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# WHAT MIGHT MEANINGFUL INTERFAITH EDUCATION LOOK LIKE? EXPLORING POLITICS, PRINCIPLES, AND PEDAGOGY

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## ***Abstract***

In our teaching, research, and community service, both of us have sought to engage and extend the work of interfaith education. We write from our perspectives as a Jewish educator and as a Christian educator. Both of us have experienced the gifts and challenges this work engenders. The purpose of this article is simple: to offer a typology for understanding several of the active strategies for interfaith education. By demonstrating some of its strengths and challenges, we hope to spark a discussion and generate new practices.

From our faith perspectives, as a Jewish educator and as a Christian educator, we cherish the opportunities we have had to engage in interfaith education—both within our societies and abroad. For example, we greatly appreciate the work of the Religious Education Association (REA) to gather a diverse and international group of people to think about and practice religious education, particularly through its journal, *Religious Education*. We have worked to extend these contributions because we believe that we all have much to learn from each other as we practice education and live together. In fact, we believe that interfaith educational work is the main vehicle for individuals and communities to address violence and discrimination based in religious bigotry, ignorance, and misunderstanding. It is essential for us to work together to build social structures where people can thrive.

Yet, we also know that interfaith education presents political, religious, and educational challenges. Without a doubt, interfaith education, as all forms of education, is political (Friere 1985). It calls forth our commitments, thus touching the deepest assumptions that shape our values and living. It discloses cultural patterns, exposing our

uncritical ethnocentricity that encourages the continuation of cultural and theological bias (Byrne 2011). And it even demonstrates whether our faith traditions are open to strangers.

While both of us have experienced the possibilities of interfaith education, and celebrate these, we have also seen its limitations in practice. In fact, we have experienced directly, and even been the victims of, persons using education as a means to dismiss others as lacking faith or to pursue political agendas that divide.

We need to honestly name the concerns that trouble people when they hear the concept “interfaith education.” First, some fear the exacerbating of conflicts. Sometimes people do learn that differences are intractable. We all know about how hard it is to allow others to disagree with us when it touches our deepest commitments or fears. Nevertheless, to live together on this planet and to seek the thriving of all, as our religious traditions require, means we need to risk the conflict. It cannot be avoided.

Second, using interfaith education and dialogue to “convert” others. We know this occurs. When dealing with deep commitments, we want to share what we have found meaningful—that which shapes our living and our vocations. Interfaith education means we must indeed share with integrity and truthfulness, or we are not really meeting each other. However, we need to learn to do this with civility and respect.

Third, interfaith education may confuse some about the truth of their own faith commitments. Again, as we know from all forms of education, encountering difference does create real questions and insights. We know this concern is real for many people. However, we witness, as have others, that interfaith education often encourages a fuller understanding about our own positions and empowers us to state these convictions with more clarity.

Finally, a more subtle concern—How do we deal with the realities of power and privilege in any conversation? For example, even though the United States is seen as a diverse society, it is overwhelmingly Christian. Any interfaith conversation occurs within this reality. Some are majority and others are minority. Rules of conversation are often unexpressed. Expectations about dress, language, who speaks, and who responds, all shape the ways education is conducted and is experienced. These realities profoundly affect the climate for learning. We cannot ignore these realities. Naming them is a start. We have to find ways of directly and openly addressing power realities.

Both the potential and the perils of interfaith education are a reality. Yet, is this not the case for all forms of human interaction? The

more we are honest about these possibilities and concerns, the more we enhance our work and teaching. In what follows, we offer some ways of understanding these concerns. We offer a typology that may move us closer to clarity about the reasons we engage in interfaith education and how we can continue to enhance its contributions.

## EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

Research in the United Kingdom where religious education is required in schools has suggested two goals for interfaith education: “to learn about” religion and religions, and “to learn from” religion so people can critically reflect on their own experiences and their interactions with others. In a world where religions sometimes conflict, these goals are seen as ways of building a common respect for the other in order to live together (*Religious Education: The Non-Statutory National Framework* 2004).

Even in cultures that practice the separation of church and state, like the United States, educators need to ask how teaching is affected by religious values and meanings. For example, the teaching of history inevitably reveals religious motivations, as does the teaching of literature. The exploration of contemporary social problems confronts the ways religious values affect interactions. And even in the study of science, we encounter religious commitments and resistances. We cannot avoid learning about and from others’ views of God or understandings of religious vocation.

