“Listening to the Children: A Radical Revolution of Values”
Nina Simone: “To Be Young, Gifted and Black”


Tentative Agenda for those in CDF Proctor Institute’s Dale P. Andrews Freedom Seminary

Wednesday, July 7  5:30-8:30 ET  Welcome Home! Introduction to DAFS, discussion on *Let Your Light Shine* and small group discussions with other participants by track

Monday, July 19  12-3:30 p.m.ET  Faculty facilitated discussions on 2 required books 
Theology of Child Advocacy 
Dismantling Cradle to Prison Pipeline 
Faculty facilitated small groups across tracks

5:30-8:30 p.m. ET  Kelly Brown Douglas, *Stand Your Ground* 
Radical Kinship: The Art of Making Kin 
“Backs Against the Wall” Theology

Tuesday, July 20  12-3:30 p.m. ET  Faculty facilitated discussions on 3 required books 
Listening to Black Boys, Celebrating Black Beauty 
Faculty facilitated small groups across tracks

5:30-8:30 p.m. ET  Join CDF’s Proctor Institute

Wednesday, July 21  12-3:30  Proctor Institute workshops 
5:30-8:30 p.m. ET  Join CDF’s Proctor Institute

Thursday, July 22  12-3:30  Proctor Institute workshops 
5:30-8:30 p.m. ET  Join CDF’s Proctor Institute


**Course Description and Core Components:**
This course offers an immersion experience for students who wish to engage and cultivate necessary prophetic voices with communities on the margins - communities contending against systemic injustices that directly impact children and youth. Biblical and theological assumptions justifying institutional complicity with oppressive systems will be challenged. Theological education in collaboration with public theology and contextual practice allow for direct
engagement in communal struggles for social justice. This course will include contextual learning to facilitate collective organizing of churches and communities for justice-making.

Learning Goal and Learning Objectives:

To reframe and to transform religious leadership in view of the sacrality and integrity of children and youth in our commitments to justice-making. By the end of this immersion experience students will:

1. Be able to articulate theological, biblical, and historical mandates and frameworks for child advocacy ministries.

2. Identify theological foundations for justice and preaching ministries in the effort to build partnerships among faith communities and traditions; including interfaith communities.

3. Demonstrate contextualized learning that includes social analysis, interdisciplinary approaches, (e.g. theological, biblical, historical, political, and experiential studies) and practices of ministry through a final project.

4. Be able to describe models of nonviolent direct action organizing that lead to collective action for the justice of God through congregational praxis and public theology.

Questions we will explore include:

1. Who are we in justice work, God’s work, in our communities? How are we advocates for a plumbline of justice in our communities? How do we measure justice?

2. What structures perpetuate poverty, mass incarceration, white supremacy, and other forms of systemic oppression?

3. What theologies perpetuate poverty, mass incarceration, white supremacy, oppression?

4. How can we move faith communities from charity to justice?

5. How can we develop strong and effective interfaith partnerships to seek justice for all of our children?

6. How do we listen to and learn from and with young people? What can we learn from their stories and leadership?

7. How can we work through collective nonviolent direct action organizing to disrupt and dismantle the cradle to prison pipeline?

8. How do we become partners WITH instead of planning programs FOR young people who are wounded by the structural violence of poverty, white supremacy, inadequate public education, zero tolerance discipline policies and the cradle to prison pipeline?

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

1. Attendance and participation are essential for the success of the student and the course. Students are expected to actively participate in all sessions. Some professors may require that students keep daily reflection notes in a journal.
2. To familiarize yourself with the Children’s Defense Fund website and five of the assigned videos: “Keep Moving Forward,” “Something Inside So Strong,” “Black Boys” documentary, the introductory video for “When They See us” and the virtual video from the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth – all listed in this syllabus. What was your response to these videos? What was new to you, challenging, troubling, hopeful? When and how do you listen to, learn from and partner with children and youth who are struggling with at the intersection of white supremacy and poverty? (3 page reflection paper to be turned in to your professor by July 6 or a date defined by your professor)

3. To engage the five required texts through critical reflection. What surprised you? Challenged you? What did you find most helpful? Disturbing? Prophetic? How does the reading push you to change, to redefine ministry, to work in new ways? What questions would you like to ask the author? Write a two page reflection paper on each required book – Let Your Light Shine, Listen to the Children, Anchored in the Current, Healing Haunted Histories, The Purpose Gap. Be prepared to engage the class and authors/editors. (Five 2-page reflection papers due to professor before July 15 or a date assigned by your professor)

4. To develop and to present a Final Project Proposal – at the discretion and date set by the instructor of record at your institution. Required elements of the plan must be discussed and approved by your instructor and must articulate your distinctive contribution to the children’s movement.

