

A Celebration of Religion and Health: Emory University, May 2019

Ellen Idler^[1]

Editors' Note: The PHRS Bulletin is pleased to spotlight goings-on in the growing world of research, practice, and education on public health, religion, and spirituality. In this article, Ellen Idler takes us with her on a visit to this year's commencement for our field at Emory University, one of the US universities with the most well-developed educational programs on public health, religion and spirituality. For lists of programs, please see our resources page (<http://www.publichealthrs.org/resources/>).

Emory University is proud of our coursework and degree programs in religion and public health offered at the Rollins School of Public Health and the Candler School of Theology. We honored our most recent graduates of programs in religion and public health in May 2019 with the second annual ceremony in the Wesley Teaching Chapel, just prior to Commencement (see photo). This year we had four students who completed requirements for the Religion and Health Certificate, two who completed the MTS/MDiv-MPH dual degree, and four who completed MPH or PhD theses in the area. Each student spoke about their work and plans for the future, and we presented them with a colorful Religion and Health stole to wear at Commencement. Some of their thesis projects included a case study of HPV vaccine perceptions and HPV prevention strategies in an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgia; interviews with Hilton Humanitarian Prize Laureates on burn-out in faith-based humanitarian organizations; religion's influence on minimally invasive tissue sampling (MITS) through the CHAMPS Network in Bangladesh and Sierra Leone; two projects on religion and HIV/AIDS in the Southern United States; ethical engagement with indigenous populations in Alberta, Canada;



2019 Emory University Religion and Health Certificate and Dual Degree Awardees (photo by Ahoua Kone)

and a study of abortion attitudes among Protestant religious leaders in Georgia.

Some of the students are going to work in the field, and some are continuing in doctoral programs. We see a bright future for them, with meaningful work in communities around the globe. Their training in our interdisciplinary programs at Emory will enable them to be master bridge builders, continuing in a long tradition of those who have built bridges between organizations in religion and public health, beginning at The Carter Center and the Interfaith Health Center. And they will be faithful translators from one community to another, because they will have the respect and credentials of both. We send them out into the world with great expectations. Please join us in congratulating them!

Here is a list of the graduating students, their degrees, and the title of their thesis or dissertation:

[1]^Ellen Idler, Department of Sociology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA (eidler@emory.edu).

- Charles Barber, PhD, Graduate Division of Religion, “It’s Complicated: Religion and the HIV/AIDS Epidemic Among Black Same-Gender-Loving Men in the South”
 - Elisha Bronner, MPH, Global Health, “Understanding and Assessing Impact of U.S. Short Term Missions”
 - Jessica Dozier, MPH, Global Health, “‘Even if I deeply disagree...I’m going to continue to love you’: Exploring abortion attitudes and pastoral care among Protestant religious leaders in Georgia”
 - Tyler Fuller, MTS, MPH, Behavioral Sciences and Health Education, “African American Women’s Construction of Religio-Social Identity in Relation to HIV and AIDS”
 - Caitlyn Furr, MDiv, MPH, Global Health, “Ethical Engagement with Indigenous Populations in Alberta and Beyond”
 - Stephen Kim, MPH, Global Health, “Emory Religion and Health Summer Institute Needs Assessment”
 - Ariana Lahijani, MPH, Global Health, “The Church as an Agent of Change: A Case Study of HPV Vaccine Perceptions and HPV Prevention Strategies in an African Methodist Episcopal Church in Georgia”
 - Leslie Leonard, MPH Global Health, “Understanding Staff Burnout and Wellbeing Resources in Faith-based Humanitarian Organizations and Hilton Humanitarian Prize Laureates”
 - Katrina Ma, MPH, Behavioral Sciences and Health Education, “A Grant to Tailor an Educational Intervention Promoting Knowledge of HPV and Vaccination Uptake in Georgia’s Catholic Churches”
 - Ashley Meehan, MPH, Global Health, “‘It is the Will of God:’ Religion’s Influence on Minimally Invasive Tissue Sampling (MITS) through the CHAMPS Network in Bangladesh and Sierra Leone”
-