

Rev. Megan R. Visser, MA, Ph.D.

EDUCATION

Ph.D.	Sociology, University of California, San Francisco Dissertation: “How Connected is this Heart”: The Religious and Spiritual Experiences of Women of Color with Heart Disease” Committee: Howard Pinderhughes (Chair), Janet K. Shim, Catherine Chesla	June 2022
M.A.	Ethics & Social Theory, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA Thesis: “‘The Story Can Be Told Another Way’: The Contributions of Womanist Ethics to the Principle of Respect for Autonomy in Bioethics” Advisor: Gabriella Lettini	May 2009
B.A.	Society & Health (Sociology), Simmons University, Boston, MA Thesis: “Kinship, Faith and Empowerment: The Experiences of Organizers Working with Central American and Central American (Im)migrant Communities” Thesis Advisor: Valerie Leiter	May 2006

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Fellowship (Chaplain Resident)	Children’s Hospital, Los Angeles, CA Department of Spiritual Care	2023-2024
Residency	Clinical Pastoral Education, Levels I & II (2 nd -4 th units) Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA Department of Spiritual Care	2022 - Present
Internship	Clinical Pastoral Education, Level I (1 st unit) Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA Department of Spiritual Care	2017
Certificate	Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA Women’s Studies in Religion	2011
PhD Student	Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA Ethics and Social Theory	2009-2011

PUBLICATIONS

McCune E, **Visser M**, and Bamberger, J. (2022). “Nobody Wants to Talk About It, Especially in This Building”: A Qualitative Study of How People Living in Permanent Supportive Housing Approach End-Of-Life Care. *Journal of Death and Dying*.

Visser M. “Holding it Together”: how COVID-19 changed religious and spiritual practices for Women of Color with heart disease. *Journal of Religion and Health* (Under Revision).

Dowdell,* M. (2019). Not the Last to Need Saving. In Susan Frederick-Gray (Ed.), *The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide*. Boston, MA: Skinner House Books. (Book Chapter).

Dowdell, M. (2017). Not the Last to Need Saving. In Meg Riley (Ed.), *Testimony*. Boston, MA: Skinner House Books. (Book Chapter).

Dowdell, M. (2013). Adverse Birth Outcomes, ‘Bad Fathers,’ and Disciplining Risk: A Place for a Feminist Voice in Bioethics. Thinking Gender Papers, *UCLA Center for the Study of Women*.

Baron, E, Cullinan, J, **Dowdell, M**, Fontneau, P, Garner, L, Harrison, B, and Kratochvil, N. (2013). *Who’s In Charge Here? The Complex Relationship between Ministry and Authority*. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association.

PRESENTATIONS

Scientific Presentations

Visser, M. “Holding it together”: how the 2021 COVID-19 pandemic changed religious and spiritual coping resources for Women of Color with heart disease. Accepted Presentation, Society for the Study of Social Problems Annual Conference, Los Angeles, CA, August 2022 (declined due to COVID).

Visser, M. *Religious and spiritual coping resources for Women of Color with heart disease*. Accepted Roundtable Presentation, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting Los Angeles, CA, August 2022 (declined due to COVID).

Visser, M and McCune, E. *Expanding knowledge of end-of-life care in permanent supportive housing*, Workshop, Housing First Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, April 14-16, 2022.

McCune, E and **Visser, M**. *Goals and expectations for end-of-life care for people living in permanent supportive housing: a qualitative study*, Poster Presentation, Society of General Internal Medicine Annual Meeting, 2022.

McCune, E, **Visser, M**, Kinderman, A, and Bamberger, J. *Expectations and Desires for End-of-Life Care in Permanent Supportive Housing: A Qualitative Analysis*, Poster Presentation, Summer Explore Symposium, School of Medicine, University of California San Francisco, November 2020.

Dowdell, M. ‘Flesh-and-Blood’ in New Bioethics: Moral Experience, Risk, and Case 162: The Threat of Hemophilia (1974), Presentation. *American Sociological Association Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, CA, 2014.

Dowdell, M. *Adverse Birth Outcomes, ‘Bad Fathers,’ and Disciplining Risk: A Place for a Feminist Voice in Bioethics*, Plenary Finalist, Thinking Gender Conference, UCLA Center for the Study of Women, University of California Los Angeles, CA, 2013.

* Name changed to Visser from Dowdell in 2019.

Dowdell, M. *Playing with Cells in the Dark: Writing/Reading The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks as a Site of Memory*, Presentation, Pacific Sociological Association, San Diego, CA, 2012. Presented in Absentia.

Dowdell, M. *And What About the Doctors?: The Search for Human Dignity in the Clinical Encounter with Black Pregnant Women*, Presentation, American Academy of Religion, San Francisco, CA, 2011.

Dowdell, M. *Respect for the Human Dignity of Black Motherhood*, Presentation, Eastern Society for Women in Philosophy, American Philosophical Association, Washington, D.C., 2011.

