

L. S. Carlos A. Thompson, PhD

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Awards

- Henri Nouwen Doctoral Fellowship: *Western Theological Seminary*, Holland, MI (March 2018)
- *Best Paper* at the 18th International Conference of Disability and Diversity: Rome, Italy (May 2016)
- *Southeastern University* graduation commencement speaker, 2012

Academic & Pastoral: Papers, Presentations, Journal Articles, and Book Reviews

- **“Disability in the Bible”** A collaboration with Dr. Benjamin T. Conner for a SeminaryNow Course. (Holland, MI: Aug 2023)
 - I organized and presented section *three* of the larger unit titled *Introduction to Disability and the Church*. Section *three* focused on explicating disability in the Bible and providing the hermeneutical, historical-critical scaffolding to contextually, engage the healing narratives and disability.
 - I also conducted a series of interviews with individuals within the Friendship House Community that live with disabilities. This material was then integrated into the larger course framework.
- **“How to Preach the Healing Texts”** This was an afternoon workshop for pastors and lay-leaders given during the one day Symposium on Disability and Ministry. Co-hosted by the Western Theological Seminary’s Center for Disability and Ministry and the Colledgeville Institute (Colledgeville, MN). I collaborated with, Alison Connelly-Vetter and Dr. Sue Rozeboom. (Holland, MI: Jul 2023)
 - Over lunch I facilitated a panel discussion around the **“communal nature of Christian vocation: Reflecting upon Christian friendship, the lived experience of disability as clarifiers for Christian vocation.”** This panel was to facilitate a discussion between two seminary students—one with a diagnosed disability and one with lived mental illnesses—who developed a deep friendship through their differences. As a result, they *both* learn(ed) more about who God is calling them to be and become in Christ. (Remotely: Holland, MI: July 2023)
- **“Nurturing Belonging: Exploring Hospitality, Disability, and Theology”** presentation on Healing and the Bible’s practical application. This was for a training hosted by THRIVE and RCA Disability Concerns for ministry leaders, lay people, and (Remotely: Holland, MI: Oct. 2023)
- **“Beyond Curing: Healing as Wholeness”** *Reformed World* 70, no. 1 (Nov. 2022)
- **“The Beauty of Belonging”** *Comment Magazine*. (Jul. 2022). <https://comment.org/the-beauty-of-belonging/>.

- **“Healing and Wholeness in the Bible and in our Church”** An Inaugural Lecture given for Western Theological Seminary’s Center For Disability and Ministry. This lecture was co-presented with Dr. Bethany McKinney-Fox. (Holland, MI: July 2022)
- **“The Friendship House Community: Christian Community as a Lived Framework for Theological Education.”** *Journal of Disability & Religion* 25, no. 3 (Jul. 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23312521.2021.1895026>.
- ***From Longing to Belonging: Theological Education*** Barton, S. J., Conner, B., and Thompson, L.S.C.A. Panel presentation delivered at the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability, Holland, MI, (May 2019).
- ***We All Worship: Dis-abling the Ways We are Gathered and Sent*** Presented at Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Calvin College, with Benjamin T. Conner and Barb Newman, Grand Rapid, MI, (Jan. 2019)
- ***Henri Nouwen Fellow Finalist Lecture: “Reforming Disability Theology: Listening to the Soft-Spoken Amongst Us”***
Presented at: Western Theological Seminary (Mar. 2018)
- ***Book Review:*** Thompson, L. S. Carlos A. “Latin@ Identity in Pneumatological Perspective: Mestizaje and Hibridez, Written by Daniel Orlando Álvarez.” *Pneuma* 39, no. 3 (2017): 407–409.
- **“Moving Beyond the Limits of Disability Inclusion: Using Belonging Through Friendship to Improve the Outcome of the Social Model of Disability”**
Presented at: The 18th International Conference on Disability and Diversity. Rome, Italy (May 2016)
Published in: World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, International Science Index 113, International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering (2016), Vol 10(5), 1312-1315.
- ***Reconstructing Blackness: Embracing Me as We: From Disable to Differently- Able***
Presented at: The Transatlantic Roundtable on Race and Religion. London, UK (July 2015)

Guest Lectures, Congregational Consultations, and Para-Church Leadership Development

Note: I regularly engage in the ministry of preaching at various churches locally and abroad. As a rule, I am (generally) in the pulpit at least monthly (virtually, locally, or abroad). These are not listed here for the sake of conserving space.

