

Theological Education

Volume 47, Number 1
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ISSUE FOCUS

***Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices
in a Multifaith Society***

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Society: An ATS Project, 2010–2012**

Stephen R. Graham

**Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices
from an Evangelical Perspective**

Sang-Ehil Han, Paul Louis Metzger, and Terry C. Muck

The Mainline's New Moment:

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Amos Yong

**Educating Religious Leaders for a Multireligious World:
Outcomes and Learning**

David A. Roozen

**Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World:
Recommendations for Conduct**

*World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council for Interreligious
Dialogue, and World Evangelical Alliance*

OPEN FORUM

**Theological Diversity in a Liberal Seminary:
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities**

Sharon M. Tan



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Theological Education

Volume 47, Number 1
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Editor's Introduction	iii
<i>Stephen R. Graham</i>	

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Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society

Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society: An ATS Project, 2010–2012	1
<i>Stephen R. Graham</i>	

Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices from an Evangelical Perspective	11
<i>Sang-Ehil Han, Paul Louis Metzger, and Terry C. Muck</i>	

The Mainline's New Moment: Hospitable Christian Practice in a Multireligious World	33
<i>Frances S. Adeney, Duane R. Bidwell, and Elizabeth Johnson Walker</i>	

Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices from a Roman Catholic Perspective	47
<i>Mary C. Boys and Scott C. Alexander</i>	

Guests of Religious Others: Theological Education in the Pluralistic World	75
<i>Amos Yong</i>	

Educating Religious Leaders for a Multireligious World: Outcomes and Learning	85
<i>David A. Roozen</i>	

Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct	105
<i>World Council of Churches, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and World Evangelical Alliance</i>	

OPEN FORUM

Theological Diversity in a Liberal Seminary: United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities	111
<i>Sharon M. Tan</i>	

Continuing the Conversation

Theological Education invites responses, of up to 1,500 words, to articles published in the journal in order to foster conversation among its readers. Reader responses may be emailed to editors@ats.edu. Responses are published at the discretion of the editors and may be edited for length.

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Editor's Introduction

Stephen R. Graham

Recent studies make clear what most North Americans are experiencing—not only that religious diversity is increasing but also that many families, most congregations, and nearly all clergy experience this reality on a regular basis. The Henry Luce Foundation has supported a number of projects to address issues related to growing religious diversity, including those intended to reflect on and develop theological approaches to religious plurality and those to enhance interfaith dialogue. The project to which this issue of *Theological Education* is dedicated was also funded by the Luce Foundation and has as its focus pastoral practices. The *Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society* project brought together faculty members; scholar practitioners representing world faiths; and chaplains from hospitals, correctional facilities, and the US military to explore facets of the complex situations facing those in religious leadership as they exercise their pastoral practices of preaching, teaching, providing care, marrying, burying, and the host of other duties within their ministries. This issue includes a more detailed report on that project.

Begun in 2010 and concluding with a consultation in September 2012, the project hosted four consultations, commissioned essays, and provided small grants, all for the purpose of exploring the issues and making resources available for theological schools. Along the way, the project shared its conversations with the task force for the revision of the ATS Standards of Accreditation, providing input that was incorporated into the revised standards.

Structured around the three ecclesial families within the ATS membership—evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, and Roman Catholic/Orthodox—the first three essays represent conversations promoted within each family group as well as across the groups. A writing team from each family was commissioned to craft a report that reflected the conversations in their group, that named particular issues with which the family needed to wrestle, and that provided a beginning point for future conversations. There was no attempt or desire to achieve agreement in every area within the families, nor even among the authors. Instead, the lively exchanges, with both areas of consensus and strong disagreement, proved fruitful within the consultations, and we believe they can supply a good starting place for conversations within schools and other contexts. Quite naturally, some overlap exists between the three ecclesial family essays but other areas are quite distinctive. We hope, though, that all three will be informative and provocative for readers regardless of one's own ecclesial identity. The authors are to be commended for completing this remarkably difficult task with effectiveness, accuracy, and insight.

Amos Yong presents an extended reflection on hospitality, host, and guest that was initially given at one of the project's consultations. Yong explores what it means to take on the perspective of "guest" in the interfaith encounter,

sketches some of the theological assumptions behind that move, and offers implications of that stance for those in theological schools seeking to prepare their graduates to be effective and faithful in those relationships.

David Roozen contributes his reflections on the *Educating Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World* project funded by the Luce Foundation. A centerpiece of the project was a set of courses offered by fifteen theological schools that included the opportunity for eighty students to attend a five-day seminar in conjunction with the December 2009 World's Parliament of Religions in Melbourne, Australia. The report includes fascinating testimony from the students as well as reflections on the courses designed by the different schools as faculty took advantage of the opportunity to incorporate the World's Parliament into their course design.

We are also pleased to be able to reprint in this issue the document titled *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*, jointly authored and presented by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Alliance. The document includes reflections on "the basis for Christian witness," "principles" to guide and shape that witness, a set of recommendations for Christian bodies, and an appendix that outlines the series of meetings between 2006 and 2011 that produced the document.

Finally, Sharon Tan offers reflections on the related topic of hospitality to different theological perspectives within a theological school. As an institution, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities has worked for a number of years and made important strides toward racial and cultural hospitality. Observing the growing diversity of theological perspectives represented among its students, the faculty and administration recognized the need to develop practices of hospitality toward theological difference. Tan's record of the school's work in that direction brings important insights to theological schools across the United States and Canada that are experiencing similar theological diversity.

As North American cultures experience growing diversities—religious and other forms—we believe the resources of these projects can be of benefit in helping schools and their graduates develop the capacities and skills necessary to serve faithfully and effectively in multifaith societies.

Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society: An ATS Project, 2010–2012

Stephen R. Graham

The Association of Theological Schools

The Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices project sought educational changes in the 273 member schools of ATS that prepare the majority of professional religious leaders in the United States and Canada. The goal of the project was to achieve curricular and cocurricular change within member schools to enhance the abilities of graduates to function effectively in pastoral contexts in a multifaith society. This essay describes the process and activities undertaken in the project.

Christian leaders in the United States and Canada are increasingly called upon to exercise their pastoral practices in contexts that require understanding of faith traditions other than their own. Moreover, these situations call for in-depth knowledge of their own faith communities' teachings and practices in relation to those other religious traditions. In order to help schools in this area, ATS adopted multifaith dimensions of theological education as a new area of work. The need for this new focus was identified by the board of directors and was included in the work plan for 2008–2012 as follows:

Among the many changes that are occurring in North America is the growth of religious communities other than the Christian and Jewish faiths with which ATS schools have been most closely identified. The increasing number of adherents to these other faiths in North America will invariably affect the practice of Christian ministry. Ministers and priests will need to be better informed about the commitments and practices of these religious communities; they will need to expand their own theology with a theology of world religions; and they will need to be able to minister in the contexts of inter-religious interaction and engagement in the settings where they will serve. Religion has been both a uniting and a dividing influence, and ATS schools will need to identify those practices that the majority religion in North America should undertake to ensure religion's positive contribution as the continent experiences the increasing presence and cultural power of other faiths.¹

Through generous support by the Henry Luce Foundation, the Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society (CHAPP) project sought to help theological schools prepare their graduates to serve faithfully

and effectively in multifaith contexts. Led by organizations such as the American Academy of Religion and Auburn Seminary's programs on Religion in a Multifaith World, a number of other projects worked to encourage interfaith dialogue or to develop theologies of world religions. Given its broad membership and the vastly different approaches to multifaith issues of member schools and their theological and ecclesial traditions, the ATS project focused on the common work of performing pastoral practices. Regardless of theological stance, the simple fact is that graduates of all schools will face situations in which multiple religious faith traditions will be involved. Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal, and Methodist graduates—as well as those without particular denominational ties—need to develop skills and sensitivities that enable them to be effective *and* faithful within their areas of service. Those who marry, bury, provide care, counsel, preach, and teach find themselves in multifaith situations demanding understanding and charity. Continuing growth in faith diversity will make that an even greater demand in the future. Theologies of world religions and skills in interfaith dialogue inform the practices of ministry, but the CHAPP project's focus was on those practices themselves.

Diverse, yet commonly Christian

In order to enhance the project's usefulness for member schools across the theological spectrum, the Association utilized a structure that facilitated conversation by groups representing the three ecclesial families that make up its membership: mainline Protestant, evangelical Protestant, and Roman Catholic. Because each family approaches issues related to the multifaith contexts of ministry in distinctive ways and because their theological starting points, emphases, and concerns are quite different, the Association staff believed that it would be most effective to create opportunities to wrestle with issues *within* each family group in order to name and address those distinctive concerns, and to proceed with the project in ways that would be faithful to their distinctive traditions. And this proved to be the case. While participants regularly commented on the wide diversity *within* the ecclesial families, the threefold division provided a way to get the conversation going. The ecclesial group consultations provided space in which theological educators could speak in particular confessional terms, use their preferred approaches to scriptural interpretation and ecclesiological wisdom, and wrestle “within the family” over the meaning of Christian hospitality and its implications for pastoral practices. Having conversations within the families and then gathering for conversation *across* the families proved to be a very fruitful approach to issues related to pastoral practices.

Why “hospitality?”

Theologically, the centerpiece of this project was the concept of hospitality, a fundamental theme in Scripture affirmed by all Christians. As Christine Pohl points out in her highly regarded book, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, “Images of God as gracious and generous host

pervade the biblical materials. . . . [New Testament writers] portray Jesus as a gracious host.”² Theologian David F. Ford notes in *The Shape of Living*, that Jesus’s hospitality was “universal.”³ Offering hospitality without concern for gaining advantage is a hallmark of the biblical practice.

As can be imagined, considerable time was spent discussing the use of the term *hospitality* and the nuances and complexities represented by the term and its manifestations. Who are “host” and “guest” in any particular circumstance? In what senses was Jesus himself guest and host? Does hospitality imply or impose hierarchy? For example, as the term was used in the project, did it imply Christian privilege in relation to other faiths? What biblical examples of hospitality might inform these discussions? What difference does it make for persons in nonmajority groups to speak of hospitality?

The conversation about hospitality proved to be fruitful and continued throughout the project, perhaps most importantly as it informed the activities that were funded as the project’s final phase.

Pastoral practices

While most schools offer courses in world religions, less attention has been given to pastoral practices that accrue to ministry in increasingly multifaith settings. Clergy and other religious professionals need theologically informed pastoral skills to negotiate encounters with people of other faiths. They need to be informed about the “lived faith” of others—the different habits and lifestyles, modes of dress, eating, socializing, and charity that instantiate religious teachings. Religious leaders also need skills to handle the pastoral situations that emerge in multifaith families, such as religious initiation and upbringing of children, marriage, hospitalization, and death. They also need to understand how parishes and congregations from their Christian community are appropriately involved with or related to congregations of other faiths in community organizations, civic events that include religious rituals, and cooperation on social service projects and common moral witness.

The primary goal of this project was to infuse educational efforts related to these pastoral practices into seminary curricula as an intentional emphasis or bright thread woven into courses in the theological disciplines and practical theology, field education experiences, and extracurricular programs. Because practices are theology-infused ways of living, they presuppose theological frameworks, and theological students will need to wrestle with any number of issues, including, for many, the incommensurability of their traditions’ stories with those of other faiths. Christian hospitality requires theological students to learn how to remain faithful to the truth of their own religious convictions in the context of the diversity of beliefs and religious identities of others.

To the surprise of some, the project revealed that, despite fears that engaging multifaith issues might dilute faith commitments, those commitments in fact became stronger and deeper for many students.

Project activities from 2010–2012

To achieve the desired change described above, the project centered on the goal of achieving curricular change within member schools, making multifaith competency in pastoral practices a normative expectation for the education of clergy and other pastoral leaders. The activities of the project prepared the schools to consider this change, to shape its expression, and to engage in activities and create resources to help implement it. In broad terms, the project included a variety of activities in two phases.

Phase one: Conversations and publications

April 2010 consultation. In order to benefit from good work already underway in ATS member schools, and to identify key issues to address as the project moved forward, ATS hosted a consultation in April 2010 that included participants from a broad spectrum of member schools. Nineteen participants from the schools, plus an officer from the Luce Foundation and five staff members from ATS, met in Pittsburgh to share information and ideas about what was being done in the schools to prepare their graduates in this area. The consultation also began conversations within the ecclesial family groups about how to help schools of their ecclesial tradition across the Association to develop and implement appropriate training for this ministry. Prior to the meeting, participants each submitted a brief report about what their schools were already doing in this area. On the basis of the written reports, participants were divided into three groups for panel presentations and conversation. The first group included schools in urban areas that sought to interact effectively with people of various religious traditions within their metropolitan contexts. The second group included schools that had developed grant-funded centers, other structures, or programs to facilitate work in this area. The final group included those whose reports had focused on curriculum, including particular courses, travel experiences, and field education. Each panel presentation was followed by roundtable conversation to address issues raised in the presentations. Clearly, many significant things were already underway within ATS schools. Just as clearly, the engagement was somewhat sporadic and there was a great variety in the level of involvement among the schools.

The final day of the April conference included the first ecclesial family conversations of the project. Following their time of “family” conversation, all participants gathered in plenary session to share reports from each ecclesial family. These reports provided a rich and detailed picture about issues that emerged within the family conversations. For example, the evangelical Protestant family conversation emphasized the necessity to root the discussion in biblical teachings and language if the issue was to gain a hearing across the groups represented within that family. The mainline Protestants noted the wide variety represented *within* their group, spanning a wide spectrum from more conservative to more liberal approaches to multifaith issues. For the Roman Catholics, it was important to recognize the long history of inter-faith interaction and to engage the documents and statements on the topic

from various sources and with a range of authority. The reports also provided important guidance for planning the meeting to come in September 2010.

September 2010 consultation. In September, the second consultation of the project convened in Pittsburgh with thirty-five participants. This consultation included two key components: continuing the conversations within the ecclesial family groups and panel presentations by chaplains from hospitals, jails, and the military. The conversations within ecclesial families were structured around three themes that emerged from the initial conversations in April: terminology, documents, and curricula/resources. The earlier conversation about the importance of terminology opened the door to wide-ranging and fruitful dialogue within each family about the significance of terms and concepts in this work. As mentioned before, there was ongoing discussion about using the term *hospitality*, particularly among the mainline Protestant group, and the many positive and negative nuances carried by the term and the practice. The Evangelicals noted that many within their family prefer to speak about *conversations* rather than *interreligious dialogue*. Other evangelicals recognize an existing *plurality* but resist *pluralism* which carries connotations of equality of religions. Similarly, *multifaith* is acceptable as a description of existing reality, whereas *interfaith* seems to presume a level of interaction that might not be appropriate from their perspective. Nonetheless, they agreed that the “short-cut” of watering down terms in order to achieve the appearance of agreement was not only unacceptable but ultimately unfruitful.

The Roman Catholic family noted the range of important documents, commission reports, and speeches that inform interfaith issues for the Catholic community, as well as highly symbolic and powerful actions in the interfaith arena, particularly those by Pope John Paul II. One participant noted that these actions illuminated the fact that Christian identity and interfaith work are not competing values. For mainline Protestants there are a number of denominational statements on interfaith issues as well as documents produced by the World Council of Churches. Evangelical Protestants view Scripture as their fundamental source but have also produced statements such as the Lausanne Covenant and the Manila Manifesto to guide their thought and practice in interfaith relationships.

Participants in all three families agreed that it was necessary to “make the case” why energy and resources should be invested in this emphasis, given the many other demands on energy and resources in theological schools. Faculty resist adding yet “one more thing” to curricula already overloaded in the attempt to meet the needs of constituents and students. Regardless, participants also agreed that it would be impossible to cover every tradition and every issue adequately, instead arguing for weaving interfaith issues into the fabric of existing curricula and other educational practices. They also noted the need to help faculty develop the expertise and skills they require to address interfaith concerns effectively.

As practitioners whose ministries involve them daily in pastoral practices in multifaith settings, the chaplains did an outstanding job of framing the questions and giving insight into the needs of graduates. A productive dialogue developed between the chaplains and the theological educators that

continued throughout the consultation. The educators spoke of the chaplains' presentations as "outstanding," "inspiring," and as an "excellent contribution to our deliberations." One chaplain also strongly affirmed the work of ATS schools, emphasizing the quality of seminary graduates who came to the military for chaplain training, especially in comparison to those from groups who do not require ATS-accredited seminary education.

The chaplains in health care facilities raised a number of important issues for consideration:

- The differing perspectives on pain and suffering within particular religious traditions
- Questions about modesty
- Providing care within the context of differing traditions of experiencing and responding to grief and loss
- The assumptions of "American medical culture," (e.g., the status of nursing workers, which in North America is much higher and more responsible than in some cultures)
- The increasing multifaith profile of the hospital staff

Serving in correctional facilities raises another set of issues. Jail and prison chaplains spoke of the transitory nature of the populations of some facilities and the daunting challenges of providing spiritual care for the vast variety of religions among inmates, from adherents of well-known world religions to those with highly idiosyncratic and personalized beliefs. It was deeply moving to hear about work with "the despised" and the challenge of rejecting feelings of hatred for those who had committed truly despicable acts.

The military chaplains named the challenge and opportunity of the increasing variety of religious expressions among those in the armed forces and the structure of the oath taken by chaplains to support and defend the Constitution, including the first amendment. According to carefully crafted guidelines, military chaplains are called to

- *provide* spiritual leadership and service for those in one's own tradition;
- *facilitate* that leadership and service for those of other faith traditions;
- *care* for all by safeguarding the freedoms of all; and
- *advise* those in command concerning religious matters.

All the chaplains agreed that training of graduates who would inevitably be called upon to serve in multifaith settings required firm grounding in the person's own faith tradition as well as developing the capacity to understand and relate to those in other faith traditions.

Writing teams. Growing out of the consultations, the project assigned a writing team from each of the three ecclesial communities to prepare background papers on their respective communities' distinctive approaches to Christian hospitality and ministry within the context of religious plurality. Writers were selected who could represent their own ecclesial traditions faithfully and engagingly and who could effectively summarize the breadth

of views within the conversations. Each of the three writing teams drafted an essay identifying aspects of the particular approach to religious pluralism within their respective ecclesial communities and naming particular challenges that needed to be addressed for fruitful ministry in a context of increasing religious plurality. Drafts were circulated and provided the basis for a second consultation.

April 2011 consultation. The project's third consultation gathered participants from the first two consultations, scholars of religious plurality, and scholar/practitioners of Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism. The draft essays from the writing teams provided the background for the scholars' reflections. Each affirmed the importance of building relationships with those of other faiths and creating opportunities for them to "speak for themselves" about their beliefs and practices. While such personal reporting from practitioners encourages fair representation and discourages stereotyping, it is also true that individual accounts complicate the conversation because of the great variety of individual expression within *every* religious tradition. One participant remembered the admonition of the late New Testament scholar and Bishop of Stockholm, Krister Stendahl, not to bear false witness against another's faith—or one's own. The scholars also stressed the importance of engaging those of different religious traditions than one's own in contexts that allow each to be as "at home" as possible. Encounters in classrooms or other academic contexts have value, but interaction at deeper levels is possible in places of worship, homes, or other locations that have religious meaning. As one scholar put it, authentic engagement may only happen if we "feel it in our gut."

The scholars also highlighted the importance of leadership in the public sphere by those trained in theological schools, and the need for them to be adequately prepared to provide that leadership in multifaith contexts.

Conversations within the ecclesial families offered additional input to the writing teams who continued their work on final essays, which are published in this issue of *Theological Education*.

Phase two: Small grants and revision of ATS Standards of Accreditation

Small grants. In order to engage pastoral practices growing out of the conversations at the consultations, the program invited ATS schools to apply for modest grants to explore ways to integrate multifaith elements into their curricula. In the process of developing answers to the challenges of religious plurality, the small grants program was designed to draw on the expertise of personnel in the schools as a key source of creative approaches and insights. For their project proposals, applicants were encouraged to explore ways to engage the "lived faith" of practitioners and leaders of faiths other than Christianity.

Eighteen grants were awarded in the summer of 2011 to support creative projects during the 2011–12 academic year.⁴

September 2012 consultation. A third and final consultation gave project directors from the grant-recipient schools the opportunity to present and discuss their projects. Projects were grouped into four categories, and project directors presented their work and engaged participants in conversation

about what they had learned—both what worked well and what did not work so well. The schools and projects by general category were as follows:

Integrating Curriculum and Communities of Faith

- Andover Newton Theological School, “Taking Interfaith Off the Hill”
- Hartford Theological Seminary, “Educating Clergy for a Multifaith World”
- Luther Seminary, “The Pastoral Practice of Hospitality as Presence in Muslim-Christian Engagement: Contextualizing the Classroom”
- Pentecostal Theological Seminary, “Christian Hospitality and Neighborliness: A Wesleyan-Pentecostal Ministry Paradigm for the Multifaith Context”

Faculty Development

- Ashland Theological Seminary, “Challenge and Opportunity: Preparing Students to Minister in a Multifaith Society”
- Bethany Theological Seminary, “Practicing God’s Shalom and Christ’s Peace in Pastoral Ministry”
- New Brunswick Theological Seminary, “Pedagogies and Partnerships for Ministry in a Multifaith World”
- St. John’s University School of Theology, “Raising Awareness of Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society”
- United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, “Christian Hospitality in a World of Many Faiths: Equipping a New Generation of Religious Leaders in a Multifaith Context”

Pastoral Practices

- Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, “Caring Hospitably in Multifaith Situations”
- Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University, “Interfaith Perspectives on Religious Practices”
- Iliff School of Theology, “Putting into Practice an Intercultural Approach to Spiritual Care with Veterans”
- Wake Forest University School of Divinity, “Creating Places of Welcome: Pastoral Care and Worship in a Multifaith Society”

Crossing Cultural Barriers

- Boston University School of Theology, “Teaching Religion, Conflict, and Peace-Building in a Multifaith World: An Interreligious Consultation on Theological Education”
- Ecumenical Theological Seminary, “Listen, Learn, and Live”
- Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, “Engaging Public Theology in a Multifaith Context: Building on Theological Education that Forms and Shapes Faithful and Sensitive Leaders for a Public Church”
- Multnomah Biblical Seminary of Multnomah University, “Table Fellowship with Our Buddhist Neighbors for Beloved Community”

- North Park Theological Seminary, “Developing a Cultural Competency Module to Facilitate Christian Hospitality and Promote Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society”

In addition to the presentation of the projects, scholar/practitioners representing Judaism and Islam offered reflections on the projects, and chaplains also returned to offer their insights on the projects.

Revision of the Standards of Accreditation

An important goal of the project was to influence curricula at theological schools to include training in exercising pastoral practices in multifaith contexts as appropriate to each school’s theological and ecclesial identity. Through the project, the project director regularly communicated the project’s findings and ideas to the task force charged with drafting revised standards of accreditation. The goal of the project bore fruit when the membership adopted the revised standard at the Biennial Meeting of 2012. The change is relatively small, but highly significant.

The previous standard, A.3.1.2.2, stated:

“MDiv education shall address the global character of the church as well as the multicultural and cross-cultural nature of ministry in North American society and in other contemporary settings. Attention should also be given to the wide diversity of religious traditions present in the social context.”

The new standard, A.2.3.2, included as part of the degree program standards for the Master of Divinity degree was revised to read as follows.

“MDiv education shall engage students with the global character of the church as well as ministry in the multifaith and multicultural context of contemporary society. This should include attention to the wide diversity of religious traditions present in potential ministry settings, as well as expressions of social justice and respect congruent with the institution’s mission and purpose.”

The addition of the term *multifaith* is significant as is the naming of the “wide diversity of religious traditions present” not just in the social context as stated in the previous standard but in “potential ministry settings,” thus capturing the importance of training for pastoral practices in those contexts. Finally, the new standard expects attention to “expressions of social justice and respect” for those in other religious communities. A final note about the revised standard is that, in this case as with other theological issues about which there may be disagreement within the Association, the “institution’s mission and purpose” are recognized and privileged.

Conclusion

The Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society project was successful largely due to the willingness of participants to engage important issues in a spirit of collegiality and trust. Participants discussed difficult issues within ecclesial families and across them, in many cases recognizing but patiently holding deeply held theological differences, thus modeling a fruitful and authentic way of learning together.

Much work remains to be done in this area, but the project has provided an important step toward preparing graduates of ATS member schools who are faithful and effective in exercising pastoral practices in multifaith contexts.

Stephen R. Graham is director of faculty development and initiatives in theological education for The Association of Theological Schools in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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ENDNOTES

1. The Association of Theological Schools, *Programs and Reports* (46th Biennial Meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia, June 21–23, 2008) (Pittsburgh: ATS, 2008), 58–59.
2. Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 16.
3. David F. Ford, *The Shape of Living: Spiritual Directions for Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2004), 48.
4. Project final reports are available on the ATS website.

Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices from an Evangelical Perspective

Sang-Ehil Han

Pentecostal Theological Seminary

Paul Louis Metzger

Multnomah Biblical Seminary

Terry C. Muck

Asbury Theological Seminary

The aim of this essay is to prepare graduates of evangelical seminaries to bear witness to the gospel in grace and truth as they serve their various communities in a multifaith society. To accomplish this, the authors first discuss particular challenges and opportunities that evangelical theological educators face when preparing their graduates for effective ministry in a multifaith context. They then discuss concrete practices theological educators can develop to help train students, which then leads to a discussion of the pedagogical forms that are required for this training.

Introduction

Evangelical theological educators in North America perceive the same phenomenon of religious plurality in North America that our colleagues from other Christian traditions observe. Protestantism is on the verge of becoming a minority religious tradition in the United States.¹ There are as many Buddhists in the United States as Congregationalists in the mainline tradition.² Hindus are gaining a critical mass. Moreover, Islam has experienced a net gain based on changes in people's religious affiliation from childhood to adulthood, whereas Protestant and Catholic Christianity has experienced decline.³ While evangelical Protestantism is the largest Christian religious group in the United States, it is by no means uniform in its polity and doctrinal positions. Such differences among evangelicals extend to matters of how we approach other religions and their adherents. Moreover, evangelicalism is not immune to the fluctuations within the increasingly competitive religious marketplace.⁴

The government no longer affirms Christianity as the implicit civil religion. Some employers provide spaces and set times for Muslim prayer in secular contexts. Hindu and Muslim students attend our children's schools. Multifaith and interfaith marriages and households are increasing, presenting unique challenges and opportunities to those who minister to such family units. The military includes chaplains from Muslim and Buddhist traditions in addition to representatives of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish faiths.⁵ Hospital, prison, and military chaplains serve people whose religious practices are increasingly diverse.⁶ Students from other countries taking seminary courses from remote sites overseas bring multifaith issues to the classroom in

immediate and existential ways. These students often provide helpful insights to explore the deeper issues in matters of multifaith discourse and civility. Practitioners in our own tradition here in North America are experimenting with Eastern forms of meditation and medicines. Movies increasingly introduce Westerners to non-Western forms of spirituality in appealing ways. Muslim and Hindu communities are building religious centers near our churches, civic centers, and key landmarks, giving rise to various responses.⁷

What kind of response will we see from graduates of our evangelical seminaries to the increasing religious diversification? How will evangelical theological educators prepare them to minister effectively as evangelicals in this pluralistic cultural context? These are the questions we will seek to answer in this essay. The focus is on preparing our seminary graduates to serve in a pluralistic context wherein they are true to the evangelical tradition and shaped by best pastoral practices of neighborliness and hospitality. Thus, the concern here is not political correctness but pastoral effectiveness. The aim is to prepare our seminary graduates to bear witness to the gospel in grace and truth as they serve their various communities in a multifaith society.

To accomplish this, we will first discuss particular challenges and opportunities that evangelical theological educators face when preparing their graduates for effective ministry in a multifaith context. We will then discuss concrete practices theological educators can develop to help train students, which then leads to a discussion of the pedagogical forms that are required for this training.

Particular challenges and opportunities

Surely, religious pluralism is not a new phenomenon. The Christian faith emerged and thrived in a very pluralistic culture in the Roman Empire. However, the form religious pluralism is taking today across the globe and in North America is both quantitatively and qualitatively different from anything the church has experienced in previous generations. In addition to the technological advances that bring religious practitioners with their beliefs and customs from across the globe to us through the Internet, television, and foreign travel in increasing measure, the church in North America has never experienced such an influx of diverse religious customs and practitioners. Having “enjoyed” privileged status and cultural hegemony for much of American history, Christianity in its various forms now needs to grow in greater intentionality toward being hospitable toward diverse, non-Christian neighbors. Such intentionality is required of us as Christians based on the biblical command to love our neighbor (Luke 10:25–37); it is also required of us in the United States given the fundamental separation of church and state.⁸

As mentioned above, evangelical educators observe the same religious plurality that theological educators from other Christian traditions within the ATS community perceive; however, we often interpret the data differently. Commitments to evangelism and the Great Commission often lead evangelicals to approach adherents of other religions not simply as dialogue partners and as neighbors but (primarily) as those to whom we are called to share the

saving hope of eternal life through personal faith in Jesus Christ—an approach to religious pluralism that differs from those of many mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics. Having said that, it is also important to emphasize that, while an evangelical orientation to evangelism and the Great Commission presents challenges for how we approach adherents of other religions, this orientation also provides opportunities for fruitful discourse and friendship. Our distinctive evangelical commitments can help us approach those of other faith traditions on their own terms rather than seek to discount both their particularities and our own distinctives in pursuit of the bare minimum of religious identity to meet the pressures posed by religious pluralism as an ideology.

It is necessary to clarify that we are not speaking of *religious pluralism* as an acknowledgment of religious diversity in the United States (descriptive pluralism). In this immediate context, we are speaking of *ideological pluralism*, the fundamental commitment held by many nonevangelical adherents within North American Christianity that all paths are basically equally valid and true and appropriate ways of engaging God (however “God” may be defined). Self-professed evangelical seminaries within the ATS membership do not espouse this definition of religious pluralism.⁹

Given particular commitments to evangelism and the Great Commission, some observers may ask, How can one be hospitable if one is seeking to convert someone to one’s own faith tradition? Added to this is another challenge that evangelicals face when encountering religious pluralism: the legal and social tolerance of a diversity of religious perspectives. Given Christianity’s privileged status for most of US history and certain evangelical historiographies concerning the origins of our nation as Christian through God’s providential governance (Christendom versions of Manifest Destiny), it is very difficult for many within the evangelical community to move beyond seeking to safeguard and protect such privileged status and rather focus energies on promoting a truly missional model of engagement that favors hospitality and neighborly love in keeping with Jesus’s exhortation found in Luke 10:25–37.

Reflecting further on Luke 10 and the Gospels as a whole, we learn that Christian hospitality and the neighborly love it fosters should move us beyond practicing mere tolerance and charity where we minister from a position of control and privileged status. Jesus stands as the paradigmatic model for ministry, for he is the ultimate host and supreme guest at the same time. As Lord, Jesus is the ultimate host who cares for the neighbor in need no matter who he or she is; Jesus is also the supreme guest who, unbeknownst to us, is in need of our care, as Matthew 25:31–46 claims. Moreover, the biblical view of hospitality suggests that we seek to be gracious hosts and grateful guests, who value the presence of our neighbors from diverse backgrounds as gifts. As mutual vulnerability and hospitality transpires, we will likely become true friends.

