

THEOPHUS "THEE" SMITH

Associate Professor
Department of Religion
Emory University
Atlanta, GA 30322 USA
thee.smith@emory.edu
404-727-0636

Priest Associate
Cathedral of St. Philip
2744 Peachtree Rd. NW
Atlanta, GA 30305 USA
tsmith@stphilipscathedral.org
404-365-1093

Residence: 1205 Metropolitan Ave. Apt. 315, S.E. Atlanta, GA 30316

Faculty profile: <http://religion.emory.edu/home/people/faculty/smith-thee.html>

LinkedIN profile: www.linkedin.com/in/theesmith

Sermon archive: www.stphilipscathedral.org/Sermons/the-rev-thee-smith

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Emory University	Assoc. Professor , Dept. of Religion, 1987-current
Harvard Divinity School	Visiting Professor, African American Studies Spring 1990, Fall 1993 (Cambridge, MA)
Lexington Theological Seminary	Visiting Professor, Spring 1987 (Kentucky)
Kentucky State University	Asst. Professor, Whitney Young College, 1983-1987
Pacific School of Religion	Instructor, 1981-1982 (Berkeley, CA)

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Philosophical & Systematic Theology, and Philosophy of Religion
Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley, CA), 1987
Diss: "The Biblical Shape of Black Experience: An Essay in Philosophical Theology"

M.T.S. [Master of Theological Studies](#); Concentration: Biblical Languages and Literature
Virginia Theological Seminary (Alexandria, VA), 1977

B.A. [Liberal Arts](#): Humanities & Sciences in Western classics "great books" curricula
St. John's College (Annapolis, MD), 1975

FELLOWSHIPS & AWARDS

Book Award for Excellence, American Academy of Religion, for "Conjuring Culture," 1994
Senior Research Fellow, Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Univ., Fall 1993
Fellow, W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Research, Harvard Univ., Summer 1990
Fellow, Fund for Theological Education (FTE) Dissertation Year, 1985-1986
Fellow, FTE Doctoral Study of Religion for Black North Americans, 1979-81

BOOKS

[Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America](#)

New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994; 304 pp.; 1994 AAR Book Award

[Curing Violence: Essays on René Girard](#), Theophus H. Smith and Mark I. Wallace, eds.

Sonoma, Ca.: Polebridge Press (Westar Institute), 1994

ARTICLES & ESSAYS (selections)

"Dark Night of Our Soul's Democratic Vistas," in [Who Are We? Old, New, and Timeless Answers from Core Texts](#); eds. Robert D. Anderson, Molly Brigid Flynn, Scott J. Lee; University Press of America, 2011; pp. 55-64. Selections from the 14th Annual Meeting of the Association for Core Texts & Courses (ACTC), Plymouth, Mass.; April 3-6, 2008.

"Vengeance is Never Enough: Alternative Visions of Justice," in [Roads to Reconciliation: Conflict and Dialogue in the Twenty-First Century](#); eds. Amy Benson Brown and Karen M. Poremski; Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2005; pp. 35-51. Selections from the 2001 Emory Year of Reconciliation Symposium.

"Working the Spirits: The Will-to-Transformation in African American Vernacular Art," in [Souls Grown Deep: African American Vernacular Art](#), Vol. 2; eds. William Arnett, Paul Arnett, Lowery Sims; Atlanta: Tinwood Books, 2001; pp. 46-63

"Howard Thurman" in [A New Handbook of Christian Theologians](#); eds. Donald Musser, Joseph Price; Nashville: Abingdon, 1996, pp. 440-48

"Spirituality" in [Encyclopedia of African-American Culture & History](#). Jack Salzman, David Smith, Cornel West, eds. NY: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1996, p. 2549

"Ethnography-as-Theology: Inscribing the African American Sacred Story," in [Theology Without Foundations: Religious Practice and the Future of Theological Truth](#); eds. Stanley Hauerwas, Nancey Murphy, Mark Nation; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994, pp. 117-139

"After Teaching: Wisdom" in [Against the Grain: New Approaches to Professional Ethics](#); ed. Michael Goldberg. Valley Forge, Penn., Trinity Press International, 1993; pp. 97-122