- **“The Particulars of People and Place for Understanding the Ministry of Healing Health and Wholeness”** Keynote Presentation for a Young Life Regional Leadership training. (Remotely: Holland, MI: Feb. 2023)
- **“What do Healing, Health, and Wholeness Mean for the Christian?”** A presentation given to the Sunday Adult-Ed students as part of a three-week ministry curriculum being offered to the members of Thornapple Community Church in Thornapple, MI (Oct./Nov. 2022). This presentation series was also part of an internship requirement for the Friendship House Fellows who are in their 3rd year.
 - **Week 1:** *What does it mean to be a human creature? What does this have to do with disability?*
 - **Week 2** (co-presented with Friendship House Fellows): *What, then, is disability? What does healing have to do with wholeness?*

- **Week 3** (co-presented with Friendship House Fellows): *Shalom as a biblical framework for healing: Implications for Pastoral and Congregational Practice.*
- **“Weakness and Redemption: The Intellectual and the Mystical, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. John of the Cross on the Person”** This was a guest lecture given to undergraduate students at Trinity Western University for the class: **RELS 381A: Contemporary Christianity.** British Columbia, CA (Oct. 2022)
- **“What Does it Mean to be Human: Philosophy, Theology, and the Christian Creature”** This was a guest lecture given to undergraduate students at Trinity Western University for the class: **RELS 381A: Contemporary Christianity.** British Columbia, CA (Sep. 2022)
- **“Healing Health and Wholeness in the Shadow of Jesus: A Reexamination of the Healing Narratives”** This was virtual presentation that I conducted as training for Young Life Capernaum Staff in the Western GL Region of Michigan (Feb. 2022)
- **“Healing Health and Wholeness as Shalom: A Biblical Model”** This presentation that was part of a plenary presentation given at a National Young Life Leadership training conference. (Dallas, TX: Jan. 2022)
- **“Shalom as Community Formation: The Friendship House Community”** This was Presentation that was part of a plenary presentation given at a National Young Life Leadership training conference. (Dallas, TX: Jan. 2022)
- **“From Isolation to Integration: Communal Discernment in an Individualistic Age”** A Presentation and Q&A session given to the Youth Ministry interns at Calvary Reformed Church, in Holland, MI (Jul. 2019)
- **“Community as an agent of Wholeness and Healing”** A guest lecture presented to the undergraduate in Social Work for the class: **SWK 253: Disability and Community.** Hope College, Holland, MI (Feb. 2019)
- **“Where We have been, Where We are, and Where We Could Go: A discussion on Public Resources, Community Development, and ‘Dis/ability’”** A guest lecture presented to the undergraduate students in Social Work for the class: **SWK 253: Disability and Community.** Hope College, Holland, MI (Jan. 2019)
- **“Freedom Through Friendship”** A panel presentation given alongside the Friendship House Community staff and two Founding Community Members to the Adult Sunday School classes. This presentation was on Friendship as an avenue to freedom in Christ. First Reformed Church of Zeeland, MI. (Dec. 2018)

Education

University of Aberdeen, King's College, Aberdeen, UK.

Oct. 2015 – Mar. 2022

Ph.D. in Divinity

Dissertation Title: *Reframing Faithful Christian Healing: An exploration of healing and disability within the Pentecostal tradition.*

Research area(s): *Pentecostalism, Disability Theology, theologies of healing, suffering, biblical interpretation, and the pastoral application of biblical texts*

Research Question: *How is one to understand Pentecostal healing in the context of enduring congenital physical disability?*

University of Aberdeen, King's College, Aberdeen, UK.

