

## INTERCULTURAL/TRANSNATIONAL PEDAGOGIES—INTEREST GROUP

Topic:	The Future of Transnational and Intercultural Pedagogies: Embracing the New Normal
Convener:	Jean-Pierre Ruiz, St. John's University, New York
Moderator:	Tracy Sayuki Tiemeier, Loyola Marymount University
Presenters:	Shawnee M. Daniels-Sykes, S.S.N.D., Mount Mary College Carmen Nanko-Fernández, Catholic Theological Union

This was the third session of the Intercultural/Transnational Pedagogies Interest Group (organized under the aegis of the CTSA Committee on Underrepresented Ethnic and Racial Groups [CUERG] on the basis of feedback from participants at the CUERG working luncheons during the 2009 and 2010 CTSA conventions). During this session, participants observed that the complex and interrelated factors that contribute to the phenomenon of globalization suggest very clearly that intercultural and transnational pedagogies are not the latest in a series of “isms” that will come and go before a return to business as usual in theological research and education at the undergraduate and graduate levels. On the contrary, attending to the concerns raised at these complex intersections makes it possible for us to attend to what has become the new normal. Transnational and intercultural pedagogies are here to stay. The new normal for theological research and education understands the work of theology as a global effort that deals nimbly and responsibly with the many constituencies of our writing, our teaching, and our engagement with various publics in the church and in society.

In her paper, “Still We Remain: Living Religious Liberty Consciously and Unconsciously,” Shawnee M. Daniels-Sykes, S.S.N.D., takes up the ethical challenges of the “new normal” to examine and rethink conventional ways of defining religious liberty. When the issue is framed as only as freedom from external coercion, that is, as everyone’s right to express their religion in whatever form that they desire, she cautions that matters have not been always nice, tidy, or neat, especially when we focus on those who are not part of the status quo. In fact, struggles for religious liberty within the Catholic Church have a long and complex history, a history that has involved the neglect, disrespect, and exclusion of some parishioners. Church leaders might employ Eurocentric perspectives in their efforts to ward off external threats to religious liberty related to Catholic Church teachings, yet it is important to be mindful of the many Catholics who reside in economically distressed neighborhoods, whose parishes and schools have been closed. Left behind to fend for themselves, their religious liberty has thus been adversely impacted. The religious liberty of Black Catholics in the United States has been constrained inasmuch as the Church leans toward the normativity of whiteness and dominance. Even so, Daniels-Sykes noted, Black Catholics remain faithful to the Church.

In “Held Hostage by Method? Disrupting Assumptions Latinamente,” Carmen Nanko-Fernández asks who exactly is mapping the coordinates of contemporary theologizing and why does it seem that only some of us bear an obligation to socially locate—especially to locate as “other.” What are the jarring implications of taking seriously transnational and intercultural compositions of our churches, classrooms and scholarly academies? Or is the “new normal” disturbingly pointing to the establishment of new norms emanating from positions of dominance seeking to control the inevitable and uncontrollable?

She argued that one fundamental obstacle to the development of truly transnational intercultural pedagogies is an obsession with method in the so-called dominant stream of

*Interest Group: Intercultural/Transnational pedagogies: The Future of Transnational and Intercultural Pedagogies—Embracing the New Normal*

theological education and scholarship. In pedagogical contexts, especially where the traditionally underrepresented find themselves in the truly global classroom, too often methods are imposed in ways that pre-empt questions, content and context forcing sources and engagement into preconceived categories and patterns with contrived correlations. In training for ministries in particular, methods that favor mutual critical correlation place culture, tradition and experience into conversation in uncritically appropriated but handy frameworks. These can and do result in cookie-cutter theological reflections, with flat understandings of culture, and/or context that continue to insist that the exotic “other” has the obligation to locate more intentionally. Such impositions deny local and indigenous epistemologies, sources, and constructive frameworks. They teach means of controlling conversations, yet because they include explorations of culture in their frameworks, such methods are inaccurately perceived as inclusive and therefore exportable as value-free and transculturally and globally useful.

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