



Attentive Teaching in Diverse Communities and Lifelong Faith Formation

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To say there is a need to form educators capable of teaching in a diverse community of Christian religious believers seems to state the obvious. In ideal form Christian communities should encompass all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social class, or any other category we might think as representing a difference. As Paul told the community in Corinth: “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:12–13).

But in ways that are both unintentional and intentional, Christian religious communities are at times the most segregated places in our world. We are all too painfully aware that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s statement in 1963 about Sunday morning at 11:00 being the most segregated hour of the week remains true 45 years later. Because they form as intentional communities, Christian churches can at times be strictly monocultural in a way that does not represent the universality of the Christian vision of the world and the openness of God to all.

Communities are intentionally formed by, for example, ethnicity and race so as to provide support for their congregants when the larger community outside of the church is not supportive or is discriminatory. Throughout the Black experience in America, African American churches have provided a bulwark against white racism in society. In this process, they have maintained a distinctive Christian tradition, and practices that have served and identified that community. Similarly, immigrant churches have provided fellowship, support, social services and language facilitation for their congregations as they assist them in their entry into a new environment. Like African American churches, immigrant churches have formed distinctive traditions and practices in response to the religious experiences in their new soil.

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However, groups from the dominant culture can intentionally and unintentionally exclude communities of people with whom they do not wish to be associated. These exclusions could be based on race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, or any other socially determined category of difference. Thus, we bring to the discussion of teaching in diverse religious communities an important assumption: while diversity is a value in Christian religious community, in reality many Christian churches exhibit memberships and leadership in ways that might not be viewed as consistent with the Christian value of embracing all members of the Body of Christ.

This, of course, is not an uncontested assumption. There are diversities and separations present in Christian churches that some would argue are biblically sanctioned and mandated. However, these issues, while important, are not the focus of this article. Setting aside those conflicts, it is important to consider the apparent contradiction that Christian communities, which are intended to be inclusive, are often precisely the opposite of that value. This is particularly important in light of the findings of the 2008 study from Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. The study indicates that religion in America is “non-dogmatic and diverse and politically relevant,” which is reflective of the great diversity of religious affiliations, practices, and beliefs in the U.S. (Pew Forum). Statistically, immigration has played a major role in the shift in the U.S. religious landscape, whereby the majority of those who affiliate with a religious tradition are from communities of color.

Another assumption involves the inevitable connection between the church and the values of society. At times these contradictions exist because the sins and discriminations of the world are brought into Christian communities, which are not immune to these forces. The church brings into its community the ideas and values of the world, and when those values are at odds with Christian values they must be challenged.

Thus, teaching in a diverse Christian community entails asking critical questions about who is present and who is not present in the community, and why different categories of people might be absent. It requires a thorough understanding of social differences based in marginalization, and how these play out in the lives of religious communities. To teach well in a diverse context, then, involves openness, critical thinking and a deep understanding of differences understood from a social structural perspective. It requires a stance of attentiveness, a stance that both acknowledges and welcomes that which is new, unfamiliar, or different.

Attentive teaching is essential for educating in a diverse community. What are the characteristics of attentive teaching? This type of teaching attends to the biblical value of hospitality as a necessary aspect of religious community, and a grounding stance of openness. It attends to the development of social analysis and critical thinking skills in teachers so they can examine the make-up of a community, understanding both its diverse and homogenous components and the reasons why these exist. It attends to forming critical minds and discerning hearts in teachers in order to develop in them the habits of mind and heart to understand difference and engage it constructively.

Consider this scenario:

You are the head of religious education in your church in an urban setting. You are responsible for training a cadre of volunteer teachers for work with youth. The neighborhood that your church is located in has been in flux and in transition for the last 30 years. Formerly considered one of the “big steeple” churches in the area, the more affluent white members have moved out to the suburbs and subsequently moved their membership to their suburban churches.