Sep. 2014- Sep. 2015

M.Th. in Ministry and Mission (Practical Theology)

Concentration: *Pentecostalism and Disability Theology:* My research focuses on articulating a biblically sound theology of healing within a Pentecostal framework.

Thesis: *Bringing Healing, Health, and Wholeness to a Broken Church: A biblical critique of Pentecostal healing praxis.*

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL.

Aug. 2012-May 2014

M.A. Religious Studies

Concentration: *Philosophical and Theological approaches to Religion:* Hermeneutics and Disability theory at the intersection of Disability and Religious Studies

Thesis: *Rising Above a Crippling Hermeneutic.* This project Examined how Amos Yong's disability hermeneutic managed to retain a very high view of Christian Scripture, whilst explicating an inclusive and redemptive reading of controversial passages vis-à-vis disability.

Southeastern University, Lakeland, FL.

Aug. 2008-May 2012

B.S. Church Ministry

Minor: Psychology

Work Experience

Jul. 2020 – Present

Western Theological Seminary

Holland, MI

Assistant Professor of Christian Ministry and Disability Theology:

(3-year renewable contract: July 2023-Present)

In addition to my teaching in residence and online, I serve as the *Friendship House Community Director, Director of the Friendship House Fellows Program, and the Student Accessibility Coordinator* for the Seminary.

Assistant Professor of Church and Community Theology:

(Yearly appointments from July 2020-June 2023)

Courses Taught:

- *The Bible, Disability, and the Pastoral Imagination:*

This course introduces students to some of the lived tensions between particular ways of interpreting the biblical text and the lived experience of disability. Over the course of the term, then, students will be invited into constructing a pastorally sensible, biblically faithful, and Christologically focused way of addressing some of the issues, hermeneutical and pastoral, that people with disabilities encounter when reading the Bible. The class will read Scripture, disability theology, and first-person memoirs written by persons with a variety of disabilities and consider how their insights can support our pastoral imagination.

- *Healing Ministry of the Church:*

What is healing? What does it mean to be healthy? What does Jesus' life and ministry model for us about how God defines health and offers healing? How does one's definition of health and healing influence one's understanding of faithful ministry on the whole? Through dialogue around questions like these, students were invited to: (1) gain an overview of how the Church has historically understood what it means to heal and be healed; (2) critically engage existing understandings of health and healing alongside a close reading of key biblical texts (with particular attention paid to the healing ministry of Jesus); and (3) construct their own practically actionable theology of healing.

- *Living Into Community:*

In this course, students spent time critically reflecting upon what it meant to live into community as an act of mutual discipleship. Students engaged questions such as: What is discipleship? What is a Christian community? What is the difference between a Christian community and a social group? What does it mean to belong to, rather than simply be included in, a Christian community? What are communities for? And, what should communities (and their members) do? These questions were engaged alongside a detailed consideration of how 'community' is expressed within the seminary community through the Friendship House Community, the classroom, the daily fellowship offered within the community kitchen, and the sacramental praxis of daily chapel worship.

- *The State of the Field:*

In this course, students pursuing a research based ThM degree are guided through the construction of their research proposal. I guide students in developing the skills needed to engage faithfully in the task(s) of theological research in service of their Christian vocation.

- *Introduction to World Religions:*

An introduction to the beliefs and practices of the major religions of the world, with a study of their scriptural traditions. New religious movements such as Baha'i, The Unification Church, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("Mormons") are also treated, paying special attention to their relationship to Christianity. The Christian theological response to other religions is also considered.

- *Practice of Discipleship:*

In this course students focused on engaging the various theoretical and theological frameworks of discipleship alongside the biblical texts and Jesus' command to make disciples. In this course, learners explored how Christian practices have shaped them into disciples and learn how to use these practices in the making of 21st century disciples.

