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Locating the Theological Approach

Theology begins with my life, but my life is inter-related with the lives of others.
   Thus, "I am" is always also "we are."

—Jung Young Lee[1]

INTRODUCTION

This book is primarily a Christian exploration of protective hospitality informed by the Jewish and Islamic traditions. As such, it draws upon the hermeneutical principles and methodology of political theology as seen through the more specific lenses of liberation and feminist theologies in an inter-religious ethical context, and explores how the insights of political theology can be extended beyond the Christian tradition to explore the social issue of protective hospitality from an inter-religious perspective in an increasingly pluralist world.

   What I seek to do here is to provide an analysis of Abrahamic protective hospitality in a way that is critical, creative, and constructive. I aim to accomplish this through the use of two currents in contemporary Christian theologies: a contextual and political theological approach and a cooperative and complementary theological approach. The first approach emphasizes the situating of this work upon context and lived experience

1. Lee, *Marginality*, 8.

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and the methodologies of Christian political, liberation, and feminist theologies. The second approach emphasizes cooperative and complementary theological aspects that are informed by inter-religious, Abrahamic, and hospitable hermeneutics.

A CONTEXTUAL AND POLITICAL THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

A contextual and political theological approach is useful as it enables one to analyze and reflect on hospitality on three different levels—social, cultural and theological—taking into account both orthodoxy (doctrinal belief where it exists) and orthopraxy (practice and context). Starting with practical, contextual examples to set the stage, there will then follow an exploration of the political, liberationist and feminist theological foundations of these examples.

Arising from a Context: Contemporary Examples of Protective Hospitality

> *The highest virtue is always against the law.*
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> —RALPH WALDO EMERSON[2]

This section presents two brief case studies as initial anchors to contextualize the practice of protective hospitality. There are many examples which could be used, but for the sake of brevity and for the role of theological development, the case studies of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon and the Sanctuary Movement have been chosen.

The Village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon

One of the best-known examples of protective hospitality of the twentieth century are the relatively widespread actions of Christian, Muslim and other non-Jew rescuers[3] who provided sanctuary and assistance to Jews and other

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2. Emerson, "Worship."

3. "Rescuers" is the common term used to refer to those who hid Jews or helped Jews escape during the Holocaust. They are also referred to as "Righteous Among the Nations" or "Righteous Gentiles." They are memorialized and remembered at Yad

threatened individuals and communities in Nazi-occupied Europe, North Africa and Palestine in the late 1930s and early-mid 1940s. The motivations for rescue and refuge given were varied, but the common narrative is that during this time, over twenty thousand people from forty-five countries[4] took in strangers, those who were different either religiously, politically, or ethnically, risking their lives for the sake of the other's well-being.[5]

Throughout the literature, however, the actions of the village Le Chambon-sur-Lignon (shortened to Le Chambon) in France are cited as a prime example of hospitality in the context of rescuers during the Holocaust. Under the primary leadership of Protestant pastors André Trocmé and Edouard Theis, the village rescued between three and five thousand Jews by providing sanctuary within the community, either by helping them get to safer locations (such as Switzerland) or by harboring them more long-term in private homes, local farms or public buildings in the village. Putting themselves in harm's way and giving up much of their own freedom while under the Vichy regime of World War II France, the villagers of Le Chambon, also referred to as Chambonnais, practiced hospitality in some of the most costly ways.

The understanding of protection for the Chambonnais was rooted in their own tradition as descendents of the Calvinist French Huguenots who had been severely persecuted during the European Reformation as a result of their criticism of the use of power by the kings of France and the Roman Catholic Church.[6] This use of historical memory informs what theologian Letty Russell refers to as their "heritage of resistance."[7]

Russell's term "heritage of resistance" encourages a discussion of the term coined by Christian political theologian Johann Baptist Metz— "dangerous memory"—which, for Metz, stems from Christian Eucharistic theology and the concept of *anamesis*, wherein adherents *remember* God's saving deeds as an act of worship.[8] From meaningful, healthy remembrance

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Vashem in Israel, but certain criteria must be met for them to be officially recognized. See Yad Vashem's website for more details: http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/about.asp.

4. The precise number recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations" according to Yad Vashem is 25,685 as of January 1, 2015.

5. For examples, see Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed*; Tec, *When Light Pierced the Darkness*; Fogelman, *Conscience and Courage*; Gushee, *Righteous Gentiles*; Hellman, *When Courage Was Stronger Than Fear*; and Satloff, *Among the Righteous*.

6. See Scoville, *Persecution of Huguenots*; Conner, *Huguenot Heartland*; and Sunshine, *Reforming French Protestantism*.