As we move toward a more missional orientation that involves sacrificial love for our non-Christian neighbors as caring hosts and as we receive from them as grateful guests, we may find that our non-Christian neighbors will respond more favorably to the gospel as we understand it. It is critically important that we do not use neighborliness as a front for the aim of gospel proclamation (i.e., having ulterior motives, such as using, for instance, bait-and-

switch tactics). Nonetheless, as evangelicals we must always be prepared to give a reason for the saving hope that is within us with gentleness and respect (1 Pet. 3:15). Neighborly love following the pattern of Jesus's incarnation—rather than indifference, hate, and condescension—will certainly give rise to greater opportunities to bear witness to our hope in Jesus with our Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim friends, among others.

When we encounter non-Christian neighbors from other religious traditions as true neighbors and as those created in the image of God and dearly loved, we will find that there are remarkable similarities and substantial differences in beliefs, spiritual and ethical practices, and religious customs. We will come to see them no longer as the Other, and we will come to see their religious traditions as more than simply a set of beliefs about the transcendent. We will realize that religions are complex and multifaceted ways of being in the world—involving stories, symbols, rituals, and practices—and so cannot be approached simply by way of doctrinal analysis.¹⁰ In such encounters, we may very well find that God's Spirit is leading us to bear faithful witness to Jesus revealed in Christian Scripture as the saving hope of the world (Acts 4:12) in unique and innovative ways. To bear witness in a more holistic manner, we will come to see that we will need to expand our approach to educating our students. So, what are key practices and pedagogical perspectives that we as evangelical theological educators should model and promote in preparing our seminarians to minister effectively as evangelicals in biblically faithful, hospitable, and neighborly ways in our multifaith society?¹¹

Curricular implications

In light of the changes we are experiencing in our de facto religiously plural contexts, we are called both theologically and practically to make appropriate changes in the curriculum of our theological schools. Some of those changes may seem self-evident, such as the addition of more courses on the content of the other religions in our midst and more courses on the psychological and sociological implications of these religious demographic shifts.¹² Our students do indeed need to know more about the stories, rituals, practices, and beliefs of other religions. A little knowledge of this sort goes a long way in terms of mutual understanding among adherents of different faith traditions. The changes needed, however, are more fundamental than that and can be captured in two general statements about the required curricular revisions/additions.

Across the board curriculum reconsiderations

First, more is needed than curricular additions—what is needed are across-the-board reconsiderations that impact every single area of the theological curriculum and its various departments. In addition to new courses (if such courses have not already been added), we also need to teach our existing courses in new ways, taking into account the new realities of religious plurality.

These changes are needed in not just one or two departments, such as the mission and theology departments, but also in biblical studies, counseling, homiletics, ethics, and whatever other course concentrations a particular theo-

logical school offers. In what follows, we offer some initial ideas for curricular considerations in each of these areas, although we by no means exhaust what is possible or even what is needed.

Revisioning how we practice theology

Second, we are talking about more than reexamination of belief structures having to do with the other religions, although we are indeed talking about that. The revisioning we are talking about has to do with not just the cognitive elements of the curriculum but also with the affective dimensions of the course work (that is, the attitudes we bring to theological education and the other religions) and with what we do with both the beliefs and the attitudes that our coursework engenders (that is, the volitional dimensions of our curriculum). More will be said on these matters in the section on pedagogy. *Practices* has become the keyword here, and we are talking about developing skills and practices having to do with “doing” theology with people of other religions, having dialogue with them, and learning how to cooperate with the other religions when it comes to theologically appropriate social projects and justice issues.¹³

Of course, we are aware that practices cannot be divorced from beliefs anymore than beliefs can be abstracted from the practices of ministry. And neither can be adequately addressed if we attempt to avoid the implications of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23). The theological student of today needs to be equipped in all these areas in order to face the challenges of ministry in the twenty-first century.

Biblical studies. Most of us are trained to read the Bible seeking evidences of, support for, insights into, and inspiration about our Christian faith. This is good. But reading the Bible solely with this inward focus can blind us to the frequency with which non-Christian worldviews and religions are mentioned in the Bible. And the effect of not seeing these other religious traditions clearly is that we miss the lessons we can learn from the way God’s people in the biblical period interact with strange, foreign, and incommensurable religious ideas—and the people who hold them.

More than 250 times the people of God in the Bible come in contact with people who hold religious ideas different from their own.¹⁴ The results of those many contacts vary widely, but all are instructive. Sometimes the contact results in conflict, sometimes in cooperation; but, for us, all result in teachable moments. We learn *about* other religions, we learn *from* our contact with them, and we learn *what to do* as Christian believers as a result.

To be sure, learning about other religions from the Bible often takes a bit of informed yet imaginative reconstruction. The Bible is not a religious studies textbook. When the Bible mentions other religions, it simply relates events and people involved in the contact. One can infer from the nature of the contact what some of the other religious ideas are, but great gaps remain if what we are seeking is a comprehensive grasp of what, say, the Philistines, or the Moabites, or the Corinthians believed about the gods.¹⁵

And it quickly becomes evident that the biblical authors' purposes in relating these contacts vary. Sometimes it is evident that the biblical author's intent is to contrast truth with falsehood (e.g., Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal in 1 Kings 18); sometimes the intent is to identify with ideas that are common to both our religious traditions and theirs (e.g., Paul's sermon to the Athenians in Acts 17—yet even as Paul seeks points of contact, he grieves over the Athenians' idolatry); and sometimes the intent is to use the ideas of another religious tradition to communicate gospel truth (e.g., John's use of the logos concept in John 1:1).

Learning about these other religions from Scripture provides some startling insights. No longer do we anticipate just the dissimilarities between these religions and biblical religion; suddenly, we see many similarities between the multireligious contexts of the Bible and the multireligious contexts we experience today. Moreover, we see that the biblical tribal contexts produce interreligious interactions of a different order than the interactions we experience today in our contexts of democratic pluralisms, nation states, and religious freedom.

These interactions of a different order can prove beneficial in that we can empathize better with biblical characters because we have some idea of what it is to come in contact with a person of another religion. Perhaps the greatest lessons we learn from religions mentioned in the Bible are the relational instructions we gain from how biblical people acted, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, toward adherents of other religions. Who can fail to be moved, and learn from, Jesus's response to the Samaritan woman in John 4? To Jesus, she was a person created by God, to be loved as such, who also had Samaritan religious beliefs. In this brief encounter, Jesus personifies the biblical need to practice both the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.¹⁶

Dogmatics. In our day and age we have discovered so much in the Bible about other religious beliefs and other religious people, that both biblical and systematic theologians have become engaged in a new subdiscipline of theology called the theology of religions or, sometimes, comparative theology. Of course, the raw, biblical data has always been there. But our increasing contacts with people of other religions in our neighborhoods have created a demand for systematic thinking about the big questions: Who's saved and who's not? Can there be any truth in other religious systems? What are the ethics of relating to a person of another religious tradition?

Our parents thought they knew the simple answers to these questions (us, not them; no; competitive). But real life and real contact with people of other religions have led us to see that the answers to these questions are not always so simple. Although we may end up with the same answers as before, we find that arriving at them leads us through a maze of nuance, uncertainty, and discovery. By engaging these questions anew in light of our multireligious context, we lose our arrogant simplicity and triumphal dismissal of others.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen defines theology of religions as "that discipline of theological studies which attempts to account theologically for the meaning and value of other religions."¹⁷ Other Christian theologians think we must go further than the theology of religions takes us. Keith Ward advocates a com-

paritive theology that takes into account the religious ideas of the world: “The theologian should begin by studying the religious phenomenon of the world before moving on to say what the characteristics of revelation are and what sort of certainty is obtainable in religion.”¹⁸

The theological student of today cannot do theology without somehow accounting in it for the world’s religions. At the very least, today’s theological student must understand that all human beings are created in the image of God; no matter how damaged that image is, many argue that it is still the force that drives all of us to reach out to God, regardless of how mistaken our understanding of God and religion may be.

The task for which theological students (and those of us who teach them) must be trained is not just to show the other religions to be wrong at key points but also to witness to the truth of the gospel, the story of what God has done through Jesus Christ to save us from sin, in the context of those other religious ideas. Students who learn to address the questions that arise from these biblical truths will find they have an empathy with people of other religions that enables witness. Students who do not learn to address them will find themselves increasingly isolated from the very world they long to see transformed with the gospel.

Homiletics. It is almost too good to be true. When it comes to learning how to preach in our modern, multireligious context, we have in Acts 17 a model sermon to follow, a sermon designed particularly to be preached under those conditions. Paul’s sermon to the Athenians is to multireligious preaching what the Lord’s Prayer is to praying—it shows us the way.

What does it show us when it comes to homiletic training? Many things, but consider at least three: (1) In preaching to people of other religions, we must take into account not just what we (as Christians) think and say about them, but what they think and say about themselves. Preaching is about communicating, and people of other religions will not listen to what you have to say to them about the gospel if what you are saying about their religion is incorrect. (2) Effective preaching often makes good use of the insights (ideas, terminology, culture heroes, etc.) found in other religions, as Paul makes good use of the Athenian acknowledgement of the unknown God. (3) Sometimes in a multireligious context, the gospel is best presented as a culmination of other people’s thinking rather than as an antidote to their mistakes. Paul took the Athenian idea of an unknown god and expanded on it. Some didn’t hear, some did, some wanted to know more.

How might this change the way we train theological students to preach? It has been said that good preaching is all about hermeneutics—understanding a biblical text. As Haddon Robinson defines it, “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of the passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applied to the hearers.”¹⁹ In a multireligious context this is still the foundation, but students now are required to learn to exegete not just a biblical text, but a religious context in order to communicate effectively within that context.

This additional exegetical task demanded of the twenty-first century homiletician may have curricular consequences. It may mean that team-taught courses—with not just biblical scholars (which is already fairly common) but with world religion experts and cross-cultural scholars such as anthropologists and archaeologists—may become more and more common, as the task of communicating the whole word of God to the whole world becomes an increasingly sophisticated endeavor.

Counseling. One of the important features of living and pursuing theological education in what many have called a therapeutic culture like the West is that counseling and pastoral care increase in importance as demand for these services continue to rise. Our multireligious context adds another layer of complexity to this training. Examples of how this has impacted the pastor's job description are legion, but let's focus on just one well-defined case and draw some pedagogical implications from that.

Our example comes from the realm of hospital chaplaincy. There was a time when a chaplain could almost always rely on the fact that patients facing serious disease and death would think about what they were facing in terms of the traditional Judeo-Christian understanding of heaven and hell. This is an assumption the chaplain can no longer make. Increasingly, patients might be thinking of their destiny as annihilation, or nirvana, or rebirth in another body or life form. Further, these new ideas about death and the afterlife may come not just from people of other religions, but from Christians who have been exposed to these extra-Christian ideas and have somehow concluded that they can be seen as alternative Christian understandings.

So what does this mean for the way we train counselors who increasingly deal with alternative understandings of Christianity among Christians, and with people of other religious traditions and ideologies? Again, many things surely. But let's focus on two and, in order to do that, draw on the model of Jesus as he dealt with a Canaanite woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon. The story in Matthew 15 tells of a Canaanite woman coming to Jesus asking for healing for her daughter who is demon-possessed and suffering terribly as a result.

What does Jesus do in the face of this request? At first, nothing (v. 23). Then, second, when his disciples ask him to send her away, he explains to them his do-nothing policy by saying, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel" (v. 24). Third, when the woman implores him again for help he explains himself to her: "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs" (vv. 25–26). Then in response to the woman's argument, Jesus heals her child. Two lessons for training our counseling students who will be dealing with such issues can be presented: (1) We need to urge them to respect whatever genuine faith is to be found in people of other religions—indeed, we should probably expect to find some there. Jesus responded: "Woman you have great faith." Remember, this is a woman who likely had Canaanite religious beliefs. (2) We need to be ready to learn from people of other religions. As one who was fully human (and fully divine), Jesus learned as other human beings do. After listening to her initial request and then her response to his explanation of his ministry, Jesus grants her request and frees her daughter of her demon: "Your request is granted," he says (v. 28).

Mission. Perhaps no department of the theological school's curriculum has undergone—and continues to undergo—more changes in pedagogical practice as a result of our multireligious contexts than the evangelism and mission departments. Some of the changes are the more obvious ones of adding courses on other religions and ideologies that will begin to prepare students for contact with other religious traditions.

Other changes have more to do with methodology than with content. It may have been in the past that we tended to see mission training as either theology/revelation oriented or ethnography/anthropology oriented. One of the effects of contact with other religions and religious people is the increasing awareness that this is a false methodological dichotomy for faithful Christians. For one, we reflect theologically in cultural-anthropological categories, and never apart from these forms. What is the basis for this claim? As human beings we learn in our capacity as *anthropos*; that is, we are creatures created with the capacity for reason and social interaction, displaying psychological complexity. As Christians, however, we fail to learn adequately about cultural-anthropological matters if we do not approach matters biblically and theologically. Missiologically, then, our methodology must be a combination of theological and ethnographic methodologies.

In missiology, a process called contextualization has come to be used as a shorthand way of describing this incarnational approach to learning. Contextualization means learning all one can about the culture and thought forms of other peoples (and their religions) so that the gospel can be expressed in rational and cultural categories easily understood. This is not a simple process, at least if the integrity of the gospel story is to be maintained. Thus, much missiological training is about teaching a process of witness that can be used across all cultures rather than teaching a finished product that may effectively communicate the story of Jesus in one culture but fail miserably in another.

Strange to say, but perhaps the most important course in the current missiological curriculum is the one in mission history. Most theological students come to the seminary classroom still rooted in the idea that Christianity is a Western religion, best expressed through Greek philosophical thought forms, as managed by Roman methods of organization and law. What a good history course does is show that nothing could be further from the truth: currently Christianity is as much an Eastern and Southern religion as a Northern and Western one; the exciting theologies being produced in Asia, Africa, and Latin America add depth and richness to those produced in the Middle East, Europe, and North America—developments that our forebears would have never dreamed possible.

Ethics. An argument can be made that the real root of interreligious conflict lies not so much in conflicting truth claims as in hatred, ill-will, and greed. If this is the case, the hope for peacefully coexisting with people of other religions would have a better chance of becoming a reality if we as Christians were to pay as much attention to Christian ethics as we do to Christian dogmatics.

A number of scholars interested in comparative religions have argued over the years that we have a model for interreligious similarities in the ethical realm in Paul's use of Stoicism as a platform for interreligious conversations.²⁰

In particular, these scholars have pointed out the similarities between Paul's argument regarding the unity of the body of Christ and the plurality of gifts given to members in Romans 12, with similar language used by Stoic philosophers of Paul's day regarding the same issues. The Stoic teachings would have been familiar to Paul, given his Hellenistic training, and it would have been natural for him to use that language as a way of explaining the ethical requirements of Christianity.

Not that Paul is advocating Stoic ethics. As with any religious studies comparison, one always notes both similarities and differences when making a cross-religious comparison. And many scholars have pointed out the differences between that which Paul is arguing for in Romans 12 and traditional Stoic ethics.

At any rate, it is this kind of interaction that has prompted many Christians to see in the everyday ethical dilemmas, and our respective religious answers to them, possible fruitful ground for interreligious interchange that can lead to an exchange of religious ideas that creates mutual trust and understanding that can then lead to further interaction of various sorts.

In fact, a subdiscipline of ethics, called comparative religious ethics, has arisen as a result of scholars noticing both the ethical similarities and the ethical differences among the world's religions. This is an area of study that should be of interest to theological students whose training should equip them to interact with people of other religions on the ethical level as well as the theological level.

Although it is difficult these days to know just where ethics fits into specific theological schools' curriculums, it seems that wherever it fits, some training in comparative religious ethics would be wise. It is a field that lends itself particularly well to case study kinds of discussions that have almost immediate application to what is going on in our communities and neighborhoods around us. The debates, for example, over abortion, homosexual marriage, and death and dying issues are begging for interreligious discussions and, hopefully, understanding. These are social issues of great importance for all our religious communities, and having the tools with which to carry out substantive conversations about them would seem to be a must for pastoral leaders.

Public theology. Perhaps public theology is something that should have been discussed under the dogmatics section. It could also have been discussed under the ethics section. It really seems to be included in both. But we have it as a separate section to highlight its importance. There is a growing acknowledgment that the Christian church needs to rededicate itself to expressing itself publicly regarding issues of communal importance for the greater good of society.

One might ask why this need for facility in public theologizing is of growing importance. Why has it not been a point of emphasis in the past, and why is it a point of emphasis now? The answer, of course, is that in the past, most of us lived in communities and nations that were relatively homogeneous when it came to religion. Most of us who are Christian lived in communities of Christians, with few exceptions. Buddhists lived in relatively homogeneous Buddhist countries, Hindus in Hindu countries. When this kind of homogeneity prevails, then "public theology" becomes an extension of prevailing po-

litical structures; since almost all people in the political structures belong to the prevailing religion, their expressions of value tend to follow those of the prevailing religion.

As religiously diverse political structures have arisen in democratic and religiously plural countries, it is no longer appropriate for political officials to do theology in the public sphere. If this kind of influence on the broader culture is sought, then the churches and their leaders are the ones who must step up to the challenges of expressing their religious values in the public sphere. If they don't do it, it will not be done.

Evangelicalism and other Christian traditions in North America have often approached the subject of the public square by contending against secularism and the privatization of the Judeo-Christian faith. We need to consider how to engage that subject in our increasingly religiously plural society with the adherents of other religions in a way that honors the truth claims and practices of the various traditions as public endeavors—and not as privatized sentiments—for the sake of the greater good.

Theological students must receive training as to how this is to be done. Participating in religiously plural public squares is a task many do not currently feel trained to do. As theological educators, we must prepare them for this challenge along with the others created by our multireligious contexts.

It may be that our best biblical model for this is Moses, whom God called to address the needs of his people in captivity in Egypt. Moses surely felt the call to speak publicly for God's people, but still he felt ill-equipped. He didn't even feel gifted for it. But of course God enabled Moses to carry out his call in a way that changed history.

Daniel was a model public theologian who bore public witness while in exile in a pluralistic cultural context in Babylon. As we move forward in the twenty-first century, we will find that individuals like Daniel have much to teach us about how to be effective witnesses in a context where evangelical Christianity has less cultural hegemony; we will find that Christians will need to learn how to shape bold witness with compassion, sensitivity, and humility from the margins as public witnesses to our faith.

In summary, we are to think of our new multireligious influences as providing important indicators for considering shifts in our theological curriculum. In view of what has been discussed, we also need to set forth a mandate for fostering change in our teaching styles. What form might these pedagogical developments take?

Pedagogical retooling

In addition to reenvisioning our current practices in our theological curriculum, preparing our students for effective pastoral ministries in a multifaith society also calls for a responsive engagement in our pedagogical approaches. In this, what seems needful more than ever is a pedagogical paradigm entailing a holistic correlation of heart (affections—orthopathy), head (knowledge—orthodoxy), and hands (practice—orthopraxy). In order to bring about a holis-

tic theological formation of this kind, we should take seriously the agencies of the Spirit and the Word.

First, privileging the agency of the Spirit in theological learning has to do with the priority being given to the right cultivation of the heart among our graduates. In this, being attentive to the Spirit who searches “all things, even the deep things of God” (1 Cor. 2:10) would effect a right attunement of their hearts with the heart of God. Acquiring cognitive knowledge and skills is certainly needful in their pastoral engagement with the people of other faiths. As critical as those skills might be, however, they are still secondary to a more elemental aspect of affective formation through which the heart learns the grammars of neighborliness and hospitality resident in the heart of God. It is only with the heart being rightly cultivated in this way that knowledge and practice are given a right direction and governance to bear faithful witness to God.

Second, our pedagogical engagement to foster neighborliness and hospitality in our graduates should be primarily grounded in the Word of God. The Scriptures as the written Word of God bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ as the living Word. As such, we are concerned with how the Scriptures function as an active interpretative lens through which our pastoral concerns are addressed. Considering that there exist multifarious and competing voices on the questions and/or issues of religious plurality, it becomes especially critical for us to teach our graduates to engage the Scriptures with a profound sense of humility and to listen rather than to project onto them our prejudiced, if not ready-made, conclusions.

Third, taking seriously the agencies of the Spirit and the Word is also to accentuate that the theological grammar of *perichoresis* in the Trinity ought to be reflected analogically in *how* we teach what we teach. The process of theological learning—and our pedagogical engagement—has to be then communal in nature. In keeping with this, for instance, a dialogical sharing of personal and/or ministerial testimonies by an instructor and students alike as a pedagogical process might prove to be quite helpful and significant. It encourages the community of learners to be attentive together to the changing particularities of the context and dialogue about creative and constructive ways to address them. Herein, practice becomes more than an after-thought, (i.e., the secondary “application” of the primary cognitive theories and concepts). It takes, rather, the initiative in bringing about a holistic *embodiment* of the truths of God in a meaningful and significant way.

Given the changing religious landscape in North America, a graduate theological education is now tasked to proffer a double-edged response: equipping its graduates in the *distinctive convictions* of their own faith traditions while preparing them to be *responsible* and *responsive* in their pastoral engagement with the people of other faiths. In the ensuing discussion, we will examine how affective formation (heart) with its correlate effects in the discerning process of the truth (head) as well as the communal practices of a shared life (hands) help address the pedagogical task of preparing our graduates for pastoral effectiveness in a multifaith society.

Pedagogy of the Spirit

Envisioning a holistic formation first brings into question how to define the nature and the parameters of theological learning. For instance, should its primary task be defined as the impartation of cognitive knowledge? What about the questions of *how* theological learning should take place? It seems that present theological education can no longer presume a traditional paradigm that had to do with whatever knowledge teachers elect to transmit to their students. The primary focus in theological learning has shifted from “what we teach” (i.e., the impartation of knowledge from a teacher’s perspective) to “what needs to be learned” (i.e., the effectiveness of learning outcomes for the contemporary ministry context). This paradigm shift then gives further credence to taking seriously the changing religious landscape in North America.

This seems especially noteworthy for evangelical theological educators whose attitudinal posture on issues and/or questions of religious plurality has been largely indifferent and trivializing, if not dismissive altogether. However passionately we attempt to propagate theological “answers” that are in keeping with our own faith traditions, it becomes inconsequential if the questions and/or issues needing to be addressed in the present are changing. Pedagogical practices to indoctrinate a set of core theological beliefs may have a critical place in theological education. But should they be privileged as the primary, if not the exclusive, facets of what should take place in theological learning? If theological education is primarily about an indoctrination of core theological beliefs, it seems that the pastoral practices of our graduates will also be shaped by a doctrinaire spirit and orientation. Pursued in this trajectory, it seems certain that our graduates would be most inept to engage the people of other faiths, being primarily trained in the spirit of discrimination to differentiate and distance ourselves from them.

But what will happen if the primary focus of our pedagogical practices is shifted to a more elemental aspect of theological learning; namely, the cultivation of a *heart-knowledge*? This accounts for paying close attention to shaping the hearts of our graduates in attunement with the heart of God. The theological education envisioned here need not lessen its intensity to foster cognitive learning (e.g., doctrines, theories, etc.). It should, however, place such cognitive learning in complementary terms with the cultivation of love as the reigning affection in the hearts of our graduates as they progress toward the completion of a degree program. A helpful biblical image is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5), which the Spirit is known to cultivate in a believer. Such fruit should be especially evidenced in our graduates who are *being prepared to lead* their respective Christian communities. In order to bring this about, our pedagogical engagement with students should include the aspect of being open to the leading of the Spirit so that theological learning becomes a hospitable ground on and through which students learn to ask the deeper questions that help shape their hearts.

With the priority given to the heart being rightly catechized (i.e., orthopathy), the correlate effects in knowledge (i.e., orthodoxy) and praxis (i.e., orthopraxy) would follow in a meaningful and significant way.²¹ In other words, affections when rightly cultivated (i.e., orthopathy) function as the governing

principle by which one's speech and action are distinctively directed. Affections are hence dispositional in nature and should not be confused with unruly episodes of intense emotions and feelings. Here we are concerned with the *depth grammars* operative in one's heart through which one learns to know *the way of being* in life and ministry.²² It is none other than the agency of the Spirit that effects the structure and the cultivation of the heart in this way.

Affections are also *responsive* in character. As such, they are not self-generating but become engraved in one's heart as one responds to another in relationship. For this reason, the cultivation of affections presupposes particular stories and persons as the object in response to which they take on particular forms and shapes.²³ The "ortho-ness" (i.e., rightness) of Christian affections is ultimately measured precisely by their responsiveness to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Examining biblical passages about Jesus Christ that instruct how the heart (i.e., orthopathy) directs what one knows (i.e., orthodoxy) and how one acts (i.e., orthopraxis) then seems to be in order.

We trace first a story in the life of Jesus and then a parable in his teaching. In John 4, Jesus visits with a Samaritan woman. Jesus asks for a drink, meeting her at the level of a simple human need; but what occupies her attention is the difference that should separate them: "you are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman" (v. 9). Not asking anymore, Jesus then offers "living water," a clear reference to the Spirit (vv. 10, 14). But then the woman continues to respond on the basis of what she knows to be different between them. It is now the issue of the *place* of worship. Jesus is not oblivious to the marked differences that should separate them. But he does not focus on what should separate them. Instead of focusing on the difference that separates them, Jesus provides an indiscriminate invitation to people to search and examine their own hearts if they are fit to be true worshippers of God (v. 22). With the invitation, Jesus is criticizing the Jews' condescending attitudes and prejudices against the Samaritans, just as he is correcting the Samaritans' bitterness against the Jews. At the end, Jesus subverts the fears and prejudices that often generate unwarranted hostility and distancing of one another. In order to bring about effective pastoral practices in a multifaith context, it seems important for our graduates to examine their hearts and attitudes about the people of other faiths and discern the heart of God through the Spirit. Only then are they fit to engage the people of other faiths in a way that demands both courage and humility.

The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37 provides another helpful illustration.²⁴ The parable is instigated by one of our colleagues, perhaps, asking, "Who is my neighbor?" In unfolding the parable, as we all know, it is none other than a Samaritan who leaves his way to care for the wounded. In sharing the parable, Jesus then answers the initial question with another question: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor?" A slight change in the way of questioning seems quite revealing. Jesus was less interested in defining who *our neighbors* are but, instead, focused on *our neighborliness* to others. Acting neighborly to distant others is sequentially ordered by our constant inward turning toward God in Jesus Christ whose hospitable turning toward us represents the greatest distance travelled.

Pedagogy of the Word

Insofar as our present concern has to do with the issue of pastoral effectiveness in a multifaith society, a critical question before us is how to assess and cultivate such effectiveness. To respond, one's pastoral effectiveness should be measured in part by her or his faithfulness to bear witness to God and the truths of God. Our pedagogical engagement to nurture our graduates should then be grounded in the very means (i.e., Scriptures) in and by which God has chosen to reveal Godself. The nature of engagement here is *personal*. That is, the Scriptures as the written Word of God should not be engaged in detachment from the expectation of our personal experiencing of God, as it demonstrates an intrinsic power to address us *freely* and *meaningfully* in any and all existing particularities of our context.

In keeping with this, the Scriptures should be read *broadly* and *deeply*. First, a broad reading of the Scriptures would readily demonstrate how being neighborly and hospitable to the strangers living among us is characteristic of what it means to be the people of God. Leviticus 19:34 is instructive in this regard. It tells us that the elemental attitude called for is not even that of tolerance but a *wholehearted embrace* as if she or he is *born among us* (i.e., family; and we are to *love them as ourselves*). Scriptural admonition to embrace strangers reaches its culminating point, however, in Matthew 25:31–46 where Jesus calls himself a stranger in need of hospitality and is furthermore identified with all other strangers in the world. Receiving a stranger well is then characteristic of what it means to belong to Jesus Christ. Consequently, nurturing a broad reading of the Scriptures should help our graduates dissuade possible attitudinal parochialism and prejudices against the peoples of other faiths.

Second, a deeper reading of the Scriptures is also needful. One has to approach the Scriptures with an openness to be addressed by it and to be personally affected thereafter.²⁵ Discerning the Scriptures rightly requires a *prayerful receptivity* that takes a profound sense of humility before the truth of God, by which we become confronted with the inadequacies of our own thoughts and conceptions. The story of Cornelius²⁶ in Acts 10 seems instructive in this regard. Peter's vision prior to his visit to Cornelius's house is quite revealing of his attitudinal disposition toward the Gentiles at the time. Notice in particular his strong response in verse 14: "I have *never* eaten anything *impure* or *unclean*." God dramatically confronts Peter's thought and conceptions of the Gentiles, as symbolized by what he sees (i.e., four-footed animals, reptiles, and birds [v. 12]), through the voice in verse 15. This challenge unveils the truth in the heart of God: "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." Analogous to Peter's vision, the Scriptures, when read deeply with a prayerful receptivity, have a wonderful way of surprising us to expand, and even deconstruct, our own limited way of thinking and conceiving.

Pedagogy for the community of God

One of the clearest distinctives of Christian faith is its understanding of God as the Trinity. From this, we understand not only that God is a social being but also that such sociality in God is deeply woven into the grammars of life that define and govern our way of being, knowing, and acting in the world

as the ones created in God's image. Pushing it further, we also know that the aspect of sociality here is a matter not only of what we know but also of how we learn to know. Pedagogically speaking, then, it is only natural and proper that theological learning takes a form of *relational knowing* as one engages another in the context of community.

Herein, we should bear in mind that the very nature of community envisioned here is not that of building walls to keep others out but that of ever inviting them to share in the fullness of life together.²⁷ The Christians in the classical period knew this aspect of Christian faith and demonstrated it through the practices of Christian hospitality.²⁸ But, as Christine Pohl helpfully notes, the emergence of commercial society and the business of life in recent centuries has led to the scarcity of hospitality, both in understanding and practice. Hospitality has then become a mere relic from the past. In an analogous way, our theological education has sometimes shown commercializing and individualistic tendencies that readily risk the value of relational learning for the sake of convenience and marketability.²⁹ As Pohl argues, the changing of contextual particularities in life should not be taken as a call for dismissal of valued practices from the past but rather as an opportunity to explore creative alternatives to revision them in the newness of the present situation.³⁰

For this reason, we will need to examine and reconstruct a healthy concept of community at our theological institutions. Pedagogically speaking, this calls for practices of shared responsibilities and mutual learning in our classrooms, as well as in institutional life, modeling what it means to have our lives woven together as a Christian community. This requires that we address the issues of power dynamics, risking vulnerability in sharing and relating, and being open and transparent in our dialogue with one another. How we come to understand and embody community in our classrooms, and as an institution, would have an obvious bearing on our graduates in their pastoral practices. The relational learning of this kind within a Christian community would certainly prove to be critical for their ability to relate to the people of other faiths in an authentic Christian manner.³¹

A helpful biblical model in this regard can be found in John 13. With the crucifixion at hand, Jesus shares an evening meal with the disciples. Then, all of sudden, rising from the meal, he takes on the form of a servant. He takes off his outer clothing, wraps a towel around his waist, and begins to wash their feet. In a single sweep of sequential actions, Jesus bewilders the disciples, especially Peter. Thereafter, Jesus makes two things quite clear: first, they are to wash one another's feet; second, by washing the feet of one another, they demonstrate that they belong to him. This particular practice is interwoven in a distinctive Christian narrative and is therefore intra-Christian in character. But it seems to offer far-reaching symbolic significance as to the essentials of the "whats" and "hows" of building an authentic community, or sharing life with one another at various levels in our multifaith society.

