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Religious Studies Department History from 1966-1996

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Religious Studies Department History from 1966-1996 by Rev. Dr. Robert W Blaney, Professor and Chair Emeritus, Religious Studies Department.

From the founding of the Department in the fall of 1920 by Dr. George Colliver as the Religious Education Department, the Department throughout the years has been a leader in the initiation of innovation courses with high enrolments continuing from 1920 to 1996 including winter term special, topics courses and a Rabbi on the faculty. Enrollments have been high since 1920 to the present (1996) severing thousands of students. George Colliver held classes in the Conservatory of Music with the entire freshman class of over 100 students teaching a course of the Bible which was required for all Freshmen students. He used illustrations using a Magic Lantern to project images on a screen.

An additional Innovation was having the establishment in 1945 by Dr Frank Lindhorst of The Christian Community Administration, a unique program relating classwork to churches in the Stockton area, the first cooperative education program of the University and the installation of a dark room in Sears Hall where professors and students could produce audiovisual materials for churches and schools. Filmstrips produced by students for public schools included "Beyond the Textbook", a supplement for teaching units on Africa; "Westward Ho", four units on early California history; and "Introducing the Hospital to Children" for use at the San Joaquin County Hospital. The Christian Community Administration also produced religious film "I" strips, film strips: "Teaching About God in the Home", "This is Your Church", and "The Story of Mee Tee Wu", a Methodist Board of Missions Crusade Scholar.

Dr. Arthur Maynard along with alumnus Skipper Yee. initiated the Colliver Lectures in 1957 to honor the founder of the Department, dr. George Colliver. Unfortunately, he died before the first lectureship, which was in 1957 "The Fine Arts" - Professor Harold Ehrensperger, Ruth St. Dennis, Natalie Robinson, and August Zanzig.

A partial list of others included:

1982 Colliver Lectures: "Crises in Religious Education", James Fowler.

1983 Colliver Lectures: "Search for Unity: World Council of Churches and the Local Church", Michael Kinnamon.

1985 Colliver Lectures: "New Images for Sexuality and Family", Bishop Melvin Wheatley, Virginia Mollenkott, James B. Nelson.

1986 Colliver Lectures: "New Visions for Sexuality, Marriage and Family", Daniel and Marjorie Maguire, Mary Pellauer.

1991 Colliver Lectures: "What Does It Mean to be Human?" Bishop Melvin Talbert, Huston Smith, Carol Robb, Enrle Young.

1992 Spring Colliver Lectures: "Celebrate Diversity", Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Jan Oxenberg, David Fanshawe.

1992 Fall Colliver Lectures: "Liberation Theology: Struggle for Hope and Justice", Levi V. Oracion

The Department changed names a number of the times from Department of Bible and Religious Education and Recreation under Dr. Frank Lindhurst and The Bible and Religious Education to Dr. Arthur Maynard to the current title, The Department of Religious Studies with Dr. Arthur Maynard and subsequently me, Dr. Robert W. Blaney as chairs.

In 1966 I was appointed as Assistant Professor in the Bible and Religious Education Department and as Director of the Pacific Center for the Study of Social Issues. President Burns and my predecessor Phil Wogaman along with Elmer Clausen, Grand Marshall of the California Scottish Foundation, formed the Center which was funded for \$10,000 per annum by the California Scottish Rite Foundation. They called it the Great American Fundamentals Program and we called it The Pacific Center for Social Issues. It allowed me to teach a graduate course each semester, have a graduate assistant in addition to teaching courses in in the Department and in Christian Social Ethics. The Center also provided scholarships for the Graduate Seminars for UOP students and San Joaquin Delta College Teachers and High School Teachers.

The interdisciplinary Board of Directors including the Dean of COP, the Dean of the School of Education, the Chairs of the Department of Bible and Religious Education, History, and Philosophy; the Director of Admissions and the Director of the Library. The center sponsored an annual lectureship, the Clausen and Holoman Lectures featuring outstanding scholars in the field of the seminars.

