

**On bodies, the “body politic,” and the creation of (many) worlds:
Globalization and its entanglements with *Mondialisation’s* being-becoming-belonging**

by

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Love for the city, love for the world, love for you

The [critical, creative, and imaginative] questioning and transgression of limits, not the assertion of boundaries and frameworks; a readiness to question how meaning and order are imposed, not the search for a source of meaning and order already in place; the unrelenting and meticulous analysis of the workings of power in modern global life, not the longing for a sovereign figure...that promises deliverance from power; the struggle for freedom, not a religious desire to produce some territorial domicile of self-evident being that men of innocent faith can call home” (Richard K. Ashley and R.B.J. Walker, “Speaking the Language of Exile,” 1990).

... Up from the bed of the river God scooped the clay; And by the bank of the river He kneeled him down; And there the great God Almighty Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky, Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night, Who rounded the earth in the middle of his hand; This great God, Like a mammy bending over her baby, Kneeled down in the dust Toiling over a lump of clay Till he shaped it in is his own image; Then into it he blew the breath of life, And man became a living soul. (“The Creation,” James Weldon Johnson, 1927)

**Introduction:
Entering an ongoing conversation**

One of the reasons I accepted the invitation to give the 22nd Annual George W. Webber Lecture in Urban Ministry was so I could come back to NYTS to meet old friends and colleagues—and to renew the inspiration and conviction about the kind of theological education for ministry that the idea of NYTS represents for me, an idea that continues to inform my work at the Association of Theological Schools in the US and Canada, as well as in my own personal, professional, and academic engagements around the world, but especially in Asia.

I want to begin first with a word of gratitude to this community for allowing me to be a part of its ongoing conversations about global urban ministry. Your generosity, hospitality, and friendship are deeply appreciated.

Second, I want to acknowledge the limits of my contribution to this conversation. The intellectual production, reproduction, and representation in which I am engaged, as much as it may personally and earnestly aspire to the transformative, is still the discourse of a privileged male. Michel Foucault is right—all intellectual work is a passage through privilege, fraught with both dangers and possibilities because we are a species marked, not only by reason, or by freedom, but also by error. And as Gayatri Spivak reminds us, our representations, especially of those “other than ourselves,” are intimately linked to our own socioeconomic, gendered, cultural, geographic, historical, and institutional positionalities—hence, the need for a heightened self-reflexivity and modesty in the work of scholars, academics, and public intellectuals—and here, I will be bold and include theologians, pastors, and ministers.

Third, and most important, I want to underscore the fact that we are honoring both Bill Webber, the man, and his larger-than-life-legacy not just of theological education for ministry, but also of a pure and unwavering commitment to urban ministry. In relation to Bill Webber I feel like Zacchaeus, the tax collector—except that I never got the chance to invite him to my professional and intellectual home—until now. And while I am not worthy to walk in his shoes, I hope that this evening’s presentation can be a small contribution to the work that he loved so much, and served so well.

It is in this spirit of gratitude that I make my presentation this evening. First, I would like to share a slice of conversations on globalization in which a good number of ATS member schools are engaged, not in order to critique but in order to learn, understand and celebrate their achievements. Second, I would like to share some of the conversations I have been having with close friends over the years, including with Jerry Reisig and Dale Irvin, regarding my understanding of what is involved or at stake in this ATS conversation. And, third, I would like to offer a kind of “practical framework for engagement” for urban global ministry where the “practical” is understood as embracing thinking, feeling, and acting; and more important, is rooted in, inspired by, and formed through faith, hope, and love.

“Global awareness and engagement”: The ATS story

Globalization—by which I mean both the concept and practice involving structures and processes of capital, goods, information, communication and people circulating worldwide, and which has been variously interpreted as “space,” “political-economic-cultural artifact,” “sites of ministry” or even as “religio-moral event”—has been a central concern of ATS at least since the 1990s, although one can argue that these concerns reach as far back as 1967, with the reflections of Harvey Cox on “world dialogue for theological education” published in that year in volume III: 2 of the ATS journal *Theological Education*.