Washing the feet of one another is a symbolic act of embrace, fostering a mutual respect and acceptance of one another. It has a bearing on all our relationships inside and outside the church. It requires not only our willingness to embrace one another as equals, but also to examine together our mu-

tual shortcomings and thereafter have the courage and will to wash them off one another.³² This takes the willingness to receive others with much love and grace. But, perhaps more importantly, this invites us to risk vulnerability and place ourselves in the hands of others so that they may examine us and forgive our offenses. Only when we act toward one another in a spirit of humility and vulnerability will we approach the stranger in our midst in a rightful manner. We will come to see the stranger as our neighbor, who is not simply our guest but also our host, reminding us of our Lord who is the ultimate host and supreme guest.

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ENDNOTES

1. According to the *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey* "Religious Affiliation: Diverse and Dynamic" (February 2008) published by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, the percentage of self-professed members of Protestant denominations is presently around 51 percent (see p. 5 of the full report). For the online version, see <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-full.pdf>.
2. Ibid., 12. See the chart, "Religious Composition of the U.S."
3. Ibid., 24. See the chart, "Childhood Versus Current Affiliation of U.S. Adults." For the online version, see <http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/report-religious-landscape-study-chapter-2.pdf>.
4. According to the *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey*, "More than one-quarter of American adults (28%) have left the faith in which they were raised in favor of another religion—or no religion at all. If change in affiliation from one type of Protestantism to another is included, roughly 44% of adults have either switched religious affiliation, moved from being unaffiliated with any religion to being affiliated with a particular faith, or dropped any connection to a specific religious tradition altogether" (p. 5). See pages 7–8 of the report regarding the religious marketplace.
5. See Terry Muck and Frances S. Adeney, *Christianity Encountering World Religions: The Practice of Mission in the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 23–26, for a discussion of many of these points and others.
6. This point was brought home in striking detail to the participants in the ATS Christian Hospitality consultation during its September 2010 gathering. See, for example, the essay, "Dates, Gatorade, and Ramadan," in *Cultural Encounters: A Journal for the Theology of Culture* 7, no. 1 (2011), coauthored by US Military Chaplain Gordon Grose-close, a fellow evangelical ATS consultation participant.
7. See, for example, Laurie Goodstein, "Across Nation, Mosque Projects Meet Opposition," in *The New York Times*, August 7, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/08/us/08mosque.html>.

8. While James Madison and other contributors to America's founding documents were concerned for Christian tolerance, the kind of tolerance envisioned then is to be extended toward those of non-Christian traditions today. It is also worth noting here that another key difference concerning the religious landscape today bound up with the separation of church and state is that, whereas the competition between religions in the United States was originally Christian in nature, today such competition in the American religious marketplace is universal. From a variety of angles, America's separation of church and state poses particular challenges for American evangelical Christians: We must seek to be faithful witnesses to the gospel's exclusive claims and at the same time champion this country's defense of religious freedom for all people.

9. Harold Netland defines the technical use of the expression religious pluralism. "As a technical term in religious studies and theology . . . , '*religious pluralism*' refers to a view that goes well beyond just the social acceptance of Religious Others. *Religious pluralism* in this sense is the view that all of the major religions are (roughly) equally true and provide equally legitimate ways in which to respond to the divine reality. No single religion—including Christianity—can legitimately claim to be uniquely true and normative for all people in all cultures at all times." See Harold A. Netland, "One Lord and Savior for All? Jesus Christ and Religious Diversity" (published by the Christ on Campus Initiative and available through the Carl F. H. Henry Center at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL), 6, <http://henrycenter.org/pdf/netland-pluralism.pdf>.

10. It is important for evangelicals to develop an all-encompassing approach to religion. Here it is worth noting what Nicholas de Lange writes in a discussion on Judaism: "The use of the word 'religion' to mean primarily a system of beliefs can be fairly said to be derived from a Christian way of looking at Christianity. The comparative study of religions is an academic discipline which has been developed within Christian theology faculties, and it has a tendency to force widely differing phenomena into a kind of strait-jacket cut to a Christian pattern. The problem is not only that other 'religions' may have little or nothing to say about questions which are of burning importance for Christianity, but that they may not even see themselves as religions in precisely the way in which Christianity sees itself as a religion. At the heart of Christianity, of Christian self-definition, is a creed, a set of statements to which the Christian is required to assent. To be fair, this is not the only way of looking at Christianity, and there is certainly room for, let us say, a historical or sociological approach. But within the history of Christianity itself a crucial emphasis has been placed on belief as a criterion of Christian identity . . . In fact it is fair to say that theology occupies a central role in Christianity which makes it unique among the 'religions' of the world." The quotation is taken from a selection of Nicholas de Lange's work *Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), found in Roger Eastman, ed., *The Ways of Religion: An Introduction to the Major Traditions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 291. The points that we take from this enlightening statement for our present purposes is that a theological approach to engaging other religions cannot be taken as exhaustive. It is also important for evangelical Christians to understand and approach non-Christian faith traditions in terms of "the historical, cultural, and experiential forces, including" awareness of "the symbols, stories, and rituals of the diverse traditions . . . from a sociological and historical vantage point." Moreover, "in light of de Lange's statement," we "maintain that it is important to differentiate between questions" that "Christians raise from a particular theological perspective in addressing other traditions and the questions that these other traditions pose in view of their own traditions (some of which are theological but many of which are not). It is important not to impose on the" non-Christian faith traditions "Christian questions and categories while still approaching" them "from the standpoint of one's Christian perspective. The Christian must seek to be true to issues of internal coherence pertaining to a particular tradition . . . while also

accounting for matters of external correspondence, namely, bearing witness to ultimate reality through the truth claims of one's tradition and assessing various traditions in view of these claims." This discussion bound up with the quotation from de Lange is taken in large part from Paul Louis Metzger, *Connecting Christ: How to Discuss Jesus in a World of Diverse Paths* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 278–9.

11. In addition to works already mentioned, other evangelical sources presenting models of hospitality include the following: Richard J. Mouw, *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1st ed., 1992; 2nd ed., 2010); Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999); Joseph C. Aldrich, *Lifestyle Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those Around You* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 1993); Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor*, Faith Meets Faith Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008); and the contributions of Paul Louis Metzger to the volume he coedited with mainline Protestant William F. Storrar and Roman Catholic Peter J. Casarella titled, *A World for All? Global Civil Society in Political Theory and Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011).

12. Schools in The Association of Theological Schools are uneven in the implementation of these curricular additions. Some, such as Fuller Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Asbury Theological Seminary, have had such courses for a long time; others are just beginning to see the necessity.

13. Dorothy Bass, ed., *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010).

14. Muck and Adeney, *Christianity Encountering World Religions*, 348–353 (see n. 5). See also Richard J. Plantinga, ed., *Christianity and Plurality: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 23–27.

15. Jack Finegan, *Myth and Mystery: An Introduction to the Pagan Religions of the Biblical World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1999).

16. The Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19); The Great Commandment: "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10:27).

17. Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *An Introduction to the Theology of Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 20.

18. Keith Ward, *Religion and Revelation* (London: Oxford, 1994), 36.

19. Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

20. A good recent discussion of this sometimes controversial issue is contained in a collection of essays edited by Tuomas Rasimus, Troels Engberg-Pedersen, and Ismo Dunderberg, *Stoicism in Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

21. Theodore Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998), 146–67. See also Steven J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 41–4, 131–6.

22. See Don E. Saliers, *The Soul in Paraphrase: Prayer and Religious Affections*, 2nd ed. (Cleveland, OH: OSL Publications, 1991). Saliers helpfully differentiates subjective feelings from "deep" emotions engraved in hearts by noting how, despite chaotic and unruly displays of intense feelings at times, we do in fact learn to "control" them. This should then at least alert us to "the difference between having an emotion and feeling particular sensations, say, at the onset of a particular emotion . . . [Hence] emotions cannot be 'merely subjective' . . . Undergoing or experiencing our emotions is only one

aspect of having emotions" (p. 14). The deepening of the senses in the Spirit (i.e., holy affections) then takes the ongoing process of learning and patterning our passions and emotions in a *distinctive* way; moreover, rightly cultivated, holy affections become "a basic attunement which lies at the heart of a person's way of being and acting" (p. 6).

23. As for the "transitivity" and "narrativity" of passions and emotions, see Richard B. Steele, "The Passion and the Passions," in *"Heart Religion" in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements*, Richard B. Steele, ed. (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2001), 245–65. See also Richard B. Steele, "Gracious Affection" and "True Virtue" according to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1994); Gregory S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989); Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 68–72. See also Rowan A. Greer, *Broken Lights and Mended Lives: Theology and Common Life in the Early Church* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), 119–40. Noting the significance of hospitality in particular, Greer notes how receiving one another in the church *and* strangers in the land were normative in the early church and were also distinctively defined in terms of a Christian's personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Hence, hospitality was none other than an act of receiving Christ himself. This is also reminiscent of how Karl Barth insisted that we are to look upon one another as the one for whom Christ died. See Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1960), 69ff.

24. For a helpful, reflective essay on the parable, see Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Compassion and Commitment," *Weavings: Compassion* 5, no. 6 (November/December 1990): 39–40.

25. This idea seems to be forcefully conveyed in 2 Timothy 3:16 where the very character of the Scriptures is defined as "God-breathed." The Greek word for God-breathed is *theopneustos*, a compound word that underscores the agency of the Spirit in the giving of life to the letters of the Scriptures. A literal translation would then be "God-spirited." That is, the Scriptures came into being out of the very breath of God who gives *life*; this is clearly reminiscent of how a human became a living being in Genesis 2:7. Implied is the idea of being personally affected by the encounter in such a way that should result in the giving and affirming of life in praxis.

26. Given the fact that Cornelius is portrayed as "devout and God-fearing" (v. 2) as well as generous in giving and fervent in prayer (v. 3), it seems difficult to think that Cornelius was still in need of conversion before Peter's visit. Peter's later assertion in verses 37–38—"You know what has happened throughout Judea . . . how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power . . . because God was with him"—seems to evidence further that he was already converted to Christ. But the point remains insofar as the issue we raise here has to do with Peter's attitudinal disposition toward the Gentiles prior to his experience with Cornelius.

27. Pohl, *Making Room*, 152ff. (see n. 11). Using the image of "making room," Pohl helpfully notes how Christian hospitality entails a *holistic, relational* embrace of the strangers by opening up places (e.g., home, church, community, nation) where we are meaningfully connected with one another. This is clearly contingent upon a prior opening up of our hearts as they are affected by our personal relationship with Jesus Christ (p. 34).

28. Yong, *Hospitality and The Other*. Making a reference to hospitality from a charismatic standpoint, Yong articulates practices of hospitality as "concrete modalities through which the gifts of the Holy Spirit are poured out" (p. 153).

29. See Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1989), 51–6. From his experiences both as a student and later as a teacher, Nouwen speaks of the individualizing tenden-

cies in academia that had inadequately prepared him for a communal life with people who were different from him.

30. Pohl, *Making Room*, 167–8 (see n. 11). Pohl further comments that the seeming incomparability of values between hospitality and contemporary life arrangements should not deter creative ways to retrieve hospitality in a new and meaningful way; otherwise, we all end up becoming strangers even to those to whom we are related.

31. Mouw, *Uncommon Decency*, 108–34 (see n. 11). Drawing from Hebrews 12:14, Mouw articulates that the dialectical task of pursuing *peace* in all spheres of life and cultivating *holiness* in particular demands a discerning yet unreserved exercise of Christian civility (pp. 17–9). Speaking further on the relationship with religious practitioners of other faiths, Mouw underscores the critical significance of the ability to relate to the other in an authentic and transparent manner that allows evangelism and dialogue to be placed in complementary terms. If we are standing on strong relationships that have been cultivated over time, even the sharing of the gospel can be hospitably received as an expression of love (p. 114).

32. Speaking of hospitality in a thoroughly holistic and relational way, Yong understands hospitality as involving “not only the risk of our interacting with strangers of other faiths but also the risk of our being vulnerable to and with them.” Anthony J. Gittens, “Beyond Hospitality? The Missionary Status and Role Revisted,” *Currents in Theology and Mission* 21, no. 3 (1994): 164–82, quoted in Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*, 132 (see n. 11).

The Mainline's New Moment: Hospitable Christian Practice in a Multireligious World

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Mainline Christians cannot assume a primary (and privileged) role as gracious hosts in a normative culture. They must become guests unashamed to receive from the abundance of others. This shift requires "dialogical heart" distinguished by humility, receptivity, gratitude, and a nontriumphant attitude. Dialogical heart privileges relationship over conversion, shared goals and values over doctrine. This interreligious orthopathos contributes to effective leadership in multireligious contexts. Cultivating dialogical heart is a primary task of theological education in the next decade.

A new moment in the history and narratives of mainline denominations has arrived. North Americans today see the religious landscape in very different ways than they did a century ago. Old religions are resurfacing; new spiritualities seek adherents. The public voice of mainline Protestants, so powerful in the mid-twentieth century, is muted. Mainline denominations seem prosaic, and secularism seems reasonable. This changed religious landscape offers challenges and opportunities to mainline Protestants.

Looking back

To make the most of this new moment, mainline Christians try to understand where they came from. Building on the energy of two Great Awakenings, the late nineteenth century Protestant mission movement saw US Americans taking Christianity and Western civilization to the ends of the earth. The climax of the "Christian Century," as the nineteenth century has been dubbed, was that great proliferation of mainline Protestantism around the globe. Since then, a thorough critique of that movement has created the understanding that, along with education, healthcare, democracy, and the gospel, the nineteenth century mission movement also took to other lands colonialism, disease, cultural destruction, and a belief in Western superiority.

The resulting loss of confidence in mainline Protestantism's ability to discern the good and practice it now influences mainline attitudes toward those

of other cultures and religions. Contemporary mainline Protestants are ambivalent about evangelism. Despite celebration of the gospel in spoken and unspoken ways, mainline Christians sometimes shy away from arduous efforts to “convert” others. Rather, they are curious about the religious paths of others. They want to see the best in the religious practices of others. That chastened attitude gives mainline Protestants the opportunity both to offer and to receive hospitality from those practicing religions or spiritualities different from their own.

As the twentieth century progressed, the evangelization movement gave birth to the ecumenical movement. Unity among Christians became a major theological emphasis among scholars and churches. With the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948, the conviction that different theological viewpoints need not prevent unity came to the fore. Since that time, Protestant denominations around the world have worked together on issues such as human rights, poverty, care of children, and environmental concerns. In the World Council, churches from the family of Orthodox traditions have taught American mainline Protestants much about celebrating difference.

Another theological theme that gained influence among mainline Christians later in the twentieth century is a focus on mystery. Static images of God gave way to ideas of God’s relational way of being with creation, with a sense of God’s actions being more complex than humans can comprehend. Focusing on the mystery of God and how God works in the world helped to expand Christian notions of God’s compassion and to limit ideas of exclusion.

Those twentieth century changes now form the basis for expanding mainline ideas of hospitality and mutual concern for social issues to those religions other than Christianity. Both the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Christian Churches have encouraged mainline Protestants to explore other religions and interact with people in mosques, temples, and synagogues. Today, mainline Protestants are challenged to offer and receive hospitality, work on issues together, and present themselves in broader civic and community arenas as people who can see beyond differences. The expansive theologies and moral sensibilities of the mainline traditions substantially add to the force with which mainline Protestant denominations work together for the common good.

In recent decades, the impact of secularization and postmodern philosophies as well as changes in social norms, including patterns of marriage and a reduced focus on church-oriented social activities, has contributed to a decline of mainline church membership. People seem less interested in doctrinal issues or differences among denominations. At the same time, special interest groups like Alcoholics Anonymous and other support groups bring people through church doors for their meetings. An increased interest in spirituality and environmental ethics also presents opportunities for churches to develop ties with social and religious groups outside of their own denominations.

Simultaneously, the increasingly vocal presence of other religions in North America highlights the shift to a more pluralistic society. Interest in Buddhism has led many people to declare themselves dual-practitioners, practicing both Christian worship and Buddhist meditation. The tragic events of 9/11 have

propelled people to explore Islamic organizations and beliefs, making distinctions between terrorists and peace loving Muslims. Hindu temples have sprung up in Texas, Kentucky, and other states. Yoga, both as an exercise program and as a spiritual practice, has captured the attention of many Americans. And new religious movements—combinations of traditional world religions, Christianity, and new spiritualities—continue to proliferate.

No longer can mainline Protestant congregations avoid issues of religious difference. A young person may leave the congregation to become a Buddhist. A Hindu woman may become engaged to a congregant. A Muslim congregation may want to purchase an unused church building. Mainline congregations can engage such changes with compassion, showing hospitality and understanding rather than displaying fear and avoidance. The richness of the past century for mainline Protestants now offers those opportunities.

Need for theological education

In order to seize the new moment, mainline Protestants need new ways to train pastors, chaplains, and counselors for service. A starting place might be to build on the training that students already receive in pastoral practices, tailoring them to suit a situation of religious plurality. Some seminaries are creating forums for student learning that include study of other faith traditions, interaction with religious leaders, and formation of relationships with people of other faiths. Theological educators can further focus that effort, offering training in practices of hospitality, community ministry projects, and spiritual care across religious traditions.

Seminaries face the multifaceted task of training Christ's workers for gracious interaction with people of other religions. Understanding the significance of the religious practices of others prepares seminary students for leadership in a multifaith world. Helping students develop an interest in other religions and sensitivity to issues of human rights and equality in a pluralistic society builds bridges with other religious groups. Assessing crucial skills for ministry in a religiously plural world can foster a strong sense of Christian identity.

The new moment in the Protestant mainline narrative is full of possibilities for giving and receiving hospitality, working on social issues across religious lines, and deepening both an acceptance of others and understandings of the Christian faith. Different mainline denominations and theological institutions will approach these issues in different ways. What follows is just one theological account that might inform a mainline Protestant response. It seeks to address the breadth of the mainline traditions but is shaped significantly by the theologies and experiences of the authors: a white female Presbyterian missionary, a white male Presbyterian Church (USA) pastor, and an African-American female United Methodist clinical pastoral counselor. The authors teach in mainline Presbyterian and Methodist seminaries and represent the disciplines of missiology, sociology of religion, pastoral theology, and pastoral counseling.

Constructing a theological rationale for pastoral practice in multireligious contexts

In thinking theologically about what is being asked of mainline Protestant denominations at this moment in their history, it is important to look closely at the current context. In the past thirty years, sweeping changes have occurred in the landscape of religious difference among Christian and Jewish communities of faith in North America. Multireligious communities are springing up alongside Jewish and Christian communities.

The growing influence of a variety of religious traditions in our culture raises ethical questions for Christian and Jewish communities—questions related to Christian hospitality and religious difference. Theological educators need to examine the dividing influences and to build upon the uniting influences of religion so that religious leaders can minister in contexts of interreligious interaction and engage in multireligious settings where they serve.

ATS member schools can identify and make a case for those practices and ways of educating that ensure that religious leaders learn from and affirm the presence and cultural power of other religions as a vital movement in our time. Practices of hospitality can stress the uniting influences of religion, engaging religious traditions as conversation partners while vigorously affirming the integrity of each.

Theological schools that affirm the cultural reality and gift of Christianity encountering other world religions by teaching appropriate pastoral practices to future leaders of the church are participating in God's movement away from conditioned conversations of faith fueled by orthodox peculiarities of denominational identities. That movement began as Christ modeled conversations across religious difference in encounters reported in the gospel narratives (Matt. 15; Mark 7). The apostle Paul explains that the mystery of God includes other religions in God's good creation. Some mainline Protestants share the perspective that the mystery and the unity of God in the Christ means that religions can learn from one another, unfettered by competitiveness and power arrangements.

Theological rationale: God's mystery and human unity

ATS member schools that are educating leaders for mature, sensitive, and responsive service in multireligious contexts must be able to articulate a theological rationale for this work—a guiding framework that makes sense to various constituencies and describes the values and commitments that inform pastoral practice in multireligious societies. The history and ethos of the mainline Protestant traditions offer rich resources for constructing such a rationale.

The historical dimension of the Christian faith tradition is explicated in the mystery of the gospel, highlighted for the sake of the Gentiles in the apostle Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. Ephesians 3:4–6 identifies "the mystery was made known to me by revelation. . . . In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs,

members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” The mystery Paul affirmed is that God took God’s authority to let the Jews and others in on God’s plan to include all persons as recipients of God’s hospitality. Religion’s dividing influences, so dominant in the history of Jewish-Christian relations, can in this “new moment” be transformed by turning from pastoral practices that emphasize exclusivity to newer, more inclusive practices.

The resources for training ministry leaders for multireligious conversations of value are located in pastoral practices of Christian and other religions. Ministry leaders prepared to engage in multireligious conversations influence and affirm all conversation partners, manifesting in increasing opportunities to experience and affirm one’s own faith. Further, multireligious conversations extend cultural value to other religions. Herein is the authority and theological rationale of the church to witness to the new moment of Christian faith, a moment that utilizes the tension of difference to engage authentic conversations of faith that transform cultural realities. Such engagement, as philosophical theologian Philip Clayton recently affirmed, clarifies our own faith commitments and theological understandings.¹

The apostle Paul offers a rationale for inclusive ministry, affirming that those who were previously believed to be excluded are now recipients of the mystery of God in Christ. One lesson of the mystery of the gospel is that its message of God’s hospitality crosses the borders of religion *all* ways. From a mainline perspective, God extends integrity to people on *all* sides of the religious borders and is the “uniting” influence for *all* religions (even those that contest monotheism and the existence of God). God relates to Religious Others just as we imagine God relates to us: “God has found us.”² Protestant churches have grappled with the notion of how to prepare ministry leaders to have conversations that promote the intent of the gospel. “*Discernment of the gospel*” is a church practice that could provide criteria for identifying pastoral practices to promote the mission of the gospel in the world while respecting non-Christian traditions.³

Historical documents

Christian churches in North America have tended to respond to the mystery of the gospel with a commitment to train and prepare Christian leaders who appeal to one of three contemporary options or theological frameworks for responding to non-Christians: theological exclusivism, theological inclusivism, and theological pluralism. These frameworks tend to be one-sided,⁴ with agendas that tend to proselytize persons and communities to conditioned orthodoxy and focused conversations. The conversations are most often guided by explicit Western cultural values. The textbook *Theology in Global Perspective: Contemporary Challenges for the Church* contributes to the resources of historical documents of the church and pastoral practices in North America. The project grew out of a previous ATS consultation with theological schools with explicit foci on topics regarding church response to the implications of the global context for ministry in North America in the early 1990s. The rationale for the consultation that fueled the project is cited in the preface:

. . . basic assumptions [were listed by an ATS committee] regarding the contemporary global context that suggested the need for a new vision for the mission of Christian theological schools in the twenty-first century . . . The contemporary global reality, the committee observed, is commonly viewed by Christians as either [an] ominous threat or an exhilarating opportunity.⁵

The text is a resource for theological schools to reflect on “contemporary Christian ministry and theology in global perspective.”⁶ The editors, who are historical theologians, reflect thoughtfully on the promise of interreligious dialog. The introduction describes the three contemporary theological options for the church to engage in and reflect upon interreligious dialog. A range of options are represented in theological exclusivism, theological inclusivism, and theological pluralism.⁷ Christian mission in each option is different. Mission for the theological exclusivist is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus in “word and deed and convert the world to worship.”⁸ Theological inclusivism trusts the transforming power of God among “all persons and communities faithful to Jesus Christ, responsible in mission, and open to new possibilities for interreligious cooperation and dialog.”⁹ Theological pluralists believe that Christianity may develop through synthesis with other perspectives and practices,¹⁰ holding that Christian mission is a practice of “influencing traditions to incorporate practices”¹¹ The three primary Christian positions are one way scholars have thought about missiology and theologies of religion. Other historical documents identify the influences of our tradition that divide the church around issues of conversion, language, the danger of conflating issues, ecumenism, economics, access, and doctrine. The historical documents of the church, from the early church until this century, provide textured resources for the church to engage in ongoing discernment and interpretation of its mission of the gospel regarding theological education.

Toward a pedagogy of pastoral practices for multireligious conversations

The introduction of this article reviewed the historical movements of the Christian church through the current era. This section explores the cultural context in which we live and experience our faith as exemplified by Christianity encountering world religions in our communities, among our neighbors, day and night, and sometimes in our homes. This reality calls for a pedagogy that is respectful, affirming, and appreciative of the tensions and lessons other religious traditions offer. It calls for the church to train and prepare mature, sensitive, self-aware ministry leaders who are deeply convinced of their own religious tradition(s) and who are able to hold firmly to their own faith while affirming the religious traditions of the neighbor. Such pedagogy attends to several items. The study *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* explores the influence of social context on pedagogies that form pastoral, priestly, or rabbinic imagination.¹² Social-context influences manifested in “pedagogical reconstruction” practices in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in a quest for professional competency, the presence of women’s and

feminist's perspectives, and globalization.¹³ The analysis moved the church to "new expectations" that "increase student consciousness and capacities for working sensitively and constructively in the encounter of meanings and practices originating in diverse cultural, religious, or socioeconomic contexts in traditional clergy roles and responsibilities."¹⁴

More recent influences that continue to shape pedagogy are "... renewed interest in spirituality and ... interest in practical theology"¹⁵ as modes of discourse and practice in classes. It might be that this movement of reconstructing pedagogy describes the moment of what God is doing today to facilitate multireligious conversations of integrity in theological education.

The question of culture that is posed in the light of our changing society of religions is to attend to "how to be a guest" across the three primary contemporary Christian stances of religion available to the churches. Part of the answer lies in reconstructing pedagogy. Reconstructing pedagogy involves an elaboration of what theological schools are doing well in their preparation of ministers. Pedagogical reconstruction continues by asking questions concerning educational outcomes. Some questions that emerged in the mainline conversations concerning pedagogy during the ATS Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practice in a Multifaith Society consultation include the following:

- How do we create environments in theological education that nurture and sustain multireligious conversations?
- What are the opportunities for self-awareness embedded in the three historic stances of the church?
- Do we help ministers to become aware of and experience role reversals in religious tradition and the cultural implications of such insights?
- What exercises and experiences of difference stretch our students to examine reactive capability in context and develop reflexive capability in the service of interreligious conversations?
- Are our students urged to understand shared *telos* with others regarding social issues and God's movement/moment?
- What student learning outcomes create multireligious competencies in pastoral practices?

Pastoral practices

The mainline traditions specifically seek to develop pedagogies that nurture pastoral practices in the classroom in three areas: discernment, integrity, and integration.

Discernment is described as a discriminating capacity for wise judgment. (James Gustafson, theological ethicist, compares the virtuous person who discerns how to act wisely with a music critic or restaurant reviewer who has intimate skills of interpreting a tradition or practice and sensing or applying that skill to a particular performance or evocation of the activity.)

Integrity as described and used has three components. Self-knowledge is described as the capacity for collaboration and operating from an ethical frame for decision making. Integrity presupposes self-knowledge, which provides a firm identity that is able to make a commitment to a particular Christian faith tradition. Collaboration, the second component, refers to the ability

to articulate deep awareness of and stand in one's own religious tradition and learn from other religious traditions. An ethical frame, the third component of integrity, involves maturity, to include emphasis on boundaries in relations.

Integration guides the student-learning outcomes, is evidenced in the ministry leaders observed and written interactions in the learning environment, and can be measured.

The guiding metaphor of neighbor

The metaphor of *neighbor* can be helpful to theological educators training ministers for multireligious contexts. As a central theme of Jewish and Christian Scriptures, the term can contribute to shared language and practices of inclusion that reflect the mystery and unity shared by all persons as neighbors in the imagination of God. Shared language facilitates the work of naming shared pastoral practices. How might the theological stance of neighbor help frame pedagogical approaches that reflect institutional commitments and equip theological schools to frame training in pastoral practices for future leaders of ministry in multireligious society?

The following are some biblical texts illustrative of God's stance to the neighbor:

Leviticus 19. God commanded the children of Israel to leave the surplus of the harvest in the fields for the widow, the orphan, and the sojourner in the land. The practice of leaving the surplus reminds the people of God of their own journey and expands their theology to accommodate the neighbor.

Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30. Jesus encountered the Syrophenician woman in the narrative. The woman is a Gentile, and Jesus is a Jewish Rabbi. The woman wanted to engage Jesus. Culture, history, social location and religious commitments illuminate the challenge of the woman's request that her daughter be delivered from an unclean spirit and heightens the tension of the encounter. The story deepens when the woman's wish is granted, and her daughter is healed. The woman becomes a recipient of the grace of God despite the differences that threatened to divide her and Jesus.

Ephesians 3. The apostle Paul tells the Ephesians that God withheld a mystery that was finally revealed in Jesus the Christ. The mystery is God's stance that all persons are recipients of the grace of God. Everyone!

Pastoral competence in a multireligious society: Leadership, learning, and assessment in North America

Educators continue to revise and clarify what MDiv graduates should know and be capable of doing in a changing society. The current historical moment requires a new specificity: What should an MDiv graduate know and be capable of doing as a *religious leader in a multireligious society*? For mainline seminaries, answers will most likely include the formation of a particular interreligious *orthopathos*. This interreligious *orthopathos*, as a program learning outcome, could be as central to seminary education as theological knowledge and skills for ministry.

For mainline Christians, competent pastoral practice in a multireligious society likely begins with a particular relational stance (or orientation) toward the Religious Other—a stance that involves *receiving* hospitality as much as providing it. Mainline Christians can no longer assume a primary (and privileged) role as generous hosts in a normative culture; they must also learn to be appropriate and grateful guests, sojourners at ease in unfamiliar territory and unashamed to receive from the abundance of others. In practice, this stance is marked by humility, receptivity, gratitude, and nontriumphant behaviors, which can collectively be described as a “dialogical heart.” Those who live out of a dialogical heart might often adopt pluralist and inclusivist positions toward other religions but could also claim a responsible Christian exclusivity. Right relationship, not doctrinal position, is central to this competency.

Cultivating a capacity for dialogical heart may become a primary task of theological education for the coming decade. It involves a capacity to recognize the *imago Dei* among believers of other faiths, a trust that God (not the individual believer) is the agent of conversion and therefore proselytization becomes an unnecessary practice, and an acceptance that relating to the Religious Other contains an internal good not realized through other means (or when relationship is approached from a primarily instrumental stance). This is a performative competency that reflects an internal locus of pastoral authority and acceptance of particular relational virtues as central to pastoral identity. As denominations and institutions identify an appropriate praxis for a Christian pastor or lay leader in the civic spaces of a religiously plural society, no set of skills could outweigh a dialogical heart that privileges relationship over conversion and shared goals and values over doctrinal difference.¹⁶ No intellectual content could compensate for a relational stance that honors the mystery of an *imago Dei* that manifests through the neighbor, the guest, and the stranger who do not share our faith.

Mainline Christians who manifest a dialogical heart practice their faith with integrity, able to articulate authentically their own beliefs without insisting on the normativity or absoluteness of Christian traditions for others and without erasing religious and cultural differences for the sake of superficial unity. Their ministries in religiously plural settings reflect flexibility and wise judgment, a discriminating attitude that reaches across religious traditions and is established through consistent practices of discernment. They live a life of integration, weaving interreligious learning and experience into their own religious practices and identities while remaining in distinct relationship to the Christian traditions. The emphasis in this relational stance on “being” over “knowing” and “doing” might lead some to describe it as an emerging *theologia*, a multireligious *habitus* or the performative dimensions of an interreligious pastoral imagination.