The changing face of the neighborhood was in part due to African Americans moving into the area and, after 20 years, a new population of immigrants began to move into the area, creating an uncomfortable dynamic between the African American community and the new immigrant communities. Because of the changing demographics of the area, your church has transitioned from a predominantly white Euro-American population to one that is more racially diverse. Socio-economically, the diversity of social class that has been a part of this church has become more pronounced due to the influx of new immigrants. Language issues are now part of educating. Social service needs for immigrant members of the church now compete with a wider fellowship culture of the congregation.

The demographic of the congregation is roughly 1/3 Euro-American, 1/3 African American and 1/3 Asian immigrant. The leadership of the church is predominantly white. The volunteer teachers are predominantly African American. The demographic of the youth population is 1/2 African American and 1/2 Asian immigrant.

We assert that in order to be effective educators in a diverse context engaging in attentive teaching, teachers must ground themselves in the following educational practices: attending to hospitality, understanding the social texts and contexts, and forming critical minds and discerning hearts.

This scenario is not uncommon in urban contexts where a rapidly transitioning social environment transformed the makeup and the social dynamic of the church community. If we were to take seriously the act of attending in order to teach in diverse contexts, what kind of teachers would we want to educate our children? What would the teachers need to know to be effective educators? And what kind of people would they need to be? We assert that in order to be effective educators in a diverse context engaging in attentive teaching, teachers must ground themselves in the following educational practices: attending to hospitality, understanding the social texts and contexts, and forming critical minds and discerning hearts.

Practices nurture the spiritual discipline of attending. This practice helps us to be observant and comprehending about the diverse reality of people with whom we engage. This discipline is not something learned once and for all, as we learn initially to teach. Rather, it is a discipline that must be nurtured throughout one's life as ongoing faith formation. The more we learn to attend deeply and comprehensively, the more we will be aware of the experiences and realities of people who are different from what we understand from our own lives. In short, the more we learn to be attentive, the more we are opened to diversity. Mature practices of attending are those that form attentive teaching, which creates effective teaching in diverse communities.

Attending to Hospitality

Teachers who teach competently in a diverse context must have their faith grounded in the practices of hospitality. As Ana María Pineda states so clearly, "In the traditions shaped by the Bible, offering hospitality is a moral imperative" (Pineda, 32). For her this means attending to the presence of strangers

and guests in our midst, and committing ourselves to be good hosts to them.

Grounded in the sense of moral imperative, hospitality creates a sense of welcome inclusion (Talvacchia, 94-95). When we welcome someone into a learning space, we do it with warmth and respect and an openness that makes the person feel wanted. By our openness and warmth, we indicate our desire to share both our resources and ourselves. Hospitality is the positive disposition we have to invite others into the environment we create. As Lynn Westfield reminds us, hospitality is an attitude (Westfield, 48). But welcome must also be paired with inclusion which involves attending to the experiences of the stranger, or the alien, and make those experiences a vital part of one's thinking, understanding, knowledge base, and teaching.

Attending to hospitality means attending to diverse expressions and cultural codes of hospitality. Different cultures understand hospitality in different ways. Within church communities these diverse understandings must be negotiated together. And thus, attentive teachers seek to engage the variety of expression and intention around hospitality that is present in the group. What is hospitable in some cultures can seem to be inhospitable in another culture. Thus, understanding the variety of culturally defined notions of hospitality is a fundamental practice of attentive teaching.

For example, Westfield notes that constitutive elements of women's practice of hospitality are intimacy, reciprocity, and safety. (Westfield, 48) Some cultures may thrive in the intimacy of this hospitality, while others might find it inhibiting. As another example, in the Korean American community, eating together with Bible study, worship, and prayer is an essential part not only of hospitality but also of practicing faith. Pak, et al., calls this practice of hospitality "ricing," sharing food (rice) and resources together as a practice of openness and inclusion. In the Korean culture, "to satisfy hunger is to live, and to eat rice together is to share life resources with others" (Pak, et al., 89).

Attentive teaching invites students to participate in a variety of conversations that are imperative to their formation as religiously grounded persons. These conversations introduce students to the history of their community, to the moral norms that define it, to the sacred Scripture that grounds it, and to the ideas that form an understanding of God in the world.

