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AFRICAN AMERICAN
MUSEUM

REVERDY C. RANSOM THE BLACK SOCIAL GOSPEL & THE AME CHURCH

DALLAS, TX – The African American Museum, Dallas will host a symposium regarding the Black Social Gospel on April 13, 2019, at 1:00 p. m. The event is designed to present perspectives and historical context about Reverdy C. Ransom, a founding architect of the Black Social Gospel, and his leadership as an African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church Bishop that contributed to the development of the Civil Rights Movement. The symposium is free and open to the public and will take place at the African American Museum, 3536 Grand Ave, Dallas, TX 75210.

The Social Gospel is recognized as a North American Protestant movement. Early twentieth-century advocates aspired to change societal problems and to reform the country through government programs and volunteer social groups by application of Christian ethics. Organizers of the movement sought to address poverty, immorality and social injustices. Considered a very liberal movement, the Social Gospel was shepherded by two white pastors: Washington Gladden and Walter Rauschenbusch. Key figures such as, Mordecai Johnson, Benjamin Mays, and Howard Thurman are also recognized for advancing interests and organizing African Americans. However there is still a larger story to be told: the story of **The Black Social Gospel**.

Reverdy Cassius Ransom (1861–1959) was a civil rights leader and social reform advocate who was a contemporary of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois. In 1905, Ransom joined the Niagara Movement organized by W.E.B. DuBois, William Monroe Trotter and other prominent African American leaders of the time. The following year, Ransom co-founded and was the featured speaker at the second Niagara Movement meeting held in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. This organizing was the forerunner to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Ransom was the forty-eighth bishop of the AME Church (active from 1924-1952). And as with many African American activists, Ransom endured persecution for his beliefs and approach to achieving racial equality. He used his platforms to speak out against oppression, poverty, and the harsh despair and lynchings that African Americans suffered.

The symposium will feature three distinguished scholars who will explore Ransom's life, ministry, influence the AME Church, and the resulting Black Social Gospel movement.

Social ethicist, Dr. Gary Dorrien the Reinhold Niebuhr Professor of Social Ethics at Union Theological Seminary and Professor of Religion at Columbia University; documents Ransom's efforts to popularize the Black Social Gospel, and offers a new perspective on modern Christianity and the civil rights era by delineating the tradition of social justice theology and activism that led to Martin Luther King, Jr. Professor Dorrien is the author of 19 books and more than 300 articles that range across the fields of social ethics, philosophy, theology, political economics, social and political theory, religious history, cultural criticism, and intellectual history. Philosopher Cornel West describes him as "the preeminent social ethicist in North America today."

Dr. Anthony B. Pinn, the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities and Professor of Religion at Rice University, received his BA from Columbia University, Master of Divinity and PhD in the study of religion from Harvard University. He is currently the Agnes Cullen Arnold Professor of Humanities and professor of religion at

Rice University. Pinn is the founding director of the Center for Engaged Research and Collaborative Learning also at Rice University. In addition, he is Director of Research for the Institute for Humanist Studies – a Washington, DC-based think tank. Pinn's research interests include religion and culture; humanism; and hip hop culture. He is the author/editor of over 35 books, including *Making the Gospel Plain: The Writings of Bishop Reverdy C. Ransom* (1999) and *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion* (2003).

Dr. Calvin S. Morris, minister, historian and human rights advocate (at the invitation of Reverend Jesse Jackson) became the Associate Director and National Coordinator of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference's (SCLC) Operation Breadbasket, now the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, and worked directly with Coretta Scott King through this association. Morris also served as coordinator of the African American Studies Program at Simmons College in Boston, and as executive director of Atlanta's Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change. At Howard University's School of Divinity, Morris dedicated sixteen years as Director of Ministries to Church and Society, Director of Field Education and Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology. He was Executive Vice President of Academic Services and Academic Dean at Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta; and lead Chicago's Community Renewal Society (CRS) as executive director where he retired in 2012.

The conversation between these three prominent scholars and theologians makes compelling connections to twenty-first century social justice issues.

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