Our various cultures have such different ways of dealing with religion in public life—from mandated to voluntary to excluded—that it is difficult even to ask questions that are relevant across settings. However, some overarching questions might be, should the main goals of interfaith education be acquiring knowledge of other religions and inculcating habits of openness, asking and listening, in order to create a just society? Can public schools legally invest resources in interfaith education? To what hoped-for ends? Should interfaith education have spiritual goals? If so, is it better to leave interfaith education to religious schools, where issues of spirituality and faith can be openly discussed? Who should undertake it? For what ages of learners? How do we plant the seeds of empathy and curiosity, to teach children the habits of reaching out for dialogue, and building community?

The aims and goals of education as well as its pedagogy and curriculum are important issues in all forms of education. For interfaith

education, they must be discussed openly and in public. Perhaps the conversation needs to begin with those in one's own faith tradition, yet it must be extended to those of other faiths—if we are to be open and truthful about the commitments that inform education. We believe interfaith education should be both critical and spiritual: critical, in order to reflect on the blinders imposed by ethnocentricity, and spiritual, because if such a conversation does not lead us closer to God, then what is it for?

Profound questions! Of course, a typology of approaches does not address these manifold questions. Yet it does offer a frame of reference with which we can extend and deepen that conversation.

### TYPOLOGY OF INTERFAITH EDUCATION

Before we explore the typology, let us acknowledge that typologies of interfaith dialogue do exist. Moreover, typologies of intercultural education also offer models of how people communicate and educate across difference. As we examine each of these, we may see clues to help us understand interfaith education.

A primary typology of interreligious dialogue is the Document of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, 1984, developed by Catholic scholars in conversation with Muslim scholars. *Dialogue of Life* defines different ways of interfaith communication as:

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 all 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.

Note what is included in this document: sharing of concrete human problems, working together to address human suffering, communicating scholarship about theological understandings, and finally

witnessing the spiritual depth found in traditions. This perspective is rich, yet it seems to assume that the participants engage each other as equals. While commendable and to be desired, we know that this is not always the case. Power infiltrates our interactions.

The vast literature on teaching multiculturalism has sought to address these power dynamics. One of the most important is that of Grant and Sleeter (2006; Sleeter and Grant 2009). They present five philosophical and practical approaches to teaching multiculturalism:

1. *Teaching the exceptional and culturally different*, meaning helping culturally and economically disadvantaged students to assimilate and achieve the dominant cultural norm.
2. *Human relations*, meaning teaching to promote interpersonal communication and harmony.
3. *Single group studies*, meaning in-depth study of one group in order to go beyond stereotypes and understand how this group has suffered from oppression.
4. *Multicultural education*, which brings issues of power, dominance, and injustice into the open.
5. *Education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist*, which aims to develop in students a critical consciousness and the development of social action skills and commitment to correct injustice.

Note that the typology of Grant and Sleeter builds toward social reconstruction. Knowing the history of oppression and the ways that systemic power is used to control and silence minorities, even in unintended ways, they advocate for a progression from one's own perspective to seeking to engage another's viewpoint, to finding ways to communicate for understanding and/or action, and finally working to address the fundamental shaping of society.

As we have engaged in interfaith education, interfaith dialogue, and cross-cultural and multicultural education, we have seen six strategies in action. Some are more restrictive and some more open. They include the following:

1. Learning for purposes of contrast—Learning about another religious tradition to distinguish ourselves or for apologetic purposes.
2. Learning about—Learning about another religious tradition for purposes of understanding and interacting because we live in a shared world together.

3. Learning from—Learning from another tradition about the ways all of us as religious people share procedures, understandings, and even histories.
4. Learning with—Learning about another’s tradition and commitments so we can work in partnership on common projects for the common good.
5. Learning to deepen my own faith—Learning from another tradition with the purpose of deepening my own connection to God, to religious identity, to faithfulness.
6. Learning for spiritual growth—Moving from personal spiritual growth to seeking and recognizing shared connection and insights about creation, community, and future.

While these categories are not necessarily discrete (they may overlap or conjoin in any given educational activity), we do believe that they represent different kinds of and reasons for learning about other faiths, and in general represent a progression from surface to deep learning. We will describe each and then draw conclusions for our practices of interfaith education.