7. Russell, "Hot-House Ecclesiology," 50.

8. While this understanding is particularly relevant to Christianity, there is room for different foundations within non-Christian traditions as well. In fact, the term

of past events and the communal narrative comes action, and it is action that can be described as "dangerous" as it often challenges the status quo, highlights injustice and will, on many occasions, inform and motivate acts of resistance. It must be said, however, that this reliance upon memory as fuel for tradition of resistance as seen in the actions of Le Chambon is not unique to the Christian tradition in its practice of hospitality. There there are accounts of Muslims in South Europe, North Africa and Palestine conducting similar activities with similar motivations. Moreover, all three of the Abrahamic traditions have this "heritage of resistance" at its core and all subsequently advocate welcome and hospitality as a result, which will be explored later.

In the case of Le Chambon and their own dangerous memory, ethicist Philip Hallie notes that even the routes the Chambonnais used to take Jewish children and families through the mountains of southeastern France into the safety of Switzerland were the same routes their Huguenot ancestors took when fleeing persecution.[9] As such, that heritage formed memories and self-identification that enabled the community to wed hospitality, which often came at a great personal price, to the provision of protection as a "faithful response to new social, political and economic developments and to particular historical crises," resulting in the protection of thousands from death camps.[10]

This heritage of resistance also enabled the Chambonnais to understand "the importance of welcome and hospitality [as] . . . they stretched this welcome as far as they could."[11] Those rescued by the Chambonnais remarked upon the hospitality they encountered there, enabling them, even in the midst of their suffering, to "find realistic hope in a world of persisting

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"dangerous memory" does not necessarily need a religious foundation at all to still be effective in its meaning, albeit different from Metz's original intent. The Christian understanding argued by Metz is based in Jesus' proclamation that when followers share bread or drink from the cup, they are to do it "in remembrance" of him (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24–25). God's saving acts include not just spiritual salvation, but also physical, as seen in deliverance of the Israelites from slavery and redemption from injustice. See also Metz, *Faith in History and Society;* and Metz, *A Passion for God.* However, it is worth noting here that the term "dangerous" can be problematic. Metz's understanding of "dangerous" meant "defiant" or "remembering that endangers the abusive status quo." Yet, "dangerous memory" in the minds of many can also refer to unhealthy memory, such as in relation to nationalistic, violent, martyr-related memories that divide and exclude.

9. Hallie, "From Cruelty to Goodness," 27.

10. Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness*, 141.

11. Russell, "Hot-House Ecclesiology," 50.

cruelty."[12] For example, when a new refugee family found protection in the village, it was customary on the following morning after their arrival to "find on their front door a wreath with '*Bienvenue!*' 'Welcome!' painted on a piece of cardboard attached to the wreath . . . [but] nobody knew who had brought the wreath; in effect, the whole town had brought it."[13]

Yet, in the midst of this hospitality, the Chambonnais were keenly aware of the risks they were taking on behalf of the threatened other in their midst. Russell refers to Magda Trocmé, wife of André Trocmé, as noting that "the righteous must often pay a price for their righteousness; their own ethical purity" when it came to affirming life by providing sanctuary.[14] Additionally, both André Trocmé and Edouard Theis along with others were arrested for their actions and sent to an internment camp. Upon their release, they were asked to sign a promise of obedience to the law, which they refused, and, as a result, were forced to go underground to continue their protection efforts after their release.[15]

Sanctuary Movement in the United States

The Sanctuary Movement in the United States in the 1980s "began as a movement of hospitality that aimed to provide for the humanitarian needs of vulnerable refugees" from Central America.[16] From that practice of hospitality, however, a political movement was born that sought to protest U.S. President Ronald Reagan's destructive policies supporting wars in Central America.[17] Refugees from the violence in Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua who had entered the United States illegally lived "with the immediate expectations of death if they were deported back to their countries," yet the US immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) demanded their return. Hence, the Sanctuary Movement was born.[18] Churches, synagogues, and

12. Hallie, "From Cruelty to Goodness," 27.

13. Ibid.

14. Russell, "Hot-House Ecclesiology," 50.

15. See Hallie's *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* for the history of the village and the risks they took for their actions.

16. Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 69.

17. Ibid. See also LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions*; Carothers, *In the Name of Democracy*; and LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*. For a theological perspective of the events in El Salvador at that time, see Romero, *Voice of the Voiceless*.

18. Golden and McConnell, *Sanctuary*, viii. For the sake of brevity, I will rely primarily on the Smith and Golden and McConnell texts for this section. However, see also Bau, *This Ground is Holy*; Crittenden, *Sanctuary*; Cunningham, *God and Caesar at the Rio Grande*; and Nepstad, *Convictions of the Soul*. For an exploration of feminist

community groups, and organizations responded to the needs of those flee-ing the violence, torture, and trauma of their homelands by actively taking in and harboring the refugees.[19]

Members of the movement "declare[d] their buildings sanctuaries for refugees,"[20] and in so doing, their actions put them in direct defiance of the American government and its interpretation of the Refugee Act of 1980. The US government classed what the members of the Sanctuary Movement were doing in the 1980s as "criminal, punishable by a $2,000 fine and up to five years in prison," but "[b]y declaring sanctuary, white, middle-class con-gregations experienced something of the risk that the . . . church of Central America . . . [had] endured for years."[21]

