

Religious Education

The official journal of the Religious Education Association

ISSN: 0034-4087 (Print) 1547-3201 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/urea20>

Christian Education, White Supremacy, and Humility in Formational Agendas

Katherine Turpin

To cite this article: Katherine Turpin (2017) Christian Education, White Supremacy, and Humility in Formational Agendas, *Religious Education*, 112:4, 407-417, DOI: [10.1080/00344087.2017.1300843](https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2017.1300843)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2017.1300843>



Published online: 04 Apr 2017.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 309



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 1 View citing articles [↗](#)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, WHITE SUPREMACY, AND HUMILITY IN FORMATIONAL AGENDAS

Katherine Turpin
Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado, USA

Abstract

Christian education served as a tool of White supremacy that played a central role in the devastation of millions of human lives throughout the colonial era of Western expansion. An adequate account of how Christian education paired with colonial imperatives helps to identify where the legacy of White supremacy and imperial domination lives on in contemporary practices of Christian faith formation and religious education. While any educational venture requires authority and is an act of power, humility is an essential partnering virtue for Christian educators who do not wish to replicate this history of domination.

While I believe in the importance of religious education, learning the history of Christianity in the Colonial period, particularly the pairing of colonial expansion and imperial rule by Western European nations with the development of modern understandings of Christian education, has chastened my belief in education as a positive or neutral tool. Education, specifically Christian education backed by missional theologies, served as a tool of White supremacy, which played a central role in the devastation of millions of human lives throughout the colonial era of Western expansion. This story is not how I generally frame the discipline in which I claim expertise, and yet I assert that these histories must be a part of how we teach and practice religious education. As a person of Anglo heritage who is committed to liberative practices of education, giving an adequate account of the historical reality that Christian education paired with White supremacy and colonial imperatives in often seamless ways, leading to cultural devastation and genocide, is an important ethical reminder of the potential dangers of educational forms learned in the process.

Exploring this history helps raise questions about why and how we teach, and might help us identify where the legacy of White supremacy and imperial domination live on in our daily practices of Christian faith formation and religious education. Traces of these habits of cultural imperialism and nonmutual pedagogies continue to be present in current religious educational practice in Western Christianity. A commitment to ethical Christian educational practice requires humble acknowledgment of this history and its legacy and ongoing work to disrupt its rhythms in our own practice. While any educational venture requires authority and is an act of power, humility is an essential partnering virtue for educators who do not wish to replicate this history of domination.

I frame this article around three biblical verses about teaching, partially as a reminder that the linking of religious education with colonization happened with

theological warrants from the Christian tradition, not outside of the Christian tradition. In case we are tempted to link this history with the sinful part of Christian education, perhaps saying that everything we do as humans is tainted with the mark of imperfection, I want us to consider how the Christian tradition helped shape the cultural logics that led to the use of religious education as a tool of subjugation without apology. As theologian Willie Jennings argues, “This imperialist form drew life from Christianity’s lifeblood, from its missionary mandate and its mission reflexes,” leading arguably to an even more virulent form of ethnocentrism than possible without the theological underpinnings (Jennings 2010, 112). After reckoning with that history briefly, links to current Christian educational practice bring into question the pedagogical habits and practices learned during the Colonial era that continue to frame how we engage in education today, particularly among White Christian educators and their communities of practice.

“GO AND MAKE OF ALL DISCIPLES”

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28: 18–20, New Revised Standard Version)

This text provides the grounding for the mission of the church as understood by my denomination, the United Methodist Church: “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world” (*Book of Discipline* 2012, para 120). Sometimes called the “Great Commission” and linked with practices of evangelism, this text is fundamentally about teaching and learning. Authority has been given to Jesus and by extension to his followers to go and make *mathetes*, the Koine Greek term for students or learners, of all nations and teach them to obey Jesus’s commandments.