One of the most significant markers of the ATS project on globalization begun in the 1980s and concluding in the mid-1990s, however, was the inclusion of the concern for globalization into the 1996 Standards of Accreditation, which signaled that ATS member schools had incorporated globalization as part of the definition of good theological education. In 2010, ATS member schools revisited the section of the standards explicitly addressing globalization and, while reaffirming its importance, agreed to rename it “global awareness and engagement,” not only to distance itself even further from the prevailing sentiment of “economic globalization” associated with the Global North, but also to reflect a more appropriate, not to mention potentially expansive and dynamic understanding of this important religio-moral reality. Dale Irvin just reminded me this afternoon that globalization today can no longer be simply tracked between the Global North and the Global South, but also, and probably more

important, between the Global South and the Global South.

One of the unique characteristics of ATS in the context of global theological education is that it is one of the few membership associations that intentionally and *missionally* includes schools from the broad ecclesial families within Christianity: Roman Catholic, Orthodox, mainline Protestant, evangelical Protestant, and Pentecostal. Throughout the rest of the world, theological schools tend to be aggregated within ecclesial families and seldom, if reluctantly, transcend these boundaries. The importance of a pan-Christian conversation that may eventuate in “global partnerships” has proved important to ATS, and ATS staff experience with its international partners has led us to think that it could be valuable for international contexts as well. These global partnerships are made even more urgent because of the demographic shifts in Christianity from the Global North to the Global South, as well as the population shifts within the US, and the real and perceived “shrinking of the globe” as a result of modern science and technology.

Allow me to share with you some of what I have learned from ATS member schools, especially in terms of what their programmatic efforts and the commitments and assumptions that undergird them, can contribute to our understanding of ministry in an urbanizing and globalizing world.

PROGRAMMATIC INITIATIVES ON GLOBAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT WITHIN AND WITHOUT NORTH AMERICA

Many ATS member schools have collaborative degree programs with partner educational institutions in the “majority world” at the certificate, baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, and post-masters levels—some in extension education-, distance learning-, or “global consortiums-” formats. Others have faculty exchanges involving short- term teaching and/or research. Still others have both credit and non-credit bearing intercultural and contextual programs (e.g., travel seminars, immersion and contextualization experiences, and, “missionary” initiatives).

Some schools have established centers whose mandates are directly related to global awareness and engagement. For example, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School has the Center for World Christianity and Global Theology; Ambrose Seminary of Ambrose University has the Jaffray Centre for Global Initiatives; and New York Theological Seminary has the Center for World Christianity. Other schools offer Spanish-language courses, while others offer Mandarin-language programs. Still others have Korean-language degree programs. Some ATS schools have extension sites in the Ukraine, in Indonesia, in Guatemala.

For quite a number of schools, global awareness and engagement is built directly into the history, mission, and ethos, of their institutions—either because of the worldwide character of the ecclesial family to which they belong, or because of their missionary or evangelistic orientation, or because of their geographical location and nature and composition of their faculty and/or student body.

While not always uniformly articulated, member schools, in addition to their missional and theological convictions regarding the need for global awareness and engagement, have a wide range of rationales for their programs and initiatives, including: 1) a recognition that quality theological education in North America, including its relevance, must not only have an external “global reach” but must also integrate non-North American theological resources as constitutive of its North American identity; 2) a realization that sustainable quality education should be a globally-shared enterprise whose survival is inextricably linked to this “global” reciprocity in the production and reproduction of theological knowledge and wisdom; 3) an affirmation that the educational purpose of “good theological education” is to prepare students to be “global citizens” who have the competencies, capacities, and

sensibilities appropriate and adequate to a fast-changing inter-dependent and globalizing world; and, 4) a recognition that any theological education that deserves to be called “good” must be able to embrace, if not navigate, the difficult, but necessary intersectionality between “the global” and “the local.”

