

Curriculum Vitae: Becca Whitla

EDUCATION

2012-2018 **PhD Conferred by the University of St. Michael's College and administered by Emmanuel College of Victoria University, University of Toronto.** My thesis unmasks the residual operations of coloniality and inherited notions of empire at the heart of congregational singing traditions and proposes best practices for singing and song leading as part of the development of a liberative liturgical theology and congregational singing praxis. Nov, 2018.

Comprehensive areas: Liturgics; Community Music, Ethno/Musicology, and Sacred Music Postcolonial & Decolonial Theories and Theologies; Identity Theory and Critical Race Theory.

Dissertation Title: "Liberating Congregational Singing: A Critical Engagement with Hymns, Songs, and Congregational Singing Practices using Postcolonial, Decolonial, and Liberating Perspectives."

Supervisor: Dr. William S. Kervin

2013 **MsMus Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto**

Specialization: Choral Conducting

Special Projects:

- Final Semester completed at the Seminario Evangélico de Teología in Matanzas Cuba, spring 2012

- *Eclectic Mass* Choral Ensemble performance - summer of 2011 with Canadian poet Joy Kogawa

- *Hymnody of Earth Choral Project* - Full length choral cantata with three choirs, sold out audience and visiting composer, Malcolm Dalglish, spring 2010

1991 **BFA (Honours) York University,**
combined double major in music and humanities (First Class)

Courses in Music included: Piano performance, Honours project in four-hand piano, South Indian (Karnatic) Drumming, Conducting

Courses in Humanities included such areas as: folklore, women's studies, religious studies, oppression and liberation, children's literature, Spanish

Other

2005, 2002, 1998: Royal Canadian College of Organists: Choir Training Certificate (2005); CRCCO (2002); Service Playing Exam (1998) Kathleen Williams Scholarship

1986 **Royal Conservatory of Music:** ARCT Piano Performance

1986 **Western Ontario Conservatory of Music:** Associate Performer: Piano

TEACHING AND RESEARCH AREAS:

Liturgics and Liturgical Theology; Liberationist Practices and Theologies; Post/Decolonial Theories/Theologies; Contextual and Practical Theologies; Preaching and Religious Education; Ritual/Cultural Studies; Interreligious Ritual; Sacred Music; Community Music; Community Leadership in Music (especially choral music).

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Liberation, (De)Coloniality, and Liturgical Practices: Flipping the Song Bird. Palgrave MacMillan, 2020.

Reviewed by:

- Zentner-Barrett, Joshua (2021) "Liberation, (De)Coloniality, and Liturgical Practices: Flipping the Song Bird," *Consensus*: Vol. 42 : Iss. 2 , Article 19.

Edited Works in Progress

Decolonizing Church, Theology, and Ethics in Canada. Co-edited with Néstor Medina. McGill-Queens University Press, Forthcoming.

Guest editor with Anna Nekola *Religions: Music, Liturgy, and Theology*, Forthcoming.

Book Chapters

“Sounding Coloniality and Voicing Resistance.” In *Hymns and Race: Agency, Mobility, Coloniality*, edited by Philip Burnett and Erin Johnson-Williams. Routledge, forthcoming.

“Inclusion” *Oxford Handbook on Music and Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

“Is Catholicity Viable? Building an Intercultural-Interfaith Praxis.” In *According to All: Catholicity in Postcolonial Perspectives*, edited by Stephen Burns and Bryan Cones. Lexington Press, forthcoming.

“Hymnody in Missionary Lands: A Decolonial Critique.” In *Hymns and Hymnody: Historical and Theological Introductions, Volume 2: From Catholic Europe to Protestant Europe*, 285–302, edited by Benjamin K. Forrest, Mark A. Lamport and Vernon M. Whaley, The Lutterworth Press, 2019.

“The Colonizing Power of Song.” In *Decoloniality and Justice: Theological Perspectives*, edited by Jean-François Roussel, 43–50. São Leopoldo: Oikos; World Forum on Theology and Liberation, 2018

With Tom Reynolds, “Complex Identities in a Shifting World—Musical Expressions.” In *Complex Identities in a Shifting World: Practical Theological Perspectives*, edited by Pamela Couture, Robert Mager, and Natalie Wigg, 271-74, Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2015.

Refereed Journal Articles

“The Empire Sings Back: The Implications for Theology of Confronting Coloniality in Hymns” *Critical Theology*, Spring, 2022.

“The Theological Challenge of Territorial Acknowledgements in Liturgy.” *Worship*, Volume 96, January, 2022.

