child HIV/AIDS transmission (PMTCT) and six years of pastoral and church leadership around people who are abled differently (people with disabilities). She holds an MDiv from Vanderbilt Divinity School with an interest in Global Christianity and Interreligious Encounters and Black Religion and Cultural Studies. Mediatrix is a Kenyan native who enjoys outdoor activities and is very adventurous. She believes in the salvation of the terrestrial ecosystem by way of critical thinking.

KRISTA WESTERVELT (MDIV ’25)
earned her BA in Peace & Conflict Studies from the UNC Greensboro in 2022, with a minor in Gerontology. During her undergraduate studies, she presented on integrating Peace & Conflict Studies theory and praxis at the interpersonal, organizational, and community levels on topics including embracing faith-based health justice as peace work, transforming workplace conflict, and transforming family conflict in end of life decision-making (Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention at Virginia Tech’s “Cultivating Peace: A Symposium for Violence Prevention”).