DILEMMAS, CHALLENGES, AND PERSPECTIVES ON EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

There are a number of dilemmas and challenges as well. In the first place, there are definitional and substantive challenges including, for example: 1) how globalization and theological education are to be understood and linked given the contested and uneven experiences of globalization arising not only out of different institutional and educational resources, priorities, preferences, and commitments, but also to the fact that globalization itself has both salutary and not so salutary effects on life more generally; 2) what constitutes an adequate theology and ministry for a globalizing world, particularly in relation to historic faith and practice; and, 3) how “effective global partnerships” should be defined and by what measures and criteria are they to be assessed.

In the second place, there are political and institutional push-and-pull challenges, including: 1) “brain drain” (for the global South), “brain gain” (for the global North); 2) the need to develop autonomous, self-sufficient, indigenous leadership vis-à-vis mission-driven commitments for resource sharing in a world of declining resources; 3) strong denominational missionary commitments vis-à-vis a recognition of the need for the affirmation of the non-Christian “Other”; 4) the perception of North American power and privilege and their accompanying agenda-setting prerogatives vis-à-vis the ethical and moral imperative for hospitality and mutual accountability in a world of unevenness; and, 5) the singular accountability of North American theological education vis-à-vis the rest of theological education elsewhere in the world.

In the third place, there are educational and pedagogical challenges including: 1) the dominance of the English language in terms of learning, teaching, and research; 2) the very real differences between and among cultures leading to different understandings of theology and pedagogy, for example, the differences between oral and reading/writing cultures, of rote learning and constructivist learning, and, of egalitarian and authoritarian models of education; and, 3) the growth of new delivery systems and models of education and mission (including distance/online and extension education) that are based on infrastructural asymmetries in technology and resources, as well as the dominance of an academic and curricular structure and culture both of which tend to privilege the global North and handicaps the global South.

In the fourth place, there are programmatic challenges related to educational initiatives whether degree-granting or not, with member schools that have international extension sites raising questions about 1) the viability, sustainability, and desirability of their programs, the role of their partner schools in the implementation of the program, the effects of North American-run programs on the ecology of theological education in the global South; 2) the role of North American educational institutions in the credentialing needs and desires of individuals and institutions outside North America; and, specific to ATS, the perceived and demonstrated need by theological institutions in the global South seeking either direct accreditation by ATS or assistance in the development, implementation, or improvement of their own practices of accreditation.

THE RELIGIO-MORAL DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

These dilemmas and challenges are illustrative, not only of the textured architecture of global awareness and engagement, but, for our purposes this evening, are instructive for understanding the religio-moral character of globalization, or what I now prefer to call global awareness and engagement.

Let me explain. By definition, the religio-moral is fundamentally about “what we can and need to do together in the light of what is deemed as ‘the good, the true, and the beautiful.’” It is normative, value-explicit human activity. What I find important about the work of ATS member schools is the religio-moral assumption they share, namely, that at its heart, global awareness and engagement is about the practice of “effective partnerships,” by which I mean those institutional and educational practices or initiatives that are animated by and enhance at the broadest levels, mutuality and collegiality, shared responsibility, accountability, and, transparency between and among the partners (whether local, regional, national, or international), whether individual or institutional, and that have a clearly agreed upon purpose, that empower and transform those in the partnerships, and which are contextualized, sustainable, useful, and doable. In other words, effective partnerships are normative, value-explicit human activity.