Gallagher refers to teaching as an act of intellectual hospitality (Gallagher, 137). Teachers act as hosts to introduce students to conversations already under way to help ease their disorientation and promote their participation in the ongoing

conversation. Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass would add that such a stance as a teacher is also an invitation to a religious practice. In entering into a Christian practice, one finds “that you are part of a community that has been doing this for centuries— not doing it as well as it should, to be sure, but doing it steadily, in conscious continuity with stories of the Bible and in frequent conversations about how to do it better” (Bass, 7). This act of introduction is, then, an act of hospitality. It commits itself to the moral stance of welcoming strangers, it acts out of an attitude of welcome inclusion, and it understands the cultural codedness of acts of hospitality and seeks to communicate through an awareness of this cultural coding.

In our scenario of the changing urban church presented above, what ways could the church community attend to hospitality? In what ways can they find rituals to welcome “strangers?” What conversations would the leadership have about diverse expressions of hospitality, given the diverse nature of the congregation? How might this spirit of hospitality permeate from the usher at the door, to the sermon from the pulpit, to the teachers teaching Sunday school, to fellowship at the coffee hour, or to the AA groups that meet in the basement? What type of educational programming could arise from these diverse groups in conversation with each other? What are the conversations that have been going on for many years? Who will introduce newcomers into these conversations? These are all acts of attending to hospitality.

Attending to the Rigorous Study of Texts and Contexts

Attentive teaching also requires an understanding of diversity that is more than an understanding of variety. While it is true that diverse environments imply variety, noting that fact is not enough to educate in a diverse community. Rather, to educate in a diverse context, teachers need to understand that the variety they see is connected to different power relationships among the diverse groups, which creates different experiences of living in the world. Some of these experiences are of privilege while others are of marginalization. Properly understood, understanding diversity means understanding diverse groups and their experience of privilege and marginalization. This is the process of doing social analysis.

Social analysis is the practice of rigorous study of texts and contexts. Texts can be sacred texts of a

community, e.g., the Bible and Confessions. But texts also include important traditions that have formed and continue to form that community, such as polity, rules and disciplines, spiritual writings, and oral and written histories. Contexts have more to do with a holistic sense of culture, identity, and values that make up a community of believers. For example, this can be the economic structure of a society, its political institutions and ideological stances, or the demographics of the community and neighborhood. Also, it can be a more amorphous aspect, such as the personality of the community or its ethos.

Contexts and texts are always in conversation with each other. Texts are part of contexts but contexts are more encompassing in their embrace of the full picture of a social world. Looking at diversity through the lens of this practice allows us to examine the deeper realities of what we see, and to put a critical perspective on those realities. It forces us to think deeply about what we see and experience in our social context and to understand it fully.

Attentive teachers need an understanding of social analysis so they can understand the texts and contexts of the students with whom they will be interacting. Attentive teachers will teach most effectively in diverse communities when they understand the complex textural realities of their students.

Doing Social Analysis

How does one do this textured analysis? That is, how does one do social analysis? Rather than a tool of experts or intellectual elites, social analysis is a communal process of persons examining their social context and making critical judgments about what they see. More importantly, social analysis mixes personal observation with historical and objective knowledge about a community or group so as to move the analysis beyond personal experience alone, allowing an analytical and empirical basis for judgment. An important value in any social analysis is an assumption that local is inextricably connected to global. Thus, questions about contexts must have local, national, and international perspectives.

Fred Kammer thinks of social analysis as “asking the journalist’s questions: who, what, why, when, where, and how?” (Kammer, 41). He understands the intention of social analysis to be the process of asking the fundamental questions of everything that engages the community on a local, national, and international level. With this information, a community delves deeply into the material critically and honestly. For Kammer, asking the right questions is the essence of good social analysis.