With Néstor Medina and Ary Fernández-Albán. “Liberation Theologies, Decolonial Thinking, & Practical Theologies: Odd Combinations?” *International Journal of Practical Theology*, (2021).

“Liturgy in a Decolonial Key” *(De)coloniality and religious practices: liberating hope*, edited by Júlio César Adam, Valburga Schmiedt Streck, and Claudio Carvalhaes, (IAPT.CS, 2021), 146-153.

“Postcolonial and Decolonial Perspectives on Hymnody.” *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*. July, 2020. <https://hymnology.hymnsam.co.uk/p/postcolonial-and-decolonial-perspectives-on-hymnody?q=Becca%20Whitla>.

With Néstor Medina, “(An)other Canada is Possible: Rethinking Canada’s Colonial Legacy.” *Horizontes Decoloniales / Decolonial Horizons* (Volumen V.1, 2019), 13–42.

“Poison or Cure? Christianity/ies as Postcoloniality’s ‘Other.’” *Interventions*. (Volume 22, Issue 2, August, 2019). <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369801X.2019.1649174>.

“Singing as *Un Saber del Sur*, or Another Way of Knowing.” *Toronto Journal of Theology*. 33, no. 2 (2017 Fall 2017), 289–94.

“Revolution and the Reign of God: Cuban Hymnody Gives Voice to a Distinctly Liberative Theology,” [published in two parts in] *The Hymn*, Volume 66, No 1 (Winter 2015), 8-15; and Volume 66, No 2 (Spring, 2015), 7-10.

Book Reviews

Oramos Cantando: We Pray in Song [Hymnal Review] *The Hymn* 66: 4 (2015): 38.

The Color of Sound: Race, Religion and Music in Brazil by John Burdick [Book Review] *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 37 (2015): 169-171.

“Theology and the Crisis of Engagement: Essays on the Relationship between Theology and the Social Sciences edited by Jeff Nowers and Néstor Medina [Book Review],” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 30, no. 2 (Fall, 2014): 346-47.

Hymn Collection: *Songs from the Heart: 46 Community Hymns*, Toronto: Holy Trinity Church, 2007.

Non-refereed Articles:

“How can we sing an-other’s song?” In *GIA Quarterly* (Vol. 32, No. 4, 2021).

“Singing Like David: Songs of Celebration and Lament for Our Aching World” In *Reformed Worship* 120 (June 2016).

“From the Heart of Song, to the Heart of Singing” In *Touchstone: Heritage and Theology in a New Age* 33 no. 1 (Feb 2015): 53-58.

CD Recordings

One Voice: Greatest Hits, Volume 2. Echo Women’s Choir, Conducting and Piano, Toronto, 2017.

Complex Identities in a Shifting World—Musical Expressions. Producer, Choral Conductor for tracks 5, 7, 8, 9 with the Toronto School of Theology Choir and Vocalist and Claves with Tom Reynolds, Bill Kervin, and George Koller on Track 10: Reconciliation Suite. Toronto, Emmanuel College, 2015.

I Still Have Joy: H.E.R.E. [Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees] Local 75 Choir. Conducting and Piano, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 75 Choir. Toronto, Deep Down Productions, 2004.

Gonna Sing and Shout: Echo Women’s Choir 10th Anniversary. Conducting and Piano. Toronto, Deep Down Productions, 2001.

Parlour Songs and Heart Songs. Piano, with Alan Gasser, tenor. Toronto, Deep Down Productions, 1998.

Encyclopaedia Entries

“Let Streams of Living Justice.” In *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, edited by J.R. Watson and Emma Hornby, Canterbury Press; Canterbury, U.K., 2013.

“William Whitla” In *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, edited by J.R. Watson and Emma Hornby, Canterbury Press; Canterbury, U.K., 2013.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

“Sing the World God Imagines: Performing Liberation in Congregational Singing” with Marcell Silva Steuernagel, Sectional presented at the Hymn Society conference, Washington, D.C., 2022

