Discussing Displacement: Decolonizing Multiple Religious Belonging[1]

Teresa Crist

Multiple religious belonging (MRB) has become a way to challenge hegemonic ideas about identity and religiosity. This paper questions the influence of the Western construction of "good religion" on MRB and how it limits the experience of multiplicity in the context of people displaced by war and violence. Ultimately, this paper is a plea for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of MRB that accounts for a lived multiplicity not framed by the choice and individualism that mark Western definitions of religion.

Keywords: multiple religious belonging, decolonizing, religion definition, problematizing Christian supremacy, cultural Christianity

The term "multiple religious belonging" carries the heavy burden of confused, conflicting, and multiple meanings, especially as it has gained currency within the academy. Interestingly, its history is one of being present in actuality but not engaged in theory. On the ground, MRB has been practiced as a positive norm in Asian contexts, and more negatively labeled as syncretism in many colonial contexts across the globe. MRB is, in other words, nothing new. What *is* new about MRB is its instantiation as an ontological status worthy of exploring, which comes largely out of Christian contact and appropriation. MRB is now framed not as something happening *out there* on the margins, but as a phenomenon which even those practitioners of "good (Christian) religion" can engage as a means to greater spiritual fulfillment or life-affirming human flourishing. With this positive claim toward multiplicity, however, comes a need to acknowledge the roots of the terminology and project of MRB. Multiple religious belonging, while often a useful term describing the lived religion of modern peoples, is mired in Western ideology and categories that require deeper examination and nuancing. Embedded assumptions behind the terminology of MRB both erase the experience of some multiple belongers and contribute to a quotidian trauma that often remains ignored.

At the forefront of much of the MRB discussion is Catherine Cornille, whose edited volume *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity* led the way for academic discussions of the phenomenon. Cornille has acknowledged various forms of MRB, very usefully explaining that it is not only in one form that MRB exists. She engages New Age religiosity, interreligious dialogue, and a "strong sense" of multiple religious belonging, the last of which is for her the truest manifestation of multiplicity in belonging. New Age forms of MRB she cleverly describes as a "complete absence of belonging," as this so-called cafeteria style of religion rejects ultimate truth claims and refrains from the affiliative aspects of institutionalized religions, while engaging selective beliefs and practices from various traditions based on one's own taste.[2] Interreligious dialogue can develop into MRB when contact with different religions leads to an identification with certain

beliefs or practices of the conversation partner's religion in addition to an existing religious commitment. Cornille's "strong sense" of MRB shares some qualities with both interreligious dialogue and the process of inculturation. As a more "radical form" of interreligious dialogue, this "full and dramatic" sense of MRB manifests when one is "between traditions, unwilling to renounce the tradition of origin and unable to deny the truth discovered in the other tradition."[3] It may also "manifest itself in the form of belonging to the symbolic and historical framework of one religion and the hermeneutical framework of another,"[4] much like the process of inculturation, in which a religion's theology is adapted to a particular cultural context.[5]

Cornille's definition of multiple religious belonging in the strong sense shares practical aspects with Gideon Goosen's working definition of what he labels dual belonging, a term that can be used interchangably with MRB: "[dual belonging] is when a person has a first major religion and draws on a second to a greater or lesser degree, according to the three criteria of doctrine, practices and actions."[6] Peter C. Phan echoes these definitions, by claiming that MRB goes "beyond inculturation and interreligious dialogue," and means " to accept in theory this or that doctrine or practice of other religions and to incorporate them, perhaps in a modified form, into Christianity but also to adopt and live the beliefs, moral rules, rituals, and monastic practices of religious traditions other than those of Christianity, perhaps even in the midst of the community of the devotees of other religions."[7]

All of these definitions bear in common not only a root in Christian theology and interested scholarship, but also a tendency toward a certain understanding of whatever term is favored for labeling multiple religious belonging. Essentially the definition is one of allegiance (belonging) to a primary religion and then either being supported by practices, rituals, or theories from secondary religions, or perhaps using the hermeneutical framework of a secondary religion to complement or interpret the primary one. This is based less on an equal sharing of different religious contexts and more on the use of conscious choice and personal seeking to find supplementarity in different religious expressions.[8]

These definitions are problematic for two reasons: (1) They rely strongly on a concept of "religion" that is the result of colonial encounters and is dependent upon a Protestant Christian paradigm. (2) Despite insistence from various scholars that MRB is manifest in many different

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[3] Ibid., 4.