"From Cure of Souls to Curing Culture: The Prospect for Ritual Leadership in the Black Religious Tradition." [Virginia Seminary Journal](#) XLV:1 (April 1993): 2-12

"The Spirituality of Afro-American Traditions" in [Christian Spirituality: Post-Reformation and Modern](#). Series: [World Spirituality: An Encyclopedic History of the Religious Quest](#), vol.18; eds. Louis Dupre & Don E. Saliers; NY: Crossroad, 1989; pp. 372-414

LECTURES & PRESENTATIONS (selections)

"Becoming Beloved Community," presentation for the Theology and Peace annual conference; 2018 theme: Invitation to Beloved Community; at the American Baptist Seminary, Nashville, TN; May 21-24, 2018

"Restorative Leadership for Diverse Communities," presentation for the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), main campus, Bethlehem, PA; October 17-20, 2017

- "The Advent of TTC's – Truthtelling & Trustbuilding Commissions," Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), Sept. 25, 2015
- "From African Earthkeepers to Afrofuturism and Ecosophy," a presentation for "The Sacred Mundane: A Conference on Religion and Ecology;" Emory Univ. Sept. 11, 2015
http://news.emory.edu/stories/2015/09/er_sacred_mundane_conference/campus.html
- "Rescuing Our Faith from Sacred Violence: Interfaith Resources for Courses & Group Work," Keynote, Teaching Religion, Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding: A Consultation of Educators in Religion. Boston University School of Theology. August 9 -11, 2010
- "Dark Night of Our Souls' Democratic Vistas," Plenary address, Association for Core Texts & Courses - ACTC Annual Meeting: Radisson Hotel, Plymouth, Mass.; April 5, 2008
- "From Ancient Agony to Contemporary Ecstasy: The Gospel at Colonus", Friday Evening Lecture, St. John's College, Annapolis, MD. January 18, 2008
- "Deconstructing the Victim-Perpetrator Paradigm: A Heuristic," paper, Annual Meeting of the Colloquium on Violence and Religion (COV&R 2007) hosted by the Blaise Pascal Instituut, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, Netherlands; July 4-8, 2007
- "Toward a New 'Confederation of Honor,'" Keynote Address at "Southern Exposure: A Summit on Racial Reconciliation:" hosted by the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the Univ. of Mississippi (Ole Miss), Oxford, MS; March 17-19, 2006
- "Sacred Lies/Sacred Violence Clinic I," "Mimesis, Creativity, and Reconciliation:" Annual Meeting of COV&R 2006 at St. Paul University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; June 1, 2006
- "Time Alchemy II: Healing History 'As If' Horror Never Happened or: Nonviolent Time Consciousness: A Phenomenology," Northwestern Univ., Evanston, Ill.; Global Cultures conference: "At the Crossroads: Memory, Performance, Pedagogy," 6/23/05
- "Return to Divine Providence: Essaying a Theology of Providence Today;" 3-day annual Payton Lectures at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., Feb. 22-25, 2005
- 'African Heritage Christianity': Transhistorical Breakthrough via Eastern Orthodoxy," presented to North American Religions section of the American Academy of Religion, San Francisco, 11/97
- "Violence Conversion as State Policy: A Religious Studies Approach to Amnesty Trials/Truth & Reconciliation Commissions," presented at the Carter Presidential Center, 4/16/97

"Improvisational Black Studies: A Field Theory Approach" Marquette University conference:
 "Integrating Black Studies into the Core Curriculum of a Catholic University," 11/30/90

WORK-IN-PROGRESS

After Violence: Futuring Victim-Free Societies envisions post-violent futures as our human destiny. The book inaugurates 'futuring' or 'visioneering' strategies that advance the prospect of victim-free futures in terms of performative and pragmatic ventures, that is, as a kind of *praxis*. In pursuit of that millennial quest, the book also announces breakthroughs of major importance that theorists and practitioners alike have achieved. Working often independently in disparate fields and disciplines, remarkable success has occurred in our efforts to deconstruct and counteract the phenomena of systemic violence. Such theory-practice breakthroughs are increasingly evident and emergent in related efforts around the nation and the world. In the course of the book it becomes evident that interdisciplinary and theory-practice syntheses of this kind remain to be impactful at the level of public scholarship. Accordingly, the project bears tremendous significance as an effort to inform and energize ordinary people outside of academic and pragmatic communities.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