Postcolonial biblical scholar Musa Dube takes on this text and the havoc it created in colonial contexts, noting how it was used in an invasive, non-mutual way:

The command not only instructs Christian readers to travel to all nations but also contains a “pedagogical imperative”—“to make disciples of all nations.” Does such an imperative consider the consequences of trespassing? Does it make room for Christian travelers to be disciplined by all nations, or is the discipling in question conceived solely in terms of a one-way traffic? (Dube 2004, 224)

Dube argues that because the text fails to suggest that Christian disciples also must learn from other nations, it creates an unequal relationship between the disciples and those they encountered. She notes, “Consequently, if all nations are to be entered and ‘disciplined’ by Christian teachers without any sort of reciprocal stance or attitude on the latter’s part, do we not then find in the gospel an operative model of outsiders as infants to be ‘uplifted’?” (Dube 2004, 224). Dube goes on to argue that formal education served as a primary “structural instrument with which to wrench and wean individ-

uals away from their so-called pagan culture, backward state, and primitive beliefs. Put differently, formal education became a powerful tool of colonization and ultimately its own form of imperialism” (226). This cultural genocide was performed simultaneously in order to achieve religious salvation for people that European Christians perceived as lesser than themselves and to create docile socialized subjects for participation in the labor necessary for colonial projects that stole labor and resources from the worlds they invaded. Justification for this stripping of natural and human resources came from uplifting and salvific narratives that claimed that slaves and other subjugated workers were left better off by their Christianization and the “civilizing” influence of White Eurowestern cultures. Religious education, because of its dual socializing and converting roles, was often the initial tool of economic and cultural decimation in this scheme.

The Christian education that was practiced not only labeled cultural practices central to the social order of native persons as demonic and barbaric, colonizers understood the people who practiced them as of lesser intelligence and incapable of apprehending reality correctly. Dube notes, “As such, the coming of Christianity was accompanied by a structural process of pauperization, whereby our perceptions of reality and beauty were denied, and abetted by a variety of disciplines and practices” (2004, 228). She argues that by imposing a local standard on a universal scale, Christian teachers failed to meet their learners as “an equal subject, with dialogue and free exchange as a result” (233).

The process that Dube critiques from her own African context has also been well documented in Christian educational work with indigenous persons on the North American continent. As educational theorists K. Tsianina Lamawaima and Teresa McCarty describe, “The ‘civilized’ nation assumed that its right to dispossess Native nations went hand in hand with a responsibility to ‘uplift’ them, and mission and federal ‘Indian schools’ were established as laboratories for a grand experiment in cultural cleansing, Christian conversion, and assimilation of laborers and domestic workers into the workforce” (2006, 4). Christian discipleship, as envisioned in the colonial period of imperial expansion, joined a form of White supremacy with Christian evangelism and economic exploitation, with religious education as a primary tool of structural domination.

Theologian Willie James Jennings uses the life of José de Acosta, a young Jesuit priest and theologian who came to Peru in 1572, to further explore this link between Christian pedagogy and colonialism. He argues that Acosta “... fashioned a theological vision for the New World that drew its life from Christian orthodoxy and its power from conquest” (2010, 83). Jennings argues that this impulse is not just an outgrowth of colonial power, “but it also reveals in a very stark way the future of theology in the New World, that is, a strongly traditioned Christian intellectual posture made to function wholly within a colonialist logic” (83). Acosta demonstrates how Christians evaluated the native population with a “white theological gaze,” deeming them barbarians through assessing their “rituals, idolatries, behaviors, language, and practice” (Jennings 2010, 103).

A member of the Jesuit order, Acosta brought the educational sensibilities of that order, a tradition of evaluation “to form Christian character through the humanist vision of *Bildung* in anyone so willing to be shaped” (Jennings 2010, 104). However, the assessment of the original inhabitants of the land as ignorant and demonic leads to an

important translation, in which Biblical narratives of resistance to the gospel get overlaid onto whole cultures that seemed alien to the colonizers. This set a new trajectory for traditioned Christian faith that linked it entirely with the colonial project. Jennings notes, “What comes into effect is a new form of ecclesial habitus in which the performance of theology—in teaching, preaching, writing and other ministry—becomes the articulation of processes of colonialist evaluation” (2010, 105). This expanded pedagogical evaluation linked with colonial force, the need to subjugate whole peoples to form workers merged with “the operation of forming theological subjects,” (Jennings 2010, 104) turning Christian formation into a hegemonic, unidirectional process, with, as Dube asserts, biblical warrant in “making disciples of all nations” in non-mutual, unjust ways in the name of the gospel (Dube 2004, 224).