Effective partnerships and partnering further illustrate the religio-moral, especially when they include those practices that emphasize the desirability of multilateral, multilayered, and multi-perspectival strategies and voices that seriously attend to: 1) the intersectionalities of the issues related to global awareness and engagement, including, for example, issues around immigration, migration, and emigration; 2) that broaden and deepen collaborations, particularly in terms of inclusion, plurality and difference; and 3) that are intentionally sensitive to the nuances and specificities of differential space, time, and place. “Collaborations need to be mutual and contextual, but not necessarily universally symmetrical.” The religio-moral is articulated even more fully in those initiatives that encourage interdependence and relative autonomy in global North and global South relationships, that empower those involved in the partnership, that flattens power differentials that arise out of the unevenness of human, financial, and physical resources, and of history and location. These goals are best achieved through strategies based on collegiality, shared decision-making, and sustained dialogue, including for example, a more intentional “multidirectional flow of resources” between the global North and the global South, where the notion of resources is re-defined in more comprehensive terms than just human, financial, or physical.

Effective partnering as religio-moral practice also includes the formation of a spirituality, that is articulated in: 1) the enhancement and improvement of individual and institutional capacities and skillsets for cross-cultural and contextual competencies in the areas of ecumenical, dialogical, evangelistic, and justice efforts; 2) the knowledge and sensitivity to and respect for economic, cultural, and religious differences that shape theological educational and practice worldwide; 3) the development and nurture of shared ideals, values, and principles among and between the partnering individuals and institutions; 4) the constitutive and regulative practice of active, empathic, principled, and humble listening, as well as translation and appropriation; and, 5) the sobering “fact” that partnerships take a long time to develop and that building trust is central to their full flowering.

To put the matter simply, the central argument in this section of my presentation is that global awareness and engagement not only cannot be understood apart from the kind of institutional partnerships that characterize such awareness and engagement, but that effective partnerships constitute the meaning, significance and definition of global awareness and engagement itself.

Bodies, the “body politic,” and *Mondialisation*:
The ATS story re-told

Global awareness and engagement, particularly if we understand it as being constituted by effective partnerships, is fundamentally performative. That is to say, they come into being as they are

enacted—lived out—and have no meaning apart from this enactment. Therefore, I want to offer for your consideration now the second major argument of my presentation, namely, that global awareness and engagement, understood as effective partnerships or effective partnering, is inextricably-related both to bodies and the “body politic”—as *ethnos* and *populus*—in that they share with this partnering that fundamental notion of performativity.

A DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF “THE BODY”

Simply put, I want to suggest that we might try to think about globalization or global awareness and engagement as a performative narrative by, of, for “the body”—all kinds of bodies: what they are, who they are, what is happening to them, what they hope for, how they plan to get from “here” to “there.”

Earlier I noted that part of the reason why ATS abandoned the term “globalization” was related to its association with the economic expansionism of the West and of the Global North. While I share a visceral skepticism about the usefulness of the term, including its capacity to describe adequately the realities of our present world, I have, perhaps, a more radical objection to it. In the English-speaking world, globalization has come to be assumed not only as the horizon, by which I mean a range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular situation, location or vantage point—but also, as the way in which “totality is grasped as [an indistinct] whole” and as “a spatial and temporal extension of a particular [Euro-American] way of life.” The more conventional critique of globalization is that it not only is a limited horizon granted universal status, but also that it has led us down a pathway that destroys other ways of life that stand in the way of these geopolitical, geostrategic, and geocultural extensions [as in colonialism, imperialism, patriarchy, cultural chauvinism—to name only a few].

Part of the critique that needs to be made, but which unfortunately has not always been made, is that globalization such as we have inherited it, is almost always accompanied, particularly in the so-called “global North,” by a fundamental subterranean epistemological temptation to represent the world as an act of a self-sufficient, autonomous, “subject of history.” Such representation bears resemblances to both a Cartesian-like aspiration for that philosophical, perspectival, and foundational certitude that grounds all modern thinking, feeling, and acting, and a Hobbesian-Lockean-like anthropology of a possessive individual that is also an epistemological or thinking-knowing subject with the power, privilege, and opportunity to name or represent, and therefore, to create, the world in his image: *Cogito ergo sum*, “I think therefore I am,” becomes *Cogito ergo vinco*, “I think therefore I conquer,” and finally eventuates in *Vinco ergo sum*, “I conquer therefore I am.” We know that at the very least, this is a flirtation with hubris, which almost always results in what the biblical tradition calls idolatry.

