

ted work for justice and respect for the other as the first step to authentic relationships across cultures and race.

Practitioners in congregations, community hospitals, and in academic circles will find this volume an invaluable resource at many different levels.

Isabel N. Docampo
Perkins School of Theology
Dallas, TX



Matthew Floding, ed., *Welcome to Theological Field Education!* (Herdon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011), 206 pp.

As one who has been immersed in the practice and teaching of field education for many years, my “ah ha” moment in reading Matthew Floding’s book was when I said: “I didn’t realize we needed it, but now that it’s here how did we get along without it?” *Welcome to Theological Field Education!* comes to us at just the right time, as our discipline is more needed than ever, but is also faced with the challenges of changing landscapes in theological education. Floding is director of formation for ministry and associate professor of Christian ministry at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan, and is also currently serving as chair of the Association for Theological Field Education.

Floding’s statement at the beginning, directed to students, provides a simple and elegant definition of our work: “Field education offers you a place to practice ministry and spaces to reflect on it so that you can grow toward competency in ministry.” Chapter 1 entitled, “What is Theological Field Education?” gives an informative overview, not only for students but for all who are connected to a seminary field education program. Floding’s “A Word to Supervisor-Mentors” is particularly valuable, lifting up the important role played by our ministry partners who directly oversee the students’ field work. Floding refers to this as a “holy responsibility.” Several of the contributors include in their chapters reflections that are specifically addressed to supervisors and mentors.

Because theological field education is, as Floding notes in his preface, “informed by many theoretical fields,” Chapters 2 through 11 are written by fellow scholars and practitioners; colleagues who are seasoned in pastoral and practical theology, supervised ministries, and leadership studies at seminaries across the continent. Authors and subject areas in these chapters include: “The Art of Supervision and Formation” by Charlene Jin Lee; “Ministerial Reflection,” Emily Click; “The Use of Case Studies in Field Education,” Tim Sensing; “The Power of Reflecting with Peers,” Donna Duensing; “The Forming Work of Congregations,” Lee Carroll; “Self-Care and Community,” Jaco Hamman; “Ministerial Ethics,” Barbara Blodgett; “Language and Leadership,” Lorraine Ste-Marie; “Considerations for Cross-Cultural Placement,” Joanne Lindstrom; and “Assessment and Theological Field Education” by Sarah Drummond.

Each chapter provides clear, accessible, and thoughtful writing on topics that those of us teaching in field education recognize as the fabric of our rich and complex discipline. The chapters on language and cross-cultural placement are particularly relevant. In Chapter 9, “Language and Leadership,” Lorraine Ste-Marie maintains that “language creates our reality.” She includes a “mental map” exercise that can lead us to identify the language of the assumptions that we hold dear, part of a larger process we can use for exploring our immunity to change. In Chapter 10, “Considerations for Cross-Cultural Placement,” Joanne Lindstrom reflects on themes from Romans 12:1–3: “non-conformity, transformation, and sober judgment.” These themes become the focus of her support and encouragement of those who undertake a field education placement that crosses cultural boundaries. Lindstrom indicates that students, supervisors, and ministry sites engaging in such a cross-cultural experience need to understand that the journey “requires great effort, intent, and compassion.”

Bringing all of the components of theological field education into one volume honors our work and gives everyone involved—students, supervisor/mentors, congregations, and field education directors—new understanding of its breadth and depth. I recommend that those of us who are field educators purchase a copy of *Welcome to Theological Field Education!* and give it to our seminary presidents and academic deans to read and discuss with us. This book inspires new energy for the tasks and the teaching of field education and makes me proud to be a part of

this discipline. Our work has not always been fully understood or celebrated—Floding’s book will be an important resource for changing that reality.

Nancy E. Hall
American Baptist Seminary of the West
Berkeley, CA