In contemporary times, this blend of Christian education, White supremacy and colonial attitudes still continues in many Christian mission efforts in the two thirds world. Many White evangelicals go on missions to achieve gospel conversion in other parts of the world, often traveling to places like El Salvador where the indigenous population has already been converted to Roman Catholicism in previous centuries. More subtle forms of the blend are present in mission trips of White Christians going to non-White places to serve the local population and improve their economic situation in the name of Jesus. In each of these scenarios, an underlying assumption is that the missionaries and servant workers have something essential to teach or share with those they encounter, often without much attention to the mutual learning that should occur in the exchange. These efforts have been and must continue to be critiqued for the way they continue to perpetuate the histories of imperialistic Christian education.

“TEACH THEM TO YOUR CHILDREN”

You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. (Deut. 11:18–19, New Revised Standard Version)

Perhaps you are thinking that outside of a few gross contemporary examples of unethical missionizing, this linking of White supremacy and Christian education is all tragic history. Religious educators are not setting up missions next to the *encomienda* any more, and most do not have control over large swaths of humans backed up by an invading army with guns, germs, and other means of warfare as they seek the formation of Christian subjects (Diamond 1997). The theological tenets of White supremacy have been thoroughly critiqued (Carter 2008; Cone 2004; Harvey and Case 2004; Welch 1994), and most religious educators do not hold people of other faiths with disdain. Most well-established Christian denominations are not sending White savior Christian missionaries naively into cultures unlike their own to save darker skinned peoples. So what does this history have to do with the current practice of religious education?

Traces of these impulses towards cultural superiority and what Jennings calls the “white theological gaze” (2010, 103) are still built into the discipline of Christian education. To attend to them, let us consider the pedagogical and theological logics

lying beneath the colonial educational practices that may still persist in contemporary Christian educational projects. To describe what was going on in Acosta and his Jesuit contemporaries, Jennings turns to Augustine's concept of *faith seeking understanding*, noting that in the colonizers' assessment of the natives, we see instead *faith judging intelligence* (Jennings 2010, 108). Because Acosta and others mistrusted the capacity for intelligence among those they worked with, they shifted instead to the constant formation of habit as the primary educative method:

Put bluntly, these disciplinary realities for Acosta transform the New World into one large, ever-expanding classroom with no beginning or ending period, an unrelenting pedagogical eternity. ... This is the ground upon which the ideologies of white supremacy will grow: a theologically inverted pedagogical habitus that engenders a colonialist evaluative form that is disseminated through a network of relationships, which together reveal the deep sinews of knowledge and power. (Jennings 2010, 109)

The posturing of educator to educated learned in these historic forms of Christian education continue to a lesser degree in contemporary Christian educational practice. As one example, I want to look at the way the educational task of nurturing faith in the next generation may perpetuate some of these colonizing impulses. It may be, as Thandeka argues, that the first victims of White America are its own children, even in subtle ways, in the process of Christian formation (2002, 21). Traditions that attend most carefully and energetically to Christian formation, to educating the next generation into the faith, are often the most likely to attempt to create the kind of "pedagogical eternalities" learned from the colonial period. That imperialist tendency, the desire to declare a better way that the next generation should live into, gets played out on children and youth, who also tend to be imagined by their adult teachers as unknowing, unable to be intelligent, and primarily people to be formed by habit in totalizing environments.