[4] Catherine Cornille, "Double Religious Belonging: Aspects and Questions," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 23 (2003): 47.

[5] "Inculturation" is discussed and developed with particular nuance and brilliance by Edward Antonio, in his essay "The Hermeneutics of Inculturation." For Antonio, inculturation is particularly about Christianity's adaptation to various contexts, and it also presupposes the anthropological concept of enculturation, which is a broader term for the cultural adaptation process. In this case, I use inculturation as a helpful analogy for the process of developing MRB. Edward P. Antonio, "The Hermeneutics of Inculturation," in *Inculturation and Postcolonial Discourse in African Theology*, ed. Edward P. Antonio (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 30.

[6] Gideon Goosen, *Hyphenated Christians: Towards a Better Understanding of Dual Religious Belonging* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 27.

[7] Peter C. Phan, "Multiple Religious Belonging: Opportunities and Challenges for Theology and Church," *Theological Studies* 64, no. 3 (2003): 497.

[8] One might note the similarity between this description of MRB and the discipline of comparative theology/comparative religions, the project of which is often using the framework of one religion to understand and interpret another. The field is particularly tied to a conception of comparison rooted in similarity, rather than difference. J. Z. Smith explores this issue in his 1982 essay, "In Comparison a Magic Dwells," in *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, ed. Jonathan Z. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 19–35.

ways, the definitions rely upon choice to some extent; MRB seems to be indebted to a concept of religion that is largely interior, abstract from historical-cultural context, and individualized. Often, MRB seems to be the process of engaging other religions by personal conscious choice— however genuine—in order to benefit one's own spiritual journey.

The first problem in defining MRB is that of a singular conception of what constitutes "religion" and therefore "religious;" often used is the sort of "world religions" understanding of the term. In fact, "religion" as a category for study emerged out of the contact between imperial Christian Europe and the peoples of the lands they colonized. At that time, there arose a need to maintain European superiority, and one way of doing so was to label any indigenous practices or beliefs as atavistic or even morally corrupt.[9] Scholars led by the likes of Max Müller and E. B. Tylor began to develop what became the field of comparative religion by postulating "religion" as something that looked like post-Enlightenment Christianity. Anything not neatly circumscribed by that category was either primitive religion, or not religion at all. In fact, says comparative religion scholar David Chidester, "[u]nder colonial conditions religious categories were not simply discovered or purely invented by outside observers. They emerged through complex interrelations, negotiations, and mediations between alien and indigenous intellectuals."[10] The categories of religion that have existed until the present day grew out of imperial projects that looked to build theories that rested upon political and moral judgments. Atavistic religion could be used as justification for the colonizer's presence and actions. Categories of bad religion gave more credence to the "good religion" of those in power.

This idea of "good religion" has hardly been lost. Though the academy and the world at large enjoy more cross-cultural connections and an ostensible tolerance if not affirmation of diversity, the idea of "good religion" still permeates public discussion and academic engagement. Scholar Robert A. Orsi examines this idea in his work *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them*. He notes the establishment in the academy of "a liberal and enlightened civic Protestantism"[11] as the standard for study. This gentle, rational, and compartmentalized Christianity then gets cast in the role of "good" or "true" religion, in comparison to various expressions of religious "madness." Indeed, Orsi explains, "The discipline [of the academic study of religion] was literally constructed by means of the exclusion—in fact and in theory—of these other ways of living between heaven and earth, which were relegated to the world of sects, cults, fundamentalisms, popular piety, ritualism, magic, primitive religion, millenialism, *anything but religion*."[12]

In the same way that Chidester elucidates the establishment of a category of "religion" and comparative religious studies, Orsi exposes the maintenance of those boundaries in the academy,

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[9] For an excellent treatment of this, especially regarding Islam and "the Orient," see Edward W. Said's seminal text, *Orientalism*. Running throughout this work is a theme captured in the introduction, in the following quote: "[I]ndeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is […] the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures." Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979), 7.

[10] David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 18.

[11] Robert A. Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 185.