### *Learning for Purposes of Contrast*

This approach has been the primary one used by missionary communities to understand the meanings of others so that they can be addressed or used for purposes of conversion (apologetics). Of course, the reasons for this work have often been worthy, as believers sought to share with others the truth that they had found or they worried about the “eternal souls” of others, yet the process is not mutual or dialogical.

Without a doubt, for us to engage in communication with others, we have to understand their perspectives as clearly as we can. Moreover, in every conversation we are seeking to share our own meanings. But the explicit purpose of this approach is to highlight the differences among others and ourselves. In case the reader cannot guess, this is not our position. Too often such a position, even when it does not intend to do so, caricatures another religious tradition, and enacts hegemonic power within a culture or across cultures.

Moreover, religious traditions are extraordinarily diverse within themselves. While there are key convictions, practices, and institutions shared within a religious community, diversity is the reality. For example, the two of count many varieties of expressions of Judaism

and Christianity in our own experiences. While accepting, naming and honoring contrasts is crucial for interfaith dialogue (as is honoring those differences), a primary purpose for interfaith education is to understand the other, to let the other speak for himself or herself, and to work together.

### *Learning About*

This approach is probably the primary way that interfaith education is engaged today. We study another tradition or people to understand who they are and what commitments they hold. We recognize the diversity within their own community, yet we highlight the key elements that define them.

In many countries people interact with others of various faiths in the marketplace, business, and higher education. However, these interactions tend to be superficial, and beyond this superficial level we may come to barriers, spoken or unspoken, related to others' customs, beliefs, and even clothing. Our reaction to that which is different can make us shut down. Learning about another religious tradition can remove barriers created by fear of difference and sense of strangeness, and this in turn may deepen our desire and our ability to interact on a human level, creating greater connection and enabling respect. Learning about others may make us want to know others. Basic knowledge forms the beginning of commitment to do the hard work required to live decently together in our shared but troubled world.

Interfaith education shares much with multicultural education in this regard, and in fact the two are often intertwined (Halsall and Roebben 2006). An inherent challenge in "learning about" other cultures and religions is that such learning rather naturally begins with details, facts, colorful images, such as the "foods and festivals" approach in some school multicultural education programs. This is not to belittle such an approach, but to recognize that in and of itself just learning about the colorful ways that "others" live their lives keeps those people as "other," as different from or even alien to "us," whether or not this is explicit. When other faiths or cultures are viewed in comparison to our own tradition, hidden issues of ethnocentrism come into play, as we ourselves remain the norm and standard against which others are juxtaposed.

Another challenge in learning about other faiths and cultures at this descriptive level is that these approaches

remain largely silent on issues of race and racism. This may be due to a general tendency to avoid representing *any* oppressive ideologies and practices as being part of *any* religious and spiritual tradition . . . only representations that idealize all religious traditions are selectively included in order to develop students' feelings of warmth and tolerance. . . . In this way all religions, religious education and the religious educator can be constructed as seamless, non-contradictory, whole, and "innocent." (Kameniar 2007, 409)

This means that a critical spirit is lacking and our own ethnocentrism is not examined. Practices or beliefs of others that contradict our moral sensibilities, such as committing terrorism in the name of God, will not be addressed.

In the field of multicultural education, Banks (2010) urges us to deepen our pedagogy and points to the results of comprehensive multicultural education as content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure. These represent the educational processes and products that can result when learning about other cultures or religious traditions is a goal embodied in curriculum, teaching and school culture. We hope all of these could result from both school-based and public processes of interfaith education. Berling (2004) suggests that learning about other religions can move beyond facts, images and differences, even if students are learning in a classroom, from books and teachers, without the opportunity to really interact with those of other religions. Creative, committed pedagogy is required, so that "learning about" becomes "reacculturation . . . across lines of difference" (Berling 2004, 29). Curriculum, learning resources and especially teachers are the keys to helping students of any age see beyond the lines of difference rather than merely gazing at them.

Despite these limitations of "learning about" other religious traditions, such learning is important, and is probably essential, as a kind of threshold from which deeper kinds of learning and engagement may be pursued.

### ***Learning From***

"Learning from" is a more nuanced way of extending "learning about." While "learning about" tends to shave off the rough edges of a religious tradition, not able to deal with all the subtleties and difference of practice, belief, and commitments, "learning from" allows representatives of a religious tradition to speak for themselves.