This kind of colonizing formation of the next generation can be witnessed most clearly in segregationist White evangelical Protestant communities in the United States. These communities sponsor private Christian schools that are closely linked to church and home formation so that children experience the kind of totalizing formational environment that does not allow for interaction with secular culture, which is seen as potentially corrupting and destructive to faith. Not coincidentally, many of these private evangelical Christian schools tend to have been founded at the historical moment of racial integration in public schooling as well (Andrews 2002). These communities, while using a desire for Christian formation as the rationale, also achieved racial segregation in the name of protecting their children from corrupting influences.

In the late part of the twentieth century, homeschooling networks emerged that further isolated children, ensuring that the home was the primary socializing environment, and that parents could have sole control over the intellectual and faith development of their children. These networks share Christian-based academic curriculum with an emphasis on character formation. The home becomes a seamless pedagogical environment in which Christians must teach their children to love the Lord, protecting them from other cultural forces that would lead them astray. This contemporary example of a totalizing "pedagogical eternity" creates a situation in which the entire environment a young person interacts with must contribute to forming Christian habits

and character, without any sense that there is a faith seeking understanding in the child that could withstand or benefit from exposure to cultural difference, to non-Christian friendships or teaching relationships, or to other authoritative discourses of human meaning-making, such as the scientific method.

Lest more mainline Protestants and moderate Catholics believe they are out of the woods in these forms of imperial education, these traditions also have a series of religious educational texts concerned about the potential loss of Christian belief in the next generation. A survey of the titles of some major texts cited and taught in Christian education include concerns about the need to evangelize the next generation: John Westerhoff's classic *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (2012), Thomas Groome's *Will there Be Faith?* (2011), Christian Smith's *Soul Searching* (2005), and Kenda Creasy Dean's *Almost Christian* (2010). Each of these books begins by declaring the next generation as being vulnerable to falling back into a non-Christian way to be, and therefore imagines them as key targets for Christian formation through comprehensive socialization and embodied practice in Christian communities. One of the classic ways to rally energy for religious education is by casting the next generation as potentially lost to their cultural environment, not unlike the way that Acosta and his cohort saw the inhabitants of the New World. Educators evaluate the next generation as hapless, out of the realm of the disciplined ones, and in need of intervention through some serious formational force before the reach of the broader culture corrupts them out of salvation.

To be fair, the content of many of these texts contains much more nuance about the agency of children and adolescents, and the authors espouse the belief that the Holy Spirit is capable of working within the next generation independent of the salvific educational efforts of their communities.¹ The insights about socialization, formation, faithful friendships and mentoring relationships with adults, and engagement in embodied practice that they name are important additions to the field of Christian education. But the way these texts get titled and positioned in the market reinforces the motif of Christian education as colonizing uplift in a foreign and potentially corrupting environment. I am not condemning these texts, or even my own works that advocate for communal contexts of socializing practice, but I am drawing the connective through-lines between these efforts and the White supremacist, colonizing logic that got merged with Christian formation in the colonial era. Approaching the next generation with desperation for their maintenance within the Christian community, with non-mutual forms of socialization and habit formation through immersive pedagogical environments for the strengthening and continuation of a particular form of Christianity, draws uncritically on the history of colonizing educational models for its habits of educational practice.

The intense focus on embodied Christian practice in community that emerged in the late twentieth century in White mainline Protestantism in the United States, just as these traditions were coming to terms with losing their place of cultural prominence in the culture, also points to this trajectory. When faced with declining numbers and decreasing cultural dominance, these traditions drew on what they have known best

¹Smith's *Soul Searching* (2005) is a notable exception to this nuance, and he is the author without formal training in theology or Christian education in this group of texts.

historically: shaping the next generation through embodied practices of the tradition and dominant socializing communities. This formation is considered life-giving, providing exposure to virtuous practices of faith that pass on traditional wisdom, but it also draws on the embodied practices of disciplining environments.

