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## CULTIVATING A SPIRIT FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE: TEACHING THROUGH ORAL HISTORY

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### *Abstract*

The thesis of this article is that teaching through oral history cultivates a spirit for justice and peace, as well as knowledge and skills that contribute to that spirit. The authors examine periodical literature focused on justice and peace education and analyze a course taught through oral history. Both the literature and case study yield thematic insights. The dialogue between them suggests educational practices that serve justice and peace: engaging in active, practical learning; encountering cultural, contextual, and pedagogical diversity; analyzing social systems; building strong, multivalent learning communities; fostering imagination, wonder, and empathy; inspiring creative agency; and challenging with encouragement.

The value of a person's life work is difficult to discern... Oral history provides a way to listen to another closely, to analyze that person's life and work in relation to a larger context, and to draw out insights for theory and practice.

—Syllabus, Prophetic Pioneers in Religious Education<sup>1</sup>

If education has a major role in humanization and contributing to a better world, how can all courses, not just those with explicit justice and peace content, cultivate a spirit for justice and peace? We explored this question in a course called “Prophetic Pioneers in Religious Education”—a course designed to “explore religious education history, issues, and visions through life story, contextual analysis, and educational theories, practices, and cultural ‘products’” (Syllabus). The subjects of this class were people who pioneered in religious education in the past century, along with three living women whom the class interviewed to gather their stories and draw upon their wisdom.

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<sup>1</sup>This course, co-taught in fall 2004, is the case study of this article. We thank the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning Theology and Religion for supporting the Oral History Project, based in the Women in Theology and Ministry Program, Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

The guiding thesis of this study is that *teaching through oral history has potential to cultivate a spirit for justice and peace and to enlarge pedagogical insights in current justice and peace literature*. Such teaching enables students to discover knowledge that shapes a just-peace spirit, and to develop skills for living in just peace in the present and future. The claim here is not that oral history is the only way by which these goals can be reached. We simply offer oral history as a distinctive educational approach that has value to equip people for life-giving relations with others, whether in education, ministry, public activism, or other vocations. To investigate this possibility, we analyze and put into dialogue two sources that pertain to justice and peace—periodical literature focused on such education and a case study of the Prophetic Pioneers class. In both, we seek pedagogical clues for teaching justice and peace, especially clues not previously identified.

### EDUCATING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

What pedagogical practices contribute to justice, peace, and ecological well-being? Before proceeding with the case study, we seek a large picture of the educational discussion on justice and peace. In this article, we paint this picture with a periodical review of three major religious education journals over the past ten years: *Journal of Religious Education*, *British Journal of Religious Education*, and *Religious Education*.<sup>2</sup> The review allows us to probe the current dialogue in religious education and to flip the question Anne Wimberly (2003) asked in her 2002 APRRE presidential address: “What kinds of exercises of power in relationships militate against the relational qualities of justice, kindness, humility, love, and peace in our own institutions, in our communities, in our nation, and in our world?” (284–85). To pursue our research question, we scanned every article, selecting and analyzing those that addressed education for justice and peace, seeking to discover which relational qualities *nourish* a spirit for justice and peace.

Contrary to earlier work in moral education by John Wilson and others, many scholars writing today emphasize that rationalism does not guarantee change. As Michael Grimmit (1994) articulates, “It

<sup>2</sup>Review included: *British Journal of Religious Education*, spring 1994 through spring 2005; *Religious Education*, winter 1995 through spring 2005; and *Journal of Religious Education*, 1999–2005 (60% of issues, as available).

cannot be assumed that the dissemination of information about, for example, the religious beliefs and cultural values of ethnic minorities will, in itself, counter and modify attitudes of racial prejudice or inhibit racist behavior on the part of others” (137–38). Thus, we cannot simply teach students about justice and peace; we must also change *how* we teach (cf. Bellett 1998).

Discussions of justice and peace occupy much space in current religious education dialogue, especially if we consider both implicit and explicit approaches. For instance, work on inclusivity and human relationships has an implied connection with justice and peace. Consider Gayle Felton’s (1996) writing on teaching toward gender and ethnic inclusivity, in which she asserts, “Prejudice, bigotry, discrimination, and superiority are learned attitudes and behavior” (154). Felton’s argument that people learn negative behavior suggests, by extension, that people can also learn positive attitudes, such as respect, mutuality, and empathy. In this vein, Mary Elizabeth Moore (1995a) claims that respectful human relationships “undergird the justice and peace of the world” (224). Indeed, as we will see in this literature review, many religious educators have considered how to promote respectful human relationship through religious education.