The Department was all male, all ordained United Methodist clergy, and all graduates Boston University of Theology: Arthur Maynard, Walter Nyberg, John Diamond and myself with the exception of Kathleen Shannon, an ordained minister in the Disciples of Christ and Rabbi Bernard Rosenberg.

All of our professors taught Key ideas of the New Testament and Key Ideas of the Old Testament which as I recall were required by all COP students, with the exception of Rabbi Rosenberg who taught Key Ideas of the Old Testament and Judaism. In addition, I taught courses on Christian Social Ethics, Christianity and Communism, Christian Marxist Dialog, Ethics and Men's Liberation, and Church in the Modern World as well as a Graduate Course each semester on a different contemporary social issue sponsored by The Center for the Study of Social Issues.

Arthur Maynard, chairman the Department from 1965-1975, specialty was Bible, Old and New Testament which he taught in addition Introduction the Key Ideas of New Testament and Old Testament, World Religions, Religion and American Culture, Readings in Western Mysticism, and Prophets and Jesus.

Walter Nyberg's field was Religious Education and later Psychology Religion. In addition to Key Ideas of the New Testament and Old Testament he taught courses on Theology, Gestalt Therapy, and Educational Philosophy, Religion and Existence, Religion and the State, Dreams, Interpersonal Relations, Counseling, Marriage and The Family and Psychology of Religion.

Kathleen Shannon field was Religious Education. She taught in addition to Key Ideas of the New and Old Testament courses on Church in Today's World, and numerous courses on Religious Education. She supervised students in the Masters of Religious Education program. Students with this degree were qualified to be Directors of Christian Education in local churches.

John Diamond's field was Systematic Theology. In addition to the courses on the Bible he taught Nature of the Christian Faith, and Theology Liberation. When he became director of the

Community Involvement Program, he was replaced by Thomas Ambrogi, D. ScR (Strasbourg), a former Jesuit, who taught courses Theology of Liberation, Contemporary Theologians, and Nature of the Christian Faith.

When I joined the Department Lawton Harris was also a member and his office was located in Sears Hall. His field was Recreation and Folk Dance. This Department prepared students to become YMCA Directors, Recreation Directors, Youth Group Directors, etc. He was also Director of the famous Summer Folk Dance program. Sometime later his program moved to the Physical Education Department.

Lawrence Meredith was originally $\frac{1}{4}$ time in addition to being Dean of the Chapel until he joined the Callison Faculty and was no longer Chaplain. After the Cluster Colleges closed, I negotiated with the AVP to have Meredith and Gilbert Schedler to join the Department. Schedler also taught courses in the English Department.

The Center of the Pacific Center Board encouraged me to take part in several different programs in Europe and the Peoples Republic of China as well as attendance at Professional meetings. These meetings enabled me to teach several new courses including Christianity and Communism and Max and Christianity. In 1968 I was taking part a part in a Christian Peace Conference Study Tour, a three-week tour to East Germany, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. The Board approved my participation and funded much of my expenses.

In 1960 with the Center's support, I was an official delegate to the Christian Peace Conference. Official delegate. The whole experience for this young assistant professor was exhilarating and provided valuable material for my Christianity and Communism class.

During the course of my career, I chaired the Colliver and Clausen Lectures several years. They included:

1967 Clausen Lectures: Robert Theobald, Socio-Economist and Futurist.
 1968 Clausen Lectures: Herbert Holomon, Undersecretary of Commerce.
 1969 Clausen-Tippett Symposium: (Co-Chairperson) "Campus in Crisis,"
 Thomas Hayden, Carl Ogelsby, Robert Fitch.
 1978 Colliver Lectures: "Surges of Religious Consciousness", Jacob Needelman and Daniel Goleman.
 1982 Colliver Lectures: "Crises in Religious Education", James Fowler.
 1983 Colliver Lectures: "Search for Unity: World Council of Churches and the Local Church", Michael Kinnamon.
 1985 Colliver Lectures: "New Images for Sexuality and Family", Bishop Melvin Wheatley, Virginia Mollenkott, James B. Nelson.
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 1991 Colliver Lectures: "What Does It Mean to be Human?" Bishop Melvin Talbert, Huston Smith, Carol Robb, Ernle Young.
 1992 Spring Colliver Lectures: "Celebrate Diversity", Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Jan Oxenberg, David Fanshawe.
 1992 Fall Colliver Lectures: "Liberation Theology: Struggle for Hope and Justice", Levi V. Oracion.

