

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Axel M. Oaks Takacs

The editorial team, publishers, and sponsorship partners of the *Journal of Interreligious Studies* are amid exciting changes. Longtime advocates of the journal have established Interreligious Studies Media (ISM), a Delaware charitable corporation, to support the JIRS's operations and broaden public and scholarly engagement with the journal. Issue 46, a collection of rolling submissions articles and book reviews, represents a transitional issue. As you'll note in the masthead and partner page, ISM joins Hebrew College, Boston University School of Theology, and Hartford International University for Religion and Peace as a publisher of JIRS. The Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies joins JIRS's current institutional publishers as a founding partner of ISM. In addition, ISM is actively establishing new institutional partnerships to steward the *Journal of Interreligious Studies* and its sibling media: Interreligious Studies Press, Inter/Sections podcast, State of Formation blog, and more.

We will have more to share in the coming months. However, for now, let me introduce this current issue, which features five articles.

In "A Paradigm of Hospitality: Theological Reflections on Spiritual but not Religious," Joseph Kelley explores a framework for interfaith dialogue with those who identify as spiritual but not religious. Drawing on social science, Christian theology (notably, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Karl Rahner), and Sandra Schneiders' hermeneutical approach, Kelley proposes four sensibilities to foster hospitable engagement across religious, nonreligious, and spiritual differences.

Cameron Howes and James Walters, in "Identity Transcendence as a Response to Religious Conflict: Understanding Effective Student Engagement with Israel and Palestine," evaluate the London School of Economics Faith Centre's Interfaith Encounter Israel and Palestine program (2014–2019), which brought over 100 students to the region to explore the

conflict's religious dimensions. Through participant surveys and interviews, the authors identify "identity transcendence"—a capacity to empathize with opposing views while retaining one's convictions—as a key outcome, offering lessons for interfaith engagement in polarized contexts.

In "Resisting Oppression Creatively: Counter-stories as Expressions of Resistance among Religious Minorities in Finnish schools," authors Milena Parland and Nora Repo-Saeed explore how teachers from religious minorities in Finland employ creative and artistic methods to challenge marginalization in educational settings. Drawing on Critical Race Theory, the article highlights counter-narratives that foster resilience, visibility, and inclusion for minority students, offering insights into the transformative potential of art and storytelling in multicultural education.

In "The (Im)Possibility of Measuring Interfaith Learning Outcomes," authors Hannah J. Visser, Gerdien D. Bertram-Troost, Marianne Moyaert, and Anke I. Liefbroer critically examine the challenges and implications of quantifying interfaith learning. Drawing on interdisciplinary debates, they argue for a balanced approach that integrates stakeholder involvement, contextual sensitivity, and mixed methods to capture the nuanced, often intangible outcomes of interfaith initiatives, while cautioning against overreliance on metrics that may distort their complexity.

Finally, "Constructive Problematizing Dialogue: A New Model for Abrahamic Exchange" by Aaron R. Dunn explores the pitfalls of interreligious dialogue—harmonization, doctrinal avoidance, and slow relationship-building—and proposes a character-based Scriptural Reasoning method to center religious differences constructively. Dunn introduces a typology of shared scriptural figures, such as Jesus and Ishmael, to foster deeper engagement and theological honesty among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. The article argues that embracing conflict as a skill can transform interreligious encounters into opportunities for cooperation and mutual appreciation.

The issue closes with six book reviews:

- *Hindu and Catholic, Priest and Scholar: A Love Story*, by Francis X. Clooney, S.J., is reviewed by Katie Mahowski Mylroie.
- *A Companion to Comparative Theology*, by Pim Valkenberg et alia, is reviewed by Stephanie M. Wong and Reid Locklin.

- *Approaches to Jewish-Arab Interreligious Dialogue and Peacebuilding: Theory and Practice*, by M. Ben Mollov, is reviewed by Ron Kronish.
- *Beyond the Academy: Lived Asian Public Theology of Religions*, by David Thang Moe, is reviewed by Yex Nang Shwe Rong.
- *The Global Mystical Tradition*, by Bruce Stephen Naschak, is reviewed by Preeta M. Banerjee.
- *Grounding God: Religious Responses to the Anthropocene*, by Arianne Conty, is reviewed by Jerome Bump.

I remain forever grateful to our Senior Editor, Lucinda Mosher, for her copyediting work. In addition, we are pleased to welcome S. Aaron Wong as our Design and Production Editor.

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Journal of Interreligious Studies