5. To produce a final project framed by the course core components, learning goals and objectives, questions we explore, and discussions. This can be a collaborative group project or individual. Due on the date set by the instructor of record at your institution.

Final project must emphasize:
A. Listening to and learning from and with children and young people on the margins
B. Working/partnering with those struggling with oppression vs. programs for or to
C. Addressing systemic, structural oppression vs. individuals only
D. Engaging in justice rather than charity

Examples of past projects include:
- Initiating a listening circle and restorative justice process, including a website, to deal with conflict around race/class bias against youth in neighborhood
- Creating a triptych of paintings with a companion narrative exploring experiences of young people, structures of oppression and possibilities for hope as model for listening to young people and redefining youth ministry
- Creating an ongoing listening circle process for transgender youth in partnership with a community youth center
- Designing partnership for work around gardens, food culture, memories and art with young folks and their families near Latino community center
- Creating booklist, training curriculum and support process for work with parents considering transracial adoptions through local adoption agency
Omari Booker and Karla McKanders listened to immigrant children and then wrote a children’s book about what they heard and saw

Seminary/Proctor partnership video created for participating seminary

**Required Texts** – All seminarians will read and review the required five texts, videos and articles and become familiar with the Children’s Defense Fund website. Books are available from CDF’s Haley Farm online bookstore: [https://cdfwebstore.com/](https://cdfwebstore.com/)  **Bold** indicates author will be participating in Proctor 2021

**Blount, Reginald and Virginia Lee, editors.** (2019) *Let Your Light Shine: Mobilizing for Justice with Children and Youth, A Reader.* (Book 1)

**Douglas, Kelly Brown.** (2015) *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God.* (Book 2)

**Ellison, Gregory, editor** (2020) *Anchored in the Current* (Book 3)

**Enns, Elaine and Ched Myers.** (2021) *Healing Haunted Histories.* (Book 4)

**Reyes, Patrick.** (2021) *The Purpose Gap* (Book 5)

All students are to engage the following and be ready to discuss in small group:

CDF website: [www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org) including “Keep Moving Forward” video on [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBwn9FFR1bZrOkSXvqbmRWA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBwn9FFR1bZrOkSXvqbmRWA)

“Something Inside So Strong” CDF Freedom Schools [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Sj-fpzT2v4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Sj-fpzT2v4)

Documentary “Black Boys” [https://www.peacocktv.com/watch/asset/movies/documentary/black-boys/0ec3eefe-f60f-3d73-921b-c4307e571a0b](https://www.peacocktv.com/watch/asset/movies/documentary/black-boys/0ec3eefe-f60f-3d73-921b-c4307e571a0b)

“Don’t Give Up on Me” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KL9qp0FNEzU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KL9qp0FNEzU)

“When They See Us” – Netflix [https://www.netflix.com/title/80200549](https://www.netflix.com/title/80200549)

At minimum watch this brief introduction: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI88TN9IFS0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI88TN9IFS0)

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth/Incarcerated Children’s Advocacy Network video on VR experience of juveniles: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo1gM2LL1lc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo1gM2LL1lc)

Short video about Proctor made by Vanderbilt Divinity School seminarian Quentin Cox: [https://1drv.ms/v/s!AqwjhJz01AoNh5RAonyl1HCSeBzO2A](https://1drv.ms/v/s!AqwjhJz01AoNh5RAonyl1HCSeBzO2A)
We hope you might also read:

**Crutchfield, Carmichael.** (2020) *The Formation of a People: Christian Education and the African American Church.*


Kaba, Mariame. (2021) *We Do This ‘Til We Free Us: Abolitionist Organizing and Transforming Justice.*


Additional Resources:


**Suggested Readings and Resources:** Those in bold indicate author will be at Proctor 2021

Video: Civil Rights | Watch Makers: Women who Make America on Women in the Civil Rights Eyes on the Prize documentary series.