Using these journalistic questions, Kammer provides a clear and usable explanation of a “how to” that is useful for our discussion. This process is a simple act of gathering as much information as possible about a particular problem in the community. He believes that many well-meaning religious leaders attempt to make it more difficult than it is. Social analysis is neither about dramatic revelation nor about a ponderous examination. Rather, it is about using all of the resources we have to gather all of the available facts.

1. Who and What

As a beginning, the “who” and “what” questions fill out the particulars of the basic facts that have been assembled. Asking comprehensive, detailed questions is the key to engaging the “who” and “what” questions. For example, in our urban church scenario, one can ask questions such as: Who are the people in congregation? Who are the ‘old guard’ and who are the newcomers? What are their characteristics in terms of age, race and ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, economic status, and status as differently-abled? What is their relationship to the institution? What are the defining characteristics of the church? What is its polity? Where is the money located, and does this group have any access to it? Who makes decisions for the congregation? Who does it affect positively and whom does it affect negatively? Who are the teachers and leaders?

2. When

“When” is the question of timing. Kammer believes this question considers the present and future, but also, at least three senses of history. The first is the sense of history that seeks objectively to discover what actually happened. This is the most difficult to ascertain because of the inability to know fully the exact facts of an event. The second sense of history involves articulating the facts of an event as a person has remembered them. Of course, memory is selective and is engaged in an interpretive function. As such, the details conveyed in describing the event indicate to the listener what is really important to the speaker. The third sense of history for Kammer is one in which the speaker selects what he or she remembers, in which what the speaker remembers is tied to an ideological perspective or worldview. An example of this would be the revisionist historical projects of immigrants, women, and other marginalized groups to recover memories that tell a fuller picture of history.

In many ways such experiences of remembering can affect a person’s sense of the present and future.

For many people, having sense of the future determines their present. And how they understand their present is often determined by their history. Thus, the “when” question puts the “who” and “what” questions in historical perspective. From our example, the community might ask questions about how the church was founded, how the mission of the church was developed, and whom this community was intended to serve. What alternative histories exist and when were they developed? In what ways does this history point us in a direction toward the changing face of the church?

3. Where

Asking the question “where” locates the “who” and “what” concretely within institutions and structures in a society. In this reality we see connections between people, events, and institutions that shape the particulars of the community’s life in specific social structures. The “where” question situates us in the organizations, institutions, and social systems that affect our daily lives. These structures “convey that what is freeing, community-building, and love-generating (grace) and what is isolating, alienating, and destructive (sin) is structured into social, cultural, political, and economic realities” (Kammer, 52). These structures are not just abstract realities removed from a community’s experience. In fact, the community can internalize the beliefs of these structures and the values and attitudes they express to become part of the community’s own belief system.

Thus, a social analysis must question the role of social institutions in the life of the community, and question the viewpoints, attitudes, and values that shape the way the community thinks and acts. For example, in our scenario, the following questions could be asked: what are the major institutions in the community? What are the boundaries of the church’s service area? What one social or economic feature of the community has the greatest impact on the majority of people? What is the composition of the population? What are the political entities that are part of the community? Are there any major industries? Are they in growth or in decline?

4. How

The question of “how” assesses the impact and interaction of those social institutions on the community. In order to do this the community must examine what Kammer refers to as the “institutional faces” of an organization, that is, the way in which an institution presents itself to outsiders as well as to insiders. The outer face of an institution acts in the external environment and is the face shown to the

public. The inner face of the institution is harder to see, and is represented by its organizational structures, decision-making modes, personnel policies, and actual personnel.

Social analysis examines institutions both in their internal and external faces to see how they are acting and how they are designed. For example, in our scenario, the community might want to ask a question about the local school system. What does the school system say externally about its inclusion of diverse groups of people? How is that lived out internally in its structure and personnel and its mandates for the classroom activity and the curricula? Another example would be the church itself: how does it describe itself in its mission statement, and how does it live out this reality in its activities, governing structure, educational programming and its liturgy?