[12] Ibid., 188. Emphasis mine.

helped along by a moral judgement that masquerades as definition and fact. Good religion is something that looks like post-Enlightenment Protestant Christianity: private, rational, respectful, and wholly compatible with secular (and democratic) society.[13] And it is this continued reliance upon a "good religion" that has made studying, or indeed even engaging with, religious expressions that do not exist within the "good" side of the good/bad binary such a challenge.

The second problem, an overreliance on choice for defining MRB, is largely the result of modern Western identity. One of the main markers for this identity is a trend toward interiority and individualism, the result of locating moral sources inwardly. Augustinian thought is the starting point, argues Charles Taylor, for a modern identity imbued with the language of inwardness. It is Augustine who "represents a radically new doctrine of moral resources, one where the route to the higher passes within."[14] Such language of inward and outward had not been possible before this distinctive shift, and it remains in vogue to the present day. This movement has led to a propensity for individuation, as everyone's articulation of this internal source is unique. The shift to individuation is still deeply entrenched in modern conceptions of identity; every self has value in its uniqueness, and every self is called to express that uniqueness as part of their full identity.

Such a cerebral and inward trend of understanding identity, morality, and belief bolsters the individualized Protestant Christianity that functions as the paradigm for religious definitions. Out of this trend toward inwardness and individual human flourishing expressed by the Romantics comes an emphasis on individual choice. And the Western choice paradigm leads eventually to religious seekers, some of whom supplement their own cultural and religious traditions with others in what has come to be called multiple religious belonging.

A result of (and contributor to) this process is the move to what Olivier Roy calls the deterritorialization and deculturation of religion, the de-linking of religion from its historical-cultural context. "Religion," says Roy, "circulates outside knowledge," lending it the appearance of universality. It is "disconnected from a specific culture that has to be understood in order for the message to be grasped. […] Salvation does not require people to know but to believe."[15] As "religion" becomes belief-oriented rather than practice-, ritual-, or space-oriented, it is more easily adoptable by those not born into a particular tradition or community. Such deterritorialization therefore supports multiple religious belonging since anyone can choose to appropriate and participate in these unbounded and universal religious practices, which are no longer tied to racial/ethnic or geographical restraints.

However, this shift to understanding religion as an interior, belief-oriented, and deterritorialized matter of choice is as limiting as it might also be freeing. The importance of choice in the paradigm of religion prevents those expressions of MRB that are coerced from being recognized as such. The focus remains on religion as private and voluntary, Protestant Christianity

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[13] Ibid. Orsi gives a far more comprehensive list of the attributes of good religion.

[14] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 140.

[15] Olivier Roy, *Holy Ignorance: When Religion and Culture Part Ways*, trans. Ros Schwartz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 6–7.

serving as the paradigm for religion in general.[16] Christianity has become something like the ultimate deterritorialized religion, one that can easily coexist with various cultural markers because of its intense interiority. This can also be seen in the relatively recent "rise of the nones" phenomenon in the United States, where a shift in the understanding of religion and spirituality has manifested in the growth of non-affiliation with religious institutions. Linda Mercadante explains that people "commonly use the term 'spirituality' to refer to the interior life of faith and 'religion' to mean the necessary communal and/or organizational component."[17] While sociologists of religion like Mercadante see a decline in interest in "religion," these so- called "nones" or the "spiritual but not religious" maintain the importance of the interior and belief-oriented aspects of religious traditions, often engaging a variety of them in a new form of multiple religious belonging.

These definitions and paradigms of "religion" privilege a certain form of participation, one premised on affiliation, belief, interiority, and individualism, such that not all forms of MRB are given due consideration. MRB is, in effect, a colonized term, premised on the superiority of these values and definitions, which negate or erase the experiences of marginalized peoples.[18] For example, MRB that is the result of displacement or direct colonial encounters is often not considered MRB at all, instead being labeled as syncretistic, coerced conversion, or a new product of acculturation. All three of these forms of multiplicity are MRB, little as one might like to consider this the case. MRB therefore needs to be expanded and nuanced to engage these different forms of multiple religious participation, which are invalidated as a result of the emphasis on conscious choice and interiority. Particularly egregious is the example of displaced people(s), for whom religious participation can be both dangerous and coerced.

