

Stephen G. Ray Jr. begins presidency at Chicago Theological Seminary

Ray has "a deep awareness" of where theology intersects with race, politics, and culture.

People in the [March 28, 2018](#) issue



Stephen G. Ray Jr. Photo courtesy of Chicago Theological Seminary.

Stephen G. Ray Jr. became president of Chicago Theological Seminary on February 1.

"I have so often felt a missionary of the gospel of inclusion and hope in other places in theological education," he said in a statement. "Being at CTS feels like God has brought me home."

Previously Ray taught at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, and Hartford Seminary.

Ray is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, with which CTS is affiliated. Alice Hunt retired as president of the 164-year-old seminary after ten

years in the role.

John C. Dorhauer, UCC general minister and president, said in a statement that he has worked closely with Ray.

“He brings a solid foundation of theological sophistication and a deep awareness of emerging racial, political, and cultural realities,” Dorhauer said. “He knows where theological intersections with culture and politics matter.”

Ray [wrote about that intersection of theology, race, politics, and culture in a 2012 *Christian Century* article](#): “My great-grandfather was lynched. It was not a big affair in the town square; it happened on a dusty southern road. But its imprint and the communal denial in the small southern town that is our homeland have had lasting reverberations for generations of my family.”

Most African Americans are no more than a few degrees removed from such a story, he wrote. “The theological methodology used by black theology is one which gives primacy to experience: experience of not only the divine but also of the vicissitudes of human pain and suffering caused by the workings of evil.”

Ray is the author of *Do No Harm: Social Sin and Christian Responsibility* and coauthor of *Black Church Studies: An Introduction*. He is president of the Society for the Study of Black Religion.