Whatever it is called, it is a relational stance marked by a willingness to learn, to not yet know the fullness of the mystery we call God, and to stand in solidarity with people of other faiths despite disagreement. It is a stance that affirms the priority of being present to and witnessing God’s activity and presence in religious multiplicity, rather than bowing to an anxious need to assert who we are or defend what we believe. It is a *kenotic* or emptying stance in

which Christians become willing to pour out what they think they know and who they believe they are in order to make room for the full manifestation of the Religious Other and the ways in which that Other can challenge, expand, and nuance our understandings of self and God. This stance might reflect the assertion of constructive theologian David H. Jensen that the “genuinely radical nature of Christian discipleship is not its adherence to rules or norms for ‘Christian’ behavior, but rather, its willingness to *empty* itself of any such rules that would leave one secure in one’s own sphere.”¹⁷ Jensen continues,

In professing the One who “incarnates” being-with-others, Christians are called to recognize the reality of otherness, the claim of the Other upon them, and the interrelation that constitutes abundant life in God’s world. The ethical paradigm in glimpsing this life, in other words, is the kenotic self that would empty itself of anything—even rules and religion—that obscures the reality and claim of the Other who is already there. . . . Relinquishing all privilege, the kenotic vision evokes a *life of others* (solidarity) rather than life over (privilege), life for (charity that presupposes a culture of privilege), or even life with (in which “we” represent the center).¹⁸

Such a stance requires a firm conviction that God will reveal Godself through multireligious interaction, a trust that God—not the Christian or the denomination—is sovereign and therefore the agent of conviction, conversion, and salvation in ways we might not imagine. Our primary task becomes attending to the Religious Other with the same diligence with which we seek to attend and respond to the presence and action of God in the world and in our lives. It is a stance that Jesus seems to have known well.

In two gospel stories, Jesus models the complexity of this relational stance. Both describe a spontaneous encounter with a lone woman, a stranger who is religiously and culturally “other” to Jesus. (In Scripture, as in life, religious difference and cultural difference go hand in hand; multireligious encounters are necessarily cross-cultural to some degree, no matter how similar the people might seem). In each, Jesus stumbles into the complexities of pastoral practice in multireligious settings, once with his dialogical heart at the fore and once with a triumphalism that threatens right relationship. Both clearly illustrate the guest-host reversals described in the “Pastoral competence in a multireligious society” section of this essay.

In the first story, an unnamed woman encounters Jesus at Jacob’s Well in the heat of the day (John 4:1–30). Surprised to find anyone at the well at noon—let alone a Jewish man—she seems doubly surprised when he assumes the role of guest. “Give me a drink of water?” the weary traveler asks. Her response highlights the cultural and religious context through which she hears his question: “How is it that you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink of water?” Throughout their conversation, religious difference seems more significant to the woman than the gender and cultural roles that proscribe the encounter. An almost playful banter evolves, with Jesus gently shifting from

guest to host—never pressuring her to adopt his worldview but rather suggesting that something is at stake more powerful than conventional religious identity and doctrinal truth. Anachronistically, we might call this a relational approach to evangelism; Jesus does not press for conversion, *per se*, but claims his truth with honor and honesty. His dialogical heart, expressed through a flexible relational stance, wins the trust of his hostess-become-guest and opens her heart to a new understanding of God's work in the world.

In the second story, a Canaanite woman culturally and religiously different from Jesus asks him to heal her demon-possessed daughter (Matt. 15:21–28; see also Mark 7:24–30). Jesus—not feeling particularly kenotic, it seems, and perhaps having misplaced his guidelines for appropriate pastoral practice in multireligious settings—takes an inflexible, exclusivist, and triumphal stance: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” he tells her. “It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs” (vv. 24, 26, NRSV). Yet the woman refuses his absolute, normative statement with a quick retort: “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table” (v. 27). She demands that he shift his stance and stay in human relationship with her. In response, Jesus commends her faith: “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish” (v. 28). Her daughter is healed. A multireligious encounter that begins poorly, as this story illustrates, can be redeemed if the practitioner has the relational flexibility to shift to a dialogical (rather than defensive) stance in response to a rejection of Christian privilege and triumphalism.

To prepare mainline leaders to assume a relational, dialogical stance toward people of other religions (both in private settings and in the public square), theological schools must identify what this stance looks like in their particular locations and for their particular constituencies. Developing this ministry competency begins with institutions constructing specific multireligious learning outcomes for each degree program. Likewise, instructors of particular courses can develop student learning outcomes that contribute to a dialogical, relational stance toward people of other religions. These learning outcomes are best articulated in descriptive-critical (rather than prescriptive-normative) terms. For guidance in this task, teachers and administrators might turn first to core competencies for comparative religious ethics and for interreligious spiritual care, such as those developed by missiologist Frances Adeney¹⁹ and pastoral theologians Kathleen J. Greider²⁰ and Daniel S. Schipani and Leah Dawn Bueckert.²¹ Guidelines for multicultural competency developed by scholars in cognate disciplines might also prove useful, such as those proposed by psychologists Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, who suggest three developmental competencies for psychotherapists that can be adapted to interreligious relationships: (1) awareness of one's own assumptions, values, and biases; (2) understanding the worldviews of culturally diverse persons; and (3) developing appropriate strategies and techniques for interaction.²²

As theological institutions begin to develop learning outcomes for pastoral practice in multireligious contexts, those outcomes will be most effective when stated clearly in measurable, behavioral terms. For example, a program learning outcome for a generic MDiv degree might read as follows:

MDiv graduates will provide competent religious leadership in multireligious settings as evidenced by their abilities to identify shared patterns of response to ethical issues among people of different religions; identify commonalities, honor differences, and take a self-critical perspective in dialogue with people of different religion traditions; and cooperate effectively in political, ethical, economic, social, and peacemaking activities with leaders of other religious traditions.²³

For particular generic courses, student-learning outcomes toward the multireligious competency of “right relationship” might read as follows:

- As a result of this course, students will articulate the difference between dialogue and debate in multireligious conversations about this discipline.
- As a result of this course, students will demonstrate respect for persons of other faiths in practices of ministry by identifying commonalities and honoring differences while simultaneously claiming their own faith positions in nondefensive ways.
- As a result of this course, students will demonstrate compassionate relational flexibility by engaging a person of another faith in practices particular to this discipline, using the religious language and worldview of that person's religious tradition.

The most appropriate assessment strategies for these learning outcomes may seek to demonstrate performance skills rather than summative content, specialized knowledge, or intellectual skills. A dialogical relational stance toward people of other religions may be best articulated as *applied learning* that allows students to demonstrate what they can *do* with what they know through relational competencies and multireligious problem solving.

In summary, the core competency for effective mainline Christian pastoral practice in multireligious settings may be best articulated as a particular relational stance toward people of other religions. This stance privileges virtues and behaviors that foster a nondefensive, dialogical orientation toward other religions that can allow mainline Christian leaders with seminary training to engage in effective shared ministry in multireligious settings. Effective ministry informed by this stance acknowledges and honors differences, builds on common values, and claims Christian belief and identity in a nontriumphant, nonabsolute manner; it is focused on relationship rather than conversion and recognizes mystery and unity as key points of connection. Above all, it involves learning to function as guest as well as host in situations of interreligious hospitality. To integrate this core competency into seminary education, theological institutions must develop learning outcomes for degree programs and for students that allow the demonstration of the institution's ability to foster this dialogical relational stance to a basic level across disciplines and among all students who receive a particular degree.

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Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices from a Roman Catholic Perspective

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This essay provides a basis for reflection and discernment for ATS institutions within the Roman Catholic ecclesial family as they educate students in the pastoral practices of Christian hospitality in multifaith societies. It presents scholarly reflection from the broad continuum of those present for a series of conversations, and it names issues and tensions that emerged during the conversations without attempting to resolve them. As such, it is also designed to be a companion piece to the essays produced by the mainline Protestant and evangelical Protestant ecclesial families in a wider ecumenical conversation about educating students for ministry in an increasingly religiously plural environment. The authors of this essay have sought to represent the breadth of the conversation without expecting or attaining agreement on every point.

Introduction

Among the many changes that are occurring in North America is the growth of religious communities other than the Christian and the Jewish faiths with which ATS schools have been most closely identified. The increasing number of adherents to these other faiths in North America will invariably affect the practice of Christian ministry. Ministers and priests will need to be better informed about the commitments and practices of these religious communities; they will need to expand their own theology with a theology of world religions; and they will need to be able to minister in the contexts of interreligious interaction and engagement in the settings where they will serve. Religion has been both a uniting and a dividing influence, and ATS member schools will need to identify those practices that the majority religion in North America should undertake to ensure religion's positive contribution as the continent experiences the increasing presence and cultural power of other faiths.

—from the rationale for the ATS CHAPP initiative

Scriptural foundations: Hospitality as mutuality and vulnerability

The Christian tradition has been, and continues to be, multilayered in its interpretation of hospitality and its practices. While necessarily rooted in Sacred Scripture, understandings of the Christian practice of hospitality have taken many forms. The understanding of hospitality as a form of social interaction in which the pivotal roles of stranger/guest and host are relatively fixed is common. According to this understanding, the stranger/guest is the one who is welcomed into the space of the host and who receives from the largesse of the host. The host is expected to make the stranger/guest feel as if she or he is “at home,” yet the host does so by an ironic exercise of power—however benevolent—over the stranger/guest. How might Scripture also point to broader and more nuanced understandings of hospitality, particularly in relation to our neighbors of other faiths?

Hospitality in the Old Testament

The practice of hospitality as a Christian virtue is deeply embedded in Sacred Scripture. Like all biblical virtue, hospitality has its origin in God, who exercises hospitality as a mode of divine love and compassion for the human being, and particularly as a response to any form of alienation or breach of relationship.

In the narrative of Genesis 3, after God announces the punishments for the serpent, the woman, and the man—and before the latter two are banished from the Garden—the text pauses in a moment of poignancy, to describe God as making “leather garments” for the couple. They are now strangers to the only home they have ever known. As a result, they are preparing to venture into a world of hardship and pain, clad only in makeshift loincloths of stitched fig leaves—a symbol of their shame and thus of their alienation from each other as well as from their Creator. And what does God do? God extends hospitality to the two human beings at the outset of an estrangement which God ratifies, but which they alone have chosen, however rashly and unwittingly. As the Torah elsewhere teaches, God “clothes the stranger” (Deut. 10:18).

Later, in Genesis 18, we encounter the patriarch Abraham and the matriarch Sarah as the traditional biblical archetypes of both the migrant and the host. What is striking in this scene is the way in which the nomadic context calls attention to the fact that, in so many biblical presentations of hospitality, the roles of stranger/guest and host are anything but fixed. As nomads, Abraham and Sarah are fundamentally migrants and strangers. But like all nomads, they are not only capable of offering hospitality, however meager, to other nomads who might cross the threshold of their “home,” however temporary; they *must* do so. Indeed, the dynamic of strangers/guests acting as hosts to other strangers/guests is a central norm of the nomadic social code. Thus we witness Abraham and Sarah, as strangers/guests, offering hospitality to the visitors by the terebinth of Mamre. As nomads themselves, however, the mysterious visitors also play the roles of both stranger/guest and host. This is especially implied in the text’s indication that at least one of the three visitors is none other than YHWH (Gen. 18:22), the ultimate host. Indeed, later

Christian tradition identifies the three visitors as a Trinitarian theophany and thus by no means the fixed “strangers/guests” of the scene.

Precisely because God, the ultimate host, comes as a stranger/guest to the migrants Abraham and Sarah who embrace the obligations of hosts, we find deeply embedded in the story of Mamre a dynamic interplay between, and exchange of, the roles of stranger/guest and host. This interplay appears to challenge conventional understandings of hospitality as functioning within the framework of an imbalanced power structure whereby one party is the fixed receiver and the other the fixed giver. It provocatively hints at the notion that true hospitality must always unfold in the profoundly mutual context of *encuentro* wherein the stranger/guest recognizes both her potential and actuality as host, and the host her potential and actuality as stranger/guest. It is perhaps no coincidence, then, that in the very next chapter (Gen. 19), the text situates the ideal mutuality of the *encuentro* at Mamre in stark contrast to the visitors’ experience in Sodom, where a possible interpretation identifies the city’s iconic sin as the violent and dehumanizing exploitation of the stranger/guest. In the city, the fluidity and mutuality of nomadic hospitality ossifies into fixity whereby the residents and citizens see the stranger only in the foreigner and no longer in themselves. In this context, hospitality can easily become an exercise of power over, rather than service to. Thus it is in Sodom where insensitivity to the plight of the stranger/guest has become so acute that the hosts exploit their strangers/guests. Sodom is portrayed as the host-less city in which strangers/guests can find no refuge, let alone mutuality; as such, Sodom has turned its back on God.

The proposition that profound mutuality must lie at the heart of any act of genuine hospitality is perhaps nowhere better proclaimed than in the Levitical teaching on the treatment of the stranger (19:33–34). The text enjoins its hearers to do no wrong to the stranger (Heb. *ger*) dwelling in the land of Israel, demanding that she or he be treated as a citizen and thus, “loved as one loves oneself” (Lev. 19:18; cf. Deut. 10:18–19). What is particularly instructive, however, about the Levitical (and Deuteronomic) law of hospitality is the reason the text adduces for this law: “for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am YHWH your God” (Lev. 19:34, cf. Deut. 10:19). The identity of the children of Israel and the nature of their relationship to God is eternally and inextricably tied to the experience of the Egyptian bondage and divine liberation. To be a true Israelite, and thus to have YHWH as one’s liberator and the land of the covenant as one’s inheritance, necessitates being ever aware of the vulnerability of the stranger—within both the self and the other—as well as the potential within both the self and the other to exploit this vulnerability.

Thus “For you were strangers in the land of Egypt” is a reminder of the potential in us all to exclude and marginalize, as well as to become the victims of exclusion and marginalization. From a Christian Trinitarian perspective, one might argue that God’s own love of the stranger (Deut. 10:18–19) is an expression of God’s inherent relationality, solicitousness, and compassion for that which is alien, separated, or even cast out of relationship. Seen in this light, the commandment to love the stranger must lie at the heart of the social code of any community constituted on the basis of its fundamental relationship to the Creator.

Hospitality in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is at once the ultimate stranger/guest *and* host. He is the ultimate stranger as the one who has come into but does not “belong to the world” (John 17:16 NRSV); he is sent by the “Righteous Father” whom the world does not know (John 17:25). He is the ultimate host as the one who has come to bring an end to all alienation and “to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20). In the Letter to the Ephesians, the author uses explicit imagery of hospitality to evoke the salvific mission of the Messiah. For this author, it is Christ who, through his own sacrifice of love and thus in his own flesh, literally embodies the ultimate act of hospitality by breaking down the greatest “dividing wall” of all—that which fractures the human family by separating Gentiles and Jews (Eph. 2:14). He brings near those who were “far off” (Eph. 2:13, 17) as “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise” (Eph. 2:12) so that they “are no longer strangers and aliens, but . . . citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God” (Eph. 2:19).

The synoptic tradition presents a rich and nuanced portrait of Jesus as both stranger/guest and host where the focus on figures who are non-Israelites and thus archetypal Religious Others appears to be no coincidence. The parable of the compassionate Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) stands out in this regard. Later Christian tradition sees the parable as an allegory of salvation, identifying the Samaritan—the radical Religious Other of first-century Judaism who plays the role of host for the “half dead” son of Israel—as Christ. Perhaps, however, the synoptic tradition’s most striking use of the Religious Other in its treatment of Christ’s teaching and practice of hospitality, comes in the somewhat startling memory of Jesus’s encounter with the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:25–30; Matt. 15:21–28). This memory is startling because it appears to tell the story of a stranger/guest challenging Christ as host to commit himself to the deeper demands of a hospitality that knows no bounds.

The Markan setting of this story employs the rhetoric and imagery of hospitality. Jesus is in the predominantly Gentile region of Tyre and enters a home seeking refuge from the crowds. We are not told whether the home is a Jewish or Gentile one, but given the tenor of the exchange that ensues, it may be safe to assume that it is the former. Thus Jesus is an Israelite stranger/guest in the region of Tyre but perhaps, at the same time, an acting host of this Jewish home visited by the Gentile woman seeking an exorcism for her daughter. That the Gentile woman is welcomed into the Jewish home is a sign of great fidelity to the Torah’s teachings about the treatment of the stranger/guest, especially given the fact that Jews were a minority in this particular region of ancient Palestine. But this visitor is not satisfied with being welcomed into the home. She wants more. This mother has come for what Jesus, and Jesus alone, can give: a cure for her daughter’s madness. As one master exegete of the Matthean version of this scene notes: “There is nothing that fires up a mother’s audacity more than her child’s wellbeing.”¹ What unfolds is a scene in which we witness the genius of a “tenacious mother”² who will not let her daughter be the victim of conventional, and thus limited, hospitality.

Like a gracious host forced to confront an overly-demanding guest, Jesus responds by telling the woman that she has crossed the line. As if to proclaim that all hospitality has its reasonable limits, he sharply reminds her of her social location as Religious Other, telling her that she is violating the canons of hospitality by acting like a “little dog” (Gk. *kynaria*) demanding to be fed before the children (Mark 7:27). After all, the gifts of healing he has are intended for the daughters and sons of Israel, and not for pagan “dogs.” However, instead of reacting with the justifiable indignation of being compared to a little dog by this Jewish stranger/guest in Gentile territory, the woman embraces the humility and vulnerability of the stranger/guest before her host and accepts the comparison. Instead of acting on what would be her understandable rage, and thus severing the bonds of the limited hospitality she has thus far been offered, she skillfully seeks to reinforce and deepen them by simply reminding Jesus: “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs” (Mark 7:28).

In the Matthean text, Jesus overtly proclaims the greatness of the woman’s faith—presumably in him as “Lord” and “Son of David” (Matt. 15:22)—thus implying that this quintessential expression of Israelite faith in this most unlikely of non-Israelite persons is the catalyst for the healing of the woman’s daughter (Matt. 15:28). The Markan text, however, concludes more subtly and perhaps more evocatively. In the Markan pericope, Jesus indicates that the woman’s words (*dia touton ton logon*) are the reason for her daughter’s healing (Mark 7:29). Are they words of faith? Yes. But the Markan account does not present them exclusively as words of faith in Jesus qua Messiah (though they may well be and most likely are), but also as words of faith in the practice of true hospitality. They are presented as words so wise and apt that the religious stranger/guest and host (the woman) is actually depicted as reminding the host and stranger/guest (Jesus) of something he knows all too well: that true hospitality breaks through limits. Through this encounter, Jesus heals the woman’s daughter, and the woman provides Jesus an opportunity to proclaim his gospel of a divine hospitality that knows no bounds. *Thus, in the context of interreligious hospitality, both parties have touched each other deeply and mutually in God’s Spirit.*

Evangelical hospitality is, therefore, the hospitality of *encuentro*³ in which mutuality and mutual transformation are central. As such, it is this understanding of evangelical hospitality that should inform and shape the pastoral practice of Christians as they interact with Religious Others. That this has not always been the case is a fact of our history, a history that we must own in its entirety—accepting both the good and the bad of where we have been—in order to move forward in the gospel spirit of reconciliation and hope.

Roman Catholics and the Religious Other: Historical perspectives

Repentance and engagement: Two recent moments

Two dramatic recent events suggest the complexity of relationships between Catholics and those of other religious traditions.

Marking the beginning of a new millennium, Pope John Paul led a service of repentance on the first Sunday in Lent 2000 (March 12). In a series of seven prayers, he and leading Vatican officials asked God's forgiveness for sins committed against a variety of peoples. Amidst the grandeur of St. Peter's Basilica, they prayed, for example, for forgiveness for sins "committed in action against love, peace, the rights of peoples, and respect for cultures and religions":

Archbishop Stephen Fumio Hamao: Let us pray that contemplating Jesus, our Lord and our Peace, Christians will be able to repent of the words and attitudes caused by pride, by hatred, by the desire to dominate others, by enmity towards members of other religions and towards the weakest groups in society, such as immigrants and itinerants. [Silent prayer.]

The Holy Father: Lord of the world, Father of all, through your Son you asked us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us and to pray for those who persecute us. Yet Christians have often denied the gospel; yielding to a mentality of power, they have violated the rights of ethnic groups and peoples, and shown contempt for their cultures and religious traditions: be patient and merciful towards us, and grant us your forgiveness! We ask this through Christ our Lord. R. Amen. R. Kyrie, eleison; Kyrie, eleison; Kyrie, eleison.⁴

Five years later and just a few miles away, an unprecedented conference took place. Hosted by the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, participants celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's declaration, *Nostra Aetate*.⁵ As the program read,

With the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* in 1965, the Catholic Church's highest teaching authority initiated a new and unaccustomed discourse in which the Religious Other is greeted with respect and esteem and is seen as a partner in dialogue and action. This positive inclusion of the Other in our official discourse has brought about a dramatic change in the Church's sense of itself, and it is this transformation of identities in dialogue on which we wish to focus in this conference. We reflect on the distance we have come together, and we celebrate it. At the same time we look to the future and map the more difficult paths we have yet to take if the dialogue of believers is not to remain simply an official policy practised by a few, but to become a key element of contemporary culture.⁶

Among the participants were Buddhist scholars from Sri Lanka, Japan, and Turkey; Hindu scholars from India and the United States; Muslim scholars from Lebanon, Scotland, Egypt, and Malaysia; and Jewish and Christian

(including Orthodox and Protestant) scholars from Europe, Israel, and North America. The presence of scholars, women as well as men, from diverse religious traditions engaging one another with respect, seriousness, and sensitivity was a true moment of interreligious hospitality.

Juxtaposing the two events offers a perspective on history. The seven prayers of Pope John Paul II explicitly name sins that those in the church have committed over the course of centuries: enmity toward others, violation of the rights of ethnic groups and people, contempt for other cultures and religious beliefs, intolerance, causing Jewish suffering, failure to acknowledge the equality of men and women, discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity, and trust in wealth and power while manifesting contempt toward the marginalized and poor. While recent church documents have in part acknowledged such sins, the liturgical context and solemnity of this “purification of memory” provided a stark admission of the ways in which the Catholic Church had failed to live the gospel of love it proclaims.⁷ The church’s repentance, however, lies not only in formal confession but especially in transformed ways of acting—as was evident at the fortieth anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* conference at the Gregorian.

Thus, as we approach the topic of the Catholic Church and the Religious Other, it is important to keep both realities before us. On the one hand, we face the sobering reality of a history too frequently characterized by diatribe and disputation—even persecution and violence. In the face of disquieting truths, we are called to respond with humility and vulnerability rather than defensiveness. Facing our history—being responsive to it—involves dying to notions of Christianity that see it only as a force for good in the world. Facing our history requires remembering what William Burrows terms Jesus’s “paradigmatic revelation of God, in his death on the cross. If the dynamic of finding new life through death is the ultimate paradigm of Christian existence, then perhaps the death of Jesus is key to a Christian hermeneutic of mission in the contemporary world.”⁸ On the other hand, we see the contemporary turn to dialogue, which as the Gregorian’s program note said, is “a new and unaccustomed discourse in which the Religious Other is greeted with respect and esteem, and is seen as a partner in dialogue and action.” Dialogue may be understood as the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁹

The larger historical context constitutes an essential component of consideration of hospitality. Toleration of the Other—such as it is in our world today plagued by conflict, violence, and bloodshed—is a relatively modern concept. In antiquity, religious toleration was “at best a fragile notion.”¹⁰ So Christianity and the Catholic Church were hardly alone in the long and painful journey toward the practice of authentic biblical hospitality in relationship with the Religious Other.¹¹ No religious tradition has clean hands vis-à-vis the other, but each tradition has the ethical obligation of confessing its own failings as a way of repenting.

Christian origins: Rivalry and polemics

Many scholars today talk about “Jesus’s Renewal Movement,” that is, how his ministry inspired persons to renew their commitment to God’s Reign of justice and peace. After his passion and death, Jesus’s resurrection and the gift of the Spirit revived the community of his followers, emboldening them to proclaim that Jesus, not Caesar, was Lord and Savior. These followers, of course, were Jews. By midpoint of the first century CE, however, Gentiles were also drawn into the following of Jesus. Their presence raised many questions about the extent to which Gentile disciples of Jesus should take on those practices that characterized Jews, such as circumcision of males and the keeping of the dietary laws. After the Romans destroyed the Temple and razed Jerusalem in 70, tensions between Jesus-believing Jews and non-Jesus-believing Jews were exacerbated, and some of those tensions can be seen in the Gospels. For example, Matthew depicts Jesus as denouncing the Pharisees in harsh terms (23:1–36), a passage likely more reflective of Matthew’s own situation in which the Pharisees were the most prominent group of Jewish leaders after 70. John’s Gospel, in particular, exculpates Roman authorities for their role in the crucifixion of Jesus (see John 19:13–15). As the American bishops have written,

After the Church had distanced itself from Judaism, it tended to telescope the long historical process whereby the Gospels were set down some generations after Jesus’s death. Thus, certain controversies that may actually have taken place between church leaders and rabbis toward the end of the first century were “read back” into the life of Jesus.¹²

Yet the polemics of the New Testament texts were in fact typical of the way philosophical and religious movements spoke about the Other in antiquity: “The way the New Testament talks about Jews is just about the way all opponents talked about each other back then.”¹³ Tragically, later generations of New Testament interpreters did not recognize the function of polemic as a literary genre of antiquity.

Early Christian perspectives on the Jews and Judaism

This polemic found its way into the writings of the early church. Amidst many profound spiritual and theological insights, some early Christian writers also sought to justify their beliefs by denigrating Judaism, a tradition highly respected for its morality and antiquity. As church leaders articulated ways in which the followers of Christ might be differentiated from Jews and pagans, they, too, often fell into disparagement of the other. They contended that only Christians rightly interpreted the Scriptures, whereas the Jews failed to recognize the one of whom their own Scriptures spoke (see Justin Martyr’s *Dialogue with Trypho*). Moreover, they accused Jews not merely of blindness and obtuseness in failing to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, but they also described Jews as “Christ killers,” guilty of deicide. Their language of denunciation was often harsh, giving rise to the genre of *Adversus Judaeos* literature.

The rhetorical realm, however, should not be regarded as a mirror of social reality. Even in the second, third, and fourth centuries, when the anti-Jewish rhetoric flourished, there is “abundant and continuous evidence of intimate social interaction” between Jews and Christians.¹⁴ Moreover, the complexities of changing societies and cultural variations lay veiled beneath the consistent anti-Jewish invective. As Judith Lieu argues, ideological or doctrinal literature tends to stress differentiation. The realm, however, of social and religious experience tends to be less tidy.¹⁵ More hostility became evident in the fourth century as post-Constantinian Christianity gained political power: “In the Christianized empire, Judaism came to be perceived as the only remaining major negation of the universally proclaimed truth. What had been a family argument now came to be perceived as a permanent and public insult to God and his true faith.”¹⁶

We see now that anti-Jewish rhetoric was not simply or even primarily about the Religious Other. Rather, it served a significant function in the formation and maintenance of Christian identity as the church developed from its origins as an illegal religious minority (*religio illicita*) to a legal religion (*religio licita*). Struggling to find its niche in Roman society, Christianity appeared to be an “upstart cult no longer covered by the respected antiquity of Judaism.”¹⁷ Thus, Christians needed to justify their existence and to explain their teachings both to a skeptical culture and to the faith’s own adherents. As Paula Fredriksen writes, “polemics ostensibly directed against outsiders work rhetorically to establish definitions of community for insiders”; Jews were the crucial Other against which orthodox Christian belief and practice might be calibrated.¹⁸ Theological statements about God’s unique revelation in Christ also served to strengthen the religious identity of believers and to distinguish emerging Christianity from Judaism. Polemics may seem to be directed against the other, but a prime function is to strengthen the religious identity of believers.

The linkage of polemics with religious identity rests on the recognition of the role that binary oppositions play in the construction of identity. Forming clear boundaries of “us” and “them” constitutes a common and powerful way in which individuals and groups express their self-understanding.¹⁹ In the case of Christianity, rivalry with pagans and Jews was crucial to its development. Yet oppositional identity was—and is—not without its dangers, particularly when a power differential developed, and differences were exaggerated in ways that dehumanized the other. Tragically, as the papal confession of 2000 indicates, the church’s identity, formed by way of contrast to the Other, too often rationalized conflict and hostility.

Christian perspectives on Muslims and Islam

A similar pattern is evident with the church’s confrontation of and conflict with Islam, which began with the period of early Muslim expansionism (c. 632–750 CE). Among Christians, the sociopolitical reaction to the early Muslim conquests was varied. For many Christian communities, being relegated to the second-class status of *ahl al-dhimma*, or “protected peoples,” under Muslim rule was a tragic turn of events, involving the loss of many rights

and privileges they had taken for granted under Byzantine Christian rule. Yet other Christian communities viewed the Arab Muslim forces as liberators. Assyrian Nestorian and Egyptian Monophysite communities, for example, that had been deemed heterodox by the church of Constantinople and thus often persecuted, appeared to enjoy more freedom and autonomy under Arab Muslim rule than under the rule of their fellow Christians.

Overall, the Christian theological reaction to the coming of Islam was negative. Islam was seen as heretical. Every community or tradition that seeks to define itself according to a set of normative beliefs, values, and practices needs a way to determine what lies within its norms and what does not. In this sense, the language of heresy has had a legitimate role to play in the history of Christian-Muslim relations, each of which has seen the other as having strayed significantly from the truth. It is a temptation, however, to use the language of heresy to regard challenges to one's religious worldview as an intolerable form of Otherness. Rather than simply being used to set legitimate limits on what a tradition deems to be the truth, the language of heresy has, with rare exception, been used to interpret difference as deviation, and thus to demonize and treat as subhuman those who differ from the norm.

A particularly glaring example of this application of the language of heresy on the part of Christians is apparent in the theology of the Crusades (1096–1271). On one level, the Crusades were part of a long-standing Christian response to Muslim expansionism, which did not stop until it had taken Constantinople itself—the heart of Eastern Christendom—for Islam. It was the Byzantine loss of so much of the Eastern Christian heartland of Anatolia to the Seljuk Turks in 1071 that prompted Emperor Alexius I to seek help in his fight against the Turks from his estranged Christian brother in the West, Pope Urban II.

On another level, however, in his fiery preaching of the First Crusade, Urban went far beyond the parameters of traditional Christian “just war” discourse. His words were controversial in his own day; contemporary Catholic teaching implicitly rejects them. Urban argued that war against the Muslims was not only just, but “holy” as well. From the time of St. Augustine onward, Christian theology recognized warfare as an evil that at certain times and under certain conditions was morally necessary to avert a greater evil. Urban radicalized this line of theological reasoning by claiming that fighting the Muslim “infidel” could actually be a sanctifying and redemptive penance for the Christian warrior. Such reasoning had a tragic effect: the wholesale massacre of between 40,000 and 70,000 Jerusalemites—Jews, Christians, and Muslims; men, women, and children—by the European Crusaders in 1099. The Crusades significantly damaged Catholic relationships with Muslims and Jews, as well as with Eastern Christians.

