

TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INITIATIVE FOR THE STUDY OF
RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE HISTORY OF AFRICA AND THE DIASPORA (RASHAD)

From the Web...

What Are the Humanities?

In its definition of the humanities, Congress includes: Archaeology, Comparative Religion, Ethics, History, Languages and Linguistics, Literature, Jurisprudence, the History, Theory, and Criticism of the Arts, Philosophy, and certain aspects of the Social Sciences which use historical or philosophical approaches.

As fields of study, the humanities emphasize analysis and exchange of ideas rather than the creative expression of the arts or the quantitative explanation of the sciences.

History, Anthropology, Folklore and Archaeology study human social, political, and cultural development.

Literature, Languages, and Linguistics explore how we communicate with each other, and how our ideas and thoughts on the human experience are expressed and interpreted.

Philosophy, Ethics, and Comparative Religion consider ideas about the meaning of life and the reasons for our thoughts and actions.

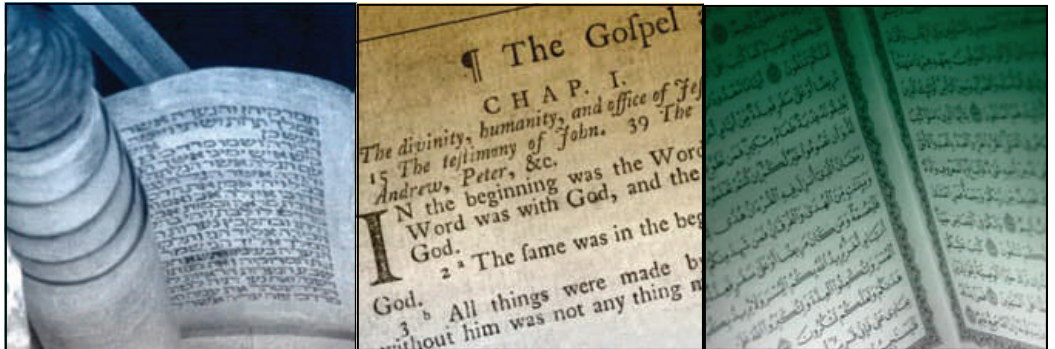
Jurisprudence examines the values and principles which inform our laws.

Historical, Critical, and Theoretical Approaches to the Arts reflect upon and analyze the creative process.

*Visit www.ohiohumanities.org.



'CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM' EXHIBIT EXAMINES THREE WORLD RELIGIONS



Graphic from OHC's *Children of Abraham* brochure, Aaron Collins Design.

By Regennia N. Williams, PhD

Cleveland State University's Department of History and the Initiative for the Study of Religion and Spirituality in the History of Africa and the Diaspora (RASHAD) are pleased to partner with the University Library to host *Children of Abraham*, a traveling exhibit that will be on campus from January 9 through February 13, 2009. The exhibit is made possible in part by the Ohio Humanities Council (OHC), a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

OHC materials suggest that the exhibition "examines the commonality of beliefs shared by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and seeks to help people understand their similarities, differences, and common roots. Visually striking exhibit panels explore the origins, prophets, holy texts, sacred spaces, and core beliefs of the three Abrahamic religions." OHC has agreed to provide host institutions with copies of its *Children of Abraham* brochure and a roster of Speakers Bureau presenters, who will lecture on topics related to the exhibit. (See page two for more information on the Speakers Bureau.)

While the RASHAD team will play a leading role in directing this campus-based project, other individuals from Cleveland State University and the surrounding community are invited to collaborate with RASHAD to plan and implement complementary programs. **The *Children of Abraham* planning committee will hold its first meeting during RASHAD's Fall Open House, on Monday, October 27, 2008, 12:15–1:15 p.m., in University Library Special Collections, (Rhodes Tower, Third Floor). Refreshments will be served. For more information, call (216) 523-7182.**

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Non-Discrimination Statement

Cleveland State University is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in employment and education. No person at the university will be denied opportunity for employment or education or be subject to discrimination in any project, program, or activity because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, handicap or disability, disabled veteran, Vietnam era veteran or other protected veteran status.