- “Introducing *Sing A New Creation*, the Anglican Church of Canada’s forthcoming hymn book supplement” with Ken Hill, Sectional presented at the Hymn Society conference, Washington, D.C., 2022
- “Decolonizing theology, reframing the discipline: What’s hidden in how we think about what we do.” Panel participant, Virtual Forum Series Doing Theology during epochal shifts: fears and hopes, Toronto School of Theology, December, 2021.
- “The Empire Sings: Confronting Coloniality in Music.” Hymns and Race: Agency, Mobility, Coloniality, Conference hosted by Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies, the International Network for Music Theology and Durham University, October, 2021.
- “Are All Welcome?” Paper on inclusion and communion for the International Academy of Practical Theology, July 2021.
- “The Empire Sings: Confronting Coloniality in Hymns.” Opening panel paper, Canadian Theological Society, May, 2021.
- “Flipping the Song Bird.” Plenary panel paper, Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, May, 2021.
- “Between Practice and Praxis: On Planning Interfaith Services” Paper presented Practical Theologies Group, AAR, San Diego, 2019.
- “Intersecting Circles: The Theological Challenge of Territorial Acknowledgements in Liturgy.” Paper presented at the Canadian Theological Society, Vancouver, Canada, 2019.
- “*Sentipensar*: Everyday Living and Liturgy in a Decolonial Key.” Paper presented at the International Academy of Practical Theology, Sao Leopoldo, Brazil, 2019. With Néstor Medina.
- “Singing (re)formation, (re)forming song: Confronting Coloniality in Hymns.” Paper presented at Reforming Imagination Conference of the United Reformed Church, Birmingham, UK, 2017.
- “Singing as *Un Saber del Sur*, or Another Way of Knowing.” Paper presented at the Panel: Decolonial Theological Encounters: *Los Saberes del Sur Global* Confronting the Epistemology of the Global North. Canadian Theological Society. Toronto, 2017. With the Canadian Decolonial Theology Project (Becca Whitla, Néstor Medina, Lee Cormie, and Michel Andraos).
- “Decolonial Thinking and Song.” Paper presented at the Panel: Decolonial Theological Encounters: AAR, San Antonio, 2016. With the Canadian Decolonial Theology Project.
- “The Colonizing Power of Song.” Paper presented at the Decolonial Theological Encounters keynote panel. World Forum of Theology and Liberation. Montreal, Canada, 2016. With the Canadian Decolonial Theology Project.
- “Damned if You Do and Damned if You Don’t: Singing Global Music in Seminary Chapel Services.” Paper presented at the International Academy of Practical Theology Conference. Pretoria, South Africa, 2015.
- “Whose Song is it Anyway? A Framework for Exploring Globalization and Congregational Song” Paper presented with Lim See Hong at Christian Congregational Music: Local and Global Perspectives. Ripon, United Kingdom, 2015 (funded with a travel bursary).
- “Actualizing the Beloved Community: Singing the Reign of God into Being.” Paper Presented at the Music, Theology and Justice Conference. University of Toronto, 2014.
- “Revolution and the Reign of God: Cuban Hymnody Gives Voice to a Distinctly Liberative Theology.” Paper Presented at the Emerging Scholars Forum. Hymn Society, Richmond, Virginia, 2013 (travel funded with a Lovelace Scholarship).
- “The Power of “We:” Accountable Collective Agency in Community Singing” Paper Presented at the Toronto School of Theology, Advance Degree Students Association Conference. Toronto, Canada, 2013.

GUEST LECTURES/WORKSHOPS

- “Decolonizing Congregational Song.” Webinar for *The World Sings* 100th anniversary webinar series of The Hymn Society, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_2TYt7Fh58, January 10, 2022.
- “Decolonizing Liturgical Theology.” Guest Lecture for EMP 5120 with Professor William Kervin at Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology, December 2, 2021.
- “Decolonizing Worship 1” <https://practicing-gospel.blubrry.net/2021/11/15/decolonizing-worship-1-pge-53/>, and “Decolonizing Worship 2” <https://practicing-gospel.blubrry.net/2021/11/29/decolonizing-worship-2-pge-54/>, Podcast series: *Practicing Gospel*. Host: David Rayburn. Fellow guests: Marcell Silva Steuernagel and Brian Hehn, November 15 and 29, 2021.
- “Decolonial Thinking, Theology and Liturgy.” Guest Lecture for TS 732 - THEOLOGIES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH with Professor Néstor Medina, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, November 12, 2021.
- “I Do Not Submit” Panel Discussion for the release of reggae artist and dub poet Michael St. George’s new single, August 15, 2021.
- “The Colonizing Power of Song and Other Ways of Knowing.” Keynote Address, *Music Matters* Conference of Music United, the Association of United Church of Canada Musicians, April, 2021.
- Anti-Racism and Christian Worship Group, workshop at Whitworth College, Spokane, Washington, April, 2021.
- “Colonialism, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and What We Sing.” Lecture/Workshop at St. Luke’s Anglican Church, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, January 2019.
- “Singing Sacred Songs on the Picket Line.” Lecture/Workshop for the Hymn Society’s Annual Conference “Sacred Songs in the Public Square, St. Louis, July 2018.
- “The Colonizing Power of Song and Other Ways of Singing.” Liturgy Seminary, University of Toronto & Lecture at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, March 2018.
- “Inspired by Song in the Face of Struggle.” Lecture/Workshop for the Perkins SMU Continuing Education Program at the World Methodist Conference, Houston, Texas, 2016.
- “Jiivan Dho (Give Us Life): A Festival of Land and Community.” With Lim Swee Hong. Helped organize the festival and conducted schola cantorum. Hymn Society Conference, Columbus, Ohio, 2014.
- “Music Making with Integrity: The Place of Global Song in North America.” And Asian Hymn Festival presented with Lim Swee Hong, Hymn Society Conference, Columbus, Ohio, 2014.
- “The Story of the H.E.R.E. Local 75 Choir.” Presentation for the Council for World Mission Worship Conference, Kingston, Jamaica, 2014, also assisted with conference organization and followup.
- “Sacred Songs for All God’s Children” Presentation with Lim Swee Hong for Canadian Churches Forum, Toronto, Canada, 2014.
- Workshop on Congregational Singing with Lim Swee Hong for Alumni Days, Emmanuel College, Toronto, Canada, 2014.