However, “globalization” is not the only term or meaning of “world” that is available to us. Jean-Luc Nancy argues that “world,” particularly in the French-speaking regions of the planet, does not always carry with it the connotations of world as globalization. Nancy foregrounds *Mondialisation* as that process of differentiation and formation that “maintains a crucial reference to the world’s horizon as a space of human relations... of meaning held in common... of signification or possible signification.” In fact, *Mondialisation* places the emphasis not on the representation of the world but on the creative act of forming a world. And while it is not clear to me that Nancy fully extricates himself from the representational, apophantic dilemma of globalization conventionally understood, should God grant us the grace and wisdom to be appropriated to the notion of *Mondialisation* and its implicit relational, dialogical, and personal sensibilities, we just might be brought into a clearing [*Lichtung*] in the dark forest of globalization—a place of relational, intersubjective disclosure the ancient Greeks called

ἀλήθεια, [truth] in our conversations about global awareness and engagement, enough to allow the “creation of the fundamentally new which is also fundamentally better,” which is my definition of transformation.

In this context, my reference to the body and the “body politic” in this presentation and elsewhere, is decidedly empirical, that is to say, I deploy the term to signify, quite literally, material, concrete, sensuous human bodies as a way not only to ground and orient my understanding of global awareness and engagement, but also, and perhaps more important, as a way to resist the objectification, reification, and commodification of human beings and nature arising out of the estrangement [*Entfremdung*] intrinsic to the dynamics of capitalism’s relations of production, reproduction, and representation. At the same time, I also deploy the term philosophically and metaphorically to signify a much deeper, more complex direction that I am taking here which might be situated along the trajectories which Michel Foucault and those who have followed his lead have called “biopolitics.”

As I understand it, one of the grand assertions of biopolitics is that under the sign of capitalism and sovereignty, the practical and conceptual divide between the οἶκος and the πόλις, or what the Ancient Greeks saw as a distinction made between “natural life” [*zoe*] and “political life” [*bios*], can only be sustained with great difficulty in our time. Yet, the distinction between οἶκος and the πόλις, in fact, is critical to such notions as freedom and obligation, the limits of public and private power and privilege, and, governance, community, and transformation. And, the collapse of the distinction, as Antonio Negri points out, results in the “control of populations as a way to govern life.”

While biopolitics is more complex than this, it reminds us of the necessary role, status, and function of “the body” whether literally, metaphorically, or biopolitically understood in discussions of religion, politics, or ministry today, particularly, where “bare life” itself has become a site of both disciplinary power and “dispositifs of control.” This is evident, for example, in the dynamics of forced migration [what we are now seeing in Europe] or gentrification [what we are seeing in many so called urban (re) development projects—in downtown Detroit, for example]. Life today—and therefore, ministry—cannot be extricated from its multi-stranded embodiments or from multiple bodies across time, space, and place. The good life can no longer be recuperated by normatively upholding the distinction between “natural life” [*zoe*] and “political life” [*bios*] since the collapse of the distinction, under conditions of the exercise and circulation of power within globalizing, transnationalizing capitalist regimes, has profoundly altered public life through discipline, punishment, and [dispositifs] of control. To illustrate, at breakfast today, my friend and colleague Bob Zuber who works in that apparatus called the United Nations, made the observation that in some of the moneyed circles he moves, folks tell him that “you can assume that a well-resourced organization must be doing something good.” The unsaid, of course, is that an under-resourced organization must not be doing anything good—and therefore, not deserving of support. Capitalist values and assumptions rule the day.