Dowdell, M. *"The Story Can Be Told Another Way": The Contributions of Womanist Ethics to the Principle of Respect for Autonomy in Bioethics*, Presentation, American Academy of Religion – Western Region, Whittier College, Whittier, CA, March, 2011.

Dowdell, M. *How Doctors View Women of Color as Patients: Missing Histories and a Feminist Approach to Bioethics*, Presentation, Women's Studies in Religion Conference, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA, March, 2010.

Clinical and Community Presentations

Visser,* M. Spiritual Tools for Coping. (Keynote). *Community Symposium on Stroke, Depression and Mental Health*. California Rehabilitation Institute, September 2022.

Visser, M. Ethics in Pastoral Ministry. *Ministerial Leadership Course*. Starr King School for the Ministry, September 2022.

Takahashi, L., **Visser, M.**, Carvill-Ziemer, E., Wolfe, S.J., and Stevens, E. *Trauma and the Spirit Workshop*. General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association, 2021.

Dowdell, M. *Understanding and Reading Research 101*, Clinical Pastoral Education Program Didactic Presentation, Department of Spiritual Care Services, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, November 2018.

Dowdell, M. *Research Literacy for Chaplains*, Clinical Pastoral Education Program Didactic Presentation, Department of Spiritual Care Services, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, October 2017.

Dowdell, M. *A Christian Ethical Perspective on Federal Hate Crime Statistics (2011)*, Invited Lecture, Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Ministry, Berkeley, CA. (Declined).

Dowdell, M. *Keynote Lecture*, Allies for Racial Equity, Unitarian Universalist Conference, Fort Worth, TX, 2012.

Dowdell, M. *A Commissioner's Reflections on Evil, Conscience, War and Freedom*, Presentation, Bay Area Truth Commission on Conscience in War, May 3, 2010.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Clinical Researcher

Sensorimotor Function of Stroke Rehabilitation Patients. Neurology Research Lab, California Rehabilitation Institute. Primary PI: Steven Cramer, MD.

2022-Present

* Name changed to Visser from Dowdell in 2019.

Graduate Student Researcher	Personal Genomics Researcher Database. Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of California, San Francisco. PI: Catherine Bliss, Ph.D.	2015
Student Member	Working group on the Role of Race/Ethnicity and Gender in Precision Genomic Medicine. Center for Transdisciplinary ELSI Research in Translational Genomics, UCSF, UC Hastings School of Law, and Kaiser Permanente Northern California. Co-PI: Barbara Koenig, PhD.	2013-2015
Graduate Student Researcher	Survey data analysis on older tobacco smokers and lung cancer screening. Department of Physiological Nursing, University of California San Francisco. PI: Janine Cataldo, RN, PhD, FAAN	2014
Graduate Student Researcher	Tobacco Control Research. Department of Physiological Nursing, University of California San Francisco. PI: Janine Cataldo, RN, PhD, FAAN	2014
Graduate Student Researcher	EngageUC: Engaging University of California Stakeholders for Biorepository Research. (UCSF- CTSI Grant Number UL1 TR000004-07S2). Program Directors: Sarah Dry (UCLA), Elizabeth Boyd (UCSF), and Daniel Dohan (UCSF). Co-PI: Barbara Koenig, Ph.D (primary mentor).	2013
Co-Principal Investigator	Emotions and the Experiences of Front Desk Personnel at Clinics that Provide Abortions. University of California San Francisco, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences. PI: Howard Pinderhughes, Ph.D.	2012-2013
Graduate Student Researcher	Measures of Women's Empowerment. I developed repository of measures of women's empowerment in global health research. Center of Expertise in Women's Health & Empowerment, University of California Global Health Institute. PI: Shari Dworkin, Ph.D.	2012-2013
Research Assistant	Race as a Risk Factor. University of California Hastings School of Law. PI: Osagie Obasogie, Ph.D.	2011-2012

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Per Diem Chaplain	St. Joseph's Medical Center (Providence), Burbank, CA	2023-Present
Lead Minister	Unitarian Universalists of Santa Clarita Valley, Santa Clarita, CA	2019-2023
Assistant Professor	Starr King School for the Ministry, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA	2018-2020

Visiting Assistant Professor	Starr King School for the Ministry, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA	2014-2018
Adjunct Professor	Starr King School for the Ministry, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA	2010-2014, 2020-2021
Project Assistant	SF Refresh and Growing Home Project Homeless Connect/SF Department of Public Health, San Francisco, CA	2011
Community Organizer	Voices for Healthcare Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of CA	2009
Business Specialist	Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA Emergency Department	2004-2006
Program Coordinator	Boston Alliance of LGBTQ Youth (BAGLY) & AIDS Action Committee of MA, Boston, MA Mpowerment HIV Prevention Program	2003-2004

TEACHING

Graduate Theological Union (Graduate)