In selecting articles for thematic analysis, we have erred on the side of inclusion, especially as concerns two genres of literature. First, we incorporated articles focused *implicitly* on justice and peace, such as studies of education for: values and virtues (Arweck and Nesbitt 2004; Ingall 1998; Kung 1995; Reiher 1999); liberation (Bellett 1998); human rights (Gearon 2002; Kung 1995); great souled-persons (McArdle 2001); and spiritual approaches to social justice (Yob 1995). Second, we included reports on oral history and life-history research since it casts light on oral history as a teaching method for justice and peace (Bowman 1996; Sikes and Everington 2001). With this background, we turn now to themes in the literature review.

### *Encountering Difference: Mirror, Window, and Conversations*

One major question in education for justice and peace is how to ensure that students encounter difference in positive ways, especially because these encounters potentially can lead to violence and injustice. Susanna Hookway (2002) offers a helpful schema to organize diverse approaches to difference, describing education as mirror, window, and conversation. Whereas Hookway’s focus is on the millennial generation, her work resonates with other research.

*Mirror.* Paradoxically, religious education as mirror—coming to know oneself and one’s values, beliefs, and cultural influences—is an important part of preparing students for encounters with difference. Researchers describe diverse approaches that resonate with Hookway’s mirror: evoking students’ pre-understandings (Streib 1998); inviting students to name their cultural and existential experiences (Foster 1997); encouraging people to know their religious tradition (Brelsford 1995); attending to biases and emotions (Moore 1995a); increasing consciousness of our own perspectives (Grimmitt 1994); conscientizing based on students’ realities (Bellett 1998); and raising historical and political critical consciousness (Gearon 2002). The sheer number of authors who deal with this theme suggests that knowing oneself and one’s environment is crucial to engaging difference positively. Norma Cook Everist (2001) suggests a reason why: drawing on participants’ lived experience is non-coercive and non-violent. Further, knowledge of the self, when paired with encounters with difference, helps people avoid the unwitting projection of their own views onto others.

*Window.* Whereas some religious educators advocate self-understanding as a beginning point, Shelley Barlow (2000) contends, with Emmanuel Levinas, that a just society will only happen when we give priority to the other, asking, “Who is my neighbor?” People thus need what Hookway calls “window” encounters with difference, an emphasis that permeates recent research. Gordon Mitchell (1995) reasons, for example, that educating South African students in diverse religious traditions may diminish racism, because race and religion are often linked. Evelina Orteza y Miranda (1994) believes that tolerance of people with different religious backgrounds will only happen when we teach all religions in their particularity. Susan Laird (1995) learns from Jane Addams and her settlement-house work with immigrants that “education for and by such encounters could be crucial to foster the possibility of religious freedom and diversity without violent intolerance” (125). Gayle Felton (1996) concludes, “Personal experiences with persons of different gender, socio-economic background, and ethnic heritage are essential in building relationships of respect” (158). Finally, Margaret Ann Crain and Jack Seymour (1996) discover that ethnographic research is itself transformative when it engenders respectful relations among ethnographers, interviewees, and communities.

Hookway’s mirror and window (self- and other-orientations) may indeed be complementary. Eileen Bellett (1998), for example, sees conscientization (mirror) and critical solidarity with others (window) as *mutual* movements in education for liberation. Karl Nipkow (1999) similarly advocates balancing self- and other-awareness in inter-faith education. He concludes that students need to have education in their own religious tradition *and* in inter-faith perspectives.

*Conversation.* This discussion suggests a third educational approach to encountering difference—conversation as a meaningful dialogue between two parties, in which both parties are open to change. This is precisely what Mary Elizabeth Moore (1995b) proposes in considering how to teach Christian particularity in a pluralistic world. This suggests that people need more than knowledge of self and others; they need conversation among these diverse realities.

