

Collaborative panel

Dr. Addie Walker, Oblate School of Theology, awalker@ost.edu

Dr. Boyung Lee, Iliff School of Theology, blee@iliff.edu

Dr. Mary Hess, Luther Seminary, mhess@religioused.org

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Accessing the Sacred, Opening to Diversity, and Engendering Hope

Abstract

Three life-long dialogue partners frame an educational strategy for personal and professional growth as well as effective teaching that engages students and faculty in a cross-cultural and an intercultural pathway for learning and shaping of faith, identity, and capacity for welcoming difference. Teaching and learning life becomes a pathway of hope in a society and culture increasingly more complex and more stratified.

Main concepts being addressed

All three of us are committed to create a racially just world, and known for our scholarship on the topic. In this panel, we will embody a communal storytelling pedagogy to showcase how our distinctive and different stories when linked to the others' can generate a larger story of hope and solidarity for justice.

We will talk about how within our own story, our own memories, we have discovered various pedagogies that we have pulled forward in our lives into our teaching and learning. We believe that the sacred is exposed in our very stories, and we have been captivated by the sacred, drawn out by the sacred, and this kind of storytelling has become part of our strategy for leading out teaching. We are constantly looking for and providing stories of people who encounter the Holy within themselves, within community, and within a world that is torn, shattered, and broken.

Each of us has been a frame of reference for our pedagogy, wherever we are and whoever we are, and especially when we are together. These frames come from different contexts and literatures, different theologies and media, but in engagement with each other and more, we are energized and nourished.

All three of us use story as a methodology that allows us to see more clearly ourselves in the midst of difference. Each of is very different, and therefore we see ourselves more clearly by being in conversation with each other, and by allowing our stories to inform and impact the other. That action, that activity, awakens the Divine in the diversity. It is in that difference that hope is engendered, it is the seedbed of hope.

It is our difference, the very thing that one might think would divide us, that brings us together. Our God is a God of difference. We can recognize the sacred in the other, we can recognize the gift of the difference of the other, we can recognize the pathway to hope that that relationship brings to us, in our experiences of this difference.

Just mentioning each other's names brings so many memories that reawaken the sacred in us. The stories we share – from our lives, from each other, from our traditions, are an essential part of that hope. “I can become the best self because of the gift that you are to me.”

This panel will build from these convictions and share specific, pragmatic examples of ways to invite stories, and engage stories, within processes that support the engagement of difference.

Form of the session

The three of us will set the context -- telling a bit of our stories personally and together -- and then we will each share a concrete pedagogical strategy. Throughout the session we will work to engage those who attend as participants in our processes.

Theories that inform our presentation

Story-linking
Digital Storytelling
Christian theologies of hope
Womanist theologies of story
Postcolonial Biblical theologies
Feminist Theologies from the Global South

Specific bibliographic references include:

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