We all know the great diversity within traditions. In Christianity, denominational differences embody this diversity. In addition, within each denomination are multiple parties advocating for particular views. While all do share many things in common, the learning about approach tends to focus on the common elements and not the differences.

Learning from simply means that we let representatives of a religious tradition teach. One of us was in an interfaith education between Muslim and Christian faithful. We read two religious texts that dealt with heroes recognized in both traditions. As we shared our perspectives on these persons, our differences and similarities were revealed. We moved beyond sharing to beginning to understand the ways decisions were actually made. We learned about differing understandings of revelation and multiple interpretative practices. The focus was letting others teach us about themselves.

“Learning from” requires an openness and respect to let the other teach us. It is the primary way that friends interact—letting the other tell her or his stories and respecting the other’s views of the world. Often such a commitment indeed builds friendship even when we do not see eye to eye. Such a practice recognizes that truth is much bigger than any one of us can name. It is the real beginning of understanding.

Regretfully, too often, however, in practice, the “learning from” style focuses on the least controversial aspects of our faiths and commitments. Of course, that is easier. Yet, for interfaith education to thrive, we have to pass to the areas where difference and pain are realities. An example is the ways Christians and Jews have interacted for generations. Simply noting that we were born from the same ancient religious history and have many things in common is not sufficient. We also need to note the ways that representatives, throughout the history of the Christian community, have sought to outlaw and even destroy Jewish faithful. We do not only live in our shared beliefs and commitments; we also share conflict and abuse. As “learning from” extends from easy ways of communicating to honesty about our pasts, new life and new community can be built—across differences.

### *Learning With*

This means learning together with those of other faiths, toward shared goals. While we will most certainly learn “about” one another through such encounters, “with” intertwines participants’ consciousness in an even deeper way.

Service learning, working on civic projects in the community, is one educational structure that can be employed to enable “students to go beyond the strictly academic environment to better understand those who diverge from mainstream cultural conceptions . . . and appreciate the structures of power and privilege that function in the dominant society” (Borden 2007, 172), thus reducing ethnocentrism.

Pedagogically, an approach that may deepen the intellectual side of “learning with” is learning *models* of interfaith cooperation. Albert Bandura, famous for his theories of social learning, has written about spiritual learning that, “Leaders of reform efforts, such as Gandhi, King and Mandela, acted on strong moral convictions to contest social injustices and inhumanities” (Bandura 2003, 171), and study of such movements provides models that can strengthen individuals’ beliefs about their own self-efficacy, their belief in their ability to act. Knowledge of successful models can help in times of stress and difficulty when people “have to work together to manage and improve their lives. In the exercise of *collective agency* they pool their knowledge, skills and resources, and act in concert to shape their future” (172). Through the application of such models during difficult, shared work, personal efficacy gives way to collective efficacy, deepening the interfaith experience and increasing the likelihood that shared projects will succeed. For example, see the work of Eboo Patel and Tim Scorer and the Interfaith Youth Core (Patel and Scorer 2013).

In areas of overt religious strife such as the Middle East, non-profit organizations, community groups, and universities create forums in which people of different faiths interact, discuss, and plan projects together. In Israel, for instance, the Interfaith Encounter Association (IEA) creates a forum for Jews, Moslems, Christians, Druze, and Bahá’ís to work together on promoting peace, believing that “rather than being a cause of the problem, religion can and should be a source of the solution for conflicts that exist in the region and beyond” (IEA Mission Statement n.d.).

“Learning with” is seldom just an academic exercise. It is often connected to the urgent need to work in partnership in order to find solutions to immediate, entrenched problems. In this way Jews and Christians worked together for racial justice in the United States, and Hindus, traditional religionists, Jews, and Christians worked to challenge apartheid in South Africa. The very process of working together toward a common goal becomes “learning with.”

Learning with others needs to be an active, ongoing process and, like all learning, it is ultimately personal. It does not necessarily create widespread cultural change that is passed on from generation to generation. While such work can lead to systemic solutions to social justice problems, history tells us that deep-seated religious tensions can remain entrenched; they tend to simmer and flare up, and every generation, every group, every person, needs to take on the challenge of interfaith understanding anew. We work together, but each participant's personal experience of this difficult work is what opens his or her heart and understanding. Otherwise our hard won freedoms become history, someone else's story, and our current strife may seem insoluble, too intractable to surmount. It may be that the only way to keep religious prejudice and hatred at bay is to continually learn and act together.