A compelling example of classroom conversation is Kevin O’Grady’s (2003) ethnographic action research with students in England (year eight). Seeking to understand student motivations, O’Grady sponsored conversation on three levels: (1) between students and himself as teacher, allowing student questions about topical content and learning activities to influence his lesson planning; (2) between the subject (Islam) and students’ experiences, beginning studies with questions that interest students, such as Muslim dress; (3) among students, utilizing small group work. Such emphasis on conversation, together with self-reflection and encounters with difference, offers significant clues for education that fosters justice and peace.

### ***Fostering Imagination, Wonder, and Empathy***

Researchers also consider how to foster imagination, wonder, and empathy through religious education—qualities implicitly related to education for justice and peace. For example, Reijo Heinonen (1995) links imagination and global responsibility, arguing that imagination encourages value-based decision making and counterbalances instrumental thinking, which has magnified the north–south gap, inequality between rich and poor, and unbalanced relationships between humanity and nature.

Wonder and empathy also seem to be pre-conditions for genuine and transformative encounters with difference. Kate Siejk (1995) names wonder as “the creative condition for religious dialogue,” because it helps us recognize that the other has something to say, that

we may be changed by what is said, and that respect and openness to change are demanded by true dialogue. She adds that a contemplative attitude helps people balance fidelity to their own values with openness to others. This requires pedagogies that draw on imagination. Similarly, Jeff Astley (1994) accents the importance of empathy as the imaginative comprehension of another's viewpoint, and Anabel Proffitt (1998) emphasizes wonder as a source of reverence, epistemological humility, and appreciation. "We are confronted with otherness," she writes, "and in wonder we allow that otherness to be, and do not attempt to incorporate it into our existing categories of explanation" (108).

Although wonder and empathy are important pre-conditions for just and peaceful encounters across difference, they can also be the result of such encounters. Edward Everding and Lucinda Huffaker (1998) describe how human encounters with difference foster empathy by expanding people's experiences and challenging their indifference. Besides encounters with difference, religious educators name four other strategies for fostering imagination, wonder, and empathy.

First, Heinz Streib (1998) and Jan Grajczonek (2001) find fiction useful in invoking imagination and empathy, partially because fiction nurtures one's consciousness of difference. Fiction helps people transcend rational explanations and immediate understandings because it presents particulars, while opening the possibility that things could be otherwise. Second, Mary Elizabeth Moore (1998) and Ross Keating (2004) highlight the power of poetry to open imagination, empathy, and wonder. Moore (1998) understands poetry as "created on bridges between contrasting realities" (269). She notes how it focuses our attention on relationships and connects us with the "rawness and depth of life" and with Divine reality (274). Third, Susan Willhauck (1996) recognizes how faith language and liturgical practice can challenge our assumptions about what *is*, thus leading us into imaginative spaces of what *might be* and what we *might do* to reach this reality. Finally, Joyce Miller (2003) celebrates the potential of the visual arts to stimulate and enhance imagination and empathy. She adds that imagination and empathy allow students to enter into religious stories, visualize diverse events and places, and respond to symbolism and artistic expressions, thus enabling students "to draw their learning into a coherent whole" (210–11). In conclusion, religious education that includes fiction, poetry, liturgy, visual arts, and oral histories can undergird justice and peace by opening people to new realities, to Divine presence, and to respectful encounter with others.

### *Evoking Environmental Awareness and Cosmological Critique*

A third theme in the literature centers on ecology. Although ecological education is not always associated with justice and peace, it is included here for two reasons. First, as Ruth Conway and Brenda Watson (1998) articulate, ecological justice and social justice go together. Second, three of the authors attending to ecological education call for new cosmologies and anthropologies that move beyond anthropocentrism (McArdle 2001; Chamberlain 2000; Treston 2001) and stir fresh visions of justice and peace. For example, Kevin Treston (2001) names values of a creation-centered religious education that are implicitly related to justice and peace: (1) an anthropology where human beings are understood within the web of creation; (2) egalitarian, rather than hierarchical, relationships; (3) ethics based in earth care and justice, emerging from "reverence for life, interdependence of all creatures, human stewardship, giftedness of life and ecosystem sustainability"; and (4) affirmation of dignity for all, equal rights, and the common good (7). Karl Ernst Nipkow (1999) understands sensitizing students to ecological issues as a first step in ecological education that will promote ecologically responsible behavior. Although teaching *about* ecological issues is important, simple changes in educational content are not sufficient to promote just and peaceful relations with creation. We also need to envision *ways* of teaching that sensitize individuals and support ecological well-being.

