

THE STRUGGLE IS OUR SCHOOL:

What the San Francisco Hotel Workers' Struggle, Occupy Wall Street, and Other Grass-roots Organizing Movements Can Teach Us About the Possibilities for Social Transformation?



For many scholars the work of research and teaching receives its relevance and vitality from the real struggles going on around us. As we gather in San Francisco during a time of unprecedented economic crisis, continued foreclosures, record unemployment, and increasing attacks on workers' rights to organize, we are presented with unique opportunities to allow these struggles to become a source of transformative learning. **Hotel workers across San Francisco** are engaged in an ongoing battle to stand in solidarity with other abused hotel workers, protect their retirement and healthcare benefits, prevent increased workloads that hurt their bodies, and push for ethical investments against sweatshop hotels – it is a fight for basic human rights that many across the country are waging as disparities of wealth and poverty continue to grow.

The panel we will bring together activists, academics, and faith leaders to learn more about the hotel workers' struggle and how it is connected to a broader struggle for social change. We will also engage the ways the **Occupy Wall Street movement** has captured the imagination of activists, made new and creative ways of protest, and is helping to shift the national discourse on grassroots struggles in the U.S. today. Through this process we hope to push forward a model of pedagogy rooted in a human struggle for social transformation.

A Panel Discussion at the
**American Academy of Religion and
Society of Biblical Literature**

**November 19, 2011 (Saturday)
9:00 - 11:30am**

**Marriot Marquis Hotel, 55 Fourth Street, SF
Room: Yerba Buena 2**

*Hosted by the Political Theology Group and the
Transformative Scholarship and Pedagogy Group*

In Cooperation with

Poverty Initiative: www.povertyinitiative.org
Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice: www.clueca.org



PANEL SPEAKERS

Melissa Snarr (Presiding), Vanderbilt University

Charon Hribar, Poverty Initiative at Union Theological Seminary, and Drew University

Dorsey Blake, Graduate Theological Union, and Dean of the Starr King School for the Ministry

Rita Nakashima Brock, Faith Voices for the Common Good, and Graduate Theological Union

Israel Alvaran, Pacific School of Religion, and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice - SF (CLUE)

Donna Wood, Pastor of Park Presidio United Methodist Church, and CLUE-SF

San Francisco Hotel Worker, HEI Le Meridien Hotel and UNITE HERE! Local 2 (hotel workers union)