



SECTION 3

ASSOCIATION FOR THEOLOGICAL FIELD EDUCATION FLOURISHING THROUGH THEOLOGICAL FIELD EDUCATION

Flourishing for its own sake is not enough. In the same way, formation is not the end in and of itself. Mission statements from the two institutions that I served as a theological field educator underscore this. Western Theological Seminary in Holland, MI affirms in its mission statement: *Western offers rigorous academic study in a nurturing community to prepare men and women for the challenges and opportunities of ministry in today's world.* Similarly, Duke Divinity School claims as its mission: *Duke Divinity School's mission is to engage in spiritually disciplined and academically rigorous education in service and witness to the Triune God in the midst of the church, the academy, and the world.* Our shared work must have an end and an embrace as big as the world God so loves.

Because of our mission and the nature of our world, the interconnect- edness and mutuality that exists in personal relationships, faith and religious communities, and creation itself, we are called to reflect more broadly on this topic of flourishing. The mission of God compels us to this larger end. Thankfully, theological field educators who contributed to this volume have reflected both deeply and broadly on this topic of flourishing.

John McNally explores a facet of the cornerstone of theological field education, theological reflection. Journal writing as a discipline, McNally argues, offers the space to reflect on God's presence and guidance. The resulting alertness to what "God has done and is doing in, around, and through us" certainly grounds us as reflective practitioners, but also contributes to our personal flourishing.

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Dorothee Tripodi takes a cue from Bloom's work, "Resiliency is our capacity to adapt, change, and respond to life's challenges and also our capacity to grow, learn, and develop new capabilities and capacities."¹ The lens through which she explores this is the positive contribution through the mentoring relationship between student and supervisor-mentor.

Susan MacAlpine-Gillis takes a step back to explore the local context and flourishing. Certainly, it is in the best interest of a contextual education opportunity to have everyone thrive. What practices nurture, students, supervisor-mentors, and the site itself towards a mutual flourishing? Be sure to note her "recipe for mutual flourishing."

What about situations and experiences which cannot be considered flourishing? William Kincaid explores an often-overlooked dimension of Bloom's work which is recovery. From that important restorative experience Kincaid artfully engages the helpful metaphor that Bloom employs of the three stages on which a ministerial leader appears and how to make the most of each.

Sue Kim Park takes us to another important "stage;" Interreligious formation. Drawing on her rich experience at Union Seminary in New York City Park helps us consider the formation of our students' *posture* in addition to gaining competency and mastery of religious literacy in one's faith. In our pluralist context this type of formation seems imperative for negotiating one's ministry context grace-fully.

Finally, Sung Hee Chang offers a vision of formation that takes seriously what our mission statements espouse—ministry encounters that mean flourishing for the world. Chang masterfully engages the work of Miroslaf Volf and others to paint a picture of what this formation for flourishing looks like and what it means.

These excellent contributions demonstrate the continuing commitment by ATFE members to explore the breadth and depth of formation for ministry that supports the mission statements that we seek to fulfill.

Matthew Floding
Editor

NOTES

1 Matt Bloom, *Flourishing in Ministry*, 18.