### *Unmasking Violence*

A fourth theme in the periodicals is unmasking violence. An excellent example is Ilan Gur-Ze'ev's (2000) article on the link between Holocaust education in Israel and the Israeli/Arab conflict. Gur-Ze'ev reveals how Jewish-Israeli identity is linked to a particular version of the Holocaust memory, which claims that Jews are the true sufferers and neglects the suffering of other genocidal victims of the twentieth century. Advocating for education that recognizes all genocides, he writes:

This is the only way to save Judaism in Israel from the dogmatism and violent institutionalism. . . . The teaching of the miseries of other people and education for empathy is not only an alternative to the anti-Judaic orientation of the hegemonic Zionist ideology, it also represents a resistance to and refusal of the current Israeli instrumentalist-egoistic and ethnocentric interpretations of Judaism and its educational implications. (382)

Gur-Ze'ev critiques educational approaches that neglect other sufferers and foster violence toward those identified as others and enemies. An important step in unmasking violence is thus to examine how the existing curriculum perpetuates violence and injustice. This is precisely the first action Russell Moy (2000) suggests for religious educators who seek to counteract racism, which persists as a null curriculum in education.

A second element in unmasking violence is attending to language. Gayle Felton (1996) insists that language is important to dismantling racism and sexism because language shapes people's thinking. To this end, we also need to be aware of violent language, such as the popular framing of conflicts as "culture war" (emphasis ours, Elliott 1999). Extrapolating from these critiques of harmful language, we might conclude that language centered in justice, peace, and ecological well-being could help end violence, injustice, and ecological degradation.

### ***Connecting Education with the "Real World"***

A final theme in the periodicals is the importance of connecting education for justice, peace, and ecological well-being with the lived experience of students. Carol Ingall's (1998) ethnographic study of a Jewish day school offers a paradigmatic example of contextualizing curriculum for the good of a community. Two goals of the day school are to foster Jews with critical minds and compassionate hearts and to stop dividing the "real world" from Judaism. To address these goals, teachers create curriculum on Jewish values, choosing a monthly theme that crosses curricular areas. The school's identity as a caring community is fostered by this homegrown curriculum, which meets student needs and supports the school's vision of a moral community.

Service in the community is another means for connecting education with the "real world." After investigating the history of the term solidarity, Michael Kelly (1998) recommends that education be grounded in metaphors of connection, recognizing that student experiences of connection and service can promote solidarity with the oppressed. Additionally, Kelly encourages religious educators to remember and re-tell stories of disconnection: "These stories disturb consciousness and counter the perennial tendency to forget that both individuals and groups pay the costs of systems that benefit the majority" (1998, 62). Similar emphases are developed in the extended case study of St. Francis High School in Youniss and Yates (1997).

Educators actually advocate many ways for connecting education with lived experience: urging those in churches to speak the language of the public as well as the language of faith (Willhauck 1996); using the action research cycle of observing, reflecting, planning, and acting to study religious communities and facilitate improvements (Martin 2000); and inviting people to reflect theologically on their lives and work (Everist 2001).

### **CASE STUDY: TEACHING THROUGH ORAL HISTORY**

The literature, as we have seen, addresses questions of *how* and *why* to teach for justice and peace. Implicitly, the same literature raises our research question: *how and why to cultivate a spirit for justice and peace in teaching across a curriculum*. A "spirit for justice and peace" is *an embodied passion for life-giving relations with the human community and natural world*. "To cultivate" is *to give students opportunities to explore this spirit of justice and peace as they engage with others in the classroom, reflect on subject matter, attend to others' stories, and draw wisdom from diverse sources*. Although recent literature suggests possibilities for cultivating such a spirit, a case study promises to unearth others. We thus begin with a brief description of our Prophetic Pioneers in Religious Education class, followed by a multifaceted analysis and the wisdom it reveals.

#### ***Introduction: Commitments and Practices***

As described in the introduction, the purpose of "Prophetic Pioneers. . ." was to "explore religious education history, issues, and visions through life story, contextual analysis, and educational theories, practices, and cultural 'products.'" We did this through a series of topics and related assignments.

