

SECTION 2 FOCUSING ON WHAT IS 'IN BETWEEN'



Editor's Introduction

Recently, I participated in a group discussion of psychotherapists and spiritual directors. We were sharing where and how each of us experiences the divine. At one point, a spiritual director proclaimed, "God is not up there . . . God is in here" (gesturing toward his heart). Reflecting some on this statement, I decided that there are merits and deficits to both looking for God "up there" and "in here" and that, ultimately, neither metaphor is completely satisfactory. I proposed to the group that perhaps God is also to be experienced in the 'in between'—in between people in the interactions and dynamics of community, of caregiving, and even of conflict resolution work. I suspect that many of the readers of *Reflective Practice* would concur that they experience the divine most clearly, but not exclusively, in the crucible of human relationships.

Coincidentally, at about the same time as the group discussion I received the first essay in this section, which is by Vhumani Magazi, associate professor of pastoral care at North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa. Magazi also uses the metaphor of 'in between.' His essay focuses on pastoral care to migrants who live in between—in between two nations, two cultures, and two spiritualities. Magazi proposes an assessment model to help spiritual caregivers evaluate the needs of migrants. For him, the primary vehicle for delivering this care is the local congregation. The experience of being in transition, or in between, might be the occasion when the Divine can break through in new ways.

In a similar way, Carol Kuzmochka, instructor at the Centre for Ministry Formation at Saint Paul University in Canada, is also focused on the in between. In this case, she is exploring the conflicts that arise between people. She describes the Thomas-Kilmann model of conflict response modes. She believes it is a very useful and effective model that is applicable to con-

gregational conflicts and suggests that it ought to be taught to seminarians in their field education work. With such a tool in hand, ministers and pastoral leaders will not be so quick to run from conflict but will manage conflict in ways that reveal God's dynamic presence.

Along with clinical pastoral education, the field education experience is the other primary crucible where the dynamics of formation and supervision play out in helpful ways to form seminarians as professional leaders of their respective religious traditions and institutions. Much of the process of formation is narrative, the forming, reforming, and embracing of formative stories. Matthew Floding and his colleagues, who are well known in the Association for Theological Field Education, explore the role that formational stories play in shaping students and continuing to shape the work that supervisors do. Clinical theological educators are skilled at listening to the stories students bring to supervision and, at the same time, are informed and shaped by their own formative stories. Faith narratives point to the presence of God in human relationships.

Next, Tom Kelly shares in poetic form his formative story "Giant Stand," a story of something that happened between him and his father that gave birth, ultimately, to spiritual liberation.

Finally, Christina Zaker completes this section with her essay "The Anatomy of a Site Visit," in which she takes a "deep dive" into the details of a field education site visit and explores ways to make such visits a growth experience for both the students and the site supervisors. Zaker, who is director of contextual education at the Chicago Theological Union, offers many helpful pieces of practical advice and guidance gleaned from her many years of experience. This is a hands-on essay, one that can serve as a primer for practical theologians beginning their work as directors of field education or for experienced directors needing a refresher or critique regarding what they do as well as ideas on how to do it better.

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Editor