Profoundly negative teaching about the Religious Other continued to develop from the time of the Crusades onward, yielding one of the most strikingly polemical formulations against the Religious Other in the church's history—the so-called Decree for the Copts, issued by the General Council of Florence in 1442:

[The Holy Roman church] firmly believes, professes and preaches that “no one remaining outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans,” but also Jews, heretics or schismatics, can become partakers of eternal life; but they will go to the “eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41), unless before the end of their life they are received into it. For union with the body of the Church is of so great importance that the sacraments of the church are helpful to salvation only for those remaining in it; and fasts, almsgiving, other works of piety, and the exercises of a militant Christian life bear eternal rewards for them alone. “And no one can be saved, no matter how much alms he has given, even if he sheds his blood for the name of Christ, unless he remains in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church.”²⁰

A more complex picture

Yet this is not the whole picture. In 1076, some twenty years before the launch of the First Crusade, Pope Gregory VII wrote a deeply respectful letter of friendship and spiritual kinship to the Muslim Sultan al-Nasir of Bejaya:

God, the Creator of all, without whom we cannot do or even think anything that is good, has inspired to your heart this act of kindness. He who enlightens all people coming into the world [John 1:9] has enlightened your mind for this purpose. Almighty God, who desires all people to be saved [1 Timothy 2:4] and none to perish, is well pleased to approve in us most of all that besides loving God, people love others, and do not do to others anything they do not want to be done unto themselves [Matthew 7:12]. We and you must show in a special way to the other nations an example of this charity, for we believe and confess one God, although in different ways, and praise and worship him daily as the creator of all ages and the ruler of this world.²¹

Similarly, in the midst of the Fifth Crusade—which he condemned as mercenary, brutal, and antithetical to the sacred duty of gospel witness to the Muslims—Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) journeyed to the court of the Egyptian Sultan Malik al-Kamil in order to propose Christ to him in respectful dialogue. Muslims and other “infidels” were not to be considered as “enemies of the Cross of Christ” but as friends who were brothers and sisters to one another. In twelfth-century Paris, scholars at the Abbey of St. Victor studied Jewish commentary traditions and interacted with Jewish scholars. Only twelve years after the Council of Florence and just one year after the Turks conquered Constantinople, Nicholas of Cusa published “The Peace of Faith,” advocating peace between different faiths.

Other such examples could be adduced. Nevertheless, the sobering reality is that far too much of Catholic teaching has caricatured, even at times

demonized, the Religious Other. The Crusades and Inquisition, the post-Reformation religious wars, and the role played by anti-Jewish teaching and preaching in the Shoah weigh heavily. As was manifest in the ritual of repentance in St. Peter's Basilica in 2000, the Roman Catholic Church has begun to acknowledge its ethical responsibility to turn in a new direction toward the Religious Other.

Nor has the Roman Catholic Church expressed its desire for reconciliation with mere words. The institutional commitment to interreligious dialogue is manifest in various official agencies, such as the Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions, established in 1964 by Pope Paul VI and eventually elevated to the status of a curial dicastery as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. In many places institutes and centers have been opened, new academic programs launched, and positions in Islamic and Jewish studies inaugurated in Roman Catholic colleges and universities.²² This institutional commitment is complemented by a range of important documents (see next section).

A poignant personal encounter between two elderly men fifty years ago aptly concludes this section on historical perspectives. In June 1960 the historian Jules Isaac met with Pope John XXIII, then 79 and in the third year of his papacy. The 83-year-old Isaac, a French Jew who lost many of his loved ones in Auschwitz and who was hidden during the Shoah by a Catholic woman, Germaine Ribiere, briefed the pope on his extensive analysis of Catholic teaching about Judaism. He had documented it as a "teaching of contempt."²³ Pope John was so moved by his meeting with Isaac that he spent three days with him. When they emerged from their deep conversation, Isaac said to the Pope, "Can I leave with hope?" And the pope responded, "You are entitled to more than hope." That encounter eventuated in placing the Christian-Jewish relationship on the agenda of Vatican II, and then in the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*.

Indeed, we are now entitled to more than hope that Roman Catholic theological education and formation includes serious commitment to a "teaching of respect" for the Religious Other.

Magisterial documents: Theology and terminology

As stated above in the opening paragraph, the ATS initiative to which this essay hopes to contribute focuses on educating students of theology and ministry in the *pastoral practices of Christian hospitality in multifaith societies*. In the Roman Catholic ecclesial family, these practices are subsumed under the broader category of "interreligious dialogue."

Although the term, *interreligious dialogue* is a relatively recent one, as the concluding paragraphs in the historical perspectives section above suggests, the foundations of the church's teachings on the subject are clearly present in Sacred Scripture. These foundations are also present in the centuries old Tradition of the Church, especially in the form of practice. This section will explore the church's articulation of its teachings regarding the concept and practice of interreligious dialogue and related terminology in a series of important magisterial documents.²⁴

***Ecclesiam Suam* (1964)**

Although, in the broadest sense, the practice of interreligious dialogue stretches back throughout the history of the church, most of the documents that valorize and explicitly address the church's teaching on the nature and importance of interreligious dialogue date from the time of the Second Vatican Council onward. In fact the central understanding of the term *dialogue* as a gospel way of being that shapes and defines a host of Christian practices is rooted in *Ecclesiam Suam*, an encyclical of Pope Paul VI promulgated in 1964 while Vatican II was still in session.

In this encyclical Paul VI defines *dialogue* as the "internal drive of charity which seeks expression in the external gift of charity" (sec. 64). So defined, the pope famously articulates the concept of the "dialogue of salvation," writing that "the whole history of humanity's salvation is one long, varied dialogue, which marvelously begins with God and which God prolongs with human beings in so many different ways"²⁵ (sec. 70). The pope goes on to contend that, rooted in the example and grace of God's dialogue of salvation with humanity, the church's dialogue with the world ought to be dependent neither on the merits of the participants, nor on achieving a specific set of predetermined results. It should also never be a means for pursuing self-interest, nor coercive in any way (secs. 74–75). Adhering to these principles—and with the necessary characteristics of clarity, meekness, confidence, and prudence—dialogue becomes a practice in which "truth is wedded to charity and understanding to love" (sec. 82).

Apparently anticipating key points in the message of *Nostra Aetate*, promulgated by the Council just one year later, the pope speaks of the importance of dialogue with adherents of Judaism, Islam, and the "Afro-Asiatic" religions who all profess belief in and worship "the one supreme God" (sec. 107). He says that, although Christians cannot "adopt an indifferent or uncritical attitude toward" other religions "on the assumption that they are all to be regarded as on an equal footing," Christians also ought not to "turn a blind eye to the spiritual and moral values of the various non-Christian religions, for we desire to join with them in promoting and defending common ideals in the spheres of religious liberty, human [solidarity], education, culture, social welfare, and civic order" (sec. 108).

***Nostra Aetate* (1965)**

Nostra Aetate, the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (October 28, 1965) is the briefest of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, yet its influence on the life of the church and its relationship to people of other faiths appears to have been in inverse proportion to its length. The declaration was originally planned as a post-Shoah statement on the church's relationship to the Jewish people. However, as the Council Fathers reflected more deeply on the degree to which the church's mission of healing and reconciliation must reach across all religious lines, the decision was made to expand the focus to include all the religions of humanity, but especially Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism.

Reflecting on Hinduism, Buddhism, and many of the other religions of humanity, the text resoundingly declares: "The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all [human beings]" (sec. 2). No sooner does the document express this "sincere reverence" for other religious "ways," however, than it emphasizes the church's sacred and inviolable mission to proclaim Christ: "Indeed, she proclaims, and ever must proclaim Christ 'the way, the truth, and the life' (John 14:6), in whom [human beings] may find the fullness of religious life, in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (sec. 2).

What is truly revolutionary about this document is that, while it affirms the unavoidable tensions between respect for other religions and the proclamation of the Christian faith, *it does not view the two as incompatible and certainly not as mutually exclusive*. Indeed, before the document moves on to talk about the church's special kinship with Muslims and Jews, it exhorts the faithful "that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve, and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the sociocultural values found among" Religious Others (sec. 2).

Nostra Aetate's affirmation of the compatibility of Christian witness and proclamation on the one hand, and interreligious dialogue and collaboration on the other, charts a course for the church's teaching on the practice of interreligious relations that is taken up and followed by subsequent magisterial teaching.

Dialogue and Mission (1984)

One of the lesser known milestones of this teaching is a document issued in May of 1984 by the then Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians titled *The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission*. This document, referred to simply as *Dialogue and Mission*, focuses on interreligious dialogue and proclamation of the gospel as two of the many indispensable elements of the "unified and complex reality" that is Christian mission. It describes dialogue as the "meeting" of Christians and followers of other religious traditions "in order to walk together toward truth and to work together in projects of common concern." It defines proclamation as "announcement and catechesis in which the good news of the gospel is proclaimed and its consequences for life and culture are analyzed" (sec. 13).

In its reflection on the nature of the proclamation of any "religious faith," the document articulates a strong, albeit implicit, condemnation of proselytism by drawing heavily on *Dignitatis Humanae* (December 7, 1965), the landmark declaration of Vatican II on religious freedom. "[I]n spreading religious faith and in introducing religious practices everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which might seem to carry a hint of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonorable or unworthy, especially when

dealing with poor or uneducated people. Such a manner of action would have to be considered an abuse of one's right and a violation of the right of others" (sec. 18 from *DH*, sec. 4).

In its reflection on the concept of "dialogue" in its most general sense, the document asserts that it is far more than an exchange of words or ideas:

Before all else, dialogue is a manner of acting, an attitude, a spirit which guides one's conduct. It implies concern, respect, and *hospitality toward the other*. It leaves room for the other person's identity, modes of expression, and values. Dialogue is thus the norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission, as well as of every aspect of it, whether one speaks of simple presence and witness, service, or direct proclamation. Any sense of mission not permeated by such a dialogical spirit would go against the demands of true humanity and against the teachings of the gospel (sec. 29, our emphasis).

Thus the document implies that interreligious dialogue is a subspecies of this "norm and necessary manner of Christian mission," *but not qua proselytism*.²⁶ Rather the document presents interreligious dialogue as a mode of sharing one's Christian witness with the Religious Other in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding that presumes the Christian's openness of mind and heart to what the Religious Other wishes to share with her or him. In other words, the "hospitality toward the other" of which the text speaks must be of the biblical genre; it must tend toward a radical mutuality in its resistance of the exercise of power over the Other.

Dialogue and Proclamation (1991)

One of the other important contributions of *Dialogue and Mission* to the development of a Catholic theology of interreligious dialogue is its presentation of an emerging typology of the major modalities of its practice. This typology is clearly schematized in a subsequent document, *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ* (Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, May 1991), the aim of which appears to be to elucidate and explore in greater depth some of the major themes of *Dialogue and Mission*.

Dialogue and Proclamation distills the insights of *Dialogue and Mission* in order to articulate a four-fold typology of the practice of interreligious dialogue according to which each of the types of dialogue are interdependent:

1. The *dialogue of life*, where people strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations
2. The *dialogue of action*, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people

3. The *dialogue of theological exchange*, where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other's spiritual values
4. The *dialogue of religious experience*, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute (sec. 42)

As a complement to this typology of interreligious dialogue as practice, and in a spirit of refreshing realism and pragmatism, *Dialogue and Proclamation* also offers a list of "human factors" which present themselves as "some of the more important obstacles" to dialogue. These obstacles must be taken quite seriously in any process of formation for the practice of interreligious dialogue:

1. Insufficient grounding in one's own faith
2. Insufficient knowledge and understanding of the belief and practices of other religions, leading to a lack of appreciation for their significance and even at times to misrepresentation
3. Sociopolitical factors or some burdens of the past
4. Wrong understanding of the meaning of terms such as *conversion*, *baptism*, *dialogue*, and so forth
5. Self-sufficiency [and] lack of openness leading to defensive or aggressive attitudes
6. A lack of conviction with regard to the value of interreligious dialogue, which some may see as a task reserved to specialists, and others as a sign of weakness or even a betrayal of the faith
7. Suspicion about the Other's motives in dialogue
8. A polemical spirit when expressing religious convictions
9. Intolerance, which is often aggravated by association with political, economic, racial, and ethnic factors, [and by] a lack of reciprocity in dialogue which can lead to frustration
10. Certain features of the present religious climate (e.g., growing materialism, religious indifference, and the multiplication of religious sects which creates confusion and raises new problems) (sec. 52)

In addition to offering this nuanced and multidimensional view of the practice of dialogue and its obstacles, *Dialogue and Proclamation* also seeks to bring even greater clarity to the reflections of *Dialogue and Mission* on the relationship between interreligious dialogue, on the one hand, and proclamation and catechesis of the gospel, on the other:

Interreligious dialogue and proclamation, though not on the same level, are both authentic elements of the Church's evangelizing mission. Both are legitimate and necessary. They are intimately related, but not interchangeable: true interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to

make Jesus Christ better known, recognized, and loved; proclaiming Jesus Christ is to be carried out in the gospel spirit of dialogue. The two activities remain distinct but, as experience shows, one and the same local Church, one and the same person, can be diversely engaged in both (sec. 77).

Dominus Iesus (2000)

No review of Church documents addressing issues pertaining to inter-religious dialogue would be complete without a mention of the somewhat controversial declaration *Dominus Iesus: On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church*, promulgated in August of 2000 by the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, under the direction of then Prefect of the Congregation Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, now His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

As the subtitle of the document indicates, its purpose is to reaffirm the ancient dogmatic principles that all salvation comes in and through the person of Jesus Christ, and that the one true Church is “the instrument for the salvation of all humanity” (sec. 22). Where this reaffirmation connects with interreligious dialogue is in the document’s concern that the dialogue may lead some to the relativist conclusion that Christ and his Church are but one way among many in which the salvific grace of God is mediated to the world. Echoing the teachings of previous magisterial documents that interreligious dialogue “is part of the Church’s evangelizing mission” *ad gentes* (secs. 2 and 22), the document avers that “it would be contrary to the faith to consider the Church as *one way* of salvation alongside those constituted by the other religions, seen as complementary to the Church or substantially equivalent to her, even if these are said to be converging with the Church toward the eschatological [reign] of God” (sec. 21). The document goes on to observe that “*Equality*, which is a presupposition of interreligious dialogue, refers to the equal personal dignity of the parties in dialogue, not to doctrinal content, nor even less to the position of Jesus Christ—who is God himself made [human]—in relation to the founders of the other religions” (sec. 22).

Statements about the salvific unicity and universality of Christ and his church are not new. They have been mainstays of authoritative Catholic theology and ecclesiology for centuries, and have only recently been challenged by certain voices who maintain that such universalism amounts to an exclusivism which is ultimately incompatible with the Church’s mission as sacrament of reconciliation and love in the human family.

The document’s explicitly negative references to other Christian communities and other religions present even more complex challenges for those engaged in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. The document maintains, for example, that “the ecclesial communities which have not preserved the valid Episcopate and the genuine and integral substance of the Eucharistic mystery, *are not Churches in the proper sense*,” and that they “*suffer from defects*” (sec. 17, our emphasis). It also declares that, although it may be “true that the followers of other religions can receive divine grace, it is also certain that objectively speaking they are in a *gravely deficient* situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation” (sec. 22, our emphasis).

Not surprisingly, this language has fallen harshly upon the ears of the church's many ecumenical and interreligious dialogue partners. Some have raised the question as to whether the use of such language can even be seen as violating the dialogic principles of respect for, and humility before, the other in pursuit of truth.

Nonetheless, although some of the language and ideas employed by *Dominus Iesus* have strained certain ecumenical and interreligious relationships, and thus posed challenges for the church's practice of dialogue, neither the document's intent nor its effect has been to dampen the church's commitment to this vital component of its mission. Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI has followed in the footsteps of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II, in rigorously dedicating himself to the practice, and in stating in no uncertain terms that "interreligious and intercultural dialogue are not an option but a vital necessity for our time."²⁷

The sacramentality of Religious Otherness

In a 2002 address commemorating the watershed moment in Catholic-Jewish relations marked by the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*, Walter Cardinal Kasper, then president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and thus president of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, looked back on the "respectful and blessed exchange" between Christians and Jews that has occurred since. Describing this exchange as "rediscovering fraternity," Kasper testifies that Catholics have become "aware with greater clarity that the faith of Israel is that of our elder brothers [and sisters], and, most importantly, that Judaism is a *sacrament of every otherness* that as such the Church must learn to discern, recognize, and celebrate."²⁸ In his reflections on this remark, one Catholic theologian has noted that

The application of the distinctively Catholic term *sacrament* to Judaism therefore means that Christians are graced by a mediation of God's presence when they spiritually engage the Jewish community and tradition. Certainly, many if not all of those Christians who have been involved in the dialogue with Jews will testify to the holiness they have experienced by their participation.²⁹

Although much has been said in Catholic discourse about the special relationship between Christians and Jews, *Nostra Aetate* itself explicitly recognizes the holiness present in other religious traditions (sec. 2) and thus could well be interpreted as an implicit affirmation of the extension of Kasper's insight on the sacramentality of Religious Otherness vis-à-vis the Jews and Judaism to other religious practitioners and their traditions. If, as the Catechism asserts, "[t]here is a certain resemblance between the union of the divine persons and the fraternity that men [and women] ought to establish among themselves," (art. 1890), then it stands to reason that Christians are encouraged to discover

the Trinitarian grace of sanctifying relationship as mediated, in its own distinctive ways, in our encounters with Religious Others as Religious Others.

One of the authors of this essay has argued elsewhere that, far from endangering their faith, Christians who—firmly rooted in their commitment to Christ and his church—seek respectful and mutual communion with Religious Others, are invited into a sacramental mystery of deepening spiritual formation and sanctification:

The sacred mystery at the heart of interreligious dialogue is this: through the challenges involved in understanding and trying to appreciate another's very different relationship with God, we somehow come to understand more deeply and cherish more dearly our own. . . . In recognizing life-giving elements in the [religious ways] of another that are not apparent or that have lain dormant in our own tradition, we come to yearn for a deeper relationship with God and others that sometimes leads in new, rich directions.³⁰

If this is true for all Christians, then it becomes critical that priests, deacons, and lay ministers be intellectually and spiritually formed in such a way that they can provide guidance to the faithful in their own pastoral practices of Christian hospitality in the encounter with Religious Others. As Catholic parishes find themselves increasingly immersed, both internally (e.g., in instances of interreligious marriages and families) and externally (e.g., in the religiously mixed neighborhoods of both urban and suburban settings) in the de facto religious pluralism of our times, priests, deacons, and lay ministers must be prepared to recognize and effectively engage the interreligious dimensions of their pastoral leadership. The following section explores the contours of the pastoral practices of Christian hospitality in a multifaith society and their relevance for graduate theological and ministerial education.

Pastoral practices of Christian hospitality in a multifaith society

In reviewing the biblical foundations and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church with respect to hospitality and interreligious dialogue, we have seen the strong directives for a ministry of openness and mutuality in our relationships with all people. We have been blessed with a tradition that provides plentiful models of reaching out to, and caring for, "the stranger." What, then, is the shape of this ministry in our present world? What does it take to minister effectively within the multifaith contexts we experience both within our parishes and dioceses and in our neighboring communities?

The fundamental requirement for such a ministry is the desire to create communities based first and foremost upon love. The radical love of neighbor—all neighbors—proclaimed by Jesus asks nothing less than to see others through the eyes of God. In fact, this love is the pathway to life: "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love remains in death" (1 John 3:14 NAB). Love is also the way that

we know God: “Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8). Because, for Christians, all ministry is based in the ministry of Jesus Christ, the desire to build loving community must be a baseline commitment.

A dual understanding: Understanding oneself and mutual understanding

One clear outcome of the discussions leading up to the writing of this article is the realization that any successful practice of Christian hospitality must be based on two equally important foundations: self-knowledge and a quest for the mutual understanding that grows out of a sincere and open desire to know the Other. The hospital, military, and jail/prison chaplains who shared their experiences with ATS member schools all emphasized the need to know oneself and be open to the other in order to provide meaningful, healing ministry.

A commitment to self-awareness

A healthy mutual understanding is not possible without the minister making a fundamental and ongoing commitment to self-awareness. This commitment to self-knowledge is expressed in all the ministerial guidelines for forming Roman Catholic priests, permanent deacons, and lay ecclesial ministers. Within the recommendations for human formation in “Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry,” the US Catholic Bishops state that well-formed lay ministers must work toward “a basic understanding of self and others” that will enable them to “relate more authentically with God and others.”³¹ The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Program of Priestly Formation also encourages “paths of self-knowledge”³² and affirms that human formation takes place through a three-fold process of “self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-gift.”³³

Without knowing myself and my own motivations in the most honest way possible, I cannot legitimately enter into a process of knowing others, especially those whose faith may be quite different from my own. I can only fully understand my own responses to others when I have grappled with recognizing my own presuppositions, values, and tendencies. Although I can never arrive at a totally objective understanding of myself, I must continuously propose this challenge to myself.

What constitutes “myself” is not a static reality, just as the realities of those I may seek to know are not fixed either. Therefore, a lifelong commitment to self-knowledge is a necessary underpinning for the work of Christian hospitality in multifaith contexts. In this respect, formation programs within ATS member schools can emphasize the need for this ongoing introspection. Many schools already have programs that fall under headings such as “formation” or “lifelong learning.” A specific advantage of such programs for cultivating formation for hospitality in a multifaith setting is the foundational role self-knowledge plays in all of this. Simply put, formation for the practices of Christian hospitality in a multifaith society can and should be seen as a

natural extension and enhancement of the self-awareness component of existing formation programs.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is a good case in point. One of its main objectives is an intense process of developing self-knowledge. It is no wonder that this type of education is required of those preparing for chaplaincy, since chaplains are professionals who must serve daily within multifaith contexts. Chaplains regularly emphasize the message of needing “to be rooted in who you are.” Among the guidelines that chaplains shared with the ATS team working on the Christian Hospitality project, the need to answer basic questions, such as Who am I? and, Why do I do what I do? surfaced repeatedly. Self-awareness is critical in the ministry of Christian hospitality in a multifaith society.

Another type of self-awareness is also necessary for entering effectively into the project of ministry in multifaith settings. This awareness consists of a profound grasp of, and a transparent grounding in, one’s own faith. Efforts at mutual understanding that do not come from a secure position in terms of one’s own religious beliefs, values, and practices can quickly become disingenuous and insincere. Moreover, lack of lifelong commitment to continuously deepening one’s own religious identity will not help the growth of any process of mutual understanding. Authentic practices of Christian hospitality in the encounter with Religious Others will ideally be based upon parties sharing from their own secure positions within their own faith traditions.

A commitment to understanding the Other

In order to welcome Others, our starting point must be a position of mutual knowledge between ourselves and Others, or at least a sincere and open desire for knowledge of the Others. Acquiring this knowledge about Others is not only a matter of completing a course or reading through a particular bibliography, although these pursuits are necessary. The desire to learn about others must also be a lifelong practice that grows out of the basic human drive for communion in mutual understanding. The yearning for communion in mutual understanding, however, also goes beyond the purely human; we must see our pursuit of this knowledge as a participation of the action of God’s Spirit in our world.

The Vatican II “Decree on Ecumenism,” although technically focused on the subject of Christian unity, heralds a message that applies to all efforts toward Christian hospitality in a multifaith society. The decree counsels that we must first “become familiar with the outlook” of others; this is “pursued in fidelity to the truth and with a spirit of goodwill.” Catholics need to “. . . acquire a more adequate understanding of the respective doctrines” of those we seek to understand, including “their history, their spiritual and liturgical life, their religious psychology and general background” (*Unitatis Redintegratio* 9). Referring to the links and relationships between Judaism and Christianity, the Vatican commission for Religious Relations with the Jews suggest that these links “render obligatory a better mutual understanding and renewed mutual esteem.”³⁴ The document’s authors argue for the necessity of mutual knowledge for effective practice: “On the practical level in particular,

Christians must therefore strive to acquire a better knowledge of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism; they must strive to learn by what essential traits Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience.”³⁵ This principle not only should pervade all ecumenical and interreligious activities but also would appear essential to any sincere effort to extend Christian hospitality.

The cross-curricular approach

During the ATS consultations on the practices of Christian hospitality in a multifaith society, the Roman Catholic group suggested different possible approaches to preparing students for these challenges. Most of the participants agreed that a cross-curricular approach, through which subject-specific implications of ministry in multifaith contexts would be considered in all courses, would be the best way to ensure adequate ministerial preparation. The reasons behind this consensus appeared to be multiple.

Pedagogically, the idea of relegating to a limited segment of the curriculum the work of formation for the practices of Christian hospitality in a multifaith society was deemed undesirable because of the possible implication that such formation be appended to the curriculum as an obligatory add-on. Participants mentioned the ways in which folding in the multifaith dimension to a Christology course, for example, makes issues in systematics come alive and attain a new-found relevance for many students. Others spoke of how important understandings of Jewish worship are, for example, to liturgical studies. This was in addition to the widely recognized centrality of the multifaith dimension in training for any kind of chaplaincy, be it prison, hospital, military, or campus.

Practically speaking, participants agreed that most schools already have packed curricula and are stretched for financial and faculty resources. The idea of having to hire new faculty or add new courses to the curriculum, however desirable, may simply be unworkable. Thus, in this context, the strategy of “strategically seeding the curriculum” with a focus on Christian hospitality in a multifaith setting becomes even more appealing.

Use of the “Four Pillars” in designing a cross-curricular approach. How can our programs encourage the quest for self-knowledge and the sincere desire to enter into mutual understanding? How can we address this challenge in a cross-curricular manner?

Within a specifically Catholic context, one approach to formation that organizes many programs is the four-pillars structure. The idea that we must care for the development of ministers in the intellectual, human, pastoral, and spiritual realms of learning/knowing could be useful in approaching the challenge of preparing ministers for multifaith realities. Just as any ministerial formation program must not depart from the premise of forming the whole person, so too any preparation for Christian hospitality must also consider the need for a holistic grounding in a minister’s life. The four pillars also provide a potential structure for organizing program goals, assessment tools, and outcomes that could be structured along the lines of these four areas.

1. ***Academic study: A necessary foundation:*** Academic study and intellectual learning are essential components of preparation for Christian hospitality in a multifaith society. Without at least a basic and accurate knowledge of the beliefs of other major faiths, how can we as Christians provide a meaningful welcome and subsequently interact with brothers and sisters of other faiths? For example, if I am not aware of the meaning, practice, and dates of Ramadan each year, how will I interact in a sensitive way when organizing a multifaith social justice activity during that season? Or how will I intelligently preach, even to groups of my own denomination, regarding current events involving faith-related actions without an understanding of the frameworks and beliefs implicit in the other faith in question?
2. ***Relationships: Developing a heart for lifelong learning about others:*** Since it involves a healthy ability to relate to and empathize with others, human formation is a critical component of a minister's ability to practice Christian hospitality in multifaith contexts. The ongoing commitment to self-knowledge, which we discussed previously, is a prime element in human formation; without adequate self-understanding there will be no true hospitality. Integration of the lifelong importance of seeking self-knowledge goes hand-in-hand with the need to learn about others—one outcome of good human formation should be a desire to learn about those different from us. Elements of human formation that relate specifically to skills for Christian hospitality are the "appreciation and valuing of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity," "a genuine respect and concern for others," and a commitment to the living out "the virtues of Christian discipleship, one of which the US Catholic bishops have identified as "hospitality" itself.³⁶
3. ***Spiritual growth: Open to the Holy Spirit in all faith contexts:*** Spiritual formation provides a rich field of opportunity for learning and practicing Christian hospitality. Understanding and embracing one's own need for ongoing conversion can relate to an openness to growing along with others, since the quest for ever-deepening conversion to Christian discipleship has parallels across many faith traditions. Within ministerial formation, practices such as theological reflection can provide a framework for how Christian principles of hospitality may be—or may not be—present in many ministerial activities. Comparative spiritual practices can also be a source of learning and relationships that lead to occasions of hospitality, such as comparing Buddhist and Christian practices of meditation. Acknowledging and enabling the work of the Holy Spirit through multifaith prayer gatherings is another expression of the solid spiritual formation practices that can lead to positive fruits.
4. ***Pastoral skills: Leading in different faith contexts:*** Strong pastoral skills will be essential to the ability to bring together individuals and groups of different faiths. Ability to both lead and collaborate in pastoral settings may determine, to a large degree, whether certain communities of faith are ever exposed on a communal scale to opportunities to practice Christian hospitality in multifaith contexts. Leading faith communities in adapting

to change and embracing current sociodemographic and religious realities will be increasingly necessary; ministers must be trained in pastoral practices that enable them to relate to these challenges in a spirit of hospitality and welcome. Developing the ability to relate to pastoral leaders of other faiths is also important, as all pastoral ministers seek to pursue the common good within their communities through activities such as social justice initiatives. A priest, permanent deacon, or lay ecclesial minister needs the skills to interact effectively with his or her contemporaries of other faiths in order to bring their communities into the larger pastoral settings through which they can practice Christian hospitality toward those of other faiths.

The cross-curricular method: Different expressions

Looking specifically at how Christian hospitality for multifaith contexts could be covered through the four pillars is an example of an approach to forming ministry students through a cross-curricular method. Just as learning through the four pillars cannot be neatly compartmentalized, so, too, aspects of preparing for Christian hospitality should ideally be present at all levels of the curriculum. In addition to the four pillars, another promising framework could be Lonergan's four levels of self-transcendence: (1) be attentive, (2) be intelligent, (3) be reasonable, and (4) be responsible. The ongoing commitment to broad-based self-knowledge must be established. This knowledge should encompass understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses, spiritual gifts, and personality traits as well as defining one's religious tradition in the particular time and place in which one lives. Building from this foundation, the steps of self-transcendence then serve as a repeatable process through which we can learn about others, integrate our knowledge of them into our own frameworks, and then begin the process anew. This approach to preparing ministers for Christian hospitality within multifaith contexts could also become cross-curricular, finding expressions in many different academic courses and formation activities.

Catholic identity

One's religious identity is developed through interaction *within* one's own tradition—its sacred texts and seasons; its holy women and men; its rituals, liturgies, and practices; its creeds, commentaries, and theological writings; its authoritative teachings; and its sense of mission in the world. Particularly in our time, religious identity is also formed through interaction with the Religious Other, in whom God's Spirit is also moving, as Pope John Paul expressed in his 1990 encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio*: "The church 'is aware that humanity is being continually stirred by the Spirit of God and can therefore never be completely indifferent to the problems of religion' and that 'people will always . . . want to know what meaning to give their life, their activity, and their death.'" The Spirit, therefore, is at the very source of humankind's existential and religious questioning, a questioning that is occasioned not only by contingent situations but by the very structure of being human.³⁷

Interreligious dialogue, says Michael Barnes, the British Jesuit and scholar of the religions of India, is “first and foremost a practice of faith” that originates from the same roots as the church’s liturgy. Liturgy is the sacramental act that narrates God’s Word and that thereby gives Christians their identity as a “people called to speak of what they know in Christ to be true.” Simultaneously, in listening for the “seeds of the Word,” Christians learn how to practice that form of waiting upon God’s spirit that “mirrors Jesus’s responsiveness to the Father.”³⁸

Learning with and from the Religious Other not only teaches about another way of being religious, but also hones pastoral skills of listening attentively and questioning generously. This becomes an occasion to practice “communicative virtues.” They include tolerance, patience, an openness to give and receive criticism, a readiness to admit that one may be mistaken, the desire to reinterpret or translate one’s own concerns so that they will be comprehensible to others, the self-imposition of restraint in order that others may speak, and the willingness to listen thoughtfully and attentively.³⁹

Dialogue with Religious Others, moreover, serves as a stimulus to deepen the understanding of one’s own tradition. Questions from the Other require carefully thought-out answers. Conversation, therefore, often serves as a catalyst to explore more profoundly the depths and breadth of the Roman Catholic tradition in order to articulate it more adequately to those who inquire. When interreligious dialogue happens in a serious and sustained way, it calls forth one’s articulation of the deepest and most powerful dimensions of Catholicism.