Instructor	Evidence-Based Spiritual Care	Spring 2020
Instructor	Writing for Religious Leaders	Spring 2020
Instructor	Sociology of Religion	Winter 2020
Instructor	Writing for Religious Leaders	Fall 2019
Instructor	Sexual Ethics	Winter 2019
Instructor	Religious Ethics	Fall 2018
Instructor	Mindful Walk: Pilgrimage Immersion, Kolozsvár, Romania	Summer 2018
Co-Instructor	Pastoral Counseling	Spring 2018
Instructor	Religious Ethics	Fall 2017
Instructor	Critical Theory	Spring 2017
Instructor	Health Ethics	Winter 2016
Instructor	Counter-Oppressive Sociologies	Fall 2015
Instructor	Bioethics	Spring 2015
Instructor	Sexual Ethics	Winter 2015
Instructor	Bioethics	Winter 2013
Instructor	Resilience and Resistance	Winter 2012
Teaching Assistant	Introduction to Ethics	Fall 2011
Teaching Assistant	Introduction to Ethics	Fall 2009

San Francisco State University (Undergraduate)

Instructor	Ethics of Medicine, Department of Philosophy	Summer 2015
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Quest University Canada (Undergraduate)

Instructor	Biomedical Ethics, Department of Life Sciences	Winter 2013
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University of California San Francisco (Graduate)

Teaching Assistant	Social, Economic, and Cultural Determinants of Health, Global Health Sciences Master's Program	Fall 2013
Teaching Assistant	Utilization of Research in Evidence-Based Practice, School of Nursing	Fall 2014

MENTORING

Seminarian Mentor	Unitarian Universalist Association	2022-Present
Parish Intern Supervisor	Unitarian Universalist Association	2021-2023
Faculty Mentor	Hilda Mason Teaching Fellowship Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA	2018-2020
Faculty Advisor	Masters Programs Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA	2014-2020
MA Project Supervisor	Master of Arts in Social Change Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA	2018

SERVICE

Member	Research Committee, Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)	2023-Present
Member	Outstanding Scholarship Award Committee, Division of Health, Health Policy, and Health Services, Society for the Study of Social Problems	2023-Present
Member	Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, and Multiculturalism Committee, Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association	2021-Present
Member	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, California Rehabilitation Institute	2022-2023
Convener	Journal Club on Trauma, Mental Health and Resilience, Unitarian Universalist Community Ministry	2022
Trainer-Organizer	Steering Team, Unitarian Universalist Class Conversations (National)	2016-2021
Officer	Sociology Student Organization University of California San Francisco, CA	2019-2020
Chairperson	Sub-Committee on Education, Accreditation Committee Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA	2018-2019
Member	Ethical Guidelines Committee Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association	2018-2019
Faculty Representative	Admissions Committee Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA	2017-2018
Faculty Representative	Curriculum Committee Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley, CA	2017-2018
Coordinator	Student Colloquium Series Department of Social/Behavioral Sciences & Institute on Health and Aging, University of California San Francisco, CA	2012-2013
Volunteer Lead	Project Homeless Connect/SF Department of Public Health Bill Graham Auditorium, San Francisco, CA	2012-2013
Student Representative	Racial Justice Advocacy Group Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA	2010-2011

Newsletter Editor	Student Association	2009-2011
	Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA	
Co-Founder/Member	White Anti-Racist Community Group	2006-2011
	Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA	
Commissioner	National Truth Commission on Conscience in War	2010
	New York, NY	
Student Representative	Dismantling Racism Committee	2006-2007
	Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA	

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Patricia Benner Dissertation Fellowship, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences	2021
University of California, San Francisco	
Fund for Nurturing Scholarship Research Award	2021
Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston, MA	
Fund for Nurturing Scholarship Research Award	2017
Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston, MA.	
Joseph Gittler Fund for Religious and Ethics Grant Award	2016
Unitarian Universalist Association, Boston, MA.	
C. Harrington Health Policy Fellowship, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences	2014
University of California, San Francisco, CA.	

HONORS AND AWARDS

Science for Seminaries Faculty Enrichment	2019
American Academy for the Advancement of Science, Dialogue on Science, Ethics & Religion, Retreat, Midway, UT (Declined due to family illness).	
Dean's Health Sciences Fellowship Award	2013-2015
University of California, San Francisco, CA.	
Newhall Teaching Fellowship	2011
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA. (Declined)	
Dean's Merit Scholarship	2006-2008
Pacific School of Religion, Graduate Theological Union	
Patricia Rieker Award for Most Distinguished Academic Record in Society & Health	2006
Department of Sociology, Simmons University	
Barbara Lee Legislative Fellowship, Simmons University	2006
Honors Program, Simmons University	2002-2006

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Association for Clinical Pastoral Education	2017, 2022-Present
Society for the Study of Social Problems	2021-Present
Divisions: Health, Health Policy, and Health Services; Disability	
American Sociological Association	2011-Present
Sections: Religion, Medical Sociology	
American Academy of Religion	2016-2022
Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association	2011-Present