1. **Introduction:** The class began by reflecting on students' experiences with religious education and historical movements in the field. From the beginning, stories were the backbone of the class—informing, posing questions, building community, challenging. The first class thus opened with a gathering ritual in which students shared something from their educational narratives, and much of the course revolved around the narratives of living pioneers. Consistently stories came first and analysis followed,

yielding conscientization, community-building, and educational insight from class members, interviewees, and texts.

2. **Exemplars:** We moved from introduction to encountering the lives and work of prophetic pioneers, such as Paulo Freire and women in Christian religious education (collected in the Christian Educators of the 20th Century Project, Talbot School of Theology). We approached the several texts with a common set of questions: (a) How does this text address you; (b) what were the person's central educational commitments, and how were these intertwined with the person's life journey and social context; (c) how do you evaluate the person's contribution; (d) what do you learn from the person about human existence, Christian vocation, and religious education; and (e) what visions of religious education does the person stir for you?

We sought to engage exemplars in a way faithful to the author or subject under discussion. For example, as a gathering ritual the day we discussed Freire's *Pedagogy of Hope*, we asked students to read a quotation from the book that spoke to them, reinforcing Freire's notion of reading that makes a difference. Further, we sought to teach in ways resonant with oral history, for instance, by seeking larger truths through negotiating multiple stories and analyzing our own social locations.

3. **Art of Oral History:** Our approach in the course was to hear and engage with the voices of others in an effort to understand their stories, work, and contributions. This involved discussing the purposes and values of oral history (informed by Elaine Lawless's *Holy Women, Wholly Women*) and reflecting on oral history methods and preparation (informed by Donald A. Ritchie's *Doing Oral History*). In addition, we sought to embody the figures we studied, as in asking students to portray the women pioneers in a simulated conference on the future of religious education. Later in the course, we engaged with Lawless's *Holy Women, Wholly Women* by asking students to present the women's stories to the class in a mock-interview format. Our purpose throughout was to understand each life story and text with its merits and distinctive logic, before engaging it critically.
4. **Discovering Educational Wisdom through Oral History:** We sought to mine all of our oral histories, texts, and class sharing for educational wisdom. This involved theoretical analysis of biographies and oral histories, as in the assignment for students to write a portrait paper and to identify projections for religious education in

light of this person's influence. We also encouraged integrative reflection by revisiting texts and encouraging students to build on previous work in their written assignments. The five focus questions exemplars (listed in #2 above) contributed to this reiteration process.

5. **Human Values of Biography and Oral History:** We sought throughout the course to expose ourselves to diverse peoples and pedagogical experiences through biographies and oral histories. Students engaged diverse peoples through the readings; they read and listened to oral histories; they collected oral histories; and they experienced the class's diversity in discussion and project work. We also employed diverse pedagogical practices, such as small group work, class discussions, rituals, and dramatization. Our intention was to maximize the values of biography and oral history, which we discussed explicitly in relation to the readings, such as: Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women's Words*; Alan Wieder, *Voices from Capetown Classrooms*; and Diane Tickton Shuster, *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning*.
6. **Oral History Preparation and Interviews:** Finally, we studied the backgrounds of three living pioneers and conducted interviews with them. Small groups prepared one interview each: developing a method for their interview, researching their interviewee, and conducting the interview. The value in this exercise was obviously to collect an oral history, but the further value was to develop guidelines and build skills for interviewing prophetic pioneers, practices that will serve students well in their future ministries. We began working on guidelines and skills on the first day when we analyzed the content and process of an oral history interview with Olivia Pearl Stokes. Later we practiced ethogenic analysis to discover salient themes in a community-based oral history of the New Town Florist Club. Similarly, students had opportunities to practice the art of interviewing, taking roles of interviewer, interviewee, and observer. Such skills of attentive listening, insightful questioning, respect, and hospitality are necessary for oral history, as for teaching and ministry.

### *Student Perceptions*

In addition to analyzing the course design, we also scrutinized student perceptions of the course. During the final session, students

completed an anonymous evaluation. Two Likert scale statements help evaluate the course's contribution to a spirit for justice and peace. First, in response to the statement, "This course helped me to appreciate and learn from views different from my own," six students strongly agreed and six agreed. Second, in response to the statement, "This course has encouraged respect for and engagement with matters of race, gender, and class," eight students strongly agreed, and four agreed. According to these measures, all students agreed to a relatively strong extent that this course promoted respectful engagement with difference.