Displacement functions in multiple ways—it is not just in the spatial relocation from one land to another. Spatial displacement is, of course, traumatic in its own sense, especially when that displacement is accompanied by war, violence, and genocide. Spatial displacement is also traumatic in the very removal of people from their cultural basis of traditions and practices. But another aspect of displacement is explored by theologian Willie James Jennings, in that spatial displacement often leads to spiritual displacement. Jennings elucidates the very displacement of salvation in the context of American slavery, where the development of a racial scale prioritized white Christians as the most deserving of salvation. Such spiritual displacement marked a "theological reconfiguration" of Christianity, whereby whiteness became a visual marker of being Christian.[19] This process is mirrored in contemporary situations of displaced peoples, where a

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[16] Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 312ff. Masuzawa elaborates on this process in Chapter 9, "The Question of Hegemony: Ernst Troeltsch and the Reconstituted European Universalism," in which she discusses the creation of the category of "religion in itself," wherein Christianity began to stand in for "religion."

[17] Linda A. Mercadante, *Belief Without Borders: Inside the Minds of the Spiritual But Not Religious* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5. Also helpful on the subject is Elizabeth Drescher, *Choosing Our Religion: The Spiritual Lives of America's Nones* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[18] The fact that MRB is a colonized term does not invalidate its usefulness. Nor is MRB solely a whimsical invention of liberal Christian scholars who have gained multiplicity in their contact and engagement with other religious traditions. Rather, MRB manifests in a variety of ways, and it is absolutely a legitimate label for the identity of some. My argument is that it is not *only* a happily ascribed label, and that the colonized nature of the term (including its underlying definitions of religion) prohibits all MRB from being recognized as such.

[19] Willie James Jennings, *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 31–33.

religion or tradition of origin is belittled in favor of that of the new land. Even in a world supposedly full of toleration and acknowledged pluralism, there still remain hierarchies of religious participation, epitomized in the very development of the category of religion molded in the shape of Protestant Christianity.

Two examples here are well worth exploring further. I begin with the Native American context in the United States. Though the explicit war and violence that began their displacement is considered officially ended,[20] Native Americans continue to exist in a colonized state. Displaced from ancestral lands and places of great importance, Native Americans have been forcibly removed to reservations at the hand of a trail of broken treaties and federal laws that continue to subject them to marginalization. Boarding schools were used as a tool to destroy Native traditions and replace them with Christian religion. Even these schools could never totally erase Native American practices[21] and as a result the U.S. instantiated laws barring Native religion, which were only removed in the twentieth century.[22] One of the results of these colonial practices is a multiple religious belonging made of both Native American traditions and a culturally euro-christian context.

Although it might be argued that this does not represent MRB in the popular conception, I contend that it does because it is essentially the participation in more than one religious tradition. Religion and culture are not always easily separated, despite deterritorialization and the world religions approach that skews "religion" into something that looks remarkably like Protestant Christianity. Similarly, indigenous traditions are often excluded from religion, or if included, they are *euro-formed*,[23] a delicious term from Barbara Mann, in order to fit them into extant European categories, despite their incompatibility. Thus, Native Americans, in adhering to their own cultural and spiritual traditions, have one type of (unacknowledged) religion, and whether participating explicitly in a Christian (or other) religion or merely in the euro-christian cultural context of the United States, participate in another. Interestingly, with the development of the MRB conversation, there has been a move for greater accommodation of Native traditions from mainline churches,[24] often as epitomizing the ideas of environmental stewardship.

This multiple religious belonging was for some a matter of survival—converting in order to gain the benefits of Christian participation while keeping indigenous practices secret. "In many of these contexts," says scholar George Tinker, "the traditional spiritual structures of the ancients actually continue to live as sort of a parallel universe to the missionary religion."[25] Here, the displacement of spiritual reward is explicit, where without total conversion to euro-christian religion and culture, Native Americans were left without any hope of participating fully in human flourishing on American soil. It is perhaps also important to note here that Christianity is often

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[20] It is not, however, completely absent. The violence against Native Americans continues, as exemplified in the Dakota Access Pipeline standoff at Standing Rock, North Dakota.

[21] Albert Memmi explains that as much as the colonizers lauded assimilation, they refused to grant it fully to the colonized, such that true assimilation was impossible. The colonizer needs the colonized to maintain their own position. Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965; repr., Boston: Beacon Press, 1991).