The members of the Sanctuary Movement did not take risks and violate the law casually. The decision to enter into the work of providing sanctuary was a thorough and much-discussed process, with some com-munities taking a couple months and others taking almost a year to decide if they were going to become involved.[22] For those who decided to join the movement, their decisions were most often marked by a turning point upon which they refused to submit to secular authority, but only to God and the call for justice.[23] Golden and McConnell describe the decision to participate and conduct an illegal network of sanctuary as follows:

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issues and the role of women in the movement, see Lorentzen, *Women in the Sanctu-ary Movement*. While it is not scholarly material per se, an interesting account of the Sanctuary Movement from the perspective of a thirteen year old Guatemalan refugee is found in Pellegrino's *Journey of Dreams*. For a more contemporary look at the move-ment and implications for more recent immigration policies in North American post-9/11 context, see García, *Seeking Refuge*.

19. Golden and McConnell note that Native Americans in the United States also participated in this movement, using their reservations as sanctuaries. They were "very much concerned about the plight of Guatemalan Indians," as "[o]ne branch of the Mo-hawk nation in upper New York state . . . declared its sacred land a sanctuary" and "near Indiantown, Florida, Seminoles . . . harbored hundreds of Guatemalan Indians," which "paralleled [their involvement] in the original [Underground] railroad when Seminoles harbored escaped slaves making their way to Oklahoma and Mexico" (*Sanctuary*, 60).

20. Golden and McConnell, *Sanctuary*, viii. The sanctuary, however, was not based primarily as a physical place but as a "collective will of a faith community taking a stand for life" and served as a safe place where truth could be spoken (ibid., 11).

21. Ibid., 1–2.

22. Ibid., 132. Golden and McConnell reference an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (June 24, 1984) where members of the sanctuary movement are accused of committing a "willful and casual violation of American law." It is noted that while the "willful" claim was true, casual it was not.

23. Golden and McConnel, *Sanctuary*, 134.

> The calls came, coded conversations—midnight emergency calls from a Colorado highway driver, from the Rio Grande valley, from a pastor in Ohio, from a Methodist housekeeper in Nebraska, from refugees alone in a room in a dark church, from the clandestine Mexican church, from a Trappist monastery, from an Amerindian tribe in upstate New York, from a Concordia, Kansas, retreat center, from a farm collective in Iowa, from a synagogue in Madison, Wisconsin . . . The decision was made to keep everything in the open, to allow the public to see as clearly as possible what sanctuary was and who was involved in it. But this did not preclude caution and security efforts to protect refugees from arrest, especially when they were en route to a sanctuary. To date [1986], no refugee has been taken from a sanctuary or the railroad and deported . . . from 30 sanctuaries in 1982 to 3,000 in 1984.[24]

A unique aspect of the Sanctuary Movement compared to other instances was its public aspect. While often the provision of protective hospitality is conducted in secret because it was often risky and/or illegal, leaders of the Sanctuary Movement recognized that if the provision of sanctuary were made public, it would "give the refugees a platform to tell their stories about atrocities experienced in Central America"[25] and bear witness to the brutality supported by the Reagan administration. Furthermore, the decision to remain public was an attempt by the providers of sanctuary to circumvent the INS and "claim the high moral ground [by] openly explain[ing] themselves to the media and their denominations."[26] As providers of sanctuary began to be arrested, the arrests "only served to increase the movement's visibility and produce an outpouring of support from around the country."[27] That support grew to include condemnation of the arrests and support of the provision of sanctuary from the National Council of Churches and groups of Roman Catholic bishops and religious orders. This support was followed by the announcement that "the city of Los Angeles and the state of New Mexico declared themselves Sanctuaries."[28] As a result, in 1987, the number of Sanctuary groups, according to Smith, totaled over four hundred:

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24. Ibid., 52–53.

25. Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 67.

26. Ibid., 66.

27. Ibid., 70.

28. Ibid.

Table 1.1—Types of Sanctuary Groups, 1987[29]

Types	Number	Percent
Protestant Churches	93	22
Anabaptist Churches	80	19
Unitarian Universalist Churches	67	16
Roman Catholic Churches	65	15
Jewish Synagogues	41	10
Ecumenical Religious Groups	25	6
Cities	24	6
Universities	15	4
Other Secular Groups	13	3
Total Religious Groups	371	88
Total Secular Groups	52	12

In 1984, the INS shifted its strategy toward the Sanctuary Movement and began arresting offenders who provided sanctuary to illegal refugees. When interviewed, Christians claimed in court that their motivation was that they were "fulfilling a Christian moral duty" by providing sanctuary.[30] One person in particular, Nena MacDonald from Lubbock, Texas, had been arrested with fifteen others for providing sanctuary and rationalized her actions by stating:

29. Table sourced from Chicago Religious Task Force Sanctuary Directory 1987 (table 7.7 in Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 185). The numbers reflected here do not correspond with the numbers given in Golden and McConnell (*Sanctuary*, 53), which are much higher, but Smith's book looks at the group called Sanctuