

CALL FOR PAPERS 2022

Colonization, Christianity, and Commerce: The Afterlives of Slavery in the Trans-Atlantic World

An International Conference jointly organized by Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ.; Howard University School of Divinity, Washington, D.C.; Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington, D.C. USA; and The University of Liberia, Monrovia.

Ministerial Complex, Monrovia, Liberia. October 17-19, 2022

The 400-years legacy of chattel slavery in the trans-Atlantic world, marked by the arrival of Africans in the Americas in the 16th century, and through its official abolition by the late 19th century, has produced reverberations, issues, problems, and consequences, which continue to require critical reflection and action. Former enslaved Africans in the Americas made the return voyage to West Africa from notably the late eighteenth century. The returnees settled mainly along the West Atlantic littoral, from present-day Freetown, Sierra Leone and Monrovia, Liberia to other parts of West Africa. In some cases, they settled among kinsmen. On the other hand, the returnees did likewise establish homes where they appear to have little kinship to the local people. In either case, however, they had to adjust to an environment that was socially, economically, culturally and geographically different. This “reversing sail” by the erstwhile enslaved raises a number of questions. Under what circumstances, for instance, can one refer to them as “returnees,” and what strategies of adjustments did they adopt? Nineteenth-century western abolitionists, but also the American Colonization Society, called for the introduction of Christianity and commerce to Africa as a means of ending the notorious transatlantic slave trade. They envisioned the replacement of the commerce in human chattel with the Bible and the Plow, or “legitimate commerce and the blessings of civilization and Christianity” in the words of Thomas Powell Buxton, an early proponent. Essentially, Africans would continue to produce much-needed raw materials for industries in the West. But this time the production of cotton and palm oil, for example, would take place in Africa, not in the Americas. In return, Africans were expected to accept the Western way of life, including Christianity, education, trade, together with marriage and familial arrangements. We seek papers that will explore colonization, Christianity, commerce, such as implementation and the local African responses.

This Monrovia conference will address the above and related themes. Originally planned for October 2021 but delayed by COVID-19, the Monrovia Conference is an offshoot of an International, Interdisciplinary conference titled “*The Trouble I’ve Seen: The Religious Dimensions of Slavery & Its Afterlives*,” jointly sponsored by Princeton Theological Seminary, NJ in collaboration with Howard University School of Divinity, Washington, D.C., and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture, Washington, D.C. The timing of the conference is particularly propitious: it comes in the same year that Liberians are commemorating the bicentennial of the return of the free African Americans to what is now

Liberia. They disembarked January 7, 1822 and founded the Republic of Liberia a quarter century later.

- Paper or Panel proposals should be uploaded accordingly:
 - PANEL: <https://forms.gle/5JKD4Dd1gTv7EnpC9>
 - PAPER: <https://forms.gle/N1P7q2qa4LXRdgb4A>
- Proposal submission deadline: **July 15, 2022.**
- Proposals should include: name, institutional affiliation and status, email address, contact phone, paper/panel title and abstract (± 250 words).
- Notification of successful proposals will be made by **August 1, 2022.**
- Conference Registration: early-bird registration begins on **August 2** and ends on **August 31**. Full registration fee will be charged thereafter.
- Conference fees: (include refreshments, meals and the conference banquet)
- \$150.00 – early bird / \$175.00 – full registration fee (*faculty based in USA, Canada & Europe*)
- \$100.00 – early bird / \$120.00 – full registration fee (*students based in USA, Canada & Europe*)
- \$50.00 – early bird / \$75.00 – full registration fee (*faculty based on the African continent*)
- \$25.00 – early bird / \$45.00 – full registration fee (*faculty from Liberia*)
- No registration fee for students based in Liberia and from the African continent, but registration is required.

Afterlives of Slavery Conveners:

Email: afterlivesconference@ptsem.edu

Visit: <https://afterlivesconference.ptsem.edu/>