GUEST PREACHING

Where is Hope? January 2, 2022, Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto, Canada.

Labour Day, September 5, 2021, Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto, Canada.

Love One Another! A Mother's Day Sermon, St. Mark's United Church in Scarborough, May 9, 2021

ACADEMIC TEACHING APPOINTMENTS

St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

2019-present **Professor of Practical Ministry**

Courses taught:

- PA 397 Intercultural, Ecumenical and Interreligious Ritual
- PA 110 (PA 010) Introduction to Christian Public Worship;
- PA 212 Preaching: The Word in Worship;
- PA 160 (PA 060) Introduction to Christian Education;
- PA 391 and PA391G Emerging Perspectives in Liturgy and Practical Theology;
- IU 701: Qualitative Research Tools and Application
- PA 352: English Language and Culture for Canadian Pastoral Contexts;
- PA 381: Learning Circle 1—Skills and Reflection in Pastoral Ministry;
- PA 385: Learning Circle 5—Transition into Ministry

Other Teaching:

- PA 382: Learning Circle 2—Skills and Reflection in Pastoral Ministry, unit on worship
- Integration Seminar—Community Music and Social Transformation; Practical theology
- Designated Lay Ministry Program: units on Worship, Christian Education, Diversity
- Inclusive Language and Academic Integrity workshop

Supervision:

- MTS Thesis, Bri-anne Swan: Not too Gay: Exploring the United Church of Canada's Membership, Ministry and Human Sexuality Statement with Mild Indecency (May 2022)
- Doctorate of Ministry candidate Shepherd Munikwa: An Exploration of How the "Intercultural Vision of the United Church of Canada" Can Be Integrated in the Life of Rural United Church Carmanville Pastoral Charge in Newfoundland (March, 2021)
- Ministry residency students (SME)

Reader:

- Doctorate of Ministry candidate Richmond Chibiko Diala: All Hands on Deck: Collaboration with the Laity in the Roman Catholic Chaplaincy in Nigeria Navy (March, 2021)

College Life and Service:

- Co-Chair of Faculty Council
- Chapel Dean for St. Andrew's College
- Chair, Justice Committee
- Saskatoon Theological Union Chapel Co-Coordinator
- Chair of College Council and Worship Committee
- Masters of Theological Studies Program Director (non-specialized)
- Editor of College Newsletter *Contact*
- Core Group Liaison

St. Paul University, Ottawa

May-June, 2021

Adjunct Professor

– THO2119: Liturgical Praxis, Culture, and Context—Liberating Liturgy

Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

2017-2019 Director of Chapel (EMP3113HY)

– Responsible to plan, support, and lead as needed, at weekly Wednesday chapel service and mid-day prayer services on Tuesday and Thursday throughout the academic year

– Teach, supervise, and evaluate student worship team

– Facilitate faculty and community participation in worship leadership

– Supervise/provide communication about worship life at the college

Fall 2017 Choir Director, Toronto School of Theology Choir EMT 2875HY

2012-2016 Research Fellow to Professor Lim See Hong

– Conducted the Toronto School of Theology Choir EMT 2875HY

2012-2015 Teaching Assistant for: EMT 2861 Songs of the Church (Hymnology)

Seminario Evangélico de Matanzas, Cuba

2016 (Spring) Adjunct Faculty with Néstor Medina, “Lo Cultural, Teología y Liturgia”

HONOURS, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS

2019 AAR Travel Grant Recipient

2017-2018 Ontario Graduate Student Award (\$15, 000)