“NOT MANY OF YOU SHOULD BECOME TEACHERS”

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. (James 3:1–3, New Standard Revised Version)

So many of my graduate theological students want to teach, to bring other people into their enlightened understanding of social justice, of religious traditions, of spiritual practice. I have become suspicious of that impulse, even as I can honestly say that being a teacher is central to my identity. I am suspicious of this calling because teaching is an exercise of power. We undertake any project of teaching or education because we believe that where people currently are is not adequate to their situation and that they need some kind of change to improve their lives. Even when education is intentionally liberative, seeking to help students to gain the agency to “read the word and the world,” as Freire would put it (Freire and Macedo 1987), this is a change that is imposed through an exercise of authority on the part of the teacher. This authority is perhaps why the author of James argues that teachers are held to a higher standard.

When we claim the power and authority to teach, to go and make disciples, what are our ethical responsibilities to those we wish to educate? Taking seriously the history of White supremacy in Christian education in the Western world calls for attention to the reality that all forms of education are not necessarily good for students. We know that built into the DNA of Christian education, particularly in the descendants of European-Western Christianity, is a history of White supremacy, of linking education with believing that we know better than those we teach, of assuming our own better state and the need to bring others into it. As Dube notes,

At issue here is the fact that we are all inscribed, given its global reach and impact, within the historical experience of imperialism. Therefore, unless our critical practice takes deliberate measures to understand the mechanisms of past and present imperialisms—to understand the marriage of imperialism with issues of gender, race, class, religion, and sexual orientation—even the most liberationist of discourses will end up reinscribing the structures of violence and exploitation. (2004, 243)

We are the bearers of a legacy habit of understanding Christian education as a nonmutual, unidirectional project. While this form of educational practice has been roundly critiqued, particularly in adult and liberationist religious educational literature, it still persists as part of the background of many Christian educational ventures.

When education got in the hands of European colonizers, just like Christianity, it became twisted and racist. But that does not mean that it is a wholly doomed project. It does mean that we must reckon with this history before we engage in educating in the name of Christ. We must check ourselves. Why are we so desperate to impart our ways of being to the next generation? What part of that is desire for their well-

being, and a generous act of sharing inherited wisdom? What part of that desire is an inherent sense of confident supremacy that we have learned from our history as part of Christianity interpreted in the colonial period? What part of it has a history in the colonizing impulse to bring others into our fold, to be able to control them and their resources through subjecting disciplined bodies to a regime of pedagogical force? Knowing that religious education has been used as a thoroughly White supremacist strategy of imperial force historically, what does that mean for the interrogation of the current practices of the discipline? Dube suggests this requires an intentional choice “to counteract imperialist domination by embarking on a critical practice that seeks to understand, expose, undermine, and arrest the imperialist forces of oppression and exploitation” (2004, 235–36).

The history of Christian pedagogy that Dube and Jennings relate has demonstrated that practices of education couple very nicely with White supremacy and cultural imperialism. When we educate because we believe that people’s thinking or way of being in the world needs improvement and that there is wisdom from our cultural heritage that would lead to a better way of being in the world, we know from our history that this is closely related to the dangerous territory of supremacist thinking. The opposite impulse of supremacy is humility, and this virtue is essential for those who wish to educate in Christian faith. Humility as a virtue requires honest self-appraisal, a conversion to other persons who are quite different than us as equally valuable, and a proper understanding of the community’s importance within the created order.

Humility in reckoning with the history of White supremacy in Christian education begins with honest self-appraisal that takes into account both the gifts and the horrors of our own tradition. Theologian Norman Wirzba describes humility as follows: “If we understand humility as beginning in a detailed and honest estimation of ourselves, as when Bernard of Clairvaux defined humility as ‘the virtue by which a man recognizes his own unworthiness because he really knows himself,’ how, given our propensity for either self-promotion or self-deprecation, are we to arrive at such honesty and clarity?” (2008, 231). A “detailed and honest estimation of ourselves” in religious education means being honest about our roots in the history of Christian imperialism, and seeking to understand how the habits learned in that process continue to impact contemporary practices of formation and education.