Interfaith education requires, at the very least, creating an infrastructure for meeting and dialogue in a supportive, non-judgmental environment. Preferably it should also lead to shared action, to the planning and carrying out of shared projects for the common good, and to the breaking down of hegemonic power structures through arriving at deep knowledge of and respect for the other.

### ***Learning to Deepen My Own Faith***

Honestly, learning in the presence of the "stranger" or the other, when it is done with openness and integrity, deepens one's own faith commitments. Note how each of the previous approaches in the typology moves deeper and deeper in communication. We have moved from distinguishing ourselves from others, to learning something about the other, to learning from the other, and to participating together in common action. This step acknowledges that we learn much about ourselves in the midst of the other.

On the most simple level, as we seek to express to another our deepest commitments and longings, we learn much about what we take for granted—that we just assume. In the presence of those who share our commitments and our stories, we often use shorthand. We assume the other knows what we mean, even when they may not. Yet, in the presence of another, who asks us questions, we have to be articulate about our convictions and we have to learn to answer difficult questions. Conversation with the other highlights what we believe and what we yet need to learn about our own community.

For example, the two of us, from our differing religious traditions, have talked about Jesus. As we all know, Jesus was born and raised a Jew. Jesus never called himself a “Christian.” In fact, the term was invented probably 25–40 years after his death. He fully participated in the Jewish rituals in his context of Galilee and he shared much in common with the rabbis who later continued the traditions of rabbinic Judaism. As we have shared how our traditions understand and interpret Jesus and Jesus’ work, we both needed to be clear and focused to help each other understand. While there are amazing learnings about the perspectives of the other, we are also learning much about our own convictions and about the long-standing brokenness and abuse between our traditions. Much of this pain, we would like to avoid and ignore, but in the presence of each other, we cannot.

The “scriptural reasoning” project of the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme exemplifies the depth of learning about ourselves that occurs in the presence of the other (<http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/sr>). They have provided a set of resources for face-to-face and online interfaith conversation. What occurs by learning in the presence of the other is fuller attention to one’s own commitments as well as fuller attention to the commitments of another. As we seek to respect the other, learn their ways, articulate our convictions, and share in mutuality, we confront deeply our own meanings and convictions.

Two religious educators, Mary Boys and Sara Lee, have created a pedagogical process by which Jews and Christian can learn much about each other, confront the histories that have divided them, and name abuse that has occurred. They also have witnessed that such learning deepened their own connections to God, to religious identity, and to faithfulness. Sara Lee tells how hearing Mary Boys speak about the veneration in the Catholic tradition was a revelation about how similar this was to her own tradition’s veneration of the Torah (Boys and Lee 2008). This insight was a moment of meeting and of understanding profound meanings in each other’s traditions. As we express ourselves to others, we better learn and name the convictions that shape our own perspectives.

### ***Learning for Spiritual Growth***

In the last few decades there has been a great rise in interest in spiritual growth that is specifically non-religious. Though it sounds like a tautology, religion has fallen out of favor among the non-religious. No longer is Western society generally religious. Yet the hunger for

spiritual growth that used to find its pathways of seeking within traditional religious frameworks, remains. Perhaps it has even intensified as traditional religion has waned. In what Roof (1999) has called the “spiritual marketplace” seekers can read about and take workshops in Sufism, meditation, and communicating with angels, to name only a few of the many offerings.

We would like to argue that even for those unaffiliated with any religion, the deep study of religions is an essential road to spiritual growth and to assuaging the spiritual hunger of humankind. For those who do live within a religious tradition, deep study (which is not instead of habitual practice but goes far beyond it) of one’s own religion can be a lifelong quest. How much richer the path might be if our spiritual longings lead us, through study and encounter, to insights about God and meaning offered by various faith traditions?

One of the authors of this article has a robust friendship and writing partnership with a Druze colleague. It was so unlikely that we would find each other; both of us are fond of saying that God provided the conditions that connected us, and we always know that we are both speaking about our one, shared God. Such human connections move us from a lonely spiritual quest to seeking and recognizing shared connection and insights about creation and community, and to new spiritual insight that all religions offer a path to God. While there are various interpretations of John 14:2, at least some commentators interpret thusly the statement that, “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places (NRSV).”

