

SECTION 2

ATFE and the Association for Reflective Practice in Theological Education (ARPTE, formerly known as ANZATFE)

MEMBERS ENGAGING MARGINALITY

Editor's Introduction

Formation at the margins in theological field education can be fruitful exploration, whether the margins are placement sites that explore novel ministry engagement, alternative theories of learning and reflection, or new ways of resourcing supervisor-mentors. From the margins, with a fresh perspective, we can imagine new ways of engaging formation for ministry.

Kate Beer invites us to consider the reflection theory of Jonathan Chambers inspired by the writings of Tilden Edwards in “The Three Voices.” In this beautifully integrated and embodied model, space is made for a conversation between the small ego voice, the rational voice, and the contemplative heart—the three voices. Her introduction to this model invites rich exploration and adaptation.

Another powerful theory is explored by Sung Hee Chang in “Exploring Weaving Stories.” She explores the significance of connecting various stories—biblical, personal, congregational, and cultural—in theological reflection and proposes an interdisciplinary narrative way of theological reflection based on the story-weaving work by two Asian American female theologians.

Christy Woodbury Moore considers another marginal space in formation for ministry—the nexus between self-knowledge and self-care. Her discovery that seminary students experience increased self-knowledge and cultural sensitivity when contextual education requires self-care reflective work could add a new dimension to our shared work.

The pandemic often felt like it pushed theological field education to the margins as congregations and other sites learned to function remotely. Bonnie Lemelle Abadie reflects on her program at Oblate School of Theology to discern the essence of reflective practice. She employs Richard Osmer’s reflection method to describe what took place in theological field education in San Antonio, Texas, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lee Beach leans into the theme by reflecting on Israel’s Babylonian exile to glean insights into the current existential experience of the church in North America. In the prayer language of Israel found in the book of Lamentations and in a number of psalms, Beach finds perspectives that will inform practices for ministerial formation in these challenging days.

Finally, Daniel Poole and Maggie Elwell explore the impact of Bethany Seminary’s Lilly Pathway grant implementation by way of a case study that explores marginality in the formation of a particular student.

The contributions of the Association for Reflective Practice in Theological Education (ARPTE) and the Association for Theological Field Education members in this volume demonstrate the creativity and resilience with which they and our other colleagues engage theological field education for student ministerial formation that is contextually sensitive and even prophetic.

Matthew Floding
Editor

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