

9:30–10:00am Professor Charles Bellinger
RENE GIRARD AND THE DEATH PENALTY

The French literary critic Rene Girard is a widely read and influential commentator on the relationship between violence and human culture. This talk will reflect on the implications of Girard's social theory for the meaning of the death penalty in the contemporary world.



Charles Bellinger is Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics at Brite Divinity School. His research involves reflecting on violence both psychologically and ethically. He is the author of *The Genealogy of Violence: Reflections on Creation, Freedom, and Evil* (2001) and the forthcoming title *The Trinitarian Self: The Key to the Puzzle of Violence*.

10:00–10:30am Professor Roger C. Barnes
SOCIOLOGY OF THE DEATH PENALTY

Dr. Barnes' presentation will be on the sociology of the death penalty in the context of faith traditions. He will review critical areas of the death penalty such as race, social class, innocence, and costs (both moral and financial). He will also draw on his personal experiences with death-row prisoners.



Roger C. Barnes is Professor of Sociology at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. He is a board member of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. His writings on the death penalty and crime and justice issues have appeared in the *National Social Science Journal*, the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Education*, the *Journal of South Texas Studies*, the *Criminal Justice Journal*, *Police Studies*, in edited books, and in newspapers.

**THE BIBLE AND RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

These conferences gather religious leaders to study and reflect on the Bible and its use in their professional, congregational, and intellectual lives. Each session introduces the latest techniques, publications (print and digital), and other resources focusing on the most effective use of these resources for personal enrichment and professional responsibilities, such as writing, preaching, teaching, and participating in the public arena.

**ENGAGING THE BIBLE—
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL
REFLECTIONS ON THE DEATH
PENALTY IN TEXAS AND THE US**

- ◆ *Whose lives are touched by the death penalty?*
- ◆ *What do anthropology and theology have to say about the death penalty?*
- ◆ *What do the Bible and its interpreters say regarding capital punishment?*
- ◆ *What are the facts surrounding the death penalty in the US?*

The Society of Biblical Literature is partnering with Brite Divinity School and the Religion Department of Texas Christian University in a two-day event that will bring biblical and theological scholarship in dialogue with the on-the-ground pastoral work around the prison and justice systems in Texas.

**22–23 February 2008
Weatherly Hall, Brite Divinity School
at Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, TX**


Society of Biblical Literature



EVENING LECTURE

LIFE AND DEATH WITHIN THE WALLS: LIFE IN A CAPITAL PUNISHMENT TOWN

VIRGINIA STEM OWENS

Weatherly Hall
Brite Divinity School
Friday, February 22
7:00–8:00 PM



The town of Huntsville, TX has earned notoriety as the capital punishment capital of the country. Owens, a longtime resident of Huntsville, wrote *Living Next Door to the Death House* with her husband David. Their book shows the complex and painful ways that the justice system affects those who live within and without the prison walls.

Virginia Stem Owens, winner of the Texas Institute of Letters Prize for her book *If You Do Love Old Men* (1990), has written seventeen books on a wide range of topics from media to metaphysics. Her education (an M. A. in English literature from the University of Kansas and an M.A. in religion from the Iliff School of Theology) prepared her to write *The Total Image, or Selling Jesus in the Modern Age* (1980), *Daughters of Eve: Women of the Bible Speak to Women of Today* (in print since 1995) and *Looking for Jesus* (1999). Her most recent work is *Caring for Mother: A Daughter's Long Goodbye* (2007). She has been on the editorial board of *Books & Culture* since its inception. She also served for seven years as Director of the Milton Center, an institute dedicated to fostering excellence in writing by Christians.

WORKSHOPS: Weatherly Hall, Brite Divinity School Saturday, February 23

8:30am–10:30am Guest speakers
10:30am–11:00am Coffee break
11:00am–12:00pm Group discussion

Religious leaders (ordained and lay) and students are invited to attend free of charge.

8:30–9:00am Professor Jack Hill **IS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WRONG?**

This presentation is a Christian ethical reflection on the death penalty. It discusses how one relates Biblical teachings to the current practice in the U.S., and situates the debate in terms of the social justice witness of Christians around the world.

Jack Hill is an Associate Professor in the Religion Department at Texas Christian University. His research interests include Christian ethics and Christianity in contemporary society. He is on the editorial board of *Religious Studies Review*.



9:00–9:30am Professor Francisco Lozada Jr. **POSTCOLONIAL BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: INITIAL EXPLORATIONS**

This presentation will reflect critically upon the theme of capital punishment as presented in the New Testament and through the lens of postcolonial theory. It will raise questions regarding the over-representation of minorities and other groups of the poor and powerless on death row.

Francisco Lozada Jr. is Associate Professor of New Testament and Latina/o Church Studies at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University. His most recent book is *New Currents Through John: A Global Perspective* (co-editor with Tom Thatcher, 2006). He teaches in the area of contemporary biblical hermeneutics, Johannine tradition, and Latinos/as in church and society. He is currently the Chair of the SBL's Program Committee and serves as a mentor to doctoral students with the Hispanic Theological Initiative.