To analyze students' responses to open-ended evaluation questions, we tallied frequent words and phrases. We then clustered these, calculating the occurrences of each cluster to see how strongly they were perceived by the class. We identified the following clusters, beginning with the most heavily weighted (frequencies in parentheses). The twelve students in "Prophetic Pioneers" experienced:

1. **Developing pedagogical awareness (44).** Students frequently described the course as heightening their awareness of pedagogy, referring particularly to: religious education, learning, methods, blending of spiritual practices with academic learning, course design, class activities, and "different paradigm."
2. **Practical knowing (44).** Here students used words such as insightful, interesting, effective, relevance, concrete, informative, and useful, indicating that knowledge gained in the class would be practical for their future work.
3. **Positive learning (38).** Eleven students answered positively that the course had met or exceeded their expectations. Students also added positive comments such as: enjoyed, keep it up, engaging, and no notable weakness.
4. **Encountering cultural and pedagogical diversity (36).** Five students commented on the diverse content, texts, or class activities in the course.
5. **Active learning (34).** Students used many active verbs to describe their experience in the class, such as discover, explore, read, think, question, share, search, and interview.
6. **Engaging with prophetic pioneers (33).** Not surprisingly, students expressed the importance of prophetic pioneers, both the general category and particular figures who were innovators, leaders, and mentors.
7. **Forming learning community (30).** Three students used the phrase "learning community" to describe their experience in the

class; other students used words such as cooperative, sharing, and together.

8. **Creating wisdom (27).** Two students mentioned the creativity of the course; four students commented on the wisdom communicated and evoked by the professor, teaching assistant, and other students.
9. **Practicing hospitality (24).** Three students referenced the kindness of the professor; three used the word "open"; two wrote about how the professor encourages students; and two described how she motivates students. Other hospitality terms were: affirming, comfortable, loving, available, and concern for students.
10. **Participating in experimental pedagogy (24).** Although five students made no comment about weaknesses, one student was troubled by not knowing the weight of each assignment until near the end of the term; one student called the course a "trial run"; and three students named the course as disorganized.
11. **Participating in oral histories (22).** Three students referenced the oral history project as valuable, and two mentioned the interviews.
12. **Meeting challenges (8).** Four students spoke of the course as challenging, referring to course design and the instructor's challenge of students.
13. **Ritualizing (6).** Students referred to prayer, ritual, spiritual practices, and reflection to describe the ritual aspects of the class. One student enjoyed the way class always opened with a gathering ritual.

### *Discoveries in the Practice of Teaching through Oral History*

To conclude the case study, we identify conclusions that emerged in class discussions and presentations. These conclusions first emerged in the second to fourth weeks when the class identified educational commitments of Paulo Freire and women pioneers. Similar themes emerged throughout the semester, leading us to identify and expand on these educational values as central to the course:

- **Focusing attention on those usually denied it,** especially women, children, and those marginalized in religious communities. Students recognized, for example, the commitment of South African educators to the full personhood of black students during apartheid.

- **Committing to making a difference in the world and persevering within oppressive systems.** Students admired religious educators such as Olivia Pearl Stokes and the ministers whom Lawless interviewed for following their vocational calls and visions for ministry in the face of external obstacles. They also valued Freire's and Capetown teachers' emphases on the political nature of education, and they noticed that educators such as Eileen Egan and Olivia Pearl Stokes were committed to educating for justice and peace among diverse peoples.
- **Attending to the contexts of educational ministry** and recognizing how contexts influence teachers and learners. Olivia Pearl Stokes, for example, grounded religious education in people's experiences, and students noticed her stress on speaking others' language (without compromising her own integrity) in order to reach students.
- **Educating the whole person at all ages during the whole week,** including attention to "multiple intelligences." Students recognized the commitment of Edna Baxter and Adelaide Case to connect religious education with all areas of life, helping people link "Sunday" and religion with their daily lived experience. They also saw the commitment of many educators to develop innovative curriculum grounded in Christian belief and the Bible, as well as the arts, narratives, and human religious experience. Although the educators we studied mostly predated the term "multiple intelligences," they knew the importance of using diverse learning activities to meet the needs of diverse learners.
- **Building bridges** between science and religion, between traditionalism and progressivism, across cultures and generations, between church and home, and between practice and theory. For instance, students recognized in the ministry of Taylor and June McConnell the commitment to multicultural dialogue, particularly among the Pueblo and Hispanic people in New Mexico with whom they lived. Another major bridge-building theme emerged in the interviews, namely an emphasis on intergenerational conversations and partnerships between families and faith communities.
- **Practicing hospitality** and accepting "others" as guests. The importance of creating a welcoming learning environment was a particularly salient theme in our discussion of Schuster's *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning*, as well as in the three class interviews.

