

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Rev. Monica A. Coleman, Ph.D. is an ordained elder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and Associate Professor of Constructive Theology and African American Religions at Claremont School of Theology and Co-Director of the Center for Process Studies. She is also Associate Professor of Religion at Claremont Graduate University.



She has spoken out against sexual and domestic violence since 1996, penning The Dinah Project: a Handbook for Congregational Response to Sexual Violence in 2004. She is also the author of Making a Way Out of No Way: a Womanist Theology, and co-editor of the forthcoming Creating Women's Theology: Engaging Process Thought and editor of the forthcoming Ain't I a Womanist Too?: Third Wave Womanist Religious Thought. In 2005, the interdenominational preaching magazine *The African American Pulpit* named Coleman one of the "Top 20 to Watch" – The New Generation of Leading Clergy: Preachers under 40.

Coleman understands her calling as one to break the silence around painful issues in church and society. Knowing that silence breeds shame, heartache and isolation, Coleman strives to offer a perspective that encourages connection with God and community. Through her ministry, scholarship and activism, she seeks to connect faith with the personal and social justice issues of the day.

In 1997, Coleman founded and coordinated "The Dinah Project," an organized church response to sexual violence, at Metropolitan Interdenominational Church in Nashville, TN. In its first three years, The Dinah Project reached over 3000 people. She wrote about her experiences in The Dinah Project: a Handbook for Congregational Response to Sexual Violence. The Dinah Project is being taught at theological schools, churches and domestic & sexual violence centers around the country. Coleman continues to volunteer with her local rape crisis center. Monica's expertise in religion, sexuality and sexual violence takes her around the country to speak at churches, colleges, seminaries, universities, and regional and national conferences.

Coleman advocates real talk about mental health in religious contexts. She blogs on the intersection of faith and depression at www.BeautifulMindBlog.com and writes a bi-weekly column, "Women, In Flesh and Spirit" for www.Patheos.com, the website named by *Newsweek* as "the place to get smarter about religion." She has been featured as an interviewed guest on NPR, blogtalk radio shows and www.PsychCentral.com. She lives out her call to parish ministry as Minister of Christian Education at Christ Our Redeemer AME Church in Irvine, CA, teaching a

weekly Bible study in Los Angeles.

A native of Ann Arbor, MI, Monica graduated cum laude from Greenhills School. She graduated magna cum laude with honors from Harvard-Radcliffe Colleges of Harvard University with her undergraduate degree in Afro-American Studies. She earned the Master's of Divinity degree and Certificate in the Study of Religion, Gender and Sexuality from Vanderbilt Divinity School. There she focused her studies on theology, Christian education, ethics and sexuality. She received her doctorate in Philosophy of Religion and Theology from the School of Religion at Claremont Graduate University. She has received additional professional development at the Woodhull Institute for Ethical Leadership.

She has received funding from many prestigious foundations including the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ford Foundation, The Fund of Theological Education, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, The American Academy of Religion/ Luce Foundation and The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion.

She is the founding Director of Womanist Religious Studies at Bennett College for Women in Greensboro, NC, the first undergraduate religious studies program to focus on the spiritual experiences of women of African descent. She also served as Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. An avid writer, Coleman's articles have been published in a variety of publications including *ESSENCE Magazine*, *The A. M. E. Review*, *Ecumenical Trends* and *The Women of Color Study Bible*.

A self-described nerd, Coleman is equally committed to the work of the academy and contributing to the field of religious scholarship. She was named one of twenty-five "intellectual elite" of her graduating class at Harvard. Coleman's academic work focuses on process theology, a religious perspective that affirms God's compassion in every event believing that what we do and what creation does make a difference to God. Coleman also studies black and womanist theologies, African traditional religions and the representation of religion in literature. Coleman is the first person of color to serve as a Co-Director of the Center for Process Studies. Her academic writings can be found in journals such as *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, *Soundings: an Interdisciplinary Journal*, *Journal of Caribbean Literature*, *Philosophia*, and *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*.