Center and Programs. Center for Ethics and Social Policy

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Center and Programs. Center for Ethics and Social Policy
Dates: 1974-2002
Collection Number: GTU 97-5-2
Extent: 11 linear feet (15 record boxes)
Repository: Graduate Theological Union Berkeley, California 94709
Abstract: The Center for Ethics and Social Policy was founded in 1974 as a program unit of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. Faculty involved in this area from both the GTU and the University of California at Berkeley founded the Center. Instrumental in the planning, and serving as the first staff, were Charles McCoy (Director), Mark Juergensmeyer (Associate Director), and Fred Twining (Executive Director). The mission of the Center was to explore new approaches to bring together resources from the social sciences, public policy makers, and theological ethics to focus on vital social policy issues. To fulfill its mission the Center offered courses in the GTU curriculum, held seminars, lectures, and conferences, conducted special projects, supervised interns, and published a newsletter, occasional papers, and books. Thus the Center, through conferences and projects, brought together faculty and students from academics, people from the churches, the government, and business, and citizens in the broader community. The center closed in 2002.
Language of Material: English
Access
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Preferred Citation
Center and Programs. Center for Ethics and Social Policy. Graduate Theological Union
Acquisition Information
The collection was boxed and transferred as it existed in summer 2003 from the last Center office in the Graduate Theological Union Annex Building, Berkeley, California. The Center had been closed May 2003. The files are not complete for any series or time frame. There are few files from the Center's first decade, ca. 1974 - 1984. The bulk of the files are from the last decade, ca. 1993 - 2002.
Biography/Administrative History
The Center for Ethics and Social Policy was founded in 1974 as a program unit of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. The GTU had established Area IV, Religion and Society, as a department of study. It was the faculty involved in this area from both the GTU and the University of California at Berkeley that, through discussions and planning, founded the Center. Instrumental in the planning, and serving as the first staff, were Charles McCoy (Director), Mark Juergensmeyer (Associate Director), and Fred Twining (Executive Director). Among others involved in the organizing and throughout the Center’s years were John C. Bennett, Robert N. Bellah, Charles Glock, and Karen Lebacqz. The 1974 annual report states the mission of the Center: “The contemporary ‘crisis of values’ creates the need for new approaches to bring together resources from the social sciences, public policy makers, and theological ethics to focus on vital social policy issues through research, teaching, and public discussion, and to develop ethical analysis for policy processes in corporate, governmental, and public service organizations.” Areas of concern had a wide scope including social policy issues in institutions such as government, industry, medicine, law, churches, and education. Further concerns were gender issues, the environment, economic justice, and racial justice all with a view toward alternative futures for a just society. To fulfill its mission, throughout its existence the Center offered courses in the GTU curriculum, held seminars, lectures, and conferences, conducted special projects, supervised interns, and published a newsletter, occasional papers, and books. Thus the Center, through conferences and projects, brought together faculty and students from academics, people from the churches, the government, and business, and citizens in the broader community. All worked toward the goal of creating an
The Center Directors were: Charles McCoy, 1974-82; Harlan Stelmach, Executive Director, 1982-90; Drew Christiansen, Director, 1982-86; Karen Lebacqz, Acting Director, 1985-86; William Maier, Acting Director, 1990-91; Barry Stenger, Director, 1991-97; Christopher Adams, Director, 1997; Jerome Baggett, Director, 1997-98; Clare Fischer, Faculty Director, 1998-2002. Other staff members and faculty participants over the years include Edwin Epstein, Ron Stief, and Karen Chaney. Among the numerous programs and projects, listed here are some of the major ones undertaken by the Center during its thirty year history. There were consultations on corporate ethics with such companies as Wells Fargo, Levi Strauss, and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and published ethics manuals. Networking programs included the Bay Area Ethics Consortium and the Economic Ethics Program. Environmental ethics were addressed through such projects as publishing The Cry of the Environment. Conferences, courses, and seminars led to the work of Robert Bellah’s seminal publications Habits of the Heart and The Good Society. The Discipleship/Citizenship Project and Voicing Values Project explored how faith informs life and work. Throughout the history of the Center, much of the funding for operations and for special programs and projects came through membership donations and various philanthropic foundations, private and public. Toward the end of the 1990s, the milieu in which the Center had been founded, the “contemporary ‘crisis of values’” had changed with the passing decades. The mission became difficult to focus and funding sources were increasingly scarce. The Graduate Theological Union Board of Trustees voted to close the Center for Ethics and Social Policy in 2002. For more complete information on and analysis of the history of the Center’s work, see essays in the newsletter Ethics and Policy in Box 9: Feb. 1979 (five year anniversary); 1984 Tenth Anniversary Issue; Fall 1994 (twenty year anniversary); and Fall 1999 (twenty-fifth anniversary). These essays formed the basis of this agency history.

Scope and Content of Collection
The Collection includes four Series: 1) Administrative, Financial, and Fund-Raising Records; 2) Projects, Programs, and Events; 3) Center Publications; and 4) Audiocassette Tapes. Records concerning the various programs and projects of the Center will often be found throughout the Series. For example, the Voicing Values Project will have records in the administrative and financial records of Series 1, the project records of Series 2, and the audio cassettes of Series 4. Various projects will have various records throughout the Series.

Indexing Terms
Ethics – Religious aspects
Ethics – Study and teaching – United States
Social values – United States
Policy sciences – Moral and ethical aspects
Business ethics – United States
Economics – Moral and ethical aspects
Political ethics – United States
United States – Economic conditions – 20th Century
United States – Social conditions – 20th Century
Human rights – Religious aspects
Citizenship – Religious aspects
Environmental ethics – Religious aspects
Berkeley, Calif

Center for Ethics and Social Policy