The class and teaching team also drew conclusions about oral history purposes: (1) creates a forum for emotion-laden stories; (2) values human lives; (3) reveals textures of social movements, often uncovering marginalized movements; (4) creates safe space for stories of terror and hurt, sometimes even space for healing; (5) raises consciousness about the plights of hurting people; and (6) stirs imagination and courage for action. Other functions also exist, but this short list reveals the power of oral history methods to cultivate a spirit for justice and peace.

In sum, this case study offers clues to guide education for justice and peace. One is to value human life in educational practice, especially those who are undervalued in the larger society. Another is to give people tools and opportunities to learn about and empathize with others, which contributes to mutual respect, hospitality, and healing. Still another is to create opportunities for people to discern and analyze social phenomena—diverse communities, cultural contexts, and social movements. Finally, a critical value is to inspire and equip people for action—to help people discern the aches of this world and make positive contributions to life.

### STEPPING BACK AND STEPPING FORWARD FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

Having analyzed periodical literature and a case, we bring our analyses into dialogue, seeking clues that point toward justice and peace in religious education. The emergent values promise to foster a spirit for justice and peace.

#### *Engaging in Active, Practical Learning*

One obvious pedagogical value emerged from the literature and case study—to engage people in active, practical learning. As the literature pointed to the urgency of education that connects with the "real world," so students in *Prophetic Pioneers* valued opportunities to explore, discover, question, interview, and engage with pioneers and other class members. Both reinforce the importance of helping people construct knowledge and develop skills for future work, especially skills of searching for knowledge, attending to others, practicing hospitality, asking honest questions, and engaging in collaborative analysis and theory-construction. Such skills undergird collaborative human relationships and enhance people's abilities to contribute to

the long, ever-changing process of building justice and peace in the world.

### ***Encountering Cultural, Contextual, and Pedagogical Diversity***

A second pedagogical theme is to help people encounter cultural, contextual, and pedagogical diversity. This is a major theme in the literature, especially engaging learners with people different from themselves. In the course, this value was intentionally planned and also emphasized in student evaluations. Students appreciated the richly textured stories that evoked sadness, anger, laughter, and inspiration. Indeed, their insights resonate with Susanna Hookway's metaphorical mirror, window, and conversation. The class enacted the mirror in such ways as sharing stories of their religious education experiences and reflecting on how prophetic pioneers addressed them. We enacted the window in studying pioneers' lives and conversation in class discussions, dramatizations, role-plays, and small group interviews.

Education that cultivates a spirit for justice and peace requires more than pleasant moments of interacting with diversity. It requires intentionality in engaging peoples and contexts on the social margins, and efforts to discern the wisdom of each community or individual studied. It also entails opportunities to do contextual analysis and investigate social conflict, whether in a particular community (New Town Florist Club) or larger society (South Africa). Further, it demands pedagogical diversity—a strong lesson of the case study. Pedagogical diversity engages a learning community in multiple ways of knowing, thus evoking more complex and extensive learning. Within that pedagogical feast, oral history is a vibrant way to encounter diversity. It tills the soil for more respectful human relationships, thus helping people to learn from other human lives and social movements, understand social conflict more complexly, learn from those who have worked directly and indirectly for justice and peace, and develop skills for building just and peaceful communities in the future.