PROGRAM LINKS OHIO SCHOLARS AND AUDIENCES

This year, I agreed to prepare the following lectures for the Ohio Humanities Council's Speakers Bureau. These presentations are designed to complement the **Children of Abraham** exhibit. For more information on booking OHC speakers for your events, please visit: www.ohiohumanities.org or call 800/293-9774 (Toll Free in Ohio). —RNW

Spiritual Gifts: The Music of the African American Church

This lecture will look at the 20th-century history of African Americans through sacred music. The presentation will include an analysis of evidence from scholarly texts, oral histories, audio recordings, and other sources.

Exodus: "Slavery," "Freedom," and the "Promised Land" in the Language of African American Spirituals

African American Spirituals, sacred music from the antebellum era, provide abundant evidence of the influence of ideas from Old Testament literature on cultural expressions and the intellectual gifts of the enslaved people who created the Spirituals. Historian William Edward Burghardt Du Bois described these songs as "the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side of the seas." This lecture will discuss the social thought of African Americans as it relates to discussions of slavery and promises of freedom in the language of Spirituals.

Religion, Race, and Rights in the 1960s:

The Interfaith Struggle for Social Justice in Cleveland, Ohio

Like many northern cities, Cleveland felt the full impact of the "turbulent sixties." This presentation considers the role of the city's religious leaders in addressing matters related to the social, political, and economic issues of this era.



WINGS' ANNIVERSARY GALA

More than 200 people attended the October 17th Wings Over Jordan Gala Scholarship Dinner at the Doubletree Hotel in Independence, including more than 50 members of the Wiley Middle School Challenge Choir.



Among the other guests at this final 70th Anniversary event were (top, left to right) the Rev. Dr. Valentino Lassiter and Maestro Glenn A. Brackens and (bottom) James Catledge and Delores Del Anderson.



KSU AND SACRED LANDMARKS CENTER PUBLISH BOOK ON AFRICAN AMERICAN CHURCHES

Cleveland State University's Elements Bistro provided an intimate setting for the October 6th launch of **Revelations**, a new book featuring photographs of Cleveland's African American churches. Photographer Michael Stephen Levy was on hand

to sign copies of the book. He also shared an audio-visual presentation that featured images from *Revelations* and an audio recording of the author reading from his introductory essay.

This book, the first in a series of works that will be jointly published by Kent State University Press and CSU's Center for Sacred Landmarks, also includes a foreword by Congresswoman Stephanie

Tubbs Jones, "The Pastor's Prayer for Youth" by the Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., and an essay by the Rev. Dr. Marvin A. McMickle, "What is Worship?"

With more than 150 pages of color and black and white photos, the book is as visually appealing as it is informative. *Revelations* is available at the CSU bookstore.

—RNW



(Above) Michael Stephen Levy signs a copy of his book for Vice President Njeri Nuru-Holm. Vice President Peter Anagnostos is standing behind Mr. Levy.



(Above) Cover art for *Revelations*; (Right) Dr. Regennia N. Williams and Michael Stephen Levy



RASHAD LAUNCHES ‘GRASSROOTS GRIOTS’ ORAL HISTORY PROJECT IN GARDEN VALLEY

Area residents are convinced that it takes a village to document neighborhood history.

By Ramon Smith

On October 13, 2008, RASHAD conducted its first “Grassroots Griots” oral history workshop in the Garden Valley Neighborhood. A dozen residents participated in the workshop, which included lunch, a PowerPoint presentation, and a discussion based on materials in the workshop packet. Participants talked about the importance of collecting and documenting the oral history of Garden Valley, even as the neighborhood undergoes \$1.2 million in demolition and renovation activities that are scheduled for completion in 2010.

Residents of Garden Valley were eager to share some of their stories and experiences. Throughout the discussion period, the message of family unity was continually emphasized as one of the issues they wanted to see addressed in the oral history of the Garden Valley neighborhood. At the end of the workshop, participants voted to title the project “It Takes a Village.”