Thurman, Howard. (reprint, 1949) *Jesus and the Disinherited*.


Wright, Almeda (2017) *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans*.

For questions, please contact Janet Wolf, 615-260-2894, [jwolf@childrensdefense.org](mailto:jwolf@childrensdefense.org)
**Faculty Teaching Team:** While we will be meeting together, we do have four tracks and professors may choose to revise requirements in this syllabus to address the different tracks. Victor Anderson and Lorena Parrish will facilitate the seminarian students; Bec Davis will facilitate D.Min. students; Ericka Dunbar will facilitate undergraduate students; Ched Myers and Charlene Sinclair will facilitate a track during seminary sessions for community organizers.

Victor Anderson, Oberlin Theological Professor of Ethics and Society, Vanderbilt Divinity School; Professor of the Program in African American and Diaspora Studies and Religious Studies, Vanderbilt University; author, *Creative Exchange: A Constructive Theology of African American Religious Experience*; with Lewis Baldwin, editors, *Revives My Soul Again: The Spirituality of Martin Luther King, Jr.*  victor.anderson@vanderbilt.edu

Rebecca (Becky) Davis, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Charlotte, Associate Professor of Christian Education, founding chair of Presbyterian Child Advocacy Network; 2018 ENRICH Educator of the Year, Association of Presbyterian Christian Educators, RDavis@upsem.edu

Ericka Dunbar, Visiting Professor of Hebrew Bible at Payne Theological Seminary, exploring themes of sexual trafficking, violence and internalized oppression in the Hebrew Bible; edunbar@payneseminary.edu

Derek Hicks, Associate Professor of Religion and Culture, Wake Forest University School of Divinity; Director, Center for Research, Engagement and Collaboration in African American Life (RECALL); author, *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition*; hicksds@wfu.edu

Ched Myers, activist theologian, popular educator, author of many books, including with Elaine Enns, *Healing Haunted Histories and Ambassadors of Reconciliation*, as well as his *Sabbath Economics* and *Binding the Strong Man*; partner in Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries; chedmyers@bcm-net.org

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Charlene Sinclair, Founder/Director of the Center for Race, Religion and Economic Democracy, charlene@c-rred.org
Janet Wolf, Director of Public Theology and Nonviolent Organizing, Children’s Defense Fund, author of *Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship* and “To See and To Be Seen” in *I Was in Prison: United Methodist Perspectives on Prison Ministry*. jwolf@childrensdefense.org, 615-260-2894

**Faculty Co-facilitators:**

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Eileen Campbell-Reed, Associate Professor of Practical Theology, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Co-Director, Learning Pastoral Imagination Project; Coordinator for Coaching, Mentoring and Internship; author, *Anatomy of a Schism: How Clergywomen’s Narratives Reinterpret the Fracturing of the Southern Baptist Convention*. Eileen.campbell-reed@gmail.com

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Greg Ellison, Associate Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, Candler School of Theology; Editor, *Anchored in the Current: Discovering Howard Thurman as Educator, Activist, Guide and Prophet*, and author, *Fearless Dialogues: A New Movement for Justice and Cut Dead but Still Alive: Caring for African American Youth*; see [http://fearlessdialogues.com/](http://fearlessdialogues.com/); gelli01@emory.edu

Elaine Enns, Restorative justice practitioner and trainer, co-founder of Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, co-author with Ched Myers of *Healing Haunted Histories* and *Ambassadors of Reconciliation: New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking*. elaineenns@bcm-net.org

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Rodney Sadler, Associate Professor of Bible, Union Presbyterian Seminary at Charlotte; Director of Union’s Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation; author of Can A Cushite Change His Skin: An Examination of Race, Ethnicity and Othering in the Hebrew Bible; co-author, The Genesis of Liberation: Biblical Interpretation in the Antebellum Narratives of the Enslaved; associate pastor at Mount Carmel Baptist Church. RSadler@upsem.edu

Teresa Smallwood, Associate Director, Vanderbilt Divinity School Public Theology and Racial Justice Collaborative; see her work on “The Leprosy Effect: The Treatment of Queers in the Black Preaching Tradition” Teresa.l.smallwood@vanderbilt.edu

Shively Smith, Assistant Professor of New Testament, Boston University School of Theology, author of Strangers to Family: Diaspora and I Peter’s Invention of God’s Household; stjsmith@bu.edu

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