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ENDNOTES

1. Barbara Reid, OP, “Holy Rage in the Work of Love.” Unpublished talk presented to the annual Chapter of the Dominican Sisters of Adrian, MI (n.d.).
2. Ibid.
3. *Encuentro* in mission (bishops’ document).
4. The series of seven prayers included also a confession of sins in general, sins committed “in the service of truth,” sins that “have harmed the unity of the Body of Christ,” sins against the “people of Israel,” sins against the “rights of peoples and respect for cultures and religion,” sins against the “dignity of women and the unity of the human race,” and sins “in relation to the fundamental rights of the person.” Archbishop (later Cardinal) Hamao of Japan was the president from 1998–2006 of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerants; he died in 2007.
5. On October 28, 1965, the Second Vatican Council released its declaration, *Nostra Aetate*, that spoke of the “ray of truth” revealed by other religious traditions. This modest statement was nonetheless remarkable, marking the first time an ecumenical council had spoken positively of other religions.
6. This introductory note was authored by Professor Daniel Madigan, SJ, a scholar of Islam and then Director of the Gregorian’s Institute for the Study of Religions and Cultures.

7. See, most notably, the 1998 statement from the Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah*.
8. William R. Burrows, "Concluding Reflections," in *Redemption and Dialogue: Reading Redemptoris Missio and Dialogue and Proclamation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994).
9. See Michael R. McGarry, "Apology, Regret, and Intellectual Humility," in *Learned Ignorance: Intellectual Humility among Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, eds. James L. Heft, Reuven Firestone, and Omid Safi (New York: Oxford University Press: 2011), 218.
10. Peter Brown, "Christianization and Religious Conflict," in *The Late Empire, AD 337–425*, vol. 13, Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 643.
11. The focus on the church's relationship with Judaism and Islam that follows emerges from the expertise of the writers and is not intended to exclude the important relationships of the church with indigenous traditions, Hinduism, Buddhism, and a host of other religious traditions.
12. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *God's Mercy Endures Forever: Guidelines on the Presentation of Jews and Judaism in Catholic Preaching* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1988), §20.
13. Luke Timothy Johnson, "The New Testament's Anti-Jewish Slander and the Conventions of Ancient Polemic," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (Fall 1989): 419–441.
14. Paula Fredriksen and Oded Irshai, "Christian Anti-Judaism: Polemics and Policies," in *The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period 4*, Cambridge History of Judaism, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 977–1034 (citation 997).
15. Judith Lieu, *Image and Reality: The Jews in the World of the Christians in the Second Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996), 278.
16. Guy G. Stroumsa, "From Anti-Judaism to Antisemitism in Early Christianity?" in *Contra Judaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews*, eds. Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1996), 20.
17. Stephen G. Wilson, *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70–170 CE* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 29.
18. Paula Fredriksen, *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), xvii, 101.
19. See Judy Yates Siker, "Unmasking the Enemy: Deconstructing the 'Other' in the Gospel of Matthew," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 32, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 109–123.
20. See Joseph Neuner and Jacques Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, rev. ed. 1975, #s1005, 265–266. The citations are from Fulgentius of Ruspe, *De fide ad Petrum*.
21. Cited in Jacques Dupuis, SJ, *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 102.
22. Note, for example, The Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the US Catholic Bishops, the Center for Catholic-Jewish Learning at Boston College, the Center for Jewish-Christian-Muslim Relations at Merrimack College, the National Catholic Center for Holocaust Education at Seton Hill University, and the programs in Catholic-Jewish and Catholic-Muslim Studies at Catholic Theological Union.
23. See Jules Isaac, *The Teaching of Contempt: Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964). This book is a distillation of his 1948 study *Jésus et Israël (Jesus and Israel)*, ed. Claire Huchet Bishop, trans. Sally Gran (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971).
24. There are many different understandings of this term (and the functional alternative, *interfaith dialogue*) in both popular and theological discourse on religious

pluralism. One understanding is that the purpose of such dialogue is to negotiate the nature and substance of our various traditions and faith commitments so that they are fully acceptable to one another. It implies that, like certain forms of political or diplomatic dialogue, the goal is some kind of compromise for the sake of greater peace and harmony. In light of this understanding, certain ecclesial families, as well as certain elements within the Roman Catholic Church have rejected *interreligious dialogue* as an expression of secular relativism threatening to dismantle traditional Christian faith from within. This is not, however, how authoritative Roman Catholic teaching understands the term.

25. Here, and elsewhere in this section, the language of the English translations of church documents has been altered slightly to reflect intended gender inclusivity.

26. For further consideration of proselytism in the context of Catholic-Jewish relations, see Tommaso Federici, "Study Outline on the Mission and Witness of the Church [from SIDIC]" in *More Stepping Stones to Jewish-Christian Relations: An Unabridged Collection of Christian Documents 1975–1983*, ed. Helga Croner (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 37–55, especially part II on "Unwarranted Proselytism."

27. Pope Benedict XVI, "Address to the Foundation for Interreligious and Intercultural Research and Dialogue," Vatican City, February 1, 2007.

28. Walter Cardinal Kasper, "Address on the 37th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*," October 28, 2002, <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/documents-and-statements/roman-catholic/kasper/650-wk02oct28>, our emphasis.

29. Philip A. Cunningham, "Judaism as 'Sacrament of Otherness'" (address delivered at the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews, Utrecht, The Netherlands, June 29–July 3, 2003, <http://www.jcrelations.net/en/?item=2189#1>).

30. Scott C. Alexander, "Knowing and Loving Our Neighbors of Other Faiths" in *On Our Way: Christian Practices for Living a Whole Life*, eds. Dorothy C. Bass and Susan R. Briehl (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2010), 153–154.

31. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord: A Resource for Guiding the Development of Lay Ecclesial Ministry" (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 2005), 36.

32. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Program of Priestly Formation" (Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing, 2005), 79.

33. *Ibid.*, 80.

34. Vatican Commission on Religious Relations with the Jews, "Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration *Nostra Aetate*," 1974, Preamble.

35. *Ibid.*

36. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Co-Workers in the Vineyard," 37.

37. Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, §28. The inner quotation is taken from *Gaudium et Spes*, §41.

38. Michael Barnes, SJ, *Theology and the Dialogue of Religions*, Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine (Cambridge University Press, 2002), 16.

39. Nicholas C. Burbules, *Dialogue in Teaching: Theory and Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993), 42.

Guests of Religious Others: Theological Education in the Pluralistic World

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The emphasis on hospitality strikes an important chord for Christian theological education in a religiously plural world. Yet the focus perennially has been on the “host” side of the relationship and only secondarily on what it means to be “guests” in pluralistic societies. This article highlights the importance of taking the perspective of guests in the interreligious encounter, explores the theological assumptions undergirding such a posture, and sketches some basic educational, pedagogical, and curricular implications of this approach.

Introduction

The Association of Theological Schools’ Christian Hospitality and Pastoral Practices in a Multifaith Society (CHAPP) initiative lifts up and places at the center of the theological conversation the notion of hospitality. This article is being written in response to three working documents of the CHAPP project.¹ It uses as a springboard for discussion and reflection the scattered references to guests in these documents in the conviction that further reflection on this theme is essential for next steps in this discussion. We first interact with the explicit theology of guests in the documents, then probe their theological assumptions and potential, and conclude with some suggestions for how the guest emphasis and perspective can make a difference for theological education in the twenty-first century. While the author writes as an Asian American evangelical and pentecostal scholar teaching at a nondenominational evangelical seminary, the hope is that the following considerations will be of some benefit to the broader theological conversation.

Hospitality from the perspective of the guest

The word *guest* does not appear in the reflections of the evangelical Protestants participating in this project (EPD).² But the authors do emphasize, from the story of the Good Samaritan, that “Jesus was less interested in defining who *our neighbors* are but, instead, focused on *our neighborliness* to others” (EPD, 24, *italics orig.*). This suggests that they should be taken seriously in highlighting the importance of being neighbors who exist in mutual relationships with people in other faiths. This involves, as noted earlier in the essay, “sacrificial love for our non-Christian neighbors” and authenticity in “not [using] neighborliness as a front for the aim of gospel proclamation (i.e., having ulterior motives, such as using, for instance, bait-and-switch tactics)” (EPD, 13–4), as well as “not [imposing] on the non-Christian faith traditions Christian questions and categories” (EPD, 28). The former is an especially noble aspiration for evangelicals since they are often pragmatists and instrumentalists

who ask, of any particular practice, “to what purpose?”—with the response being, usually “to achieve evangelistic objectives”—while the latter remains, of course, a challenging ideal for all people of faith when meeting Religious Others. These hints are suggestive for what might be called an evangelical theology of guests in a pluralistic world, one that emphasizes the importance of neighborly deference, politeness, and reciprocity and that respects the right of our neighbors of other faiths to define themselves. Yet as we shall see in a moment, perhaps there are also reasons internal to evangelical sensibilities and commitments why considerations about being guests, while long a secondary concern, if at all, should be more at the forefront.

The mainline Protestant writing team was more explicit about highlighting the guest posture for multifaith relations. “How to be a guest” (MPD, 39), they suggest, is one of the important questions of our time.³ This perspective entails important adjustments, which they articulate clearly in a section that deserves to be quoted at length:

Mainline Christians can no longer assume a primary (and privileged) role as generous hosts in a normative culture; they must also learn to be appropriate and grateful guests, sojourners at ease in unfamiliar territory and unashamed to receive from the abundance of others. In practice, this stance is marked by humility, receptivity, gratitude, and nontriumphant behaviors, which can collectively be described as a “dialogical heart.” Those who live out of this dialogical heart might often adopt pluralist and inclusivist positions toward other religions but could also claim a responsible Christian exclusivity. Right relationship, not doctrinal position, is central to this competency (MPD, 41).

Approaching others as guests rather than as hosts involves an intentionally deferential posture since it “involves *receiving* hospitality as much as providing it” (MPD, 41). Such a relational approach is thoroughly dialogical, and theological education should develop curriculum, degree programs, and outcomes that nurture the associated skills.⁴

Why does switching from being hosts to being guests introduce a different dynamic into the mix? Here, the Roman Catholic team is most helpful, beginning its essay (RCD) by noting how the power wielded by hosts, whether exercised or not, inevitably makes it difficult for guests to feel totally at home (RCD, 48). Instead, the biblical narrative, beginning with the ancient Hebrews, portrays a nomadic people of God, dynamically shifting roles as guests and hosts but always as aliens in a strange land (RCD, 48–9). Yet the history of the (Catholic) Christian encounter with people in other faiths has more often than not been misaligned with this scriptural starting point, a sorry narrative that is partially told within the confines of a short essay. Realization of having fallen short invites, as with the mainline Protestant proposal, a dialogical approach to the multifaith encounter, one in which strangers are, or should be, committed to understanding one another. Theological education, then, our Roman Catho-

lic interlocutors advise, would prepare ministers intellectually, interpersonally, pastorally, and spiritually for this task utilizing a cross-curricular approach.

Toward a theology of guests in the multifaith encounter: Divergent models

What are some of the theological assumptions undergirding the guest-perspectives or suggestions in the preceding proposals?⁵ And are these presuppositions capable of sustaining a theology of guests for multifaith relations today? We here begin with the Roman Catholic document and highlight some of the more obvious theological resources specific to the traditions under consideration.

Most helpful in the Catholic case is that there are the teaching magisterium and the conciliar tradition that speak with the kind of authority on doctrinal and theological issues not present in Protestant circles. Hence the recognition, particularly in Vatican II documents, that there are truth and holiness in the non-Christian religions and that therefore Christians should adopt a dialogical approach to their neighbors in other faiths. These pronouncements provide essential theological support for the idea that Christians can be guests who receive, even theologically, from Religious Others. There is in addition the presumption regarding a kind of sacramentality of Religious Otherness (RCD, 64–5) that invites Christians to expect to find truth and holiness manifest in and through the lives of their non-Christian neighbors.⁶ These combine to provide Roman Catholics not just with pragmatic motivations to be multifaith guests but with a theology of guests, one that grounds the posture of being guests in a theological understanding instead.

This Catholic theological platform is simultaneously not exclusive of or incompatible with a kerygmatic approach involving proclamation of the gospel to people in other religions. But it does provide an explicitly theological rationale for committing to understanding Religious Others (RCD, 67), even as it also urges those involved in multifaith initiatives to be “open to the Holy Spirit in all faith contexts” (RCD, 69). Last but not least, then, such openness to interreligious dialogue becomes nothing less than an expression of the practice of Catholic faith (RCD, 70–1). Is it true then that, for Catholics, being guests of people in other faiths becomes, in a sense, normative? This would be the case if there are deep theological reasons for being open to receiving the gifts of Religious Others.

Our mainline Protestant theologians emphasized both the divine mystery and the unity of the human species. These twin theological commitments support the emphasis on being guests in relationship to those in other faiths (MPD, 36–7). The former undermines any presumption that Christians (or any others) may have exhaustive knowledge of God even while the latter means that there is a fundamental sense in which Christians are on epistemic par with those in other faiths, even with regard to theological matters. If the Roman Catholic team developed the theological underpinnings of being guests in a pluralistic world, the mainline Protestant team has accented the anthropological and epistemological aspects of such a theology of guests. Thus there

is also an emphasis on the biblical and theological implications of neighborliness (MPD, 41–2), which redefines multifaith relations in terms of mutuality and reciprocity that in turn supports a more robust posture of deferentiality related to being guests. All of these theological sensibilities lead to emphasis on the development of dialogical and relational skills in the interreligious context, rather than on theological education as providing specialized knowledge or content (MPD, 44).⁷

It would not be fair, however, to say of the mainline Protestant proposals that a more apophatic approach to life in a pluralistic world results in theological vacuity. The point about being guests is not to suggest doing nothing but receiving from hosts in other faiths. Rather, it is to nurture “competent religious leadership in multireligious settings as evidenced by their abilities to identify shared patterns of response to ethical issues among people of different religions; identify commonalities, honor differences, and take a self-critical perspective in dialogue with people of different religious traditions; and cooperate effectively in political, ethical, economic, social, and peacemaking activities with leaders of other religious traditions” (MPD, 44). Accentuating the anthropological dynamics of the multifaith encounter, then, emphasis is placed in approaching Religious Others as guests who cede power and initiative, to the degree possible, to their hosts in other faiths. There are good theological-anthropological reasons for this posture, so argue our mainline Protestant dialogue partners.

Our evangelical theologians, I suggest, also have something to offer toward a theology of guests relevant for the multifaith encounter. To be sure, the evangelical emphases on kerygmatic proclamation in ecclesial mission and evangelism and on calling others “to share the saving hope of eternal life through personal faith in Jesus Christ” (EPD, 13) combine to resist any theology of guests that might temper such activity. One response would be to emphasize the relational approach of the sharing of personal testimony. This is surely something central to being proper guests, to be open and vulnerable to hosts who are in power.⁸

I would urge, however, that there are other clues within the evangelical discussion that support a guest approach at a much deeper theological level. The evangelical team recognizes that part of the goal is to nurture and develop the “skills and practices having to do with ‘doing’ theology with people of other religions, having dialogue with them, and learning how to cooperate with the other religions when it comes to theologically appropriate social projects and justice issues” (EPD, 15). These are not only practical matters, but they strike at the core of the affective and dispositional center of evangelical life. Hence the prescription is “more than ever [for] a pedagogical paradigm entailing a holistic correlation of heart (affections—orthopathy), head (knowledge—orthodoxy), and hands (practice—orthopraxy)” (EPD, 21).⁹ The recognition is that for perhaps too long, evangelical theological education has functioned at the cognitive level so that the “indoctrination of core theological beliefs” (EPD, 23) is prioritized almost to the neglect of the other two dimensions.¹⁰ To bring to the fore the “heart” and “hands” is to aim for “the cultivation of a *heart-knowledge* . . . , with the cultivation of love as the reigning affec-

tion" (EPD, 23, *italics orig.*). This is no merely emotional- or feeling-oriented approach; rather, "Here we are concerned with the *depth grammars* operative in one's heart through which one learns to know *the way of being* in life and ministry" (EPD, 24, *italics orig.*).

This affectivity lies as the heart of a sensitivity to the Other, one that allows the kinds of authentic responses that characterize the posture of guests in relationship to hosts. As our evangelical friends conclude, such a holistically formed theological education "invites us to risk vulnerability and place ourselves in the hands of others so that they may examine us and forgive our offenses. Only when we act toward one another in a spirit of humility and vulnerability will we approach the stranger in our midst in a rightful manner" (EPD, 27). If the cultivation of the right affections is emphasized equally to that of right beliefs, then evangelistic and missionary dispositions will be primed to engage with Religious Others not just as thinkers to be convinced otherwise but as hearts who can love as much as they are in need of receiving love.¹¹

Guests and theological education: Possibilities and challenges

My fundamental claim is that it is in the very nature of the triune God to be a guest in the presence of Others. There has been much written on the hospitality of God, and to some degree, it is right to emphasize how God is the host *par excellence*. But it is also just as important, I would argue, to insist on God as the (perhaps silent) guest in every situation where the divine might be welcomed. What I mean is that it is in the very nature of God to be guest—first in the creation, making space for others; then in the incarnation, traveling in the Son to a far country (to use Barth's metaphor);¹² and (this is my contribution as a pneumatological theologian) in the Holy Spirit's being poured out upon all flesh (Acts 2:17), yet paradoxically in the process not violating the prerogative of all flesh to be hosts and receptive temples for (bodily habitations of) the Spirit. If the triune God is also the divine guest *par excellence*, then what does this mean for theological education in a pluralistic world of many faiths? Let me sketch a response at three levels.

First, pedagogically, it seems to me that we have to recognize the power structures of being hosts and work intentionally about situating ourselves as guests in the presence of people of other faiths. We have to go beyond inviting those in other faiths into our classrooms on our campuses; that is important but not sufficient. We also have to visit those in other faiths in their environments, and bring our students with us. This requires that we become friends with our non-Christian neighbors who are devoted to other religious paths, and it will require that we maintain and cultivate these friendships in order that we will receive initial invitations in the first place and then so that we will be invited back after the first time. In the presence of others, then, we can learn how to properly interact and dialogue with them on their terms. After all, we also want to invite Religious Others to our churches or other spaces of Christian worship or activity, so we need to be sensitive to what it means for us to enter into the sacred space of our neighbors in other faiths.

At a second level, then, nurturing relationships with those in other faiths will provide opportunities for us to begin to cross faith lines in projects devoted to common causes. Christian evangelism is exclusive neither of dialogue nor social activism, as all three of our writing teams acknowledge.¹³ This opens up opportunities for mission together, even prophetic missionary work that confronts the principalities and powers that perpetuate oppression against the poor of the world. Herein the “hands” dimension of Christian witness not just encounters but engages with a world of many faiths for the common good. Relationship and partnerships will need to be fostered, and dialogue will be carefully calibrated to “change the world.” Such multifaith collaboration will surely open up occasions for interreligious testimony, but these emerge ad hoc, as a byproduct of multifaith efforts, rather than as the ultimate goal and aim of work together.

The third level may prove to be the most challenging. What I have in mind here is the fact that any serious engagement with Religious Others, even if we posed that merely as dialogical, involves not merely the exchange of ideas but genuine risk. Why? Because there is no such thing as engaging other faiths merely in the abstract or only with our words; rather, believing involves our hearts (“Even the demons believe—and shudder”; James 2:19), and our hands (Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount indicates that in the day of judgment those who say, “Lord, Lord,” but practiced lawlessness will not enter into the kingdom of heaven; Matt. 7:21–23). So if merely entertaining the ideas of Christianity is insufficient, why would we assume that our merely listening to our neighbors of other faiths constitutes authentic dialogue? Being guests involves entering into the space of the Other, inhabiting their homes, digesting their foods, and partaking, to some degree, in their ways of life. So listening to others involves, to some degree, opening ourselves up to their claims and, more importantly, the practices that undergird and inform these beliefs.

What I mean involves taking seriously the evangelical team’s proposals that learning is not just a cognitive but also an affective affair. True learning and understanding is not just a matter of parsing out ideas but an affective matter of our hearts and our allegiances. This opens up to some serious questions, then, about the multifaith encounter. Many Christians, particularly those on the more conservative end of the spectrum, but certainly those who have committed their lives to the Christian mission at any level, will want to be very cautious about opening up their hearts to people in other faiths. My question is this: can we be sincerely and truly guests in the presence of Religious Others if our hearts remain closed to their hospitality?

To put it another way: oftentimes in our interactions with people of other faiths we reach a point where our propositional explanations have taken us as far as we can go, and in those situations, we invite them to simply, “Open your heart and trust in Jesus and he will reveal himself to you.” There is something to this invitation to enter into a relationship with Christ so that we need to experience it in all of its profundity, even if we might never be able to articulate fully what we have encountered. But putting the shoe on the other foot for the moment: isn’t it then also true that our openness to the truth claims of

the Religious Other involve at some level our taking a leap of faith as well, a willingness to enter into that experience which they have testified about?¹⁴

Theological education, then, is not just about doctrines but about an affective encounter with and embodied experience of what religion points to. Herein we find ourselves in a catch-22: on the one hand, we may not fully understand the Religious Other without being willing to feel it in our gut; on the other hand, it is not easy to feel the Religious Other without risking ourselves and making ourselves vulnerable to the depths of an alien set of experiences. In other words, the holistic evangelical epistemology confronts us with the dilemma: even if enacted and implemented in theological education, such an approach will remain incomplete until Christians open up to not just the ideas, beliefs, and doctrines of Religious Others but also to embodied and affective participation in their religious practices and ways of life. In traditional (evangelical) theological thinking, such has been called syncretism at best or idolatry at worst.

Being guests in an interreligious world: The risk of theological education

I close with the following considerations designed to urge us on in developing a theology of guests in a pluralistic world, despite the risks involved. First, I do not believe that there is any way to avoid taking the risks of faith—this happens in many other aspects of our spiritual journeys and is increasingly being embarked upon by many in a continually shrinking global village, so the challenges in the multifaith domain are part of the rule rather than the exception. But second, these risks should never be undertaken by solitary persons; rather, learning to be guests in a world of many faiths is an extremely complex task that should be discerned over time by whole communities—in this case, communities of theological education in general and specific cohorts, seminars, or initiatives within such institutions in particular. Last but not least, herein do we rely on the gifts, discernments, and leadings of the Holy Spirit who blows from where we do not know and in unanticipated directions as well, but all the while we are convinced that she leads us to a fuller realization of the mystery of God in Christ, even if sometimes that unveiling causes us anxious pause in the process because we are confronted with something genuinely new.¹⁵ But no genuine progress can be made—in understanding the Religious Other, in being transformed by that encounter, and in bearing witness to the wondrous works of God in Christ—unless we are willing to ourselves be guests like God and guests of God in receiving the hospitality of others.¹⁶

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ENDNOTES

1. The evangelical Protestant document, written by Sang-Ehil Han, Paul Louis Metzger, and Terry C. Muck, will hereafter be identified as EPD; the mainline Protestant document, written by Frances S. Adeney, Duane R. Bidwell, and Elizabeth Johnson Walker, will hereafter be identified as MPD; and the Roman Catholic document, written by Mary C. Boys and Scott C. Alexander, will hereafter be identified as RCD.
2. This is not altogether surprising as few evangelicals have focused on this topic. Ruth Padilla deBorst, "'Unexpected' Guests at God's Banquet Table: Gospel in Mission and Culture," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 33, no. 1 (2009): 62–76, focuses more on the cultural aspects of Christian mission than on the interreligious encounter.
3. See also Enyi Ben Udoh, *Guest Christology: An Interpretive View of the Christological Problem in Africa* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988).
4. The theme of hospitality is gradually emerging in mainline Protestant thinking about theological education, for example, Elizabeth Newman, "Politics of Higher Education: How the Love of Hospitality Offers an Alternative," in *The Scholarly Vocation and the Baptist Academy: Essays on the Future of Baptist Higher Education*, eds. Roger A. Ward and David P. Gushee (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2008), 166–196.
5. My own theology of guests sketched vis-à-vis the interreligious encounter is in "Guests, Hosts, and the Holy Ghost: Pneumatological Theology and Christian Practices in a World of Many Faiths," in *Lord and Giver of Life: Perspectives on Constructive Pneumatology*, ed. David H. Jensen (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 71–86.
6. For more on the sacramental aspects of the guest-host relation, albeit not theologized explicitly with regard to the multifaith encounter, see also Leslie A. Hay, *Hospitality: The Heart of Spiritual Direction* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2006).
7. Another document forged with a good amount of input from mainline Protestant perspectives emphasizing the theological theme of hospitality for the multifaith encounter was developed by the World Council of Churches through a joint process of the Faith and Order Commission, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, and the Office of Interreligious Relations and Dialogue, resulting in "Religious Plurality and Christian Self-Understanding," *Current Dialogue* 45 (July 2005): 4–12, also available on the Internet at <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/documents/assembly/porto-alegre-2006/3-preparatory-and-background-documents/religious-plurality-and-christian-self-understanding.html>.
8. The EPD does not mention this strategy of how the testimony can function effectively in interreligious settings from the guest perspective; for initial efforts toward such an approach, see Tony Richie, *Speaking by the Spirit: A Pentecostal Model for Interreligious Dialogue* (Wilmore, KY: Emeth Press, 2011).
9. I provide one avenue toward an affective theology in dialogue with other pentecostal theologians of orthopraxy such as Steven J. Land and Samuel Solivan, in my *Spirit of Love: A Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012), ch. 5 and passim.
10. This is why James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), works so hard to interrogate this deeply rooted evangelical assumption and to call attention to how Christian education in general (not just theological education in particular) should be as much an affectively formative as a cognitively informative project.
11. My sense is that some evangelicals, particularly those informed by the "heart religion" of John Wesley and other pietists, would be very comfortable with this emphasis

on affectivity while others, especially those in the Reformed Westminster tradition that emphasizes a more propositional understanding of the nature of theological language, would be less so.

12. Here of course I am referring to Karl Barth's famous articulation of the incarnational journey of the Son of God into the "far country" of the depths of the human experience; see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* 4, no. 1, trans. G. W. Bromiley (London and New York: T & T Clark, 1956), §59.1.

13. I add my argument to this discussion in my *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor*, Faith Meets Faith series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), esp. ch. 3. This volume was referred to on more than one occasion in the EPD, but only in passing.

14. I have raised these questions elsewhere: for example, Yong, "Can We Get 'Beyond the Paradigm' in Christian Theology of Religions? A Response to Terry Muck," *Interpretation* 61, no. 1 (January 2007): 28–32, and "From Comparative Theology to 'Dual Religious Belonging'?" Francis X. Clooney and the Hindu-Christian Encounter in a Pluralistic World," *Dharma Deepika: A South Asian Journal of Missiological Research* 16, no. 1 (2012): 6–26.

15. Elsewhere I have argued for what I call a pneumatological approach to theology of pluralism, interreligious dialogue and multifaith encounter: for example, *Discerning the Spirit(s): A Pentecostal-Charismatic Contribution to Christian Theology of Religions*, Journal of Pentecostal Theology Supplement Series 20 (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), and *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003).

16. Thanks to Stephen Graham of The Association of Theological Schools for the invitation to be a part of this conversation.

Educating Religious Leaders for a Multireligious World: Outcomes and Learning

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This essay documents the outcomes and learning from an action research project bringing together slightly more than eighty students from fifteen theological schools in the United States for a five-day seminar at the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions. The project's orienting question was "How might seminaries foster significant learning opportunities for the development of leaders equipped to serve in today's multicultural, multireligious world?" Supporting the parliament seminar was a series of preparatory courses taught at each participating institution. The essay concludes by identifying eight issues in need of continuing attention.

The second and perhaps deeper fear that keeps me from interfaith dialogue is related to my own Christian identity. Before leaving for the Parliament I asked myself, Will my understanding of God, community, and self necessarily be affected by my sincere engagement with persons from other religious traditions or no tradition at all? Does honest engagement require me to be open to being changed by those I encounter? These questions pointed to my deeper fear that sincere interfaith endeavors threatened to challenge and change those who engage in them. While the Parliament neither denied the validity of these questions nor offered easy answers to them, the conference pointed me toward a different and more accessible entrance through which to begin my interfaith journey—namely, the articulation of my own religious understanding. The starting point of interfaith dialogue and relationship was not the risk of change but rather the deep understanding and communication of my own tradition. Throughout the conference I was asked by Buddhists, Humanists, and other Christians alike to communicate what I believed. In this way, interfaith engagement did cause me to change but in a way that I had not anticipated. I necessarily moved deeper into my own tradition in order that I might sincerely articulate my beliefs to those I encountered.

—Participating Seminary Student

I. Introduction

The challenge

What if a new pedagogy appeared that excelled at deepening the passion, conviction, clarity, critical reflective capacity, and fluency that theological students had about their faith? What if, further, this pedagogy held promise as an antidote to religiously infused violence and inculturated most of the principles and practices commonly associated with diversity, cross-cultural, and apologetical work in the preparation of religious leaders? And what if, as the *coup de grâce*, the pedagogical practice could largely be integrated into the current curriculum, rather than require significant additions to the curriculum? Too good to be true? Not in the experience of the student quoted at the beginning of this article. More importantly, not in the broader experience of the *Educating Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World* project. What's more, the experience conveyed in the opening story and the broader experience of the project is consistent with the experience of multifaith education over the past half century. There are lots of reasons for theological education to heed the need for equipping religious leaders to engage the Religious Other. Ironically, the most compelling reason may well be the deepening of one's own faith.

It is commonplace for those advocating multifaith perspectives within theological education to start with the simple fact that today's world is multi-religious. Therefore, the argument continues, one cannot possibly understand one's own faith, much less relate one's faith to the world, without some capacity to deal with this reality. Regardless of whether one's primary interest is locating and promoting one's own faith within the totality of God's creation, or trying to reach out in solidarities that foster peace, if not justice, the very multireligious nature of our globalizing reality seems, in itself, a weighty warrant for providing religious leaders the tools to deal with it. Unfortunately such arguments haven't created much buzz or momentum over the last quarter century.

In light of this history, ATS's current exploration of the possibility and possible necessity of multifaith education is a positive sign of growing momentum. Yet the preponderance of sociological evidence is that congregations and denominations continue to be happy not to have—and in a majority of cases, even discouraging of—any kind of engagement with other faith traditions. As Robert Wuthnow concludes after the most extensive study yet of American congregations' responses to the challenges of religious diversity, the increasing awareness of religious diversity is reinforcing our society's historic tendency toward a privatized religious pluralism, rather than the engaged, reflective pluralism that many of us might hope for.¹

The social and theological benefits of multifaith engagement, as theologically important as one or another of these may be to most readers of this essay, seem a hard sell for economically stressed institutions trying to prepare leaders for congregations that prefer the privatized pluralism of America's past. So it is, perhaps, not surprising that the strong inertias built into the American theological curriculum have thus far prevailed against the increasingly stark consciousness of the multireligious makeup of our world and our American

communities. But how many of us theological educators, at least occasionally, worry about the depth of commitment, knowledge, and critical capacity of our students? How can we ignore a tool for dealing with this?