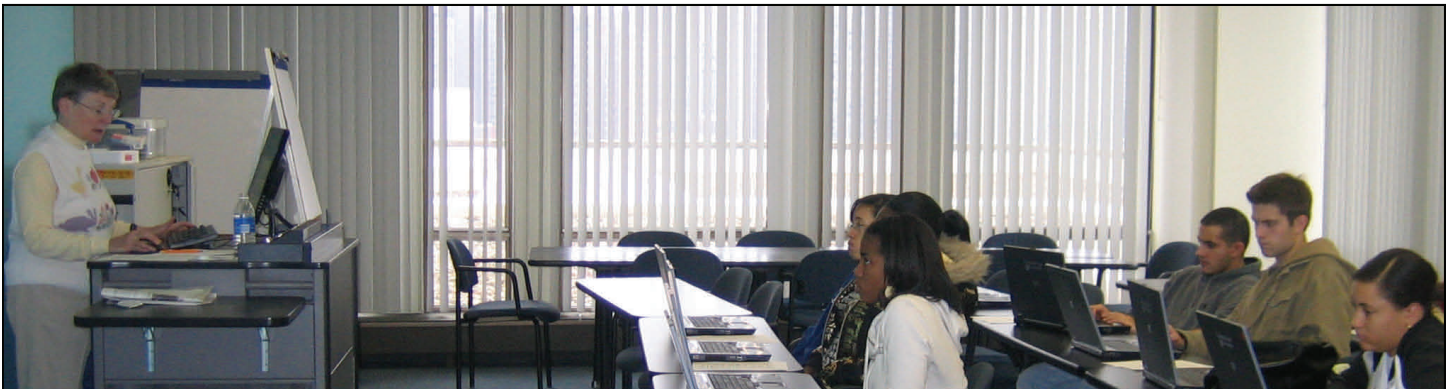


Ramon Smith, a graduate student in CSU’s Department of History, helped organize and lead the first ‘Grassroots Griots’ oral history workshop. Pictured above are (left to right), Ramon Smith, Joy Johnson, and Sherita Mullins. Johnson and Mullins are staff members at the Burten, Bell, Carr Center, host site for the workshop. (Below) Participants posed with Ramon for a final group photo.



LEARNING COMMUNITY STUDENTS TURN ATTENTION TO HISTORY OF GLENVILLE

Students in the “Cities, Sanctuaries, and Social Change” Learning Community gained added insight on the University Library’s local history collections. Marianne Nolan (standing) organized and led an October 15th workshop designed to help students locate primary and secondary sources on Glenville’s churches and other institutions. The students will complete their research activities later in the semester.



Please plan to attend the
Fall Open House for The “Praying Grounds” Oral History Project and RASHAD
Initiative for the Study of Religion and Spirituality in the History of Africa and the Diaspora
Monday and Tuesday, October 27 and 28, 2008

Reception and Debut Performance by
**Spiritual Gifts: A Professional Black
Sacred Music Repertory Ensemble**
David Manning Thomas, Music Director
Monday, October 27, 2008, 5:30–7:30 p.m.
Cathedral Hall, Trinity Cathedral
2230 Euclid Avenue

Library Activities

Literature Tables

Refreshments

“Praying Grounds” Video
Presentation

Monday and Tuesday
October 27 and 28, 2008
11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Planning Meetings

“Children of Abraham”
Monday, October 27, 2008
12:15-1:15 p.m.

“Women and Spirituality”
Tuesday, October 28, 2008
12:15-1:15 p.m.

Location:

University Library
Special Collections
Third Floor
Rhodes Tower
2121 Euclid Avenue

FREE!



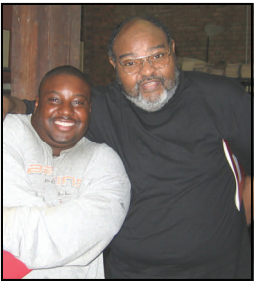
News from . . .

Spiritual Gifts

DAVID MANNING THOMAS AND THE GIFT OF MUSIC



David Manning Thomas



A native of Youngstown, Ohio, David Manning Thomas was born with a love of music. The strict code of ethics maintained in his childhood home assured that his family consistently attended church. It was there that he would listen attentively to the pianist and to the choir, learning to play on the piano his first hymn "There's A Fountain Filled with Blood," when he was about 12 or 13. In high school, attempting to decide between sports and music, one of his band directors had the foresight to point out his natural gift for music. Beginning as a percussionist, he began to practice piano in earnest on an old upright his father purchased, learning by ear and influenced by the jazz and pop his father said he could learn from as well as by the gospel and other church music his mother loved so well.

