



We are Many. We are Different. We Create Life.

The Forum, 1.2 (April, 2022)

“Letter from the Director”

Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored? (Jeremiah 8:22, NRVS)

Greetings from the Religion and Global Health Forum at Drew Theological School. As citizens of a world that continues to be haunted by disease (whether in its pandemic, endemic, or other form of categorization), by socio-political dis-ease, violence, death, and by massive population displacement, we hope that you find and continue to build healthy communities where you and all are grounded and renewed for the continuing work of the healing of the nations, the healing of all God’s children, and the healing of the earth.

We are excited to share with you some of the work of the *Forum*. We had an amazing opportunity to partner with Auburn Seminary to showcase intersectional work of pastoral leadership, scholarship, and activism around women’s reproductive health ([here](#)). Our appreciation goes to all who attended the event, the wonderful panelists – Rev Angela Williams, lead organizer for Spiritual Alliance of Communities for Reproductive Dignity; Dr. Elizabeth Freese, research associate with Auburn Seminary, focused on faith-based activism and education for the reproductive movement; and Rev. Kenyatta Chinwe, amplify project coordinator for Sister Song; and the moderator of the event, Dr. Erica Ramirez, director of applied research at Auburn Seminary. It was a beautiful and powerful expression of the inspiration, rigor, intentionality, grace, and generative work that informs holistic approaches to health and wellness. I look forward to future collaborations with Auburn Seminary.

As divine providence would have it, the most holy activities (Passover, Holy Week, and Ramadan) of the three Abrahamic religions converged around the time in April. The *Forum* partnered with Muslim Student Association at Drew, Madison Mosque, University Chaplain’s Office, and the Center on Religion Culture and Conflict to celebrate Iftar on April 12. Appreciation to Dr. Jonathan Golden, Rev. Tanya Linn Bennett, Imam Saffet Catovic, Peace Island, and Beyza Yilmaz, for creating a welcoming and enriching moment of community gathering, fellowship meal, scriptural reading from the Qu’Ran, and prayer. Healthy religiosity is a beautiful thing to see and be a part of.

As the academic year approaches its end, we remember our shared moments together with gratitude, and we look forward to the future with excitement. The Forum's work around "Healthy Churches Now" will continue, as we collaborate with churches interested in becoming "Health Hubs" for community health justice and equity. The *Forum* will also be actively involved in the upcoming Global Health Catalyst summit at Johns Hopkins University this July. Details about the program will be made available to you when it is set. We hope you can join us then.

Finally, we are excited about the release of *Let My People Live: An Africana Reading of Exodus* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2022). The work of liberation continues to be a key aspect of our understanding of the connections between personal and communal healing and flourishing.

We appreciate your involvement and your feedback. We also invite you to consider writing pieces for publication on our site. We wish you good health and happiness in all you do.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Dr. Kenneth Ngwa
Professor of Hebrew Bible
Director, Religion and Global Health Forum
Drew University Theological School
Cell Phone: 609/651-1923
Email: kngwa@drew.edu
Founder, Never Stop Breathing (www.neverstopbreathing.org)