



## SECTION 2 CREATIVE IMAGINATION AT WORK IN THEOLOGICAL FIELD EDUCATION

### *Editor's Introduction*

It will surprise no one to learn that Australia, New Zealand Association for Theological Field Education (ANZATFE) and Association for Theological Field Education (ATFE) members, when presented the opportunity to address the theme “creative imagination,” dove deeply into the cornerstones of theological field education, theological reflection, and supervision and mentoring. In addition, however, a particular disposition or perhaps skill is necessary to participate most fully in our student’s formational experience—flexibility. Christina Zaker, at Catholic Theological Union, writes in “High-Flex Field Field Education” that field educators “navigate borderlands as transformative spaces that bring the best out of their students and their teaching.” She demonstrates how the metaphor of operating in borderlands can release flexible creativity when engaging each student’s unique learning needs and context. Her article sets the tone for the explorations to follow.

Susan MacAlpine-Gillis underscores the value of context for imagining and reflecting on Scripture in “Moving beyond the Pages of Scripture: Journeying through the Fifth Gospel.” She and her New Testament scholar colleague took St. Jerome’s commendation to heart:

Five gospels recount the life of Jesus. Four are contained in scripture, the fifth is contained in the land they call Holy. Read the fifth gospel, and the world of the other four will open up to you.

MacAlpine-Gillis analyzes the powerful experience of her students in her course

that included travel to the Holy Land. "I cannot read the scriptures in the same way" was a shared outcome of her students.

Kate Beer engages the challenges of colonization in our formational structures in "Colonials or Co-Workers: Developing a Model for Providing Pastoral Supervision for Aboriginal Church Leaders in the Fourth-World Contexts of the Northern Territory, Australia." She imaginatively draws from the disciplines of Art-Based Supervision and Kaupapa supervision, a specialized form of supervision developed within a Maori worldview, to create a reflection process she calls the Territory Yarning Map. Creative imagination indeed.

Community of practice theory is a staple for most theological field educators. Its articulation of legitimate peripheral participation leading to deeper engagement with the support and encouragement of community helps both students and supervisor-mentors engage learning together with real intention. Learning is often articulated in the structure of student peer reflection groups. Daniel Corpening and Matthew Floding wondered if intentional peer groups made up of supervisor-mentors would enhance their supervision and mentoring. They share their results and a model that can be used in other contexts in "Community of Practice: Supervisor-Mentors Supporting Supervisor-Mentors."

Bruce Hulme incorporates Scripture (the Emmaus Road story), tradition (a labyrinth), philosophical insights, and a guided practice that builds for deeper formation and a model of reflective practice that can travel with students into their ministry. Hulme's article, "'Can You Talk the Walk?' A Summary of a Creative Approach to Reflective Practice for Formation," also provides helpful illustrations that can catalyze the creative use of this method in congregations and in communities of practice.

"The balanced reflective practitioner" is at the heart of Bethany Theological Seminary's vision for forming ministerial leaders. Dan Poole unpacks their process, from receiving a Wabash Grant through a curriculum redesign. Throughout, he shares how the power of imagination and metaphor artfully released their best energies. Theological field educators and others will appreciate the six learning goals and definitions he provides as an opportunity to reflect on their own program goals.

Finally, and also related to grant-funded research, is the first of two installments exploring the impact of the Lilly Endowment's Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative in three Association of Theological Schools-accredited institutions. First, Christina Zaker of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago helpfully describes the Initiative and provides a brief summary of the three schools' focus in engaging the Lilly opportunity. Theological field educators Steven Chambers at Vancouver School of Theology, Dan Poole at Bethany Theological Seminary, and Fr. Andrew Turner at St. Mary Seminary in Cleveland, Ohio, in turn share how this grant is empowering them to take stock of their formation programs and to dream big about potential change, driven by gathering data from surveys, interviews, conferencing, and more. In volume 44 of *Reflective Practice*,

Chambers, Poole, and Turner will reflect on the implementation of the plans that have emerged from their respective processes.

Each of these offerings are proof positive that theological field educators are drawing on their creative and imaginative best to invigorate their ministerial formation programs.

Matthew Floding  
Co-Editor