David graduated from Hubbard High School and studied at The Dana School of Music at Youngstown State University. He was a musician at local churches and performed throughout the area. He was a member of the R&B group "Sweet Thunder," which led to a recording contract with Atlantic records and tours with Major Harris and with the group "Rose Royce." He traveled extensively all over the world, but realizing the nature of the music business and honoring his parents wishes that he complete his education, he returned to school. He relocated to Cleveland where he studied at The Cleveland Institute of Music, earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Education from Case Western Reserve University, and he received a Master's degree in Composition from Cleveland State University. David did post-graduate work at The Royal Holloway College (U.K.) and Camden University, and recently completed the coursework for his doctorate in Music Education at Kent State University.

He has recorded and performed with various artists, among them James Cleveland, Dizzie Gillespie, Albert Ayler, Jean Carne, David Ruffin, Grover Washington, Gerald Levert, and Jennifer Holiday. He is a prolific composer and arranger, and his works have been recorded and performed by numerous musicians, among them The Cleveland Chamber Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Municipal All City Chorus, and the jazz group "Pieces of a Dream." He is also co-author of a book entitled *A Child's First Book of Spirituals*, which is the recipient of the Coretta Scott King Award.

As an Educator, he has taught music in public schools and was the recipient of East Cleveland's "Teacher of the Year Award" in 1993. He has been an instructor at The Cleveland School of the Arts, Cuyahoga Community College, The National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses, Cleveland State University, and Case Western Reserve University. Presently, he is a teacher at John Adams High School and a music director for the All City Performing Arts Program of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

David serves as Associate Minister of Music at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, he is a staff musician at Southeast Seventh Day Adventist Church, and he is the founding director for "**Spiritual Gifts: A Professional Black Sacred Music Repertory Ensemble.**" Working with various groups and choirs, he has assembled a diverse ensemble of talented singers and instrumentalists, from various community churches.

It has been his intent to learn from the world's diverse musical styles and cultures, preserving them and incorporating them into what he teaches and composes. For him, combining various styles gives people a way into the music, giving everyone something they can relate to. David is convinced that, "Music is a gift from God, so all music should go back to glorify God."



RASHAD TEAM WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS



Dana Aritonovich is a graduate student in the Department of History at Cleveland State University. Her primary area of study is twentieth-century American social movements, and she is also interested in Eastern European history. She is a member of the planning committee for the **Women and Spirituality Symposium** and managing editor for the *Journal of Traditions and Beliefs*.

Dana holds a B.A. in Communications from Lake Erie College. As a freelance writer, she has contributed to CoolCleveland.com and the *Gay People's Chronicle*. She passionately believes in community involvement, and has worked extensively with the Cleveland LGBT community, the AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland, Planned Parenthood, and America Reads, among others.

Dana plans to write imaginative and inspiring history books for children, as well as nonfiction, fiction, and poetry for adults. She will also create entertaining and enlightening documentaries about topics in which she has had a lifelong interest: music, spirituality, her Serbian heritage, Cleveland, and the LGBT civil rights movement.

Dana believes in sharing her experiences with others in order to help them reflect upon their own lives and futures, and uses her communication and networking skills to promote the ideas most important to her.

In her spare time Dana enjoys reading and cooking. She has appeared in several short, locally-produced independent films, and collects movie and music memorabilia.

Dana is the eldest daughter of Serbian immigrants and believes that this is what has inspired her love of history and community activism. Understanding the difficulties of her ancestors gives her the intensity and desire to make a difference in the lives of others, and it helps her to recognize the importance of freedom, responsibility, and compassion.



Patricia Dzadony will soon be Patricia O'Luanaigh, changing her last name to the Irish Gaelic version of her maiden name, Louney/O'Looney. She returned to CSU last year through the Women's Re-Entry Outreach Program, and is completing her undergraduate studies in Religion, Women's Studies, and Creative Writing. She is a poet with an interest in fiction and playwriting, and won an award from the CSU Student Creative Writing Contest last year. She has recently been published in

the *Vindicator*, and is beginning to submit her poetry to various journals for publication.