American Academy of Religion (AAR; occasional member)
 Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH)
 Colloquium on Violence & Religion (COV&R; co-founding member)

RESEARCH & TRAINING PROGRAMS

National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI-International): Co-founder Atlanta and Emory University chapters; an international consulting & training organization based in Washington, D.C. and specializing in diversity issues, prejudice reduction, and intergroup conflict resolution

Thurman Reconciliation Initiatives (TRI, Inc.), my consulting and facilitations practice, has provided several dozen organizations and groups "faith-based resources for conflict transformation and social change" since 1999.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & LEADERSHIP

Lead presenter with former officer and current police chaplain Paul McCabe on November 2, 2016 at St. Catherine's Episcopal Church in Marietta, GA on the contemporary topic: "Black Lives Matter - Police Lives Matter."

April 20-22, 2012 Co-organizer & presenter at "The Gathering," a conference on lynching and racial violence meeting at the Historic Train Depot in Newnan, Georgia. Sessions involved the retelling of histories and memorials to the slain; including racial healing, restorative justice,

Theophus "Thee" Smith /Vita 2018



education initiatives, reparations and restitution, the role of the arts in reconciliation work, prosecutions of "cold case" civil rights murders, and related topics.

Other presenters included community organizers from Valdosta, GA; Monroe, GA; Atlanta, GA; Duluth, MN; Wilmington, NC; Chattanooga, TN; and Rosewood, FL. I moderated the culminating event on Sunday, April 21, with a march and memorial event focusing on the Sam Hose lynching of April 23, 1899 in Newnan and the "Palmetto Massacre" one month earlier. See www.attr.org/pages/conference2012.htm

Spring 2012-current: founding member of the Black Aesthetics/Black Expression Consultation, working alongside faculty colleagues in African American Studies, Music, Religion, Theater and Literature in order to convene a national forum on Black Studies issues in the field.

Fall 2006-2008, co-organizer of the Atlanta Friends of the Liberian TRC (Truth & Reconciliation Commission). <http://liberiatr.cmnadvocates.org/Atlanta4.html>

Fall 2006-2008, Education & Outreach Coordinator of Emory's strategic initiative on [Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding](#).

Co-founder since 2006 of the [Alliance for Racial Reconciliation](#) (ATTR), a regional coalition of scholars, activists, and community groups based at the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), Oxford, Mississippi. www.olemiss.edu/winterinstitute/attr

Teacher in Atlanta of the [International Reevaluation Counseling Communities](#) (RC), a peer counseling community involving local classes, support groups, workshops, and consultations, headquartered in Seattle, Washington; www.rc.org.

Co-founder, Board Chair, and member since Fall 2003 of Southern Truth & Reconciliation (STAR), Inc., a nonprofit consulting organization founded in Atlanta to help communities adapt the truth-and-reconciliation process to local human right issues. STAR responds specifically to groups struggling with the legacy of lynching and other communal forms of racial and ethnic violence. www.southerntruth.org

Organizer of "Discovery School of Religion," a two-semester *Evening at Emory* class on world religions and interreligious dialogue offered by the Department of Religion, 2004-2006.

Consultant since 1992-current to the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta on intergroup reconciliation, diversity issues and interfaith coalition-building, and former co-chair of the Atlanta Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians (UBE).



APPENDIX 1: Biographical Sketch

Theophus "Thee" Smith is a native Atlantan and an associate professor in the Religion Department of Emory University. Raised in the black church (Baptist), he now serves as an Episcopal priest at the Cathedral of St. Philip in the Diocese of Atlanta. His book, "[Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America](#)," won the American Academy of Religion award for excellence in 1994.

His scholarship spans the fields of religion and theological studies, African American spirituality, and violence studies including co-editing "[Curing Violence](#)." From Atlanta he consults and facilitates forums and workshops on reconciliation and was a co-founder of [Southern Truth and Reconciliation](#) (www.southerntruth.net).

Thee Smith's consulting expertise, workshop facilitation, and speaking engagements are available through [Thurman Reconciliation Initiatives](#) (TRI) Inc., his research and education nonprofit that provides "faith-based resources for conflict transformation and social change." Since 1987 he has led forums and workshops on reconciliation issues at Emory University and throughout the nation, including the "Prejudice Reduction" and "Conflict Resolution" workshops developed by the widely acclaimed [National Coalition Building Institute](#) (www.NCBI.org).