The question of “how” asks a further question about particular types of institutions. This question seeks to establish with clarity the relationships between the institutions. Specifically, the questions of “how” look to uncover the institutional alliances among the organizations so as to understand power relationships. For example, in what ways does the church relate to the school? How does the major employer of the area relate to the local government and the church? What is the relationship between social service organizations for poor communities and the church?

Finally, the “how” question examines the social divisions that are part of these institutional structures. The divisions of race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and physical or mental ability are powerful stratifications in organizations, and their analysis helps teachers to understand diversity in important and powerful ways. Kammer states, “We then must ask repeatedly what social divisions are at work? *How* are we divided in this institution or neighborhood and *how* do these groups interact?”⁶ These questions are exactly the type of questions that can be asked in our urban church example.

5. Why

The “why” question is arguably one of the most difficult aspects of social analysis because it enters into areas of conscious and unconscious motivations, explicit and implicit reasons, and acknowledged and unacknowledged needs and wants. Yet, to ask “why” unmask a simple question: what is the reason for what we have observed, examined, and analyzed around us? Who benefits from the situation remaining the way it currently is? Who will bear an unjust burden because of this set of relationships? In many ways, then, the “why” question forces the community to confront unjust social relationships and

begin to change them to just social relationships. This can be a point at which the community loses heart in its social analysis.

Before this step in the social analysis, the community focuses on establishing facts and relationships. Now those facts and relationships have judgments attached to them. At times these judgments can be contested among competing groups in the congregation. This is where the community needs to be reminded of St. Paul’s scriptural mandate: “I therefore...beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1–3). The community members may disagree about the reasons why relationships exist, but these differences can and must be negotiated toward the larger aim of understanding the situations they see around them.

It is this combination of practices — hospitality, social analysis, and compassion — that makes up the next required aspect of attentive teaching: the capacity to develop a critical mind and a discerning heart.

The Practice of Compassion: Forming Critical Minds and Discerning Hearts

So far we have seen that forming attentive teachers who are capable of teaching in diverse religious communities requires attending to hospitality and developing the skills to understand texts and contexts in a community through the method of social analysis. But these two aspects are not sufficient in and of themselves. Hospitality without analysis is compromised, for inhospitable actions could result from our attempts at hospitality. Social analysis uses critical thinking to articulate a clear-eyed understanding of social context, and its realities of privilege and discrimination. But human beings are more than the social forces and institutions that affect them. Human beings are also individuals who have hope and fears and needs and joys. Thus, hospitality

must be paired with social analysis, which must be paired with compassion.

It is this combination of practices — hospitality, social analysis, and compassion — that makes up the next required aspect of attentive teaching: the capacity to develop a critical mind and a discerning heart. Talvacchia uses this image to denote the fundamental spiritual grounding for multicultural teaching. She proceeds from an important assumption: the spirituality of multicultural teaching entails changing our understanding about those who are “other” to us, rather than merely changing our teaching techniques. This requires a spiritual conversion that entails attentiveness to the experiences of those who live the reality of marginalization, as well as a commitment to stand with socially marginalized groups and work with them in their empowerment (Talvacchia, 7). The practice of compassion is the act of attending to the experience of the other *and* a commitment to stand with and for the other’s empowerment.

Through attentiveness, which is grounded in the practice of compassion, the process of forming critical minds and discerning hearts takes place. Attentiveness involves connecting one’s heart empathetically to the real experiences of people living in a social system that frequently does not benefit them. Theologically, attentiveness involves what Thich Nhat Hanh refers to as “mindfulness,” that is, “keeping one’s consciousness alive in the present reality” (Hanh, 1987, 11). Attentiveness as mindfulness allows us to access compassion as a resource to understand the experiences of struggle that we and other human beings face. It means, as the late William Sloan Coffin challenged, “If you are not outraged, you are not paying attention.”