2013-2016 Social Science and Humanities Research Council Award (SSHRC): Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship (\$105, 000)

2012-2016 Emmanuel College Advanced Degree Scholarship funded by the Bloor Lands Scholarship and Deer Park Scholarship (\$64, 000)

2014 Lovelace Scholarship

2011 Emmanuel College in-course Scholarship

2011 Lay Ministry Award from the Anglican Diocese of Toronto for Study in Cuba

2010 Katherine and Murray Corlett Scholarship; Garth and Joyce Legge Scholarship; Hugh Matheson Memorial Scholarship

2009 Emmanuel College entrance Scholarship

The Jean Preston Yoshioka Memorial Scholarship in Systematic Theology

1998 Kathleen Williams Scholarship for organ performance

1989, 1990 Faculty of Arts and Fine Arts in-course scholarships for outstanding achievement (York)

LITURGICAL LEADERSHIP AND MUSIC WORKSHOPS

Various: *Worship and music leadership* for worship and music for various conferences and special events including the following: Sorrento Centre (in B.C.), Ontario Women's Conference, KAIROS, Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative, PWRDF Annual Meeting, United Church Partners in Mission Annual Meeting

2018 *Momentum*, Anglican Diocese of Toronto: Led two-day worship workshop—training for new ordinands.

- 2018 Centre for Congregational Song, Toronto Launch (Hymn Society): Leader for Morning Worship and Panel Discussion organizer, Sept 29.
- 2017 Anglican Church of Canada national consultation on theological education—“Equipping the Saints:” Worship and Music Leader, Feb 13-17, Niagara Falls, Ontario.
- 2014 Worldsongs Vocal Camp: Facilitator for residential week-long workshop in Matanzas, Cuba.
- 2012, 2013 Canadian Auto Workers (now UNIFOR): Choral Workshop Leader for Leadership Development
- 2008 Member Maple Dub Collective, with Michael St. George, Blakka Ellis and Alan Gasser.
- 2007 CUPE National Convention: Choir Leader.
- 2005- Present Worldsongs Vocal Camp: Co-founder and Workshop Leader, Ontario, Canada.
- 2001-2004 Yoeman Fund for the Arts: Workshop Leader, New Hampshire, U.S.A.
- 1999-2001 Village Harmony: Workshop Leader, Vermont, U.S.A.
- 1995-1998 Theatre Gargantua: Music Coach, Toronto, Canada (Dora Major Moore Award, 1997).

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

- 2019-present Conductor Emerita Echo Women’s Choir, Toronto, Canada
- 1991-2019 Co-Founder, Artistic Co-director: Echo Women’s Choir, Toronto, Canada (70 members)
- 2017 Interim Music Director: Trinity St. Paul’s United Church, Toronto, Canada
- 1992-2012 Music Director: Church of the Holy Trinity, Toronto, Canada
- 1998-2004 Founding Director: Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (H.E.R.E.) Local 75 Choir, Toronto, Canada
- 1995-2003 Founding Member and Singer: Darbazi, Toronto’s Georgian Choir and Aisi Georgian Women’s Quartet, Toronto, Canada
- 1991-1995 Legislative Assistant for Ontario NDP MPPs: Dennis Drainville and Jenny Carter

ADMINISTRATION AND SERVICE

- 2022 Co-chair, Conference Committee, The Hymn Society, planning for 2023 in Montréal, Canada
- 2018-present Member of Sing2025 Committee of the United Church of Canada
- 2017-2021 Secretary, Hymn Society of the United States and Canada
- 2015-2021 Co-Director, Toronto Foundation Women’s Fund
- 2011-2019 Member of the Hymn Supplement Committee of the Anglican Church of Canada
- 2005-2007 Member, Music Committee, Toronto Arts Council
- 2003-2005 Member of the Board, Friends of South African Performing Arts, key organizer of the concert tour of Eastern Canada for the Polokwane Choral Society (2004)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS & CERTIFICATIONS

- 2008 *Music That Makes Community*, All Saints Company at St. Paul's Chapel in New York, U.S.A.
- 2004 *Building a Vocal Community: Singing in the African American Tradition* with Ysaye Barnwell at the Kirkridge Retreat Centre in Pennsylvania, November, 2004

MEMBERSHIPS

- 2018-Present International Academy of Practical Theology
- 2018-Present Society for Christian Music in Scholarship
- 2017-Present Canadian Theological Society
- 2012-Present American Academy of Religion
- 2012-Present Hymn Society of the United States and Canada

LANGUAGES: English, French, Spanish