Jun. 2018 – Jul. 2020

Western Theological Seminary

Holland, MI

Henri Nouwen Doctoral Fellow: I have been given the opportunity to teach one course per term in conjunction with my role as the *Resident Director of the Friendship House*. This is a temporary faculty post awarded to two (ABD) early career scholars and intended to be held as they complete the final stages of writing and defending their Doctoral dissertations.

Friendship House Fellows Program

My time as a Doctoral Fellow also included coordinating the curriculum design of, student recruitment for, launching, and directing the Friendship House Fellows program. This program allows individuals who live with intellectual disabilities to enroll in seminary as students in a non-credit bearing certificate program. Through the launching of this program, the Friendship House has moved beyond simply being a place where people with intellectual disabilities live alongside students of theological education. Instead, the Friendship House has become an intentional living community where all the members—able-bodied and those with disabilities, alike—are recipients of (and participants in) theological education, spiritual formation, and vocational discernment. The Friendship House Fellows Program launched in the Fall-term of 2020.

Courses Taught:

- *Introduction to Disability and the Church:*

This course introduced students to different conceptions, definitions, and expressions of disability in the United States. Gave general overview of the history of disability in the U.S. and introduced students to innovative practitioners who paved the way for today's disability theology. Finally, the course covered service systems and advocacy groups that support persons with disabilities.

- *Living in Community: Friendship House:*

In this course students will spend time critically reflecting upon what it means to live into community as an act of mutual discipleship. Students will engage questions such as: What is discipleship? What is a Christian community? What is the difference between a Christian community and a social group? And, what does it mean to belong to, rather than simply be included in, a Christian community?

- *Introduction to World Religions:*

An introduction to the beliefs and practices of the major religions of the world, with a study of their scriptural traditions. New religious movements such as Baha'i, The Unification Church, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ("Mormons") are also treated, paying special attention to their relationship to Christianity. The Christian theological response to other religions is also considered.

Feb. 2014 – Aug. 2014

The View Church

Riverview, FL

Youth and Associate Pastor: I shared the preaching and teaching responsibilities with the Senior and Executive Pastors. This resulted in preaching once a month in the Sunday morning service. My pastoral responsibilities with the Youth included facilitating our weekly Sunday morning and Wednesday evening youth group(s). I also led adult Bible Studies and church wide lectures on the following topics:

- *World Religions: Spring 2014*
- *Jesus in the World's Faiths: Spring 2014*
- *The Book of Revelation: The letter to the Church in Philadelphia: Spring 2014*

Dec. 2013 - May 2014

University of South Florida.

Tampa, FL

Graduate Teaching Assistant: I was given the opportunity to assist with and teach Mr. Dell DeChant's, *New Religions in America* (REL3131) course. I have also been given the opportunity to assist with Dr. Mozella Mitchell's, *Issues in Caribbean Religions* course. My responsibilities include administering lectures on the following topics:

- *Haitian Voodoo: Spring 2014*
- *Syncretism in Caribbean Religions: Spring 2014*

In addition to lecturing my responsibilities included the following: grading daily assignments; administering exams and conducting review sessions. Outside the classroom I was responsible to meet with students one-on-one during my office hours to answer their questions. This allowed me to inspire, encourage, and challenge the students on a more personal level through face-to-face communication.

Aug. 2013 – Dec. 2013

University of South Florida

Tampa, FL

Graduate Teaching Assistant: I was given the opportunity to assist with and teach, Dr. William Schanbacher's, *Introduction to World Religions* (REL2300). Delivering weekly lectures on the following subjects:

- *How to appropriately approach the study of Religion within the university: Fall 2013*
- *Indigenous Religions: Fall 2013*
- *Hinduism: Fall 2013*
- *Buddhism: Fall 2013*
- *Daoism: Fall 2013*
- *Confucianism: Fall 2013*
- *Judaism: Fall 2013*
- *Christianity: Fall 2013*
- *Islam: Fall 2013*

In addition to lecturing my responsibilities included the following: grading daily assignments; administering exams; designing syllabi, quizzes and exams. Outside the classroom I was responsible to meet with students one-on-one during my office hours to answer their questions. This allowed me to inspire, encourage, and challenge the students on a more personal level through face-to-face communication.