The practice of compassion is the grounding impulse of multicultural teaching. It embodies a tension in our understanding that allows us to see our students and ourselves both as unique persons *and* as members of social identity grouping(s). Holding these realities in tension is an important aspect of the practice of compassion: it is a spiritual practice. The spirituality of pedagogy sensitive to a multicultural community must embody this tension, for as Talvacchia states,

In order to teach effectively in a diverse context, teachers need a spirituality that engages both critical social analysis and empathic sensitivity. In short, a spirituality of multicultural teaching demands that teachers form themselves with *critical minds*, capable of seeing the social structural realities of society and their effects on learners, and *discerning hearts*, capable of viewing each person as an individual who has hopes,

dreams, aptitudes, skills, fears, insecurities and scars. The spirituality of multicultural teaching involves attentiveness to the twin realities of social discrimination and personal and group resistance to it. It is this combination of critical thinking and discerning compassion that marks teachers who are ready to engage the complexity as well as the rewards of teaching in diverse contexts. (Talvacchia, 10)

Attentive teaching necessarily holds in tension the reality of a critical mind and a discerning heart, and brings that spiritual stance to bear in our efforts to teach in a diverse context.

Step One: Listening and Understanding the Experience of the Other

Talvacchia articulates three steps in the process of spiritually forming a critical mind and a discerning heart. The first step listens to and understands the experience of the other. However, this can be only done through attentiveness to several concerns. To listen and understand experiences of others, we first need to seek to understand our own marginalization, or the lack of it, in relation to the experiences of others. This puts our world in dialogue with the world of others who are different from us. We seek to understand the marginalization of others empathetically. Next, we see those experiences of marginalization — both our own and others — from the perspective of power, understanding the privilege of some groups over others in an unjust society.

In the example of our urban church, this step might play out in the following way. An African American church schoolteacher who can access her own experiences of exclusion in the church has the possibility of greater empathetic awareness of the experience of exclusion that an immigrant member might feel. Experiences of marginalization can at times impede our awareness about how others too might be marginalized. A spiritual leap of faith and vision allows a person to access one’s own pains and compassionately stand with others who do not share the same history of marginalization. In this way, the practice of compassion invokes an attentiveness that translates into effective teaching in a diverse context.

Step Two: Seeing Clearly

The second step in developing a critical mind and discerning heart is seeing clearly. This involves attentiveness to conversion in our perception of the other — to turn away from the fear of those who are different and turn toward acceptance of differing worldviews and experiences. One of the challenges of

a diverse context for teachers is that they are required to communicate with and engage people with whom they might not have a basis to do so. For example, in our urban church scenario, a teacher at an adult education seminar who is from an upper middle-class economic background may bring certain assumptions about choices and possibilities for one's life that might not be true for someone of a lower economic class. Without a conversion to understanding clearly the experiences of another group and what is possible for them, this teacher will be ineffective and possibly offensive to others gathered.

Once you listen and understand empathetically, you have the potential of that awareness to convert you. This means awareness that others might have something to teach you that you cannot see due to your own privilege. For example, when you are reading the Bible with poor people, you have to be ready for them to lead you in an understanding about the Bible that may be outside of your framework.

Step Three: Acting Differently

The third step in developing a critical mind and a discerning heart challenges teachers to act differently. This involves integrating the steps of listening, understanding, and seeing clearly in our hearts and our minds so that our teaching practice demonstrably changes. Attentive teaching in a diverse context comprehends the experiences of others who are different, and accepts the conversion of heart and mind. This leads to acting differently, which forms convictions. These convictions ground attentive teaching in a moral sense of embracing diversity and responding to its demand pedagogically.

For example, let's return to our initial component of attentive teaching: the act of hospitality. Acting differently asks several questions of hospitality: who are the strangers among us? How do I/we interact with them? In my capacity as a teacher, how have I made space for and introduced the ongoing stories of a community? How has our worship changed to reflect the newcomers in our midst? How has our pedagogy and curriculum changed to incorporate the educational concerns of the new group? In what ways can we concretely establish a sense of welcome and inclusion in our educational programming? Acting differently challenges attentive teachers to not just "talk the talk" but to "walk the walk" so that genuine openness to a diverse community is embodied in our curriculum, our programs, and our worship.

