

## “Listening to the Children: A Radical Revolution of Values”

Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14, Luke 18:16

Nina Simone: “To Be Young, Gifted and Black”

2021 Graduate Intensive, Children’s Defense Fund’s Dale P. Andrews Freedom Seminary  
and CDF’s Samuel DeWitt Proctor Institute for Child Advocacy Ministry

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

Wednesday, July 7	5:30-8:30 p.m. ET	Welcome Home! Introduction to DAFS, discussion on <i>Let Your Light Shine</i> 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, <i>Stand Your Ground</i> Radical Kinship: The Art of Making Kin “Bucks Against the Wall” Theology
Tuesday, July 20	12-3:30 p.m. ET	Faculty facilitated discussions on 3 required books Radical Kinship “Bucks Against the Wall” Theology Faculty facilitated small groups across tracks
	5:30-8:30 p.m. ET	Join CDF’s Proctor Institute
Wednesday, July 21	12-3:30 p.m. ET	Proctor Institute workshops
	5:30-8:30 p.m. ET	Join CDF’s Proctor Institute
Thursday, July 22	12-3:30 p.m. ET	Proctor Institute workshops
	5:30-8:30 p.m. ET	Join CDF’s Proctor Institute

CDF’s website: <https://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faith-based/samuel-dewitt-proctor-institute/proctor-event-page/>

### 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, the assigned book *Let Your Light Shine* 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? 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 four of 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*, , *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/> **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/UCBwn9FFR1bZrOkSXYqbmRWA> “Something Inside So Strong” CDF Freedom Schools <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>

“Don’t Give Up on Me” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KL9qp0FNEzU>

“When They See Us” – Netflix <https://www.netflix.com/title/80200549>

At minimum watch this brief introduction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xI88TN9IFSo>

Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth/Incarcerated Children’s Advocacy Network video on VR experience of juveniles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jo1gM2LLlc>

Short video about Proctor made by Vanderbilt Divinity School seminarian Quentin Cox: <https://1drv.ms/v/s!AqwjhJz01AoNh5RAony1IHCSeBzO2A>

*We hope you might also read:*

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

Garza, Alicia. (2020) *The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart.*

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

Wimberly, Ann Streaty, Annie Lockhart-Gilroy and Nathaniel West, editors. (2020) *From Lament to Advocacy: Black Religious Education and Public Ministry*

### **Additional Resources:**

I Am Not Your Negro, <http://www.iamnotyournegrofilm.com/>

James Baldwin's "Letters from a Region in My Mind" in the New Yorker, [file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/Letter%20from%20a%20Region%20in%20My%20Mind,%200by%20James%20Baldwin%20\\_%20The%20New%20Yorker%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/Letter%20from%20a%20Region%20in%20My%20Mind,%200by%20James%20Baldwin%20_%20The%20New%20Yorker%20(1).pdf)

### **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.

Andrews, Dale P. (2002). *Practical Theology for Black Churches.*

Andrews, Dale P. and Robert London Smith Jr., editors. (2015). *Black Practical Theology.*

Baldwin, Lewis and **Victor Anderson**, editors. (2018) *Revives My Soul Again: The Spirituality of Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Barber II, William J. (2016) *The Third Reconstruction: Moral Mondays, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement.*

Brooks, Adrian. (2015) *The Right Side of History: 100 Years of LGBTQ Activism.*

De La Torre, Miguel.(2018) *Burying White Privilege: Resurrecting a Badass Christianity.*

**Daley-Harris, Shannon.** (2016) *Hope for the Future: Answering God's Call to Justice for Our Children.*

**Edelman, Marian Wright.** (1993). *The Measure of Our Success.*

**Ellison, Gregory.** (2020) Editor, *Anchored in the Current*; (2017) *Fearless Dialogues*; (2013). *Cut Dead but Still Alive.*

**Enns, Elaine and Ched Myers.** (2021) *Healing Haunted Histories.* (2009) *Ambassadors of Reconciliation, Volumes I and II.*

Fluker, Walter. (2018) *The Ground Has Shifted: The Future of the Black Church in Post-Racial America.*

Francis, Leah Gunning. ((2015) *Ferguson & Faith: Sparking Leadership & Awakening Community.*

Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth. (2011) *Listen to the Children: Conversations with Immigrant Families.*