The overall result of the *Educating Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World* project was stronger Christians and better leaders. What this looked like, what else happened, and the details of what was tried and learned along the way are elaborated in the remainder of this essay. It begins with a quick overview of the structure of the project and the focal questions it addressed. Section II turns to the key action components of the project and the outcomes and learning related to each. Section III presents the project's "answers" to its focal questions. Finally, Section IV lists eight issues that the project points to as in need of continuing attention, before the concluding reflection of Section V.

The project

The orienting question for the *Educating Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World* project was "How might seminaries foster significant teaching/learning opportunities for the development of a new generation of leaders equipped to serve in the challenging milieu of today's multicultural, multireligious world?" The project's sponsor was the Task Force on Theological Education and Interfaith Initiatives of The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR). The Henry Luce Foundation provided major funding for the project. I served as the independent evaluator for the project.²

The project's action frame used the 2009 Parliament of the World's Religions ("Parliament"), held in December in Melbourne, Australia, as both a culminating and a catalytic setting. The focal experience, within this frame, was bringing groups of students from fifteen theological schools in the United States together for a five-day seminar at the Parliament.³ Supporting this focal seminar was a series of courses taught at each participating institution in preparation for the Parliament seminar (professors for these courses accompanied students to the Parliament and shared in the seminar); the students' participation in the broader set of activities at the Parliament outside of the focal seminar; and the students' sharing of their experiences "back home" after the Parliament. Supplementing the student seminar-related activities was a panel discussion, at the Parliament, among the leaders of various religious and spiritual communities from around the globe on the theme, *Educating Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World*.

The orienting question for the project was further specified in terms of a subset of questions that were initially used to provoke and collect each participating school's reflection on its experience with multireligious education prior to attending the 2009 Parliament. Such prior experience was one criterion used in selecting schools for the project. The same questions were then used to structure the seminar at the Parliament, one question addressed at each session. The questions were also used as the core of an online survey conducted with students after their Parliament experience and in interviews with the professors who coordinated the preparatory courses and joined their students at the Parliament seminar. The questions most central to this article are these three:

1. *Why* is multireligious education *needed* in seminaries and divinity schools?
2. What are some of the *resources* for multifaith education in your tradition and school? What are some of the *obstacles* to multifaith education in your tradition and school?
3. What are the *virtues and skills* one needs to be an effective multifaith leader? What are the practices by which these virtues and skills can be developed (inside and outside the classroom)?

II. Key action components

Student participation

Slightly more than eighty students from the fifteen schools went to Melbourne, most with financial assistance from the project. Students had to make special application to their respective schools to participate. One consequence of this was that all students accepted had a strong and articulate interest in multifaith issues. Project students, as would be expected, reflected the faith backgrounds represented in their respective schools, which was overwhelmingly, but not exclusively, Oldline Protestant and Roman Catholic. The one Jewish seminary, one Muslim theological school, and two or three seminaries with multireligious student bodies resulted in some interfaith mix among the project students.

In the post-Parliament student assessment questionnaire, the vast majority of responses concerning the overall impact of the project ranged from “broadened, deepened, and intensified preexisting ideas and commitments” to “life changing.” Several spoke of making life-changing career decisions either during or as a result of the project experience. One such change, for example, was from seeking ordination to teaching interfaith in a secular university. Others spoke of their experience in terms of spiritual transformation.

The overwhelmingly positive experience of students notwithstanding, most students retained some sense of critical distance. As one student put it,

I witnessed that it is possible to be religious in a multireligious setting. With open and honest discussion with fellow seminarians, we were able to deepen our understanding about not only the possibilities but also the limits of Christianity for interreligious dialogue.

There was also clear recognition that the Parliament attracted a decidedly like-minded segment of religious people and left largely unaddressed the challenge of how to be engaged with the Religious Other not represented. As one student sardonically put it: “My Parliament experience further crystallized how it involves a subset of each tradition and that reaching beyond the choir continues to be the main challenge of pluralists.” Another student put it more in terms of a practical ministry question:

How can we go back to our own particular communities and spread the word about the importance of multifaith educa-

tion and interfaith work? This is a bigger challenge than I think the Parliament seemed to address. Practically everyone at the Parliament was pro-interfaith engagement. But we don't necessarily represent a majority of adherents within our traditions and don't know for sure how to speak with them.

Not all of the students participating in the project were pluralists, at least in a universalistic sense. Rather, it appears that the majority were committed to some sense of unique particularity for their Christianity, Judaism, or Islam and struggled to varying degrees with the tension between openness and exclusivity that such commitments implied. One student summarized it succinctly:

The Parliament challenged me to find ways to articulate what I believe about eternal salvation and how that may not be in tension with other faiths. I continue to explore how I can be grounded in my own tradition and open to others as well.

Even more simply, another student said, "My Bible tells me that Jesus is the way to salvation. At the Parliament, I was exposed to the possibility that there may be other ways. I am struggling with this." This tension is a critical dynamic in the formative potential that multifaith pedagogies have for faith development, as we shall develop further below.

Whatever else it might be, multifaith encounter is complicated, and this was not lost on the students. It is especially challenging the greater the distance to be bridged in the encounter. Within a vocational and justice frame, one student put it this way:

I've learned that faith can be explained in multiple ways and it is my job as a pastor to be aware of these different expressions—whether within my own church, community, or family. I've also learned that it is often easier to get along with someone of a different faith group who has a similar disposition toward social issues than it is to find common ground with someone in my own denomination who is on the other end of the social justice spectrum.

Indeed, the engagement of difference was such an overwhelming part of the Parliament experience that several students wished there had been more opportunities to learn and practice, as one student put it, "the ways in which gaps can be breached between people/communities when people are divided by *radically* opposing views."

Add in the frequent student comments about the patriarchal nature of the multifaith movement as witnessed through the Parliament, and the complexity of the effort and history becomes even more stark.

The *Educating Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World* project's program of combining a back-home course with participation at the Parliament

provided the opportunity to probe students' assessments of the unique impact of being at the Parliament. Two stand out. First, the Parliament provided the opportunity to go beyond the classroom in at least two different senses. Using the old adage that "the map is not the territory," one student representing the sentiments of many of the students went on to say, "In being at the PWR we entered the territory." Clearly there was power in the experience, and a significant part of this was because the experience included the practice. And among the many major themes and learning from the project is that, as one student put it, "while theory and discussing such issues as salvation are important, learning how to dialogue and to work through community tragedies and celebrations are absolutely essential to multifaith education." Another student differentiated that "learning about pluralism and experiencing pluralism are two totally different things. So, while I think it is crucial for seminaries to require multifaith education, I think that requirement also must include a practical application." Another sense of being beyond the classroom expressed by many students, and as alluded to above, was the affirmation of being with thousands of people from around the world who believed that, despite its diversity, religion is a good thing and that religions can work cooperatively.

Second, the extreme range of religious diversity present at the Parliament led many students to a much deeper and critical perspective on the potential of, and the limitations to, multireligious engagement and cooperation. Indeed, the presence of such a broad range of different religions at the Parliament, and especially the encounter with a few that seemed extreme, prompted at least a few students to wonder what constituted a religion, as did this student:

I was pretty open-minded about God and faith before attending the Parliament, and this trip affirmed those open-minded evaluations of religion. However, it also raised questions for me about how we create criteria for evaluating what is valid and what is not. It seems there must be some line, but I am not sure how to define it without restricting others' beliefs.

Another student, clearly looking for help in response to an experience of one faith group that for him clearly crossed the line, added, "I'm not even sure why it activated my prejudices. I have never seen even the suggestion of how to approach this type of thing theologically, nor seen a useful categorization of what is worthy of being a religion."

Several of the schools' preparatory courses were open to both project and nonproject students, and such situations provided an especially insightful opportunity for assessing what the Parliament experience might have added over and above a good, back-home course on interreligious engagement. We have only the professors' read on this, but the consensus of those professors who were asked about it was that (1) the intellectual accomplishment of the two groups (Parliament and non-Parliament students who took the same course) was basically the same, but (2) the personal, formative, spiritual, and career impact was much greater for those who went to the Parliament. Note once again the emphasis on the formative nature of the experience.

The overwhelmingly positive experience of the students notwithstanding, two distracting aspects of the Parliament experience were noted by several students, as were three broader topics that students wished had received more attention in the overall project. The two Parliament-specific distractions were that the scale of the Parliament was, for some students, overwhelming and, as one student succinctly conveyed it, the need for “fewer sessions, better speakers, more dialogue.”

The three broader topics that students wished had received more attention in the overall project included the following, the first two already noted:

- To connect with more conservative religious traditions and across deeper levels of difference
- To “sell” the importance of interreligious issues and skills to the majority of leaders of their denominations and local congregations
- The what and how of interfaith practices in local congregations and communities

Pre-Parliament courses

An informing assumption of the project was that curriculum development was a strategic priority toward the goal of helping seminaries foster significant teaching/learning opportunities for the development of a new generation of leaders equipped to serve in the challenging milieu of today’s multicultural, multireligious world. “Operationalizing” this priority in the project flowed along two paths. The first was to create an electronic archive available to the public of existing seminary courses geared toward equipping students for leadership within a pluralistic religious situation. Such an archive would provide a database for studying the content of courses that emphasize interfaith understanding and relationships and for studying the teaching resources that inform such courses. It also would provide ready access to course models and bibliographies for professors and institutions seeking to offer such courses. Toward this end, thirty-nine course syllabi were archived on the CPWR website prior to the Parliament.⁴ They range from relatively standard world religions fare, to courses on the theology of religions and interfaith dialogue, to travel immersion courses, to a course on spirituality and social justice.

The second strategic path toward the furtherance of this priority was to have a professor (or team of professors) at each of the fifteen participating project schools create a course for project students that would provide both a general introduction to multifaith understanding and leadership and an orientation to the students’ trip to the Parliament, including reflection on the five questions that would structure the seminar sessions at the Parliament. Within the general topic of preparing religious leaders in a multireligious world and with the one stipulation that they engage students in contextual experiences beyond the classroom, professors were free to do what was most appropriate for their schools. The diversity of courses that resulted was impressive as experienced professors accepted the challenge to stretch themselves by melding new approaches with their practiced expertise. Here are four examples:

- One team of professors used the history of the Parliament to map the history of interfaith initiatives and theology.
- A professor who always wanted to experiment with the case study approach designed his school's entire course around case studies of multi-faith practices.
- Recognizing the tendency for persons to perceive interfaith engagement as a threat to one's personal, traditioned, religious identity, a professor geared her course to what it means to remain confessionally Christian while dialogically engaging other religious traditions.
- A distinguished professor in the theology of religions changed his traditional theory-to-practice starting point to pursue how theology came out of relationships, and he also changed the traditional course essay to a preached sermon.

Consistent with the project's commitment to making its efforts broadly available to theological education and the public, project source syllabi have been added to the CPWR website syllabi archive noted above.

Professors were generally pleased with their course outcomes, as were students. But interviews and conversations with professors consistently flagged two broader curricular themes, one a question to ponder and the other a helpful but critical reminder.

- First, many of the professors left wondering if multifaith theology and education could be or might eclipse ecumenical theology, and what the implications of this would be.
- Second, since all the courses dealt with ministerial practice in some way, many professors noted that the experience reinforced their awareness of the multidisciplinary nature of practices.

Indeed, between the back-home classroom and the Parliament experience, both students and professors became increasingly convinced of two things:

- However else the multifaith character of our world is addressed within theological education, it is essentially about relationships and, therefore, essentially about ministry practice.
- Given its practical, relational nature, friendship and hospitality are, as one professor put it, among "the most promising foundations on which to carry on interreligious encounters and dialogue." It even emboldened one of the project professors to suggest that the multifaith reality of the world "underlines the necessity of approaching theology from the perspective of relationships; underlines the necessity of theology to come out of the practice of relationship; underlines a theological imperative to struggle with the nature of and extent of shared commitments and solidarities."

One of the anticipated project outcomes was that participating seminaries would strengthen their efforts to develop the interfaith emphases already present at the schools. Assessment of such an outcome requires a longer-term

perspective than is possible in this report. But a few more immediate observations are suggestive. It is absolutely clear that participation in the project provided a short-term “pop” in the visibility and presence of interfaith issues and emphases on each campus. Among other reasons, this was because students returning from the Parliament carried their experience into both the formal and the informal curriculums of their schools. But evidence suggestive of possible longer-term structural changes toward bringing interfaith more into the core of the participating seminaries’ curriculums was less apparent. Indeed, faculty coordinators, while articulate and energetic in pointing to the personal and short-term effects, were hard-pressed to identify emergent structural effects. Rather, the pervasiveness of institutional barriers such as those elaborated below dominated their responses.

There are few published studies of sustained, project-driven efforts to change American seminaries. One of the few is *Changing The Way Seminaries Teach: Globalization and Theological Education*.⁵ Given that current attention to multifaith education flows from and builds on the attention that globalization received within theological education beginning in the 1980s, the book is an especially instructive read for today’s change agents. Indeed, the parallels concerning the possibilities for, measures of, and resistances to change are striking, but the analysis is much more developed and systematic than is possible here, in part because the focal project was considerably more extensive than the *Educating Religious Leaders for Multi-Religious World* project. In short, even in the five-year globalization project involving each of the participating seminaries in three international and one local immersion, in the majority of instances, resistance and inertia dominated over sustained, transformative change. Nevertheless, incremental changes, such as the requirement of cross-cultural experiences and the regular inclusion of multicultural perspectives in course bibliographies, continue today.

Interreligious panel on Educating Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World

The inspiration was right on the mark. The project was about educating religious leaders. The setting was the historically symbolic center of the interfaith movement, and leading scholars from across a wide spectrum of the world’s religions were planning to attend. And there is, for all practical purposes, no comparative literature of the nature of leadership or leadership education across faith traditions, much less on the role or location of multifaith considerations in such education. Why not start such a conversation?

A panel of speakers was convened,⁶ but unfortunately, little conversation, engagement, or convergence was evident. Why? The simple answer: the differences in perspective—both religious and cultural—were so great that there were few touch points around which to generate a conversation, nor even, at least in the moment, enough commonality among the presentations to readily discern a future path of conversation. A comparative study of the question remains a critical next step, but how best to do that remains unclear.

To be sure, the magnitude of the challenge is immense. The question of *educating* necessitates a prior delineation of educating for *what*, which in

turn requires a delineation of the virtues and purposes of leadership. This, in turn, requires a delineation of the relationship between leader and sources of religious authority, leader and faith community, and leader and civic community, all of which differ across major traditions, differ across family differences within traditions, and differ across cultural settings. And the challenging questions are not really whether there are commonalities—comparative analysts will inevitably be able to articulate at least a few—but the real questions within this search for commonality are (1) Will the level of abstraction required to find common ground totally disconnect the conversation from the lived reality of everyday leadership practice? and (2) To what extent will the commonality connect to the fundamental concerns of any given tradition's concept of leadership?

The typical scholarly way of dealing with complexity is to bracket out or control as much variation or difference as possible so that one can more clearly see the interaction among a manageable range of factors or concepts. To the extent this is suggestive for future efforts to pursue the question of the role and location of multifaith considerations in leadership education across religious traditions, it implies that some preset controls on the range of variation brought into the conversation need to be set. One way of doing this might be to control the cultural context (e.g., how do, how should multifaith considerations factor into the preparation of religious leaders in Nigeria? In Thailand? In Germany? In the United States?) Or, one might control the task(s) of leadership (e.g., promoting civic harmony or teaching the sources of religious authority within one's own tradition).

III. Action learnings

Although the project did not use the term, it presents a classical example of *action research*. Action research is a systematic form of inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical, and undertaken by the participants of the inquiry as they engage in an action project that is an exemplar of the subject of inquiry. Further, when used in educational settings it is typically used for deepening understanding of everyday, real problems experienced in schools and for seeking ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. In this particular project, students and professors worked together across multiple seminaries to equip the students for religious leadership in a multifaith world. Simultaneously, they collectively asked, "How might seminaries foster significant teaching/learning opportunities for the development of a new generation of leaders equipped to serve in the challenging milieu of today's multicultural, multireligious world?" Two purposes are always at work in action research. One is the desired outcomes for the participants. The second is learning that can be shared with other practitioners. Section I addressed the outcomes for students and faculty. In this section we turn to what was learned, very briefly providing only bullet summaries of key insights for the project's four orienting questions most directly related to the action.

Why is multireligious education needed in seminaries and divinity schools?

All participants (professors and students alike) took for granted the typical, abstract answer that we live in an increasingly diverse world, that religion is a fundamental dimension of this increasing diversity, and that therefore as religious leaders, we need to be aware of and know how to deal with diversity, including religious diversity. Taking this for granted, the case for multireligious education articulated by project participants focused on the details. Three clusters of detail dominated project participants' reflections—one practical, one educational, and one formative.

The practical case. Ministers are increasingly called upon to deal with multifaith issues both in their pastoral responsibilities dealing with congregations and parishioners and in their public and civic participation. The former range from teaching what one's faith says about engaging a Religious Other to helping parents deal with the conversion of a son or daughter. Or, as one student elaborated,

Future clergy face congregations in which interreligious marriage has become more common and parishioners are challenging traditional religious boundaries by identifying with more than one tradition. Lay people raise questions about how to raise children in multireligious homes and how to understand the religious practices of their neighbors and coworkers. If nothing else, multireligious education should equip seminarians and divinity school students with the knowledge of what they do not know and where to direct their future parishioners for answers.

The multifaith possibilities inherent in a clergy person's public role range from a ceremonial presence at civic events to working for justice, reconciliation, and peace within a climate conflicted with misunderstanding, oppression, and violence.

The educational case. Again there were two dimensions to participant responses. First, to attend to the practical issues noted above, one must know something about other faith traditions, how to engage other faith traditions, and how to help those in one's own faith tradition engage other faith traditions. Second, and as argued at the outset of this article, is what one learns about one's own tradition and one's own personal beliefs and practices.

The educational case has many aspects and for the students manifests itself in a variety of ways. But, its dual nature (knowledge about Other; knowledge about self), as well as the necessity of preparation and willingness to risk, is perhaps most forcefully, encouragingly, and graciously articulated by the student whose reflection on the Parliament's effect on her own Christian identity appears at the very beginning of this report. The reader will recall that the student concluded that extended quotation about her second fear:

In this way, interfaith engagement did cause me to change, but in a way that I had not anticipated. I necessarily moved deeper into my own tradition in order that I might sincerely articulate my beliefs to those I encountered.

She articulated her first fear with the following:

For me, a candidate for ordained ministry, the Parliament helped dispel two of my fears surrounding interfaith endeavors. First, as I prepared for the Parliament, I was reminded of my own ignorance about the world's many religious traditions. In the past, this lack of knowledge has made me hesitant to engage with people from other faith traditions or from no faith tradition at all for fear of offending those with whom I interact. My time at the Parliament convinced me that this fear only serves to further separate me from the world's more than four billion people who do not share my Christian beliefs and practices. To be sure, careful preparation and mindful engagement are necessary for interfaith endeavors. However, the Parliament encouraged me to responsibly trust that on the path toward mutual understanding, my conversational and relational missteps will be met with grace.

Making the faith development point more succinctly, if less eloquently, another student put it simply:

As a seminarian I felt uniquely grounded in my own tradition, understanding its depth and layers of meaning in ways that would allow me to engage others without feeling overly threatened. The Parliament experience, nevertheless, provided new lenses through which to see my tradition and to develop an even richer understanding of it through explaining it to someone else and seeing it through their eyes.

Moving beyond the personal, a school report even held out the possibility of theological renewal:

Multireligious education provides immense opportunity for theological growth. The presence of the Religious Other, physically present as fellow students or intellectually through study of another tradition, raised new theological questions and calls for deep contemplation of historically traditioned answers. Theologians of all religions are challenged to examine their tradition and not accept any historical position or doctrine unexplained. Multireligious education creates a climate for theological renewal and creativity, bringing vitality and relevance to a field many label static and removed from everyday life.

The risk of multifaith engagement, however, and its potential for unanticipated consequences for one's faith is also clear in the experience of the Parliament students: Frequently this is best characterized as a loosening or a softening of one's belief. As one student noted,

It definitely makes me feel less rigid or attached to particular traditions or beliefs in terms of their "rightness." But, it continues to be a challenge for me to think about how to really engage in interfaith work and dialogue while still being grounded in a particular tradition.

Another noted that "God is so much bigger than I ever thought God was before. God contains all those who were there, and they showed me a unique face of the Holy Spirit's grace-filled activity in the world."

Indeed, the vulnerability intrinsic to multifaith engagement led more than a few students to caution against entering the territory unprepared. The most blunt said, "The introspection and openness required of interfaith work is, even as a believer, a difficult road to tread. Those quick to take offense and who aren't able to think from someone else's perspective don't have a chance."

Still another lauded the potential for those mature in their faith but doubted if it was something for those new to their faith:

Multifaith education pushes you to a fuller understanding of the nature of religion. When your brain is forced into a new avenue, it grows in ways you never thought possible. While I know this is problematic at the congregational level, particularly with new Christians, those whose faith is already deep can make it even deeper through interfaith. As a Christian, for me, it only reinforces the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

The formative case. The formative case is closely intertwined with the educational case, as seen above, especially at those points involving deepening one's self-awareness of one's religious identity. For the vast majority of project students, the interfaith encounter with the intensity of the Parliament was a spiritual experience. For several, as previously noted, this was life changing. More typical is the rendering by a student who said, "I think the most impact of being at the Parliament was spiritual. The opportunities to pray together in the morning and throughout the day were moving and formative."

What are some of the resources for and obstacles to multifaith education in your tradition and school?

One finds a surge in books about innovation these days. Most, like Steven Johnson's *Where Good Ideas Come From: the Natural History of Innovation*⁷ focus on the inspiration for transformational ideas. But there is also increasing and long overdue attention to the experience of most organizational practitioners—namely, the more dominant reality which Kegan and Lahey co-opt for

the title and focus of their most recent book from the Harvard Business Press and John F. Kennedy School of Government's Center for Public Leadership, *Immunity to Change*.⁸ Indeed, in their guide to what they call *The Other Side of Innovation*,⁹ Govindarajan and Trimble headline Thomas Edison's reminder from more than a century ago that "genius is 1 percent inspiration, 99 percent perspiration." Their point is that there is too much emphasis on ideas and not nearly enough emphasis on execution. Consequently, "most corporations have more ideas than they can possibly move forward. Far too many promising ideas on paper never become anything more than . . . promising ideas on paper."¹⁰

Why? Because the obstacles to change typically are so deeply ingrained that few organizations have the skills or the will to take them on. But Govindarajan and Trimble are quick to remind us that most organizations also contain resources to build on and leverage for innovative change. An explicit piece of the *Educating Religious Leaders for Multi-Religious World* project, therefore, as an action research project, was to invite participating schools, professors, and students to pay careful attention to the resources for and obstacles to multi-faith education in their traditions and schools.

Appropriate to schools representing religions of the Word, consideration of resources and obstacles typically began with a scriptural turn. Perhaps not surprisingly, students found their respective scriptures as including both resources for and obstacles to an appreciative engagement of the Religious Other. In the Christian case, for example, numerous passages pro and con were cited—love your neighbor, do not bear false witness, be not yoked with unbelievers, maker of heaven and earth. But, the following extended response from a Christian student well captures the general point for the majority of project students and schools:

The basic sense of my group's presentation on the resources and challenges within our tradition for engaging interfaith dialogue was that, for Christians, scripture as well as a commitment to Jesus can be both the biggest challenges as well as the biggest resources for this kind of work. They are obstacles when we interpret them exclusively and when we think they are truth claims that we "own" rather than truth we live and embody, or when we mask our fears of difference behind "loyalty" to Jesus. They can be resources when we understand our faith as patterning our daily lives on the example of Jesus, who in fact was open to any and all kinds of people no matter their culture or religious beliefs.

Just as was the case for Scripture, project participants found contradictory impulses within the theology of their particular traditions. Much of this was articulated by participants in terms of openness versus exclusivity. One student put it from his position as an advocate of engagement: "The fundamental obstacle within my tradition consists in its theology of religion which is characterized by a sort of theological zero-sum game—namely, the saved and the

unsaved.” But several framed the major divide a bit differently. In the words of one, echoing the sentiments of others, “the major obstacle to multireligious education is mainly a silent and undergirding assumption that the Religious Other is somehow of less value because of theological orientation.”

Among the many specific structural resources for multifaith education, the following three were most frequently cited by participants:

- Proximity to large numbers of multifaith programs, or to students, faculty, or faith communities from traditions other than one’s own. In short, it is hard to encounter or engage other faith communities if one has few options in one’s immediate location. Consequently, being located in a large metropolitan area or near major universities provides a distinct advantage. Conversely, not being so fortunate requires added creativity, special effort, and typically added cost.
- The availability of religiously authoritative documents. Within most Christian traditions a variety of documents hold special status as being religiously authoritative (e.g., the Bible, confessions, creed, statements of faith). Having such documents as warrants for multifaith cooperation and engagement, therefore, is a ready resource.
- Having degree requirements for multifaith education or experiences. There is an old saying to the effect that an organization’s real priorities are most evident in reading the organization’s budget. Within higher education, the parallel saying is that a school’s real educational priorities are most evident in its required courses.

Required courses can be a mixed blessing, however, as experienced educators know. The major potential negative: a tendency to leave, in this case, multifaith to the required course rather than have it broadly spread across the curriculum. From this perspective, it was especially encouraging to find in the schools’ pre-Parliament reports an impressive, beginning list of courses that incorporate multifaith perspectives into more traditional, disciplinary-specific courses including theology, Scripture, church history, ethics, pastoral care, and spiritual practices. One also found several schools that offered optional cross-cultural experiences that highlighted multifaith issues.

The longest list of specific answers to an item on the post-Parliament student questionnaire, and the list *least* easily clustered, was for the question about obstacles to multifaith education in one’s tradition or seminary. Nevertheless, the four leading clusters are provocative and provide more than sufficient initial grist for reflection:

- A general recognition exists that multireligious issues are just not a very high priority in seminaries, denominations, or parishes, all of which face a host of other pressing and legitimate concerns.
- As noted above, having a multifaith requirement in a school’s curriculum is a major advantage. Not having such a requirement is, conversely, a major obstacle amplified by the reality of limited space in any core curriculum.

- Few seminaries have students from non-Christian traditions, and many schools do not have easy access to situations in which multifaith student classes can learn together.
- Many, if not most, seminaries are not equipped to blend multifaith considerations into their courses.

Virtually the same general clustering of obstacles could be found within each of the schools' pre-Parliament reports. The following succinct list from one school is typical and strongly suggests that the types and sources of resistance to change within theological education are well enough known to qualify as litany:

- Many obligatory courses hard to fit in
- Lack of advanced courses
- Lack of coordination among departments, partner schools, and other constituencies
- Insufficient representation from faith traditions in classes
- Lack of consensus about the value of learning from other faiths
- Lack of practical and substantive skills within the faculty

A less-noted obstacle victimizing all major faith traditions, but especially salient within racial/ethnic contexts, is the memory, if not present reality, of oppression and marginalization by, or closely associated with, faith differences. One student expressed it specifically from her Jewish identity:

One of the main obstacles in Judaism is a long history of anti-Semitism that has led to the creation of strong boundaries between Jews and non-Jews. This has occurred to ensure a pride amongst the Jewish people, as well as a natural reaction to reject those who reject you. In more open societies there are still cultural norms of insularity that linger and which are strengthened by any news of anti-Semitism from anywhere in the world.

The longer and apparently relatively well-known points of resistance to greater investment in multifaith theological education are perhaps indicative of the fact that thus far change has been at best incremental. Based on her observation of the project schools, one of the participating professors captured the tension between urgency and implementation—or to use Govindarajan and Trimble's terms quoted earlier, the gap between innovative idea and execution—this way: "Even in these institutions where there is a great willingness, there are still structural obstacles." Or as a school report put it, "Even in our institution in which multireligious education is a value, it has not yet become a priority."

What are the virtues and skills one needs to be an effective multifaith leader?

Especially in comparison to answers to the above question regarding obstacles, answers to the project inquiry about virtues and skills needed for effective multifaith leadership comfortably coalesced in six ranked clusters.

1. At the top of the list—but only by a slight margin—attentive and non-judgmental listening; to “purposefully, intently, and genuinely listen to another with patience and respect”
2. As a close second—commitment to and understanding of one’s own tradition—both as a ground for “nonanxious” listening and because dialogue requires mutual sharing
3. Openness to and empathy toward the Other, curiosity and a desire to stretch into the unfamiliar, and a humility and respect in engaging the stranger
4. Contextual awareness, including of one’s self, and some facility for untangling the commingling of religious and cultural differences
5. Knowledge of the Other’s religious tradition, beliefs, and practices. As one student put it, “one needs to become religiously bilingual or multilingual”
6. Skills in conflict resolution and reconciliation because “if one is to genuinely engage ‘different,’ one needs to be able to deal with the disputes and suspicion that inevitably will arise”

Once a respondent identified his or her list of virtues and skills, the question then went on to ask about the practices by which these virtues and skills could be developed (inside and outside the classroom). The responses given for this second question were straightforwardly related to the virtues and skills articulated and therefore will not be elaborated here except for two: one that may be somewhat counterintuitive to many and the second that was recognized as so foundational by so many participants that it bears repeating.

The first is that of spiritual practices. Spiritual practices were present in nearly every project course and prominent in many, including those heavily geared toward a theology of religions or a world religions approach. This appears to be a recognition and affirmation of the formative power of interfaith engagement noted above.

The second is the entire nexus of relational skills. As one put it,

The foremost virtue required of the multifaith leader is the recognition that the process of interfaith engagement is an oscillation in which the generative ground is located in between rather than in any one of the players. That is, the generative ground is relational, and the awareness of relatedness and all the skills of working with relatedness are, therefore, crucial.

IV. Issues in need of continuing attention toward educating religious leaders for a multireligious world

Multifaith education is a relatively new development as a contender for attention within American theological education. Indeed, it wasn't until 2010 that The Association of Theological Schools convened a major initiative to explore the topic. One implication of this nascent status is that the Parliament-related project was more like an initial reconnaissance than the advance of a well-established discipline. In any such effort, identifying key questions for further exploration is a critical outcome. The following eight themes strike this author as the project's primary contribution in this regard.