Theologian James Cone points to the reality that sharing these histories often makes the people who benefit from them uncomfortable. He notes, “Whites do not like to think of themselves as evil people or that their place in the world is due to the colonization of Indians, the enslavement of Blacks and the exploitation of people of color here and around the world. Whites like to think of themselves as hard working, honorable, decent and fair-minded people” (2010, 146). In response to this struggle, embracing humility means being willing to tell these stories and accept the responsibility for their legacy. It means teaching these histories, accepting the charges of participation in cultural decimation, and honestly seeking to discover where we are still participating in this kind of educational venture. Rather than continuing to promote Christian formation as a primarily benevolent venture, we must be even-handed in describing where it has gone wrong and continues to go wrong.

Within religious education, many scholars have worked hard to counteract this historical colonizing form of Christian education. One place to find this in the field is in the literature on religious education in multicultural settings. Many of these authors focus on humility as a critical virtue for educators when working with others who are different from them. For example, Kathleen Talvacchia codes this aspect of humility as “seeing clearly,” and the process of coming to see clearly as one of conversion: “Seeing clearly depends on a conversion to the other, to understanding and awareness of both personal prejudice and social structural difference that affects the other in different ways, depending on their social location to the dominant culture” (2003, 67). Humility requires the honest assessment of both individual and collective histories of oppression in their fullest, and attention to how these affect our educational efforts as teacher. Seeing clearly requires the humility of understanding that one’s own approach or experience does not apply to all persons universally, and it requires careful listening to the experiences of those unlike us. Humility does not always pair well with the authority required to teach, but the two do not have to be mutually exclusive.

This conversion to the other is also rooted in historical Christian resources such as the works of the desert fathers and mothers on humility. They did not understand humility as self-degradation or self-hatred: “Instead, humility meant to them a way of seeing other people as being as valuable in God’s eyes as ourselves. It was for them [the ammas and abbas] a relational term having to do precisely with learning to value others, whoever they were” (Bondi 1987, 18). This empathetic response to others prevents the kind of self-righteous judgmental gaze that is central to colonizing forms of education. Rather than judging those whom we wish to educate as deficient in some way that needs remedying, humility requires that we see potential students first as valuable in God’s eyes and also as knowledgeable and intelligent in their own right.

This conversion to the other whom we hope to teach is also present in liberationist Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, who confessed how long it took for him to learn to humbly respect and be converted to the peasant farm workers he was charged with teaching: “Coming back to my question, it took time for me to learn that the people with whom I was working already had lots of knowledge. The question for me was exclusively to understand what were their levels of knowledge and *how* did they know” (Horton and Freire 1990, 65). This approach to humbly recognizing the extant intelligence in communities in which we hope to educate is articulated beautifully in the “funds of knowledge” approach to teaching in public schools, which begins with the simple premise: “People are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge” (Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti 2005, ix–x). Primarily addressing the ways that working-class and poor communities are defined in terms of their deficiencies for the children who come from them, the approach taken by Gonzalez, Moll, and Amanti is “to view these households primarily in terms of their strengths and resources (or funds of knowledge) as their defining pedagogical characteristic” (2005, x).

Humility as a virtue of the educator is particularly important in situations where education happens across differences of race, culture, sexuality, age, and social class. In their important work on multicultural spiritual formation, Elizabeth Conde-Frazier and S. Steve Kang talk extensively about the virtue of humility in educational efforts across the spectrum of human difference. In reaction to the supremacist tendencies

that make themselves evident in these interactions, Kang notes the need to abandon the hierarchy of teacher as knower and students as “empty receptacles” (Conde-Frazier, Kang, and Parrett 2004). Instead, he argues, “The teacher must utilize her authority appropriately to make it clear from the beginning that she is on the pilgrimage along with her students and is open and expecting to learn from them just as the students are expected to learn both from one another and the teacher. To achieve this, the teacher must consistently convey humility and openness in her interaction with students” (Conde-Frazier, Kang, and Parrett 2004, 155). Conde-Frazier argues that humility comes from self-understanding that is balanced and accepting of one’s true nature. She notes, “Those who exhibit humility do not see themselves as greater than others. Therefore, they do not usurp the place of others. This sense of self and neighbor allows us to relate to one another not according to the social and economic statuses of our cultures but according to our true human worth” (Conde-Frazier, Kang, and Parrett 2004, 195). This movement beyond usurping the place of others is critical to education that resists cultural imperialism and paternalistic formative environments.

