

WHERE

DO WE

By Edee Schulze, Vice President of Student Life

In February 2020 I had the privilege of hearing Dr. Bernice King speak at the inaugural Rodney Sisco Symposium,* an annual conference held on a Christian college campus each year. It was a powerful experience to learn from the daughter of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as she spoke of the fierce urgency to follow Christ to combat systemic racism. Teaching from Luke 9:23, Dr. King stated that if we are to follow Jesus, we need to see that He set aside His privilege, took on responsibility for the sins of humankind (which He Himself did not commit) and through His love and His power accomplished justice. Further, we need to do the same.

This good and timely word is for us at Westmont. We must do as Jesus taught, beginning with denying ourselves, putting personal and self-interests aside, and engaging in dialogue and work to combat systemic racism. We are called to take up the cross

by taking responsibility for that which we have perpetuated and that which we did not create. We are called to follow Christ by doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with God.

Dr. Bernice King also referred to a book her father wrote in 1967

entitled "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?" which is as relevant in its practicality

today as it was when it was written. This book outlines Dr. King's ideas for the future of America, including the need for better jobs, affordable housing and accessible quality education for all. He calls on all of us, in community and collaboration. In answer to the question of where we go from here, Dr. Bernice King said that we are to pursue equity, inclusion and



Blake Thomas



David Bailey



Carol Houston



Professor Carmel Saad

diversity as the means to fight systemic racism.

This coming academic year we will have several opportunities to pursue equity, inclusion and diversity. First, I am pleased to announce that Blake Thomas will serve as our Interim Intercultural Programs director. As a bridge builder, Blake says, "I am passionate about diversity and reconciliation and committed to creating authentic community. I believe that if the Gospel is to permeate every aspect of our lives, it must first break down the walls of hostility and replace enmity with unity. Glory to God that the cross has already accomplished this!" Look for more information about these efforts and from Blake in the coming weeks.

Second, Westmont has engaged the advising services of Carol Houston and Arrabon, led by David Bailey. Carol is a Westmont trustee and senior pastor

of Bethel Unspeakable Joy Christian Fellowship Church. She has a prophetic teaching voice, knows our community well and will bring to us her wisdom from many years of lived experience. Arrabon exists to equip Christian leaders and their communities with the resources to effectively engage in the work of reconciliation. Our two-year experience with Arrabon will include focus groups, workshops, planning and programming. More on both of these consultation experiences will be shared with the Westmont community soon.

Third, Carmel Saad, associate professor of psychology, will lead sessions on implicit bias for faculty, staff, students and administrators during the 2020-2021 academic year. Professor Saad works with law enforcement agencies, and she has a national reputation for her insights and practical knowledge for educating all of us about our implicit bias.

So Westmont, where do we go from here? We are committed to doing better, and we will. We know we can if Christ goes before us. We will follow Christ, do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

**Listen to Dr. Bernice King's message at vimeo.com/392572062 and learn more about the Rodney Sisco Symposium at RodneySiscoSymposium.org*

For more on our fall plans go to westmont.edu/dojustice_micah6



FROM

HERE?