Jan. 2013- May 2013

University of South Florida

Tampa, FL

Graduate Teaching Assistant: I was given the opportunity to assist, Dr. Paul Schneider with *Introduction to World Religions* (REL2300). My responsibilities included grading daily assignments, administering exams, managing his online World Religion platforms, and lecturing during exam review sessions. Outside the classroom I was responsible to meet with students during my office hours to answer their questions. This allowed me to inspire, encourage, and challenge the students on a more personal level through face-to-face communication.

Aug. 2012- Dec. 2012

University of South Florida

Tampa, FL

Graduate Teaching Assistant: I was given the opportunity to assist with and teach, Mr. Dell DeChant's, *Introduction to World Religions* (REL2300). Delivering weekly lectures on the following subjects:

- *How to appropriately approach the study of Religion within the university:* Fall 2012
- *Indigenous Religions:* Fall 2012
- *Hinduism:* Fall 2012
- *Buddhism:* Fall 2012
- *Daoism:* Fall 2012
- *Confucianism:* Fall 2012
- *Judaism:* Fall 2012
- *Christianity:* Fall 2012
- *Islam:* Fall 2012

In addition to lecturing my responsibilities included grading daily assignments, administering exams, and assisting the Professor over the course in any area he delegated. Outside the classroom I was responsible to meet with students one-on-one during my office hours to answer their questions. This allowed me to inspire, encourage, and challenge the students on a more personal level through face-to-face communication.

Volunteer Pastoral Experience

Fall 2014 to Fall 2016

Aberdeen Vineyard Church

Aberdeen, UK

Guest Preaching and Leading Weekly Bible Study: I was given the privilege of sharing some of the preaching, congregational care, and Bible study responsibilities at my home church whilst I resided in Aberdeen, Scotland.

- *Suffering and the Faithfulness of God (Jms. 1:1-4):* Fall 2014
- *Working through Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome:* Fall 2014-2016

Fall 2010 to May 2012

Presbyterian Church in the Highlands

Lakeland, FL

College Ministry Director: I was given the task of starting, staffing, and leading the college ministry as a part of my pastoral internship during my final two years of my bachelorette. This afforded me the opportunity to gain experience in the areas of teaching, preaching, and leadership. In addition to preaching

up to two services a week, providing pastoral care, and discipling congregants, my responsibilities included delivering weekly lectures pertinent to the field of Biblical Studies in adult ed. courses These lectures included the following:

- *Biblical Hermeneutics*: Fall 2010; Fall 2011; Fall 2012
- *The Origins of the Hebrew Scriptures*: Fall 2010; Fall 2011; Fall 2012
- *The Origins of the New Testament Canon*: Spring 2010; Spring 2011; Spring 2012
- *Jesus Through the eyes of the Religions of the World*: Spring 2011; Spring 2012
- *Paul's Letters*: Fall 2011; Spring 2011; Fall 2012; Spring 2012
- *St. Irenaeus and the Gnostics*: Spring 2012
- *Pluralism Vs. Tolerance: Encouraging Interfaith Dialogue*: Spring 2012

Summer 2011

Church of Hope in Sarasota Florida

Sarasota, FL

Youth and Church Ministry Internship: I was responsible for all the day-to-day business of running a ministry within the church while working alongside the lead youth pastor. My daily tasks consisted of handling church finances and accounting, event planning, fundraising, preaching, teaching, mentoring, and pastoral counseling.

Extracurricular Interests

- Mentoring people in the Christian faith
- Motivational speaking
- Piano and guitar
- Poetry and good literary fiction
- Chess