On the one hand, such calls for educators to respect their students’ intelligence and agency are commonplace in contemporary Christian educational literature. On the other hand, fears about the continuation of denominational structures, the practice of Christianity into the next generation, and the influence of cultural noise often leads educators to revert to strategies of casting the next generation as endangered by their cultural context and in need of strong embodied formation. Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann notes that the covenantal tradition of the gospel can help us move from self-enhancement and preservation to walking humbly with our God: “It depends rather on self-abandoning companionship along the way, for it is the act of companionship (and not self-celebration) that gives staying power, self-respecting dignity, and eventually wellbeing” (2010, 19). This includes respect for those we would see as less intelligent than us, including children and adolescents, those we would wish to evangelize, and those who belong to other religious traditions. As a counter to historical habits of colonizing White supremacy in Christian education, careful cultivation of the capacity for “self-abandoning companionship” as educators is essential.

Katherine Turpin is an Associate Professor of Religious Education in the Iliff School of Theology, Denver, Colorado. E-mail: kturpin@iliff.edu

REFERENCES

- Andrews, R. 2002. “The Dynamics Involved in the Introduction of Cultural Diversity into the Mission of the Evangelical Christian school.” Doctoral diss. ProQuest Dissertation Publishing (3069019).
- Bondi, R. C. 1987. *To Love as God Loves: Conversations with the Early Church*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*. 2012. Nashville, TN: United Methodist Publishing House.
- Brueggemann, Walter. 2010. “Walk Humbly with Your God: Micah 6:8.” *Journal for Preachers* 33(4): 14–19.
- Carter, J. K. 2008. *Race: A Theological Account*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Conde-Frazier, E., S. S. Kang, and G. A. Parrett. 2004. *A Many Colored Kingdom: Multicultural Dynamics for Spiritual Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.
- Cone, J. H. 2004. “Theology’s Great Sin: Silence in the Face of White Supremacy.” *Black Theology* 2 (2): 139–52.
- Dean, K. C. 2010. *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Diamond, J. M. 1997. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: Norton.
- Dube, M. W. 2004. "Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations" (Matt 28:19A): A Postcolonial Perspective on Biblical Criticism and Pedagogy." In *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, edited by Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, 224–46. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.
- Freire, P., and D. Macedo. 1987. *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*. New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Gonzalez, N., L. C. Moll, and C. Amanti. 2005. *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. New York: Routledge.
- Groome, T. 2011. *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples*. New York: HarperOne.
- Harvey, J., and K. Case, eds. 2004. *Disrupting White Supremacy from Within: White People on What We Need to Do*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press.
- Horton, M., and P. Freire. 1990. *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Jennings, W. J. 2010. *The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Lamawaima, K. T., and T. L. McCarty. 2006. *To Remain an Indian: Lessons in Democracy from a Century of Native American Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Smith, C., with M. Denton. 2005. *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Talvacchia, K. T. 2003. *Critical Minds and Discerning Hearts: A Spirituality of Multicultural Teaching*. St. Louis: Chalice.
- Thandeka. 2002. *Learning to be White: Money, Race, and God in America*. New York: Continuum.
- Welch, S. D. 1994. "Human Beings, White Supremacy and Racial Justice." In *Reconstructing Christian Theology*, edited by Rebecca S. Chopp and Mark Lewis Taylor, 173–94. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Westerhoff, J., III. 2012. *Will Our Children Have Faith?* Third ed. New York and Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing.
- Wirzba, N. 2008. "The Touch of Humility: An Invitation to Creatureliness." *Modern Theology* 24 (2): 225–44.