### ***Analyzing Social Systems***

Arising naturally from the previous value is another: to analyze social systems. Both the literature and case study reinforce Paulo Freire's adage that education is never neutral. In the class, we repeatedly discovered how pioneer educators understood and contributed to revolution in their social contexts, whether local religious communities,

denominational structures, higher education, or other systems. In some cases, their revolution was to advocate for children and develop more adequate educational approaches for young people (Sophia Lyon Fahs, Dorothy Jean Furnish, and Lois and Mary LeBar). In others, the revolution was to provide leadership training and opportunities for people on the margins of society (Olivia Pearl Stokes' work with African-American youth in the mid-twentieth century and Anne Wimberly's work with homeless people in the 1980s). Through oral histories, a learning community discovers such revolutionary work and analyzes the social systems in which "revolutionaries" have lived.

Oral histories penetrate into complexities of social movements and their relation with historical moments and larger societies. The periodical literature accents other essential elements for justice and peace, especially the importance of unmasking violence, evoking environmental awareness, and engaging in cosmological critique. Such accents help people discover and analyze prophetic elements in oral histories, such as the lives of Capetown teachers under apartheid or Mercedes Iannone facing a destructive situation in her parish. For education to cultivate a spirit for justice and peace, oral history can be valuable, but it needs supplementary analysis to uncover the full complexity of social realities.

### ***Building Strong, Multivalent Learning Communities***

A fourth pedagogical value is to build strong, multivalent learning communities. Students in Prophetic Pioneers underscored this value, expressing appreciation for efforts to form community, practice hospitality, and engage in ritual. Students discovered similar practices in the pioneers whom we studied—pioneers who espoused and practiced community building in their local contexts and in their international, ecumenical, and interracial work. Students also saw connections between these community-building efforts and the work of social and ecclesial reform; thus, they made indirect (and sometimes explicit) connections between community building and the work of justice and peace.

### ***Fostering Imagination, Wonder, and Empathy***

A major value discussed in the justice-peace literature is fostering imagination, wonder, and empathy. This was an intentional part of Prophetic Pioneers as well. We consistently asked students to identify

the educational visions of the pioneers we studied, as well as their own visions. Their emerging visions were, in fact, the heart of their final presentations and papers. We also tried to invoke imagination and empathy throughout the course, asking students to take on the roles of those about whom we read, and calling attention to events in the life stories that evoked their empathy, wonder, and hope for the future. In this way, the very process of imagining, wondering, and empathizing nourished a spirit for justice and peace.

### *Inspiring Creative Agency*

Another pedagogical value is to inspire creative agency. Students in Prophetic Pioneers named two experiences worth noting here: the importance of creative learning and constructing, and the value of participating in an experimental pedagogy. From these we learn how important it is to encourage a community to be creative in learning and constructing knowledge (including imagination and wonder) and to learn by doing (akin to John Dewey's active, experimental pedagogy). The class found these values in the prophetic pioneers, who frequently developed innovative (sometimes culturally subversive) curricula and helped learners construct knowledge. Further, students discovered these values in the process of conducting oral histories. One student interviewed people from her home village thousands of miles away; she discovered invaluable insights from her people for reconstructing her theological and self understanding. The Pioneers course did, however, uncover an underside to this pedagogy of creative agency; it expects much of students, and some are overwhelmed by the open-ended process.

### *Challenging with Encouragement*

The final value (for now) is to challenge a learning community with encouragement. In our case, both the students and teaching team stressed this value. Teachers engaged in extensive support work with and for the students—doing ethical and logistical work necessary to conduct oral histories; structuring and teaching the course; helping students gather needed information; and guiding the process as it emerged, as when a group of students needed extra help in finding information, writing their paper, or conducting their interview. Further, teachers and students together discovered that the prophetic pioneers whom we studied often taught with a similar combination of challenge

and encouragement. Many were “committed to making a difference in the world,” often persevering within oppressive educational and social systems. Their lives encouraged us, whether encountered through reading or awe-inspiring interviews.

These seven pedagogical values are clues for cultivating a spirit for justice and peace. They are not all-inclusive, but they illumine many dimensions of education that inspires and equips people to build a just and peaceful world. Underneath these values is a spirit of hope, which emerges from the lives of religious educators and educational communities living in diverse times and places. That hope, for most of the pioneer educators, originates in the Holy, but takes root in ordinary places where people struggle and dream together. To observe and participate in such hope is a gift to be treasured and enacted again and again—a gift that inspires a spirit for justice and peace.

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