

FROM THE DIRECTOR



This year, I am pleased to announce that the cover of HTI's annual brochure is illustrated by artist and HTI graduate, **Dr. Yohana A. Junker**, Associate Professor of Art, Religion, and Culture at **Claremont School of Theology**. A native of Brazil, Dr. Junker named her artwork "*Entre-laçar*," which symbolizes the intricate interconnection of the diverse aspects of relationships, networks, and partnerships within the HTI culture. The lines and colors in the artwork run parallel, simultaneously showcasing their respective individuality and their harmony with one another as a whole. Indeed, "*Entre-laçar*," mirrors my experience at HTI, where a community of exceptional individuals united to cultivate the unique talents each person brings to their field, denomination, and academic pursuits to enhance the academy, the Church, and the world.

After 25 years at the helm of HTI, I am witness to how our collective achievements have resulted in the establishment of a community that generates research and scholarship, integrating the insights of Latine scholars in academia to amplify the voices and contributions across the globe. Despite the ongoing challenges we encounter, the Latine community brings *fiesta* as a form of resistance. By embracing a festive outlook, we affirm that we do not need to sacrifice joy and celebration in the pursuit of excellence. Instead, *fiesta* animates us to remain steadfast in our vocations, resilient in our scholarly endeavors, and committed to the pursuit of a more just world. In essence, we refuse to succumb to despair; together, we continue *en conjunto* to dream, envision, and create opportunities for growth and flourishing within the HTI community.

It is in this spirit, that HTI is thrilled to announce two new grants with our partners at the **Lilly Endowment Inc.:** **HTI's Latinx Voices of Leadership in Theological and Religious Education initiative was awarded \$499,835**, towards supporting the development of HTI's three main communication organs (*Journeys* newsletter, *Perspectivas* trilingual peer-reviewed journal, and the Open Plaza blog and podcast public square platform), and HTI's Dissertation Fellowship received \$2.5 million, designed towards assisting ABD HTI Scholars working on their dissertations.

We are pleased to welcome **68 HTI Scholars from 22 member institutions** for the academic year 2024–2025 (these scholars' biographies start on page 8). Additionally, we **celebrate 13 newly awarded PhDs** (adding to the list of graduates on page 45). Furthermore, HTI is conducting a strategic study, and we eagerly anticipate the new opportunities its findings will unveil.

We kindly request your continued support in prayers, time, resources, and expertise. Additionally, you can support by sharing this brochure to advance Latine scholarship and leadership in the broader landscape of theological and religious education. As exemplified by Dr. Junker's exquisite "*Entre-laçar*," HTI remains dedicated to its mission, and we encourage you to contribute for the betterment of individuals and communities worldwide.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joanne Rodríguez". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Rev. Dr. Joanne Rodríguez
HTI Executive Director