[22] The Dawes Act of 1887 banned all forms of Indian religion, and the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 allowed freedom of religion once more.

[23] Barbara Alice Mann, *Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 62–63.

[24] George E. Tinker, *Spirit and Resistance: Political Theology and American Indian Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 38.

[25] Ibid., 50.

placed at the far end of a linear developmental trajectory, so that its appropriation or expression is understood as an uplift or improvement, and thus a goal to be reached.[26] Whether one is actively participating in traditional Native American practices at the same time as attending church on Sunday is less important than the fact that these two ways of being in the world are both expressed merely in the presence and person of Native Americans.

A second example of MRB in the context of displacement is that of refugees, persons who emigrate and immigrate due to dangers at home. Refugees often rely upon religion and religious communities for humanitarian support as well as for support in adapting to new circumstances.[27] For them, MRB can manifest not only in a conversion process or in an encouragement for interreligious dialogue on new soil, but also in the acculturation process. Syrian refugees to America, for example, face an extremely difficult challenge of being Muslim in an Islamophobic environment.[28] Even where Islamophobia does not hold sway, the challenge lies in becoming American, essentially becoming culturally Christian in a country with a Eurochristian social imaginary. Refugees and immigrants must often adopt the "reformed" or "progressive" Islam demanded in the American (and Western) context as more palatable, a moderate Islam that conforms to Western standards. In a sort of backwards inculturation, immigrants and refugees must reinterpret Islam on the cultural basis of America, which is largely Eurochristian, despite its secularity.[29] These moves toward conformity result in spiritual displacement; without conforming, refugees maintain the status of outsider, and their religion is labeled "bad religion," even as much as other means of assimilation are attempted.

These examples of MRB in displaced peoples exhibit two forms of trauma, which does not have to come as a singular event, but can be chronic and part of daily experience.[30] One trauma of MRB is in its societal reception. There exists no real safe space for conversation because of the continued villainizing of multiplicity, which emerges largely out of (mis)understandings of syncretism, which has been interpreted as negative, clandestine, and divergent, though it is not

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[26] Another particularly strong example of this can be seen in the "benevolent assimilation" practices of the United States in the Philippines in the early twentieth century.

[27] Damaris Seleina Parsitau argues that "individual faith played a critical role in integrating women [internally displaced persons] into their new circumstances, and also as a motivating factor to turn their lives around." Damaris Seleina Parsitau, "The Role of Faith and Faith-Based Organizations among Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24, no. 3 (Sept. 2011): 507. Katherine Marshall writes more generally about the connection between religious faith and global development. Katherine Marshall, *Faith-Inspired Organizations and Global Development Policy: A Background Review 'Mapping' Social and Economic Development Work in Europe and Africa* (Washington, DC: Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Georgetown University, 2009). Available at https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/faith-inspired-organizations-and-global-development-policy-a-background-review-mapping-social-and-economic-development-work-in-europe-and-africa.

[28] Geoffrey Samuel elaborates on this issue in the case of Bangladeshis in the UK. He works to point out not only the many manifestations of Islam in the UK that are different from those in Bangladesh, but also the different values and agendas underlying their expression. Thus, individualism—a strong value in the UK—helps determine how new migrants and later generations of Bangladeshis interact with, and sometimes alter, the practice of Islam. Geoffrey Samuel, "Islam and the Family in Bangladesh and the UK: The Background to Our Study," *Culture and Religion* 13, no. 2 (2012): 141–158.

[29] For an excellent treatment of this topic, see Mucahit Bilici's *Finding Mecca in America: How Islam is Becoming an American Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). Bilici chronicles the transition from alien to citizen in the Muslim case, elaborating the various shifts and challenges that occur in that process.

[30] "Chronic versus Acute Trauma?" website of Trauma Abuse Treatment, *http://traumaabusetreatment.com/chronic-versus-acute-trauma.*

necessarily so. This is problematic in all forms of MRB, since it is only recently that multiple religious belonging has become widely recognized.