A DIFFERENT KIND “BODY”: DISPERSED, DISPLACED, AND DISLOCATED; RACIALIZED AND ETHNICIZED; GENDERED AND SEXUALIZED; AND, SECURITIZED

A dispersed, displaced, and dislocated body

Over the years I have tried to carefully argue that the “body politic” is characterized by at least a number of intersecting, but equivocal, conditions, including: one, it is dispersed, displaced, and dislocated; two, it is racialized and ethnicized; three, it is gendered and sexualized; and, four, it is securitized, i.e., it is linked to concerns about security and avoidable harm. I have also argued that the

transformative dimensions of these intersecting conditions are compromised by the fact that significant numbers of the “body politic,” including the political and religious have been either disembodied, i.e., expunged from that very body, dismembered, incarcerated, disabled, or pathologized, not only by modern politics, but also by institutions of the “body politic” itself, including by the government, the military, the university, the church, and the clinic. In the language of biopolitics, the “body politic” has been turned into controlled populations.

Where the first condition is concerned, four things can be said. First, the dispersal, displacement, and dislocation of bodies can not be explained by any one theory, although, the most innovative of all metaphors I have come across for the changes that are occurring has been that of turbulence, suggesting by its use not mere motion, activity, or movement, but disruptive, unpredictable, volatile speed. Second, there is a compelling argument to be made that these changes are, in fact, part of the consequences of modernity in the way Anthony Giddens understands the term, including: (i) the separation and emptying of time and space, (ii) the development of disembedding mechanisms like symbolic tokens [money] and expert systems [quality assurance agencies], and, (iii) the reflexive appropriation of knowledge. Third, these conditions are not only sustained and structured by the movements and flows of capital, people, goods, information, ideas, and images; they are, in fact, social constructions constituted by the very actions and/or activities of those individuals and communities that have been globally dispersed, displaced, and dislocated. And, fourth, these dispersals, displacements, and dislocations, while creating on the one hand, conditions of estrangement, marginalization, antagonism, and exclusion, have also given rise, on the other hand, to languages of multiplicity, plurality, difference, as well as hybridity, intersectionality, and liminality, and therefore, to the possibilities of transformation in political, economic, cultural, and religious life.

A racialized and ethnicized body

Where the second condition is concerned, that the body and “the body politic” are racialized and ethnicized, two things may be said. First, it is important, following the work, say of Kwame Anthony Appiah or Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, not to yield to the temptation of the “uncritical use of biological and essential conceptions of race as premises of antiracist struggles,” and to perhaps acknowledge that “the term ‘race’ may be so historically and socially overdetermined that it is beyond rehabilitation.” At the same time, following Ronald Takaki, it may be important to assert that racial experience is both quantitatively and qualitatively different from ethnic experience; and therefore, to be careful not to reduce “race,” as Appiah seems to, to “ethnicity” or “cultural identity”—failing, thereby, to account for the centrality of race in the histories of oppressed groups, and therefore, underestimating the degree to which traditional notions of race have shaped, and continue to shape, the societies in which we live.

Second, drawing on the work of Michael Omi and Howard A. Winant which deploys the term “racialization” to signify “the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group,” thereby underscoring the “contingent and changing nature of race and racism while recognizing its pervasive and systematic effect on our history,” we can argue that there can be no homogenous or unitary notion of race and that its meaning will, of necessity, arise not only out of its multistranded contexts, but also will have multiple accounts: biological, social, cultural, essential, and political. With Chong-Soon Lee we might conclude, not only that “race as ethnicity may actually hinder our ability to resist entrenched forms of racism,” but that race as a creature irreducible to ethnicity is needed in order to understand, for example, that colonialism, say in Africa, as an expression of imperialism, is both about racial domination and ethno-cultural oppression. It may be, as well, that the notion of “white privilege” globally construed may be a more productive path in addressing this form of oppression especially in order to move the discourse beyond the “white/black”

racial binary—but that is a conversation for another time.