Thee is a former martial artist (Afro-Brazilian capoeira) and a lapsed canoeist, but can still be found actively composing essays, sermons and prayers in cafés throughout metro Atlanta.

APPENDIX 2: Photo Resumé



THEOPHUS "THEE" SMITH

Consultant ✕ Facilitator ✕ Author ✕ Speaker



*Conjuring
Culture*



*Curing
Violence*

Academic Life & Teaching.

Professor Smith was educated at the Phillips Exeter Academy (NH), St. John's College, Annapolis, the Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, and the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. His academic and teaching specialties include philosophy of religion, African American religious studies, Christian theology, and religion and violence.

Since 1987 he has lived and worked in Atlanta, teaching at [Emory University](#) in the undergraduate [Department of Religion](#) and in the [Graduate Division of Religion](#). He is the author of *Conjuring Culture: Biblical Formations of Black America* (Oxford, 1994), and co-editor of *Curing Violence: Essays on René Girard*, (Polebridge, 1994). He is a co-founding member of Emory's initiative on [Religion, Conflict, & Peacebuilding](#).



Research & Memberships.

Prof. Smith is an occasional member of the [American Academy of Religion](#) (AAR), and a founding member of the [Colloquium on Violence and Religion](#). COV&R is an international scholarly society dedicated to exploring the relationship between religion and violence in the generation and maintenance of culture.

For its [1999 annual meeting](#) at Emory Univ. he organized the conference: "[Violence Reduction in Theory & Practice: From Primates to Nations.](#)" He is also affiliated with Emory's pioneering Law & Religion Program in which he has presented on "[A Normative Practice of Truth and Reconciliation](#)" as informed by South Africa's Truth & Reconciliation Commission.

Community Service & Religious Vocation.

From 1991-98 Thee Smith was the founding director of the Atlanta Chapter of the [National Coalition Building Institute](#) (www.NCBI.org). NCBI is an international consulting and training organization based in Washington, D.C. that specializes in diversity training, prejudice reduction, and intergroup conflict resolution.

In addition he is an active leader in the [International Reevaluation Counseling Communities](#) (see www.RC.org for "Co-Counseling"), a worldwide and grassroots peer counseling and activist movement.

In addition Rev. Smith is a clergyman in the [Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta](#) serving at the Cathedral of St. Philip, in the Atlanta Chapter of the [Union of Black Episcopalians](#) (UBE), and in the Anglican-based [Community of the Cross of Nails](#).

Public Scholarship & Social Change.

Thee Smith's consulting expertise, workshop facilitation, and speaking engagements are available through [Thurman Reconciliation Initiatives](#) (TRI) Inc., his consulting and facilitation practice that provides "faith-based resources for conflict transformation and social change."

From 2003-**2010** he was a founding director of [Southern Truth and Reconciliation](#) (STAR) Inc., a university-community partnership and consulting organization that assists local communities in addressing their legacy of racial violence through the application of truth and reconciliation practices and regional alliances such as the [Alliance for Truth & Racial Reconciliation](#).

The following links to Thee Smith's work as a socially engaged scholar are also available online at www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/smith.html.

- [Virginia Tech: Rethinking Blame](#)
- [Time Expansion vs Time Collapse](#)
- [Abstract: Deconstructing the Victim-Perpetrator Paradigm](#)
- [Fate of Innocents is in Bush's Hands: AJC Feb. 2003](#)
- [The Real Terror of the West: Islam vs 'Usury'](#)
- ["Becoming 'Beloved Community'—or—Beyond Targeting Each Other"](#) (powerpoint presentation)
- ["Rescuing Our Faith From Sacred Violence" \(Parts 1 & 4\)](#) (pdf)
- ["Rescuing Our Faith From Sacred Violence" \(Parts 2-4\)](#) (pdf)
- ["Religions Transforming Religions / Religions Transforming Worlds"](#)
- ["Eucharistic Social Change: A Concise Theology and Practice"](#)
- ["After Violence: Towards A Normative Practice of Truth & Reconciliation"](#)