

**The Journal of Interreligious Studies**

*Published by Hebrew College and Boston University School of Theology, in collaboration with Hartford Seminary*

**Issue 28**

**December 2019**

**From the Editor-in-Chief**

**1**

Axel Marc Oaks Takács

**Migration and Internal Religious Pluralism: A Review of Present Findings**

**3**

Eric Michael Trinkka

**Axis of Belonging: The Quest of Sobonfu Somé's African American Students**

**24**

Meredith Frances Coleman-Tobias

**On Òyìnbó: Yorùbá Religion, Resistance, and Polyepistemic Knowledge**

**43**

Michelle Ajişẹbọ McElwaine Ábímbóla

**Beyond Common Ground: Towards Critical Engagement in Interfaith Organizing**

**62**

Kristina J. Meyer

**Restrictions or Resources? Buddhist-Christian Discourse for Our Growing Population**

**76**

Joel David Daniels

**Book Reviews**

**91**

*Sharing Wisdom: Benefits and Boundaries of Interreligious Learning*, edited by Alon Goshen-Gottsteinz

Reviewed by Nora Bond

*Interfaith Grit: How Uncertainty Will Save Us*, by Stephanie Varnon-Hughes

Reviewed by Emily Kahm

**The Journal of Interreligious Studies**

*Published by Hebrew College and Boston University School of Theology, in collaboration with Hartford Seminary*

**Issue 28**  
**December 2019**

**Editor-in-Chief**

Axel M. Oaks Takács, Th.D.

**Book Review Editor**

Lucinda Mosher, Th.D.

**Administrative Director**

Tom Reid, M.Div.

**Associate Editor**

Catherine Osborne, Ph.D.

**Research Fellow**

Hyunwoo Koo, M.T.S., M.Div.

**Publishers**

Mary Elizabeth Moore, Boston University School of Theology  
Or Rose, Hebrew College

**Associate Publisher**

Joel N. Lohr, Hartford Seminary

**The following are members of the Board of Advisors:**

Russ Arnold  
Thomas Cattoi  
Andrew Davis  
Adam Gregerman  
Rachel Heath  
Soren Hessler  
Won-Jae Hur

Celene Ibrahim  
Joel Kaminsky  
Sheryl A. Kujawa-Holbrook  
Jeffery Long  
Kristin Johnston Largen  
Martin T. Nguyen  
Jennifer Peace

Monica Sanford  
Brahmachari Sharan  
Najeeba Syeed  
Stephanie Varnon-Hughes  
Funlayo E. Wood  
Homayra Ziad

***We remain grateful to Dr. Stephanie Varnon-Hughes and Rabbi Joshua M. Z. Stanton for their vision and commitment to interreligious engagement by founding the Journal under its original title, the Journal of Interreligious Dialogue.***

The views, opinions, and positions expressed in all articles published by the *Journal of Interreligious Studies (JIRS)* are the authors' own and do not reflect or represent those of the *JIRS* staff, the *JIRS* Board of Advisors, the *JIRS* Board of Reviewers, Boston University, Hebrew College, or Hartford Seminary.

## Editor's Introduction

When I first collaborated with our research fellow, Hyunwoo Koo, in creating the special call for papers, “Migrating Religions and Interreligious Studies,” refugees, migrants, asylum seekers, and their journeys had been on the news nonstop for a little over a year. Caravans were crossing the Americas, ships were traversing the Mediterranean, and refugees were crossing through Eastern Europe from the Levant, among many other movements. While migrants have received greater attention in recent years (even if there is not an increased rate in migration), historically the movements of peoples are inextricably constitutive of religious traditions and communities. We thus decided that a special issue regarding the interreligious transformation produced by migration patterns would be ideal.

The twentieth- and twenty-first-century developments and processes that have increased interreligious engagement among global and local communities have been well studied, and need only be listed: colonization, globalization, and the subsequent postcolonial and global economies these have produced; internet communications, social media, and the subsequent digital communities these have produced; neoliberal capitalism, revolutions, authoritarian governments, and the subsequent increase of refugees and asylum seekers fleeing poverty, violence, and corporate and state-sanctioned oppression these have produced. Many of the articles in this issue focus on the United States context, and so one has to add to this list the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, increased emigration from South and Central America from the 1980s to today, and the various increases and decreases in emigration from Muslim-majority nations before and after 9/11.

Eric Trinkka opens this issue with “Migration and Internal Religious Pluralism: A Review of Present Findings.” The article presents readers with a thorough review of literature regarding the interconnected social processes of migration and religion; it is thus a helpful primer for the articles that follow. The next two articles attend to Africana religions and spiritualities within the American context. In “Axis of Belonging: The Quest of Sobonfu Somé’s African American Students,” Meredith Frances Coleman-Tobias explores the unique interreligious and cultural identities of African American devotees of Somé, a Burkinabé émigré and teacher of Dagara spirituality. Michelle Ajişẹbọ McElwaine Ábímbóla’s “On Òyìnbó: Yorùbá Religion, Resistance, and Polyepistemic Knowledge” is an interdisciplinary paper investigating the globalization of Yorùbá religion among white practitioners. In “Beyond Common Ground: Towards Critical Engagement in Interfaith Organizing,” Kristina J. Meyer presents how an interfaith social justice group manages political difference, violent histories, and identity exclusions within an increasingly diverse American context. The issue closes with Joel David Daniels’s “Restrictions or Resources? Buddhist-Christian Discourse for Our Growing Population,” a critique of restriction-based population control via Buddhist-Christian discourses on resource sharing, interdependence, and liberation.

The issue also includes two book reviews:

- *Sharing Wisdom: Benefits and Boundaries of Interreligious Learning*, edited by Alon Goshen-Gottsteinz (review by Nora Bond)
- *Interfaith Grit: How Uncertainty Will Save Us*, by Stephanie Varmon-Hughes (review by Emily Kahm)

The publication of this issue also follows some exciting news: Hartford Seminary has recently joined the *Journal of Interreligious Studies* publishing team. Dr. Joel Lohr, President of Hartford Seminary and Professor of Bible and Interreligious Dialogue, will join the *JIRS* publishing team and Board of Advisors, and Dr. Lucinda Mosher, Faculty Associate in Interfaith Studies at Hartford Seminary, will join the *JIRS* editorial team as Book Review Editor. I am delighted about this partnership as it portends many great things to come. The full press release may be found online at [irstudies.org](http://irstudies.org).

Finally, I am delighted to welcome Catherine R. Osborne as the new Associate Editor of the *Journal*. Dr. Osborne brings to the editorial team her scholarship and teaching experience in theology and religious studies, as well as her expertise in academic editing.

Axel M. Oaks Takacs, Th.D.  
Editor-in-Chief  
*Journal of Interreligious Studies*