Pedagogically, interfaith education for spiritual growth is harder to pin down than the other categories in our typology. Perhaps the essence is that spiritual growth should be a recognized and central educational goal in interfaith educational settings. Curriculum, pedagogy, and authentic teacher presence (Court 2013) should embody, celebrate and help to create conditions for learners of every age to grow spiritually through interfaith learning and encounter.

## CONCLUSIONS

Does the typology offer any insights on the questions we earlier raised about the aims and goals and pedagogy and curriculum of interfaith education? Clearly issues of fear and of power are present in approaches of interfaith education. Yet, as we have seen, interfaith education does not meld different religious traditions into an

amalgamated super-religion. Rather, we confidently affirm, that when conducted with integrity, mutuality, and comprehensiveness, interfaith education teaches participants more about their own faiths and the range of diverse theologies and practices in their own traditions. In fact, interfaith education can invite us to spiritual practices that open us to the deepest convictions and meanings at the heart of living. Yet, note: integrity, mutuality, and comprehensiveness are indeed required.

Interfaith education is risky work because we are awakened to the assumptions by which we live. In an amazing revelatory manner, we are opened to the possibilities within our traditions and the ways they have and are being used to block others. We see the incredible rigidity and injustice that are part of some who call themselves “religious.” We see divisions throughout the world, fueled by people who attack and condemn each other in the name of their God, and ask—is this the way it must be?

Together, we reject this little and exclusive version of religion. Both of our traditions tell us that God created the world, that God created people and put them in the world, and that God called it good! They teach us that God was angry when we limited the life chances of others. God calls us to care for others as much as we care for ourselves. The vision the prophet Isaiah expresses of the great banquet where God washes away every tear and heals every sore is in fact a vision that empowers our two faiths (Isaiah 25). We are emboldened to enter God’s world because God promises us that God is indeed working for justice and hope.

To the questions: What are the aims and purposes of interfaith education? First of all, is simple respect for others. God is the creator, who created all things good. In the midst of the world God created, indeed there is brokenness, loss, and abuse, but God continues to call us children of God. We engage in interfaith education simply because this is the world God has made and because the great traditions of the faith continue to point us to God’s presence at the heart of creation.

Second, we engage in interfaith education because we have been called to shepherd the world God created. In our traditions, God called us to nurture, to multiply, to honor and to build a world—but what makes it a world worth living is respect, justice, and hope. God even challenged worship when it did not lead to care for others (Amos 5:21).

Third, we engage in interfaith education because brokenness is part of our world. We see it in our religious traditions. We squirm

when religion is used as a way of demeaning others. As Suzanne Rosenblith and Scott Priestman have eloquently suggested, interfaith cooperation and education are a means to address religion when it becomes insane and destructive. They suggest a cooperative task for religious communities in the public is to make apparent, to reveal, aspects of religion(s) that seek to control, destroy, or divide (Rosenblith and Priestman 2004). We agree. This is a crucial part of interfaith education.

What is its curriculum and pedagogy? To address issues of power and advantage, the pedagogy of interfaith education must be mutual and open. Rules need to be defined that allow people to speak for themselves. Safety must be provided so that those who have been excluded are welcomed. As the “scriptural reasoning” project has learned, interfaith education must stick to the topic being discussed, not the people involved. Interfaith education is enlivened in the midst of witness and story sharing. Interfaith education listens and respects as it focuses on work that can be done together (see <http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/guidelines-scriptural-reasoning>).<sup>1</sup>

We live in a world divided by nation states and ideological commitments where brokenness and competition grow. If we are speaking honestly, we know that religion participates and sometimes leads, and cheers, this brokenness and competition by demeaning those different from ourselves. Too often some religious groups consider only themselves human and make all others outsiders.

Yet, at the same time, we share together a globe with limited resources. How do we make the globe we believe was created by God’s goodness thrive? How do we honor the will of the creator that life begets life, that hope begets hope, and justice begets justice? Interfaith education is one way we work across our differences to seek to build a place of flourishing where we encounter the power of God. It is a journey we all can share. Let’s do it.

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<sup>1</sup>For more resources defining the pedagogies of religious education, additional resources follow the references for this article.

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