The other trauma of multiple religious belonging, and this one perhaps more challenging, comes out of the issue of living in tension, pulled in multiple directions, often unable to go fully in one place. Some of this tension is reflected in the previous definitions of MRB that privilege one religion/tradition over another—we might even call this religious "passing" in a sense similar to that of multiracial persons, where claiming one religion as primary is a way of negotiating cultural cues.[31] This tension is sometimes forced, lived in response to historical events that left some sort of syncretistic way of being in the world necessary in order to avoid full erasure. It is in a place of multiple belonging and tension that Native Americans live, and such a tension is indeed manageable for some.[32] But the daily challenge that comes of having to hold two wholly distinct world views in place in order to function cannot be ignored. These world views, "Christian doctrines and beliefs, and some of the beliefs of Indian tribal groups," as Native American scholar Vine Deloria Jr., puts it, "appear to stand in direct opposition,"[33] testing the limits of any one person to reconcile oneself internally. Similarly, the tension manifests itself in the fracturing of community, where colonial tools like boarding schools have caused generations of Native Americans to "[reject] old religious activities as a continuation of paganism,"[34] another one of those "bad religion" words that should be shunned. Though it is possible for some to live comfortably in tension, the challenge of maintaining irreconcilable world views—especially within a framework that considers one world view superior to the other—can also result in a chronic trauma, disrupting daily existence.

Multiple religious belonging definitions have grown out of colonial contexts and Protestant Christian paradigms, and subsequently do not allow for the diverse and complex realities of MRB on the ground, especially within the examples of displaced peoples. MRB must be nuanced to account for the multiple ways in which it manifests, both voluntary and involuntary. Such inclusive definitions will help to create safer places for all multiple belongers to function fully and with affirmation in the world. Because much interest in MRB has come from the Christian perspective, it is no surprise that some of the first steps in expanding definitions has come from that quarter. The World Council of Churches recently published *Many Yet One? Multiple Religious Belonging*, which is a collection of essays seeking to engage this very topic. Reverend Karen Georgia Thompson, Ecumenical Officer for the United Church of Christ, suggests moves from within churches to

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[31] This idea comes from Roshan Kalantar, whose work on the subject is forthcoming. "Passing" was defined by novelist Nella Larsen as "breaking away from all that was familiar and friendly to take one's chance in another environment, not entirely strange, perhaps, but certainly not entirely friendly." Nella Larsen, *Passing: Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Contexts, Criticism* (1929; repr., New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007), 17. The idea has since been examined by other scholars, including Werner Sollors in *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both: Thematic Explorations of Interracial Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Religious passing functions similarly, where a person functions within one religion at the expense of another in order to avoid challenges or negative biases.

[32] A recent volume by Mark Clatterbuck explores this way of being. *Crow Jesus: Personal Stories of Native Religious Belonging* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017) is a qualitative study, consisting of narratives from self-identified Crow Christians on the ways they interpret, integrate, challenge, and change the Christianities that have been present on the Reservation since the time of the missionaries. Clatterbuck argues that "Crow Christianity is now set firmly on Native terms" (Ibid., 39), identities existing in fluid multiplicity. This is the positive side of MRB for Native Americans, for whom living in tension has become a manageable and even desirable reality. Clatterbuck, *Crow Jesus*.

[33] Vine Deloria Jr., *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2003), 287.

[34] Ibid., 241.

bolster education while nurturing the spirituality of multiple belongers.[35] I would go one step further and state that in order to nurture this multiple spirituality and to refrain from perpetuating the trauma of Christian supremacy, educational programs and ministries must seek to acknowledge and confront both the positive and negative variations of MRB, including the coercion and displacement that make MRB traumatic for some. Such an effort might help to create a safer place for people to understand, know, and be in the world outside of the modern Western paradigm to which they have been conscripted.[36]

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[35] Karen Georgia Thompson, "Multiple Religious Belonging: Erasing Religious Boundaries, Embracing New Ways of Being," in *Many Yet One? Multiple Religious Belonging,* eds. Peniel Jesudason Rufus Rajkumar and Joseph Prabhakar Dayam (Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 2016).

[36] Conscription to modernity is an idea from David Scott, which I have adapted further to the religio-cultural aspects of the modern Western paradigm. See David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

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Teresa Crist completed a master's degree in religion at Claremont Graduate University and is completing a doctoral dissertation at the DU/Iliff Joint Doctoral Program in Denver, Colorado. Her research focuses on a postcolonial interpretation of interfaith interaction.