

STUDENT CHRISTIAN HUGHES NAMED BLAZING EMERGING LEADER

"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Matt 8:20

When first-year M.Div. student Christian Hughes designed a transitional housing solution to homelessness, he was responding faithfully to the countless stories he has heard from homeless people, who share the experience that Jesus Christ describes above. Christian, who recently submitted his Transition Pod idea for funding consideration, recounts the deep sense of sadness that he felt following his first encounter at the age of five with a homeless man outside a Detroit-area KB Toys. It was through this early experience that God planted the first seeds of Christian's unique ministry work.



Christian, who is the oldest of four children, was born and raised in Michigan, where Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church has been a mainstay of his life since birth. "It was here that I built my spiritual foundation," he says of the place where he participated in small groups and sang in the youth choirs. By the time he graduated from Hampton University with his bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture, he had left an indelible mark on the campus, serving as the founding treasurer and president for the American Institute of Architecture Students and the National Organization of Minority Architecture Students, Advisory Board Member for the campus newspaper, class treasurer, and pulpit assistant for the Hampton University Chapel.

As a fourth year undergraduate student, Christian attended a seminar on diversity in the profession of architecture, at which he learned that of the 200,000 architects in this country only about 1 percent are African American. That is when he heard his clarion call to ministry. "I walked out, went upstairs to my drafting table and wrote a five-page synopsis of my solution to this issue." At just 24, Christian put this proposal into action by founding Drafting Dreams, a for-profit, sole proprietorship that contracts with schools, school districts, and non-profits to teach architecture to students K-12. "The mission of Drafting Dreams is to inspire the next generation of architects as well as to increase women and minority interest and participation in the profession."

This fall, Christian received a Proclamation from the Pittsburgh Mayor's Office for being awarded the "Blazing Emerging Leader" Award from the African American Leadership Association. This award acknowledges that Christian, now 25, is an accomplished entrepreneur and mentor who has had an incalculable impact on the communities in which he ministers. Not only is he preparing the next generation of architects; but he is also ministering to youth and communities in ways that help him advocate for those neighborhoods. "Through teaching architecture, I have been able to secure architectural consulting opportunities in minority communities. This deepened my calling, as I then realized how much need exists in vulnerable communities." Whether he is developing his "spiritual arsenal" here at PTS, innovative ideas like Transition Pods or lesson plans that will build invaluable, lifelong skills, confidence, and hope, Christian is committed to being engaged in Christ's kingdom-building work.

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