



SECTION 3 INTRODUCTION PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Editors' Introduction

In *Liberating Our Dignity, Saving Our Souls*¹ Lee H. Butler Jr., Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Academic Dean William Tabbernee Professor of the History of Religions and Africana Pastoral Theology at Chicago Theological Seminary empathically invites, educates, and empowers African Americans to create a new, liberating, and salvific communal identity. Butler highlights the popular quote “Crisis breeds creativity.” He believes that persons of African descent have always found themselves trying to survive a crisis of some form. Butler asserts that whether this crisis was African Enslavement (1619–1865) or the Jim Crow era (1865–1954) or the Civil Rights Movement (1950–1970), African Americans have always, either voluntary or involuntarily, had to create new ways of being and subsequently doing. Key to crafting this new identity, along with mission and purpose, is one’s capacity to embrace imagination. What makes this task difficult is that one’s capacity to imagine is inherently based on one’s ability to vision, dream, and create *in the face of* extreme external sociological pressure or crisis.

In this section, our brave contributors have picked up the mantle of engaging in the reflective practice of imagination through visioning, dreaming, and creating something new. They seek to answer the question, “What are new and exciting methods of ministry in the face of the health viruses, police violence, and political and social unrest that have plagued our country since 2020?” This is no simple question. These contributors seek to provide substantive, practical theological answers to ministry problems that many Christian pastors, CPE interns, and seminary students are confronted with today. With the surge of COVID-19, bad theology in preaching has gone viral as many Christian

pastors have stumbled to make meaning of this heinous health crisis. Geoff New gives us a poignant education on how to develop and preach theologically sound and healthy sermons by unleashing our prophetic imagination, especially during this most sensitive time.

In light of the killing of George Floyd in 2020, many theological students passionately desire a theological education grounded in social justice theory and practice. Sarah B. Drummond and Omena McCoy have answered this clarion call by laying the foundational groundwork for theological institutions to emulate in their creation of a social justice ministerial leadership education model.

Since 2020, not only have racial tensions arisen but there has also been a resurgence of female affirmation and empowerment. We have been challenged to take a hard look at the impact of patriarchy, male dominance, and gender oppression as it is revealed in various ministerial capacities. Marilyn Draper, Yau Man Siew, Lisa Pak, and Michael Krause invite us to examine vocational discernment and the nurturing of pastoral imagination among female interns at Tyndale Seminary.

As you read these articles, we hope your creative imagination is unleashed. We hope that you find hope in a reignited ministerial capacity that speaks to your new authentic identity and calling and speaks to it now. We hope that your identity and calling is reshaped, renewed, and refreshed for the fiery crisis you encounter today. May your imagination always burn!

Danielle Buhuro, Matthew Floding, and Nancy Wood
Co-Editors

NOTES

¹ Lee H. Butler Jr., *Liberating Our Dignity, Saving Our Souls: A New Theory of African American Identity Formation* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006).