She is convening, along with Dr. Regennia Williams, a **Women and Spirituality Symposium** to be held at CSU in March of 2009, and she is the Associate Editor for the *Traditions and Beliefs*

Newsletter. Her spiritual studies and interests are far-ranging, and she has studied with several prominent teachers, among them the Sufi Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, the African shaman Malidoma Some, and the Celtic shamanic teachers Tom Cowan, Frank MacEowen, Susan McClellan, and Mara Freeman. She has been a member of ADF, Ar nDraiocht Fein, a Druidic organization, since 2006, and is also studying Norse lore, various shamanic healing techniques and modalities, and diverse forms of divination and oracular practices. Her poetic gift manifests in her spiritual work through the creation of praise-songs and bardic tales.

Her two highly creative children, Dorian and Dominique, are credited with her dedication to walking the spiritual path with practical feet. Her son, Dorian, lives in the Tremont area of Cleveland, and her daughter, Dominique, who recently graduated from CSU, now lives in Tacoma, Washington.

Patricia is currently applying to graduate schools in pursuit of an interdisciplinary Ph.D. program combining Religious Studies, Depth and Ecopsychology, Women's Studies, and Creative Writing.

WOMEN AND SPIRITUALITY: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ACADEMIC SYMPOSIUM MARCH 12-14, 2009

Deadline for Submitting Proposals: November 15, 2008

For more Information, write to: shamaness9@yahoo.com or r.williams@csuohio.edu

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Initiative for the Study of Religion and Spirituality in the History of Africa and the Diaspora (RASHAD) is seeking contributions for

“PRAYING GROUNDS AND CONTESTED TERRAIN: AFRICAN AMERICANS, RELIGION, AND THE ACADEMY”

the charter issue of

The Journal of Traditions and Beliefs

Dr. Regennia N. Williams, Founder and Editor
Dana Artonovich, Managing Editor

The Journal of Traditions and Beliefs is seeking scholarly articles on “Praying Grounds and Contested Terrain: African Americans, Religion, and the Academy” for its Fall 2009 issue. Publishable articles will contribute to the dialogue on issues related to this theme, reflect the diverse viewpoints and backgrounds of African and African American people, and highlight the various “contested terrains” of African Diasporic spirituality in the academy.

Possible topics include but are not limited to:

- Teaching the History of African-American Christianity
- Black Theology in the Academy
- Africentric Christianity
- Black Theology and the Civil Rights Movement in Historical Perspective
- Black Sacred Music and the 21st-Century Curriculum
- Islam and African Americans

Typewritten, double-spaced manuscripts, no more than 30 pages in length (including endnotes), should be prepared using *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th Edition (University of Chicago Press, 2007). Manuscripts submitted for publication will be peer-reviewed.

Submit manuscripts to: African.Diaspora@csuohio.edu

Deadline for Submissions: November 15, 2008

Notification of Acceptance: February 15, 2009

Final Revisions Due: May 15, 2009

Publication Date: Fall 2009

For more information, call (216) 523-7182.



(Above) Geraldine Hardin-Washington, Cleveland native and recent "Praying Grounds" interviewee. (Below) Dr. Regennia N. Williams and the Rev. Dr. Earl Preston, Jr., pastor of the Morning Star Baptist Church.



(Right) CSU's Dr. Richard Klein (center) led a Sacred Landmarks Tour for students in the Fall 2008 "Cities, Sanctuaries, and Social Change" Learning Community. St. John A.M.E., Cleveland's oldest African American church, is shown in the background, (Below) Patricia O'Lunaigh (left), Associate Editor for *Traditions and Beliefs* and Dr. Marnie Rodriguez at the 2008 retreat for CSU's Women's Comprehensive Program.



**RASHAD AND PRAYING GROUNDS:
ON CAMPUS, IN THE COMMUNITY,
AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY!**



RASHAD

Initiative for the Study of
Religion and Spirituality in the
History of Africa and the Diaspora



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