- Harding, Vincent. (2010). *Hope and History*. (2008). *Martin Luther King Jr.: The Inconvenient Hero*.
- Harvey, Jennifer. (2019) *Raising White Kids*.
- Heschel, Abraham. (1962, 2001). *The Prophets*.
- Hicks, Derek S.** (2012). *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition*.
- Janssen, Denise**, editor. (2015) *Educating for Redemptive Community*
- Khan-Cullors, Patrisse and Asha Bendele. (2017) *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*.
- Lightsey, Pamela R.** (2015) *Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology*.
- Lindner, Eileen.** (2006) *Thus Far on the Way: Toward a Theology of Child Advocacy*.
- Marbury, Herbert. (2015). *Pillars of Cloud and Fire: The Politics of Exodus in the African American Quest for Freedom*.
- Moss III, Otis.** (2015) *Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World: Finding Hope in an Age of Despair*
- Myers, Ched.** With Matthew Colwell. (2012) *Our God Is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigrant Justice*.
- Parker, Evelyn. (2010). *The Sacred Selves of Adolescent Girls: Hard Stories of Race, Class, and Gender*.
- Pearse, Angie. (2010). *Doing Contextual Theology*.
- Reyes, Patrick.** (2021) *The Purpose Gap*. (2016) *Nobody Cries When We Die: God, Community, and Surviving to Adulthood*.
- Ross, Rosetta E. (2003). *Witnessing & Testifying*.
- Secours, Molly. (2020) *White Privilege Pop Quiz: Reflecting on Whiteness*.
- Sheppard, Phillis. (2011). *Self, Culture, and Others in Womanist Practical Theology*.
- Salvatierra, Alexia. (2014) *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World*
- Smith, Linda T. (2012, Revised 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*
- Stevenson, Bryan. (2014). *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*.
- Taylor, Mark Lewis. (2015, Revised and Expanded, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) *The Executed God: The Way of the Cross in Lockdown America*.
- Thurman, Howard. (reprint, 1949) *Jesus and the Disinherited*.
- Washington, James M. (2001 ed.). *A Testament of Hope*.
- West, Traci** (2019) *Solidarity and Defiant Spirituality: Africana Lessons on Religion, Racism, and Ending Gender Violence*. (2006) *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter*.
- Wimberly, Anne. (2005). *Soul Stories: African American Christian Education*.
- Wolf, Janet.** (2019) *Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship* available from the Children's Defense Fund's store: <https://cdfwebstore.com/>
- Wong, Kent, Ana Luz Gonzalez and **James M. Lawson Jr.** (2016) *Nonviolence and Social Movements: The Teachings of Rev. James M. Lawson Jr.* (CDF online bookstore)
- 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](mailto: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](mailto:RDavis@upsem.edu)

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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](mailto:chedmyers@bcm-net.org)

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Patrick Reyes, Senior Director of Learning Design, Forum for Theological Exploration, author of *The Purpose Gap* and *Nobody Cries When We Die: God, Community and Surviving to Adulthood*. [preyes@fteleaders.org](mailto:preyes@fteleaders.org)

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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](mailto:jwolf@childrensdefense.org), 615-260-2894

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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](mailto: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/>; [gelli01@emory.edu](mailto: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](mailto:elaineenns@bcm-net.org)

Leah Gunning Francis, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, Christian Theological Seminary, author: *Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community*. [lgunningfrancis@cts.edu](mailto:lgunningfrancis@cts.edu)

Denise Janssen, Associate Professor of Christian Education, Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Virginia Union; editor with Friendship Press; author, *Reclaimed: Faith in an Emerging Generation* and editor, *Educating for Redemptive Community*. [DLJanssen@VUU.EDU](mailto:DLJanssen@VUU.EDU)



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Christophe Ringer, Assistant Professor of Theological Ethics and Society, Chicago Theological Seminary; author, *Necropolitics: The Religious Crisis of Mass Incarceration in America*. [christophe.ringer@ctschicago.edu](mailto:christophe.ringer@ctschicago.edu)

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:stjsmith@bu.edu)

Tiffany Trent, Adjunct Faculty, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, [TTrent@mtso.edu](mailto:TTrent@mtso.edu)

Traci West, James W. Pearsall Professor of Christian Ethics and African American Studies, Drew Theological School; author, *Solidarity and Defiant Spirituality: Africana Lessons on Religion, Racism, and Ending Gender Violence*, *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter* and *Wounds of the Spirit: Black Women, Violence, and Resistance Ethics* [twest@drew.edu](mailto:twest@drew.edu)