...faith formation must embrace a spiritual stance of attentive teaching that grows and develops throughout a person's lifetime. We must be trained for the church of the present and anticipate the church of the future, grounded in the traditions of the past. The challenge and the hope of teaching in a diverse community is this: that we embrace our differences in finding our common vision and goal.

To be sure, taking this challenge seriously means that certain other programs may not be funded in this time of reduced resources and tight budgets. There will be some sacrifices to the "status quo" to make space and room to practice hospitality to the "strangers among us." But this is the conviction that leads to acting differently—a response to God's invitation to continue the process of co-creating God's kingdom here on earth. These and our everyday practices are all "tangled up with the things God is doing in the world" (Bass and Dykstra, 4).

Let us also be clear. We do not always do this well or perfectly. But when we set our teaching in this context, we, they, are transformed. So an innocent "aha" moment becomes a practice of thanksgiving. A shared experience of hurt during the course of the class becomes a practice of solidarity with the oppressed. Making space for a quiet shy student to articulate her understanding of a Bible verse becomes a practice of hospitality. These are all practices that, when seen "tangled up with the things God is doing in the world," become the activities of the Holy Ground. And we all take off our shoes.

"It is not that the world has become more multicultural. We have always been a world of pluralistic cultures and peoples....we now accept the reality of that pluralism as a norm" (Talvacchia, 1). The Pew study reminds us that the religious landscape is changing in the twenty-first century and that it will become more diverse in terms of ethnic groups, beliefs, and affiliations. To be formed in faith with practices and attitudes shaped solely by the demands of the twentieth century is inadequate. The only way that churches can accommodate the dramatic changes that have occurred from the

twentieth to the twenty-first centuries is to embrace and accept diversity as normative.

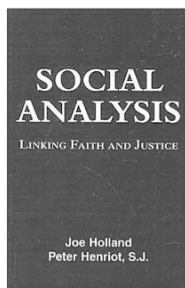
Negotiating these changes cannot be accomplished by a one-time teacher training session. Rather, faith formation must embrace a spiritual stance of attentive teaching that grows and develops throughout a person's lifetime. We must be trained for the church of the present and anticipate the church of the future, grounded in the traditions of the past. The challenge and the hope of teaching in a diverse community is this: that we embrace our differences in finding our common vision and goal.

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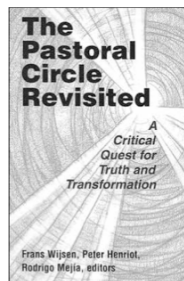
Resources for Social Analysis



Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice

Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, S.J. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983) [\$19]

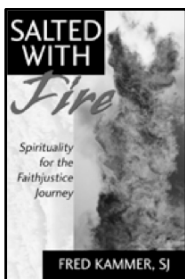
Social Analysis is the classic handbook to the pastoral circle, a four-step process that opens up dynamics for faith and action. The process—insertion, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral planning—can be applied to the a variety of settings: education and action for justice, small groups and large groups, and organizing people for social justice. This is still the best introduction to social analysis, combining the theory and practice of social analysis.



The Pastoral Circle Revisited

Frans Wiljzen, Peter Henriot, Rodrigo Mejia, editors. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005) [\$22]

To mark the 25th anniversary of the book, *Social Analysis*, this volume explores the use of the pastoral circle in parish and community life as well as in adult and higher education settings with articles from a variety of scholars and religious professionals. Helpful appendices lay out the basic steps in the pastoral circle.



Salted with Fire: Spirituality for the Faithjustice Journey

Fred Kammer S.J. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008) [\$18]

Salted with Fire blends the realities of social justice and the burdens of working for justice and peace with a hopeful spirituality. The author is a social service practitioner, who can deal both with the intricacies of social analysis as well as with a spirituality of coping, hoping, surviving, and even flourishing amidst often discouraging conditions and bureaucratic red tape. Adopting a four-fold "pastoral circle" as his conceptual tool, Kammer offers a solid, practical, and pastoral primer for those seeking to build a more humane and just society.