Other members of the Department chaired other Colliver Lectures, listed as an appendix.

Several innovations took place while I was at UOP. Beginning around 1970 we changed the name of the Department from Bible and Religious Education to the Religious Studies Department to reflect a more academic approach to religion and the Recreation Department was transferred to the Physical Education Department.

The Masters in Religious Education Degree was eliminated due to lack students but the Master's Degree in Social Ethics remained. At the same time, we voted to include Graduate Students as members of our departmental meetings. The Pacific Center's graduate assistance, Stanley Croker joined our meetings and voted with the rest of us to change the name to the Department of Religious Studies. With the change of name, several faculties underwent retooling. Walt Nyberg spent a sabbatical taking courses in Psychology of Religion, Mysticism, and Yoga and offered new courses in that field. Kathleen Shannon continued to teach Church in Today's World and other courses.

One innovation at the University of Pacific was the ability to offer Special Topics which subsequently were regular courses in the curriculum. In 1970 four of us on the West Coast initiated courses on Biomedical Ethics. This included Enrle Young at Stanford, Karen LeBacqz at PSR, and Father Albert Johnson at UCSF. These were some of the first courses in the country on Biomedical Ethics. Later I established a course on Human Sexuality and Christianity. These two courses enrolled 60 students each semester. Our department also offered courses in COP Information and Innovation (I & I) program which allowed us to teach with courses on a common theme with faculty in other departments., For example I taught a course, Ethics and Nonviolence with Sally Miller of the History Department, and another on Business Ethics with the Business Department, and another on Drama and Sexuality with the Drama Department.

An addition to the COP "Information and Innovation" I and I" program, a new course, Religion and the Modern World was offered by department in cooperation with the Dean of the Chapel, Larry Meredith. It was required of all COP Freshmen students and in the chapel. The course was taught by myself, Walter Nyberg, Larry Meredith, and the Center's graduate assistant, Stan Corker.

Other innovations at UOP included the initiation of a new Faculty governance formulated by Professor Larry Walker in the Art Department, Professor Herbert Reinelt of the Philosophy department and myself and several others. We proposed a Faculty Academic Council to supplement the Department Chairs who met with faulty goverence issues. The Academic Council was to be composed of representatives elected by the faculty of each college and school as well as the chair of the Professional Relations Committee and the Academic Vice President. We presented the proposal to the Board of Regents and the Deans and it was accepted. In addition, the COP Department Chairs in consolation with the COP Dean formed a COP Chairs Committee to deal with COP matters.

Another innovation: in 1969 the Professional Relations Committee proposed to the Board of Regents, a Developmental Study Leave Program, a modified sabbatical program. It provided for UOP faculty a sabbatical for a semester leaves every four years. Each Department or School were required to arrange for one of their faculty to cover the courses taught by that faculty with their existing faculty. It required a study project to approved by the Department and a report at the end of the leave to each Dean.

I was one of the first to take the developmental leave in the fall of 1970. I worked on a draft of a book on Martin Luther King Jr, "King's Theology and Ethics of Nonviolence". I completed a draft of the book and of several papers at the Society of Christian Ethics and The American Academy of Religion. These included

"Ethics of Nonviolent Resistance", Western Region of the American Academy of Religion; Spring 1972; "Towards and Ethic of Nonviolent Resistance," Pacific Section of the American Society of Christian Ethics, Fall 1972; "War and Peace: King, Gandhi, and Nonviolence and Peace, Extension Course California University, San Jose, Spring 2973; "Martin Luther King: Social Change through Love," California Nevada United Methodist Reported, February 1974; and "Ethics of Nonviolent Resistance King, Gandhi, and Bonhoeffer," Society of Christian Ethics, 1972."

To be continued.