A gendered and sexualized body

Where the third condition is concerned, I have argued, almost ad nauseam that much can be learned about the body and the “body politic” from the struggles of feminist, womanist, Mujerista, as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersexed [LGBTQI] members of the “body politic” to regain not only control of their bodies, but to recuperate the place of their bodies in public life. For purposes of this presentation, allow me to simply summarize my argument.

In the first place, these struggles to recover the place of the body in public life involve different ways of producing and reproducing knowledge [epistemology], consistently focused on the necessity of rethinking the relationship between reason and desire and the construction of conceptual models that demonstrate the mutually constitutive rather than oppositional relationship between them. In the second place, these struggles to recover the place of the body in public life involve different modes of being [ontology], insisting, not only that thinking, feeling, and acting are relational practices, but also that bodies, more than passive, sexualized biological objects, can be re-figured and re-inscribed. In the third place, these struggles to recover the place of the body in public life involve different forms of consciousness [subjectivity], not only acknowledging that consciousness arises out of concrete and sensuous reality, but also that subjectivity itself is performative, and that spirituality is always and already ecologically-embedded and embodied experience, including different practices of touching, feeling, smelling, tasting, eating, imagining, making love. In the fourth place, these struggles to recover the place of the body in public life involve different empowering practices [politics], recognizing not only the importance of self-definition, self-valuation, self-reliance, and self-determination, but also the necessity of transformation and transgression, and of finding shared safe places and clear voices in the midst of difference, particularly where the asymmetries of power are mediated through structures and processes that legitimize or naturalize some differences and not others.

A framework for engagement:

Intersectionality as analysis, method, and politics

I would like to begin to draw my presentation to a close by offering a framework for engagement in global urban ministry. For this, I turn to Avta Brah and Ann Phoenix who in a 2004 essay entitled, “Ain’t I a Woman: Revisiting Intersectionality,” demonstrate through the use of autobiography and empirical studies that “social class [and its intersections with gender and ‘race’ or sexuality] are simultaneously subjective, structural and about social positioning and everyday practices.” What I find especially helpful is the conclusion to the essay that invites reflection on the “potential contributions to intersectional analysis of theoretical and political approaches such as those associated with poststructuralism, postcolonial feminist analysis, and diaspora studies.”

PERSPECTIVAL CONSIDERATIONS

I deeply appreciate and owe much to Brah’s and Phoenix’s epistemic and strategic challenge to the more conventional analytics of globalization and transnationalism; and I also recognize the necessity for an intersectional approach to socio-political interpretation, description, and evaluation.

Let me take one more methodological step, however, by insisting that intersectionality, more than a concept, or a strategy or an analytical approach, is a religio-moral event, a way-of-being-in-the-world. It is a way of thinking, feeling, and acting that is ecologically situated, fully corporeal, and

thoroughly performative, and which, therefore, has consequences and requirements for global urban ministry commensurate to their “bodily” transformations, especially as they are enacted in and through “effective partnerships” or “partnering.”

THE RELIGIO-MORAL AS BEING-IN-THE-WORLD: SOCIAL TOTALITY, SUBJECTIVITY, PRACTICE

Put in this way, intersectionality directs our gaze to at least three important religio-moral questions: the nature of the social totality, the character of subjectivity, and, the challenge of practice, this time, articulated as the question of “effective partnerships.” Allow me to indicate briefly why they are important.

First, the importance of attending to the nature of the social totality, underscores the importance of embodied connections of space, time and place. Richard Thompson Ford argued, for example, that racial segregation in the US is created and perpetuated by racially identified space and that the latter “results from public policy and legal sanctions...” which, I will add, are played out—articulated, represented, implicated on the actual bodies of human beings. In a different though not unrelated context, Foucault may be interpreted as underscoring the re-articulation of the social totality when he observes that “a whole history remains to be written of spaces—which would at the same time be the history of powers (both these terms are in the plural)—from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat... passing via economic and political installations”—not only from the Global North to the Global South, but between the Global South and the Global South.