1. Multifaith dialogue has a strong formative impact on one's theological understanding and depth of commitment to one's own faith tradition. Indeed, as argued at the outset, this may be the strongest reason why multifaith education and experiences should be at the core of theological education. Why is the formative influence so strong? How is it best done and as a pedagogy of formation? How does it compare to other formative pedagogy?
2. The overlaps and distinctives among multifaith, multicultural, and ecumenical need to be articulated and understood. With "space" in curriculum at a competitive premium, how does one most efficiently, but still effectively, deal with these three critical but intertwined aspects of a multifaith world?
3. A course requirement or two is nice, but that can become the excuse for ignoring multifaith issues and practices in the rest of the curriculum. Wouldn't it be better to incorporate a multifaith perspective in all or most of a seminary's foundational courses? Assuming so, then what are different ways that faculty can incorporate a multifaith perspective in their foundational theology courses? Foundational biblical courses? Foundational church history courses? A few examples of what these might look like can be found in project seminaries.
4. What are the similarities and differences encountered when dialoging with different faith traditions? Or perhaps for a more specific point of departure—How is intra-Abrahamic dialogue different from and similar to dialogue between Christianity and Asian faiths such Buddhism and Hinduism?
5. How is leadership similar and different among different faith traditions? Addressing this question inevitably necessitates a prior delineation of how the relationship between "leader" and "faithful community" and "leaders" and "civic community" differs in different traditions (further complicated, no doubt, by how this all differs across cultures)?
6. A cataloguing and summary of the state of the art for multifaith, pastoral practices—both those more internal to a faith community and those more public/civic—is needed.
7. Critical and systematic treatment that debates and prioritizes the virtues and skills required for leadership in a multifaith world is also needed. But

just as importantly, there is also pressing need for the same kind of treatment of the virtues and capacities required of faculty educating religious leaders for a multifaith world.

8. To that end, a cataloguing and summary of the state of the art regarding pedagogies, methods, exercises, and other best practices for multifaith education (and eventually, a critical and systematic treatment of such practices) would also be helpful.

V. Concluding word

The autumn 1993 supplement to *Theological Education* was titled "Globalization: Tracing the Journey, Charting the Course." Certainly the introductory essay to that volume, "Globalizing Theological Education: Beginning the Journey," by David S. Schuller, should be required reading for anyone interested in starting theological education on a new journey, such as equipping religious leaders for a multireligious world. For one thing, one is reminded that multifaith is not a new reality or a new journey for theological education but was central to at least the early globalization discussions of the 1980s. The good news in the globalization of theological education story is that by the turn of the new millennium many, if not most, ATS seminaries had built explicit concerns with globalization into their curriculum, and this was in large part thanks to a variety of often short-lived initiatives to help faculty and schools along the way. The more sobering news is that multifaith somehow got lost or overshadowed in much of this (generally losing out to multiculturalism), and that most of the fundamental resistances identified in regard to the globalization of theological education, as alluded to in this report's section on obstacles to multifaith education, sound hauntingly similar to the obstacles to strengthening multireligious perspectives within theological education named by the Parliament project students and faculty coordinators.

Perhaps most importantly, reading the Schuller essay will remind one that the globalization journey started with a small exploratory committee in 1980, and the effort continues as a work in progress thirty years later! Indeed, it was not until the early 1990s that a concrete literature began to emerge detailing the praxis of globalized theological education, that is, detailing what it would look like when conversation, reflection, and commitment were actually embodied in program. From this perspective, the journey to better equip religious leaders for a multireligious world is about a decade ahead of the globalization pace. Although theological education's experience with globalization counsels patience, it also serves as warrant for the cumulative affect of persistent initiatives such as the World Parliament project summarized in this essay.

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ENDNOTES

1. Robert Wuthnow, *America and the Challenges of Religious Diversity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).
2. The original and more extensive evaluation report on the *Educating Religious Leaders for a Multi-Religious World* project, upon which this article is based, can be found at <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=4&sn=7>.
3. A list of participating schools and the professor serving as a school's coordinator is included in Appendix 1 at <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=4&sn=7>.
4. The course syllabi may be accessed at <http://www.Parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=4&sn=7>.
5. David A. Roozen, Alice Frazer Evans, and Robert A. Evans, *Changing The Way Seminaries Teach: Globalization and Theological Education* (Hartford, CT: Hartford Seminary, 1996), http://hrr.hartsem.edu/bookshelf/out_of_print_changingseminaries.html.
6. A description of the panel discussion and list of panelists can be found in Appendix 2 at <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=4&sn=7>.
7. Steven Johnson, *Where Good Ideas Come From: the Natural History of Innovation* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2010).
8. Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, *Immunity to Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2009).
9. Vijay Govindarajan and Chris Trimble, *The Other Side of Innovation: Solving the Execution Challenge* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2010).
10. *Ibid.*, 3.

Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct

World Council of Churches

Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

World Evangelical Alliance

Preamble

Mission belongs to the very being of the church. Proclaiming the word of God and witnessing to the world is essential for every Christian. At the same time, it is necessary to do so according to gospel principles, with full respect and love for all human beings.

Aware of the tensions between people and communities of different religious convictions and the varied interpretations of Christian witness, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and at the invitation of the WCC, the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), met during a period of five years to reflect and produce this document to serve as a set of recommendations for conduct on Christian witness around the world. This document does not intend to be a theological statement on mission but to address practical issues associated with Christian witness in a multi-religious world.

The purpose of this document is to encourage churches, church councils, and mission agencies to reflect on their current practices and to use the recommendations in this document to prepare, where appropriate, their own guidelines for their witness and mission among those of different religions and among those who do not profess any particular religion. It is hoped that Christians across the world will study this document in the light of their own practices in witnessing to their faith in Christ, both by word and by deed.

A basis for Christian witness

1. For Christians it is a privilege and joy to give an accounting for the hope that is within them and to do so with gentleness and respect (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).
2. Jesus Christ is the supreme witness (cf. John 18:37). Christian witness is always a sharing in his witness, which takes the form of proclamation of the kingdom, service to neighbor, and the total gift of self even if that act of giving leads to the cross. Just as the Father sent the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit, so believers are sent in mission to witness in word and action to the love of the triune God.
3. The example and teaching of Jesus Christ and of the early church must be the guides for Christian mission. For two millennia Christians have sought to follow Christ's way by sharing the good news of God's kingdom (cf. Luke 4:16–20).

4. Christian witness in a pluralistic world includes engaging in dialogue with people of different religions and cultures (cf. Acts 17:22–28).
5. In some contexts, living and proclaiming the gospel is difficult, hindered, or even prohibited, yet Christians are commissioned by Christ to continue faithfully in solidarity with one another in their witness to him (cf. Matthew 28:19–20, Mark 16:14–18, Luke 24:44–48, John 20:21, Acts 1:8).
6. If Christians engage in inappropriate methods of exercising mission by resorting to deception and coercive means, they betray the gospel and may cause suffering to others. Such departures call for repentance and remind us of our need for God’s continuing grace (cf. Romans 3:23).
7. Christians affirm that, while it is their responsibility to witness to Christ, conversion is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 16:7–9; Acts 10:44–47). They recognize that the Spirit blows where the Spirit wills in ways over which no human being has control (cf. John 3:8).

Principles

Christians are called to adhere to the following principles as they seek to fulfil Christ’s commission in an appropriate manner, particularly within inter-religious contexts:

1. *Acting in God’s love.* Christians believe that God is the source of all love, and accordingly, in their witness they are called to live lives of love and to love their neighbour as themselves (cf. Matthew 22:34–40; John 14:15).
2. *Imitating Jesus Christ.* In all aspects of life, and especially in their witness, Christians are called to follow the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, sharing his love, giving glory and honour to God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 20:21–23).
3. *Christian virtues.* Christians are called to conduct themselves with integrity, charity, compassion, and humility and to overcome all arrogance, condescension, and disparagement (cf. Galatians 5:22).
4. *Acts of service and justice.* Christians are called to act justly and to love tenderly (cf. Micah 6:8). They are further called to serve others and in so doing to recognize Christ in the least of their sisters and brothers (cf. Matthew 25:45). Acts of service—such as providing education, health care, relief services, and acts of justice and advocacy—are an integral part of witnessing to the gospel. The exploitation of situations of poverty and need has no place in Christian outreach. Christians should denounce and refrain from offering all forms of allurements, including financial incentives and rewards, in their acts of service.
5. *Discernment in ministries of healing.* As an integral part of their witness to the gospel, Christians exercise ministries of healing. They are called to exercise discernment as they carry out these ministries, fully respecting human dignity and ensuring that the vulnerability of people and their need for healing are not exploited.
6. *Rejection of violence.* Christians are called to reject all forms of violence—even psychological or social, including the abuse of power—in their

witness. They also reject violence, unjust discrimination, or repression by any religious or secular authority, including the violation or destruction of places of worship, sacred symbols, or sacred texts.

7. *Freedom of religion and belief.* Religious freedom—including the right to publicly profess, practice, propagate, and change one’s religion—flows from the very dignity of the human person that is grounded in the creation of all human beings in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:26). Thus, all human beings have equal rights and responsibilities. Where any religion is instrumentalized for political ends, or where religious persecution occurs, Christians are called to engage in a prophetic witness denouncing such actions.
8. *Mutual respect and solidarity.* Christians are called to commit themselves to work with all people in mutual respect, promoting together justice, peace, and the common good. Interreligious cooperation is an essential dimension of such commitment.
9. *Respect for all people.* Christians recognize that the gospel both challenges and enriches cultures. Even when the gospel challenges certain aspects of cultures, Christians are called to respect all people. Christians are also called to discern elements in their own cultures that are challenged by the gospel.
10. *Renouncing false witness.* Christians are to speak sincerely and respectfully; they are to listen in order to learn about and understand others’ beliefs and practices and are encouraged to acknowledge and appreciate what is true and good in them. Any comment or critical approach should be made in a spirit of mutual respect, making sure not to bear false witness concerning other religions.
11. *Ensuring personal discernment.* Christians are to acknowledge that changing one’s religion is a decisive step that must be accompanied by sufficient time for adequate reflection and preparation, through a process ensuring full personal freedom.
12. *Building interreligious relationships.* Christians should continue to build relationships of respect and trust with people of different religions so as to facilitate deeper mutual understanding, reconciliation, and cooperation for the common good.

Recommendations

The Third Consultation, organized by the World Council of Churches and the PCID of the Holy See in collaboration with World Evangelical Alliance and with participation from the largest Christian families of faith (Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, and Pentecostal), having acted in a spirit of ecumenical cooperation to prepare this document for consideration by churches, national and regional confessional bodies and mission organizations, and especially those working in interreligious contexts, recommends that these bodies do the following:

1. Study the issues set out in this document and, where appropriate, formulate guidelines for conduct regarding Christian witness applicable to their particular contexts. Where possible this should be done ecumenically and in consultation with representatives of other religions.
2. Build relationships of respect and trust with people of all religions, in particular at institutional levels between churches and other religious communities, engaging in ongoing interreligious dialogue as part of their Christian commitment. In certain contexts, where years of tension and conflict have created deep suspicions and breaches of trust between and among communities, interreligious dialogue can provide new opportunities for resolving conflicts, restoring justice, healing memories, reconciliation, and peace-building.
3. Encourage Christians to strengthen their own religious identity and faith while deepening their knowledge and understanding of different religions, and to do so also taking into account the perspectives of the adherents of those religions. Christians should avoid misrepresenting the beliefs and practices of people of different religions.
4. Cooperate with other religious communities, engaging in interreligious advocacy towards justice and the common good and, wherever possible, standing together in solidarity with people who are in situations of conflict.
5. Call on their governments to ensure that freedom of religion is properly and comprehensively respected, recognizing that in many countries religious institutions and persons are inhibited from exercising their mission.
6. Pray for their neighbours and their well-being, recognizing that prayer is integral to who we are and what we do, as well as to Christ's mission.

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Appendix

Background to the Document

1. In today's world there is increasing collaboration among Christians and between Christians and followers of different religions. The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) of the Holy See and the World Council of Churches' Programme on Interreligious Dialogue and Co-operation (WCC-IRDC) have a history of such collaboration. Examples of themes on which the PCID/WCC-IRDC have collaborated in the past are Interreligious Marriage (1994–1997), Interreligious Prayer (1997–1998) and African Religiosity (2000–2004). This document is a result of their work together.
2. There are increasing interreligious tensions in the world today, including violence and the loss of human life. Politics, economics, and other factors play a role in these tensions. Christians, too, are sometimes involved in these conflicts, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, either as those who are persecuted or as those participating in violence. In response to this, the PCID and WCC-IRDC decided to address the issues involved in a joint process towards producing shared recommendations for conduct on Christian witness. The WCC-IRDC invited the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) to participate in this process, and they have gladly done so.
3. Initially two consultations were held: the first, in Lariano, Italy, in May 2006, was entitled "Assessing the Reality" where representatives of different religions shared their views and experiences on the question of conversion. A statement from the consultation reads in part, "We affirm that, while everyone has a right to invite others to an understanding of their faith, it should not be exercised by violating others' rights and religious sensibilities. Freedom of religion enjoins upon all of us the equally non-negotiable responsibility to respect faiths other than our own, and never to denigrate, vilify, or misrepresent them for the purpose of affirming superiority of our faith."
4. The second, an inter-Christian consultation, was held in Toulouse, France, in August 2007, to reflect on these same issues. Questions on Family and Community, Respect for Others, Economy, Marketing and Competition, and Violence and Politics were thoroughly discussed. The pastoral and missionary issues around these topics became the background for theological reflection and for the principles developed in this document. Each issue is important in its own right and deserves more attention that can be given in these recommendations.
5. The participants of the third (inter-Christian) consultation met in Bangkok, Thailand, from 25–28 January 2011 and finalized this document.

Theological Diversity in a Liberal Seminary: United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Sharon M. Tan

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

An upper midwestern, liberal Protestant seminary sought to address the question of theological diversity as part of its journey and commitment toward racial and ethnic diversity. In its work toward racial and cultural diversity, the seminary realized that it not only had to tolerate theological diversity, but it also had to actively welcome it. To this end, faculty committed to welcoming theological diversity into the classroom and curriculum and provided opportunities for students to practice this welcome.

Introduction

This is a nation that is increasingly polarized over political, ethical, and theological issues. The profusion of specialized media outlets, but not media sources, facilitates this increasing polarization. People are able to select the media they consume according to their preferences and often choose to avoid differing opinions and opposing points of view. Thus, decreasing opportunities for conversation in civil society reduce opportunities to learn from one another and to refine our own opinions.

Theological education reflects this trend. Different theological schools occupy different niches on the theological spectrum, which become the basis by which many students will select a school to attend. Thus, in addition to denominational affiliation—or lack thereof—descriptors such as *evangelical*, *conservative*, *liberal*, and *open and affirming* serve to attract specific types of students. In turn, theological diversity among theological schools serves in part to reduce the theological diversity *within* schools. Thus, when one does encounter theological diversity within a particular school, it can seem threatening. Often, students have not developed a theology of pluralism before encountering others of differing theologies. Even when they have a theology of pluralism, openness to pluralism and diversity is reserved for other religious traditions, not for other theologies within the same faith tradition. In other words, we more easily tolerate differences with those in other faith traditions than differences within our own.

While arguing for cultivation of the virtue of racial and ethnic diversity in theological education, Daniel Aleshire proposes in his essay, “Gifts Differing: The Educational Value of Race and Ethnicity,” that theological diversity is a virtue that must accompany racial and ethnic diversity. However, theological diversity as a virtue is often overlooked and even suppressed,¹ with negative consequences for true diversity. It is this true diversity, which incorporates

theological diversity, that United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities sought to cultivate in its ethos, classrooms, and curriculum.

United's story

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, in New Brighton, an inner ring suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota, is an ecumenical seminary chartered by the United Church of Christ. It is ecumenical and noncreedal, and there are no doctrinal requirements or orthodoxies in its curriculum apart from specific denominational studies. It sees itself as a liberal seminary positioned to serve a variety of mainline denominations. With a history of being socially progressive, it also has a reputation of being "open and affirming" to GLBT students, staff, and faculty.

The explicit curriculum at United includes specific emphasis on work done by the students toward integration of their theological studies at United with their particular denominational or theological traditions. This includes practice in articulating one's own tradition and its relationship to other traditions, as well as articulating other traditions with sympathy and perhaps even empathy. For example, students in the MDiv and MARL programs take a sequence of three integrative courses and engage in yearly reflection and conversation with their advisors, both of which are designed to assess their progress in integration. The following skills, among others, have been adopted as indicators of integration:

- The student is able to understand and articulate both the particularity of his or her own (cultural, familial, religious, personal) story as well as its resonances and dissonances with others' stories and with larger social, religious, and cultural narratives.
- The student is able to identify historic connections of his or her own stories with the stories of others around the world.
- The student demonstrates a clear appreciation of other theological perspectives and is able to make a case for a perspective other than his or her own.

The explicit curriculum promotes student integration and growth in his or her own tradition and in relationship to other traditions. However, the pre-suppositions of this explicit curriculum, with its emphasis on inclusivity, as well as the implicit curriculum and community ethos, are theologically and politically liberal. This gives students voicing liberal theology the imprimatur of community and even institutional support. An example of this happening is the student handbook policy of "strongly encourag[ing]" inclusive language in seminary events, which has been taken by some students as theological doctrine, and then used to support their insistence on other students using such theological language and excluding other theological language that is more traditional or gendered.

United has also historically been on the liberal forefront of gender issues. This has resulted in a high concentration of politically, ethically, and

theologically liberal students, faculty, and staff and a high number of GLBT faculty, staff, and students. Because they have found United to be a safe and welcoming place, some are very vocal in their beliefs. Because of the congruence of theological beliefs and ethics, and theological and political beliefs, the ethical majority (which is also the racial majority) often also dominate theological discussion at United, taking theological and ethical agreement with them as given. This can foster a particular environment in which students, faculty, and staff who are more conservative theologically and ethically feel marginalized. To the extent that many racial and ethnic minority students come from more conservative churches or denominations, there is a double impact on these students as both theological and racial/ethnic minorities.

In turn, GLBT members of the seminary community are threatened by theologies and ethics that reflect the more conservative branches of the church and thus by persons articulating those theologies or using noninclusive language that signifies more conservative theology. The tension over differing theologies, languages, and ethics, therefore, runs in multiple directions, impacting the learning environment in general. It also impedes true discussions and articulations of theological beliefs as well as appreciation for theological and cultural diversity, all of which impede students' theological development and learning.

In summary, United felt caught between paradoxical commitments to being open and affirming and seeking justice for GLBT students, while at the same time being hospitable to the theological and cultural diversity that recruiting students, staff, and faculty of color would bring. The faculty felt a tension between the simultaneous needs of fostering the kind of environment that welcomes minorities of all kinds—not only those that bear similar theological opinions—and retaining its signature ethos and historic commitments to social justice in gender, race, and ethnicity. Recognizing that theology is constructed culturally, the faculty wanted to develop and practice *a theology of theological diversity* that supports a truly just learning environment. As Amos Yong states,

[I]nsofar as Christians intend to bear witness to the gospel in a pluralistic world, they will adopt a variety of practices and speak a diversity of languages commensurate with their audiences in different times and places. . . . [I]nasmuch as people have received the gift of the Holy Spirit in their own times and places, they will testify to what God has done in their own tongues and in their own ways. . . . [T]he many tongues of Pentecost open up to many Christian practices in a pluralistic world, and vice versa.²

The Wabash Center gave United a grant to work on developing a theology of theological diversity that would impact the seminary ethos and curriculum. Grant goals included general work on the seminary ethos, training the faculty in fostering welcome for theological diversity, and articulating learning objectives and assessment rubrics for the classroom.

Grant activities

First, they set out to formulate a theology of theological diversity for teaching and learning. Willie Jennings of Duke University facilitated a workshop for the regular faculty and several staff and administrators, including the interim president. The workshop aimed at helping the faculty envision student learning that would reflect a theology of theological diversity, facilitating a conversation concerning the formation of a shared vision of theological diversity, and discussing classroom implementation of this shared vision of theological diversity. To this end, Jennings challenged the faculty to embody a welcoming posture toward theological diversity and to develop pedagogy with clear learning outcomes and a process of assessment to embody its posture of welcome.

The faculty started by trying to determine what might be a shared vision of student learning and comfort with theological diversity. Phrases that shaped their discussion from the beginning suggested the theme of Pentecost and included “theologically multilingual,” “embrace diversity and not just tolerate it,” and “polyvocal theology.” They discussed the places where theological diversity is resisted, including chapel worship and specific places in the curriculum. They drafted some possible goals for the seminary community, including “to practice, embody, and encourage theological humility” and “to communicate effectively with multiple theological languages.” The workshop ended with a discussion on cultivating a faculty spiritual life and common worship that would model theological diversity within community for the students.

A second workshop with Jennings six months later focused on more specific goals that would support the cultivation of a theologically diverse spiritual community at the seminary. Jennings facilitated a conversation by the faculty about the pedagogical dimensions of being a community that welcomes theological diversity and began to guide faculty in the creation of concrete learning goals, rubrics, and forms of measurement as part of an assessment plan for the goal of cultivating hospitality toward diverse theological visions.

About halfway into this workshop, some faculty participants made the connection with previous work done on United’s curriculum to foster integration in the theological growth of students, described above. They articulated for students the common desire for them to be able to embrace theological diversity and to be able to communicate in multiple theological languages. Participants then asked what they needed to do in order to implement these as learning goals in the classrooms and to highlight this goal as a part of the general seminary ethos.

In addition, some of the participants also recognized the barriers to the realization of the goals of theological diversity—namely, there exists a “fortress” or “bunker” mentality about some of the social justice issues historically identified with United. Specifically, while many faculty have found United’s strong stance on GLBT and other liberal social justice issues a haven, they realized that this strong association could also act like a fortress that excludes theologically different perspectives and hence dialogue.

Thus, the second workshop ended with some insight, but the work of developing learning goals and assessment rubrics still needed to be completed. Consequently, the faculty held a third workshop, in-house, to continue this work. The aim of the workshop was to further discuss and finalize learning goals and assessment rubrics toward promoting classroom atmospheres that could form students capable of welcoming difference. Faculty focused on the third indicator of integration that specifically references the ability to appreciate different theological perspectives. They ascertained that this goal had to be articulated differently in different courses and discussed the various ways that course objectives for different courses could articulate a learning objective. Some course objectives that were suggested included the following:

- The student will become familiar with his or her own context and with the social context of the Bible.
- The student will be able to show ability to disagree in a civil manner.
- The student will show “engagement” with theological and cultural diversity without false consensus.
- The student will be able to listen empathetically to the opinions and thoughts of others, both in the class and in the texts, and engage in enlarged thinking and appreciation for other perspectives through conversation that bridges barriers.

Faculty also discussed that teacher’s assistants might need to have specific training as well as instructions given at the beginning of small groups. The workshop ended with the faculty agreeing to continue working toward developing rubrics and learning goals.

In addition, at different times over the course of the school year, the faculty engaged in workshops on writing learning objectives and assessment rubrics. They also devoted time to share with one another their own theological perspectives on various questions. For example, “Who or what is God?” “What is the nature of Jesus, and what is the significance of Jesus for the world?” “What are the essential elements for a life that can be called ‘Christian’?” Faculty appreciated the quality of conversation, discussion, and depth of sharing, and they expressed a desire to continue.

The next task in the journey was to practice the theology of theological diversity with the students. The Wabash grant provided some funds for lunch or dinner forums to facilitate nondefensive theological sharing and discussion with the students and staff. These were held over two semesters, at different times during the week to gather the greatest number of different students. The forums were organized around the question: “What is the significance of Jesus to the world?” and “Who is the Holy Spirit?” Attendance at the forums totaled about one-third of the entire student body.

Finally, the faculty discussed the theological rationale for theological diversity. They read the final chapter of Mary McClintock-Fulkerson’s *Changing the Subject*³ in preparation. The discussion began with the tension between the desire to be hospitable and open to the Other’s truth, and the generally held theological commitments to a liberal or progressive faith. They recognized

that, although the two are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they had to be mindful of the power they have in the classroom, ranging from the shaping of the course syllabus to the opinions they brought to class, both expressed and unexpressed. They acknowledged that, in fact, “liberals” are often more unaware of their place in the power discourse than “conservatives,” and thus less aware of the power they wield. If a theological assumption is not articulated or questioned, it gains normative status.

Several faculty members expressed and reaffirmed a deep commitment they have not to teach their own theologies but to create the conditions in the classroom for a diversity of voices. They stated that seeking a diversity of voices reflects the understanding that there is no single perspective on God. True diversity, however, is not simply toleration. It must include challenging students to examine their own positions more deeply, to learn how to truly understand another perspective, and to argue respectfully. The faculty recognized that they have the responsibility to model this for the students.

Results

Over the course of the project, the faculty linked some of the goals of the project with previous work done and thus established an institutional location and buy-in for the goals, together with a possible student assessment tool that is already in use.

Some faculty reported changes in their syllabi specifically due to the project, either by adding texts on theological diversity or by adding course objectives in theological diversity. For example, the professor of pastoral care changed his syllabus in the Introduction to Pastoral Care course to *require* the reading of Emmanuel Lartey, *In Living Color*,⁴ which addresses the issue of diversity relative to the ministry of students as they encounter multicultural opportunities. Students both discuss the book in class and write a report on its usefulness as a resource for diversity in ministry. The professor of congregational life and leadership added William Kondrath’s *God’s Tapestry*⁵ to the required MDiv contextual ministry internship course. During the height of the 2008 presidential election campaigns, the professor of Christian Ethics declared the class session “Maverick Day” when disagreement with her was specifically encouraged. This seemed well received, with applause at the end of that class session. She added the following objective to her next course: “To be able to listen empathetically to the opinions and thoughts of others both in the class and in the texts, and engage in enlarged thinking and appreciation for other perspectives through conversation that bridges barriers,” and attributed 20 percent of the course grade to participation in class discussion. The professor of Older Testament added both a course objective on diversity in her Introduction to Older Testament course and an introduction to a contextual ministry course team taught with the professor of Worship, and Theology and the Arts.

The faculty has engaged in extensive internal discussion of the goals of the project—namely, the enhancement of an atmosphere welcoming theological diversity in the seminary. They had specific discussions of the ways in which

instructors privilege their own theologies in the classroom, requiring intentionality in attending to and encouraging the voices of students with different theological beliefs and languages. The faculty has also had time to develop knowledge and experience in learning objectives and assessment rubrics.

The students responded enthusiastically to the lunch and dinner forums. Many expressed regret at schedule conflicts that prevented them from attending more than one. Many stated that these forums gave them the opportunity to think more theologically, to feel like their voices were welcome, and, in turn, to be more attentive to different theological voices. There was general sentiment that they wanted to see the forums continued at least once or twice a semester.

Reflection and conclusion

In a project that was admittedly ambitious, United set out to develop a “theology of theological diversity” that would inform the learning environment of a liberal seminary, preparing it for the cultural and racial diversity that it seeks. The faculty articulated its hopes in several ways; for example, that students could be theologically multilingual or that they would embrace and not simply tolerate theological diversity of experiences, beliefs, and expressions. Faculty realized that students would have to overcome the impact of United’s implicit curriculum by being very intentional about cultivating theological diversity and intentionally creating opportunities for theological dialogue.

United has established progress toward building a community open to and affirming of theological diversity. First, the faculty has been able to spend time developing some common understandings, goals, and language concerning theological diversity. Second, although the goals of the grant had general faculty support from the beginning, there is now broader institutional familiarity and buy-in with the work that needs to be done. The connection with work previously done—namely, in assessing students’ progress in integration—has made theological diversity a more familiar and accessible concept and has given it a location in the explicit curriculum. This had both a positive and a negative impact. To the extent that the faculty has been able to connect the work of the project with the indicators of integration, a preexisting commitment, this has lessened the threat of change and helped the faculty focus on the steps necessary to implement it in the classroom. By the same token, however, to the extent it has invoked the indicators of integration, it has also lessened the perception that change is indeed needed to create or further facilitate a community that embraces theological diversity.

The primary success of the grant has been in broadening the faculty and seminary community’s vision of, and commitment to, the embrace of theological diversity necessary to cultivate a truly multicultural and antiracist institution. The attempts to incorporate the embrace of theological diversity in the classroom concretely have furthered the work of the project. This has also provided articulation of a vision that the director of admissions can use to begin to shape prospective students even before they enter.

The change in institutional culture will take time, but some positive steps have already been taken, and they now have some tools to articulate the possibilities that they seek. The subjective perception of the seminary that theological diversity is now more welcome at United than before is an important one. This “will to believe” in a welcoming seminary community creates the necessary conditions and momentum toward continued and deeper hospitality in the future. Students have responded positively to changes that have been made. They have appreciated the ability and encouragement to express differing theological beliefs and experiences, and they have a desire to continue theological diversity discussions.

There is much future learning to do. United has started down a path that is vital to its mission and viability as an institution of higher theological education. It needs to continue down this path. It needs to continue growing in its comfort with and embrace of theological diversity. It needs to grow in its ability to use course objectives to articulate and thus achieve an atmosphere of welcome in the classroom. It needs to continue modeling this for the students, both old and new.

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ENDNOTES

1. Daniel O. Aleshire, “Gifts Differing: The Educational Value of Race and Ethnicity,” *Theological Education* 45, no. 1: 1–18 (2009), 9–10.
2. Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2008), 64.
3. Mary McClintock-Fulkerson, *Changing the Subject: Women’s Discourses and Feminist Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994).
4. Emmanuel Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2003).
5. William Kondrath, *God’s Tapestry* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2008).

Theological Education Submission Guidelines

Theological Education, the journal of The Association of Theological Schools and The Commission on Accrediting of ATS, is devoted to the distinctive concerns of graduate theological education in North America. The journal supports the mission of the Association and the Commission by providing those concerned with theological education—including administrators, faculty, and independent researchers—with scholarly discourse and reports on issues and trends, research findings and resources, and models of critical analysis and effective practices in graduate theological education.

Format of the Journal: Theme Focus and Open Forum

The **theme focus** section of the journal contains articles that have been **solicited** by the editors or the editorial board. These articles address current topics and issues in theological education, identified areas of the Association's work, and/or reports of work undertaken by ATS projects.

Unsolicited submissions are generally considered for publication in the **open forum** section. These articles may focus on any of a variety of subjects related to graduate, professional theological education in North America. The open forum may also include articles drawn from presentations at ATS leadership education events and other Association venues in order to make them more widely available.

Submission Guidelines

Theological Education invites submissions of articles that are consistent with the journal's purposes as enumerated in its mission statement. Unsolicited submissions are reviewed by at least two members of the editorial board, who make recommendations to the editors regarding their publication. The editorial board will not consider articles that are being submitted simultaneously to other publications.

1. Recommended length of articles is 3,750 words (approximately 15 double-spaced pages).
2. Follow *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed., using one-inch margins, left justification, and endnotes. Convert footnotes to endnotes.
3. Write in the third-person form when possible.
4. If quoting Scripture, include the Bible translation with each reference.
5. The *American Heritage Dictionary* and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* are the references for preferred spellings.
6. Provide a paragraph abstract of approximately 80 words at the beginning of the article.
7. Add a short (2–3 sentence) paragraph at the end of the article identifying the author(s), institution or relationship to the project/topic, position held, and/or other information relevant to the experience of the writer(s).
8. Submissions should be emailed to editors@ats.edu.

Responses to prior articles are encouraged and are published at the discretion of the editors. The suggested length for a reader response is 1,500 words; responses may be edited for length.

Author's Checklist

1. The audience for *Theological Education* includes people from multiple academic disciplines and diverse religious traditions, who share in common their work as theological educators. Have you written with this audience in mind?
2. Is the article timely? Does it contribute significantly to current interdisciplinary discourse about theological education?
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4. Will the article spark useful debate on the topic?
5. Is the article well-written with a clear focus and well-developed/supported arguments?
6. Is the research methodology sound and appropriate?
7. If applicable, does the article make accurate use of the data available from ATS and other sources?
8. Does the article conform to the submission guidelines listed above?

