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## **Trauma and healing at the heart of Staley speaker's theology**

NORTH NEWTON, Kan. – Why is there a theology (a way of talking about God) for the sinner, Phuc Luu wonders, but not for the victims, the sinned-against?

Luu takes up that question in the Staley Lectures he will deliver at Bethel College March 26-27.

Luu will be on campus those two days as a resource for the senior capstone course, Basic Issues of Faith and Life (BIFL). The common text for the class, in addition to the biblical book of John, is *Jesus of the East*, Luu's longer exploration into a theology for the wounded.

Luu has entitled his first Bethel lecture "Ida B. Wells, the sinned-against, and Minjung theology: African-American and Asian voices in harmony" and his second one "'Where does all the pain go?': God's broken body, trauma and the healing of *han*."

Luu describes himself as an "author, teacher, theologian, pastor [and] community builder."

If theology is speaking about God, Luu looks for ways "to give new language to what theology has not yet said."

He immigrated with his family to the United States from Vietnam when he was four. He went on to earn graduate degrees in philosophy (M.A.) and theology (M.Div., Ph.D.).

Luu served for seven years on the Nobel Peace Prize Committee for the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers).

He has taught philosophy and theology at Sam Houston State University and Houston Baptist University, and currently teaches Old Testament Prophets, New Testament: Gospel and World Religions at Houston's Episcopal High School.

Luu's writing and thought has appeared in the *AmerAsian Journal*, *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, the *Truett Journal of Church and Mission* and the *Houston Chronicle*, as well as on NPR's "This I Believe." He has published on topics such as medieval philosophy, pastoral care, theology and culture, philosophy of religion, and art and culture.

Luu is the author of *Jesus of the East: Reclaiming the Gospel of the Wounded*, published by Herald Press in 2020, and is writing a sequel with the working title *Spirit of Connection*.

"We read *Jesus of the East* in the Jesus and the Gospels class [at Bethel] in 2020," said Peter Goerzen, assistant professor of Bible and religion. "Students found that it provided new perspectives on a number of theological and moral issues, such as Jesus' mission, atonement, theodicy, violence and racism.

"Luu does this by drawing on multiple 'Eastern' traditions like Eastern Orthodoxy and Minjung theology – 'people's theology,' of Korean origin – and his own experience as what he calls an 'inbetween,' born in Vietnam and living in the United States since the Vietnam War."

Goerzen continued, "[For BIFL,] we wanted to pair Luu's interpretation of Jesus and his significance with a Gospel account. John's themes of embodiment, healing and abundance seemed to hold good potential for connection."

The Staley Distinguished Scholar Lecture Series was established in 1969, named for its benefactors, Dr. and Mrs. Thomas F. Staley of New York, who set it up to honor their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Staley and Mr. and Mrs. H.H. Haynes. Bethel College has been hosting Staley Lectures periodically since 1972.

Bethel is a four-year liberal arts college founded in 1887 and is the oldest Mennonite college in North America. Known for academic excellence, Bethel ranks at #14 in the *Washington Monthly* list of “Best Bachelor’s Colleges,” and #24 in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of “Best Regional Colleges Midwest,” both for 2022-23. Bethel is the only Kansas college or university to be named a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center. For more information, see [www.bethelks.edu](http://www.bethelks.edu)