Second, where subjectivity is concerned, the recognition of actual bodies as multiple, multistranded, and multifaceted performative sites, fundamentally challenges all ahistorical, essentialist, non-relational, and reified construals of “the Subject” and directs us not only to the question “What is to be done?” but also to the questions of identity: “who we are, what we hope for, where we are going, how do we get there?” This [re] sets, or “re-installs” the notion of subjectivity within a much deeper, broader, and wider intersectional, relational, ecological, and performative whole. My insistence on situating “the Subject” in these ways is an attempt to side-step the long and destructive shadow cast by the anthropocentric, auto-referential philosophical, epistemic, and political Sovereign of that part of Euro-American life associated with what earlier I called “modernity” or “the Enlightenment.” In this context, race, gender, sexuality, and security are not only the extensions or effects of human action; they are also entanglements—practices of structure, process, agency, ecology, and thought.

Third, where the performative, and therefore challenge of practice is concerned, such bodies direct us to the intersections of a peoples’ pluralistic, and therefore, always and already contradictory, antagonistic and agonistic economic, cultural, and political histories—there not only to be reminded of the importance for ministry of context; but also to be reminded of the religio-moral as “practical-critical activity,” as Marx would have put it. The challenge is not only to join theory and praxis, thought and action, spirit and matter. The challenge is “to grasp the root of the matter... but for man [sic] the root is man [sic] himself [sic]”—but man as sensuous human activity, i.e., practice, that is, being becoming-belonging.

To summarize, to focus on the metaphor of “the body” as sensuous human activity, is to bring the conversation both of global awareness and engagement and the religio-moral imperative of global urban ministry, into the domain of the absolutely personal. But not only in the sense that it touches our lives, but also that we, bear personal responsibility for—that is, we own but not possess—both the good, the true, and the beautiful, as well as the bad, the untrue, and the ugly.

Conclusion:
Thirteen steps to effective partnerships

I promised at the beginning of this presentation that I would leave you with a “practical framework for engagement” for theological education for ministry in an urbanizing and globalizing world, where “practical” embraces our thinking, feeling, and acting. So let me conclude with what I call the “thirteen steps to effective partnerships.”

- Wake up
- Breathe in/breathe out
- Stretching exercises
- Fix your bed
- Brush your teeth, take a shower, get dressed
- Have a good, hearty, healthy breakfast
- Go to work; don't forget lunch
- Siesta time!
- Goof off, take a break, go dancing, go fly a kite, take a vacation, play, laugh at ourselves
- Go home; have dinner with loved ones
- Study time
- Meditate, pray, have a regular devotional time
- Get a good night's sleep

Finally, I want to conclude by taking a moment to share my own dissatisfaction and disappointment with my presentation, as a way of indicating where I think we need to go in order to deepen the religio-moral character of global urban ministry, but where unfortunately, I did not go tonight, intentionally, out of my own very human skepticism of its possibility.

“Three things remain,” St. Paul, reminds us, “faith, hope, and love; but the greatest of these is love.” I want to affirm, as my friend and colleague Humberto Alvaro I am told does, that at the heart of the religio-moral is the ineffable, irrepressible, excessive, love of God. Without this pure, simple, love, given freely to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and through the communities of the faithful both named and unnamed throughout history, the religio-moral is an empty shell; global awareness and engagement are meaningless; and global urban ministry can only limp along. Can I define love? No. But I know that without love, there can be no real compassion, no unconditional forgiveness, no genuine humility, no honest courage, no stubborn freedom, no true service, no mutual respect, no recognition of difference, no efficacious empowerment, no integrity, no tenderness, no awe, no kindness, no joy, no curious wonderment, no truth, no beauty, no goodness, no transformation—all these gifts that our world cries out for and needs, and which have often been given even though we sometimes fail to recognize them.

Thank you for your time and your patient graciousness, good people. May your global awareness and engagement, your partnerships in the service of global urban ministry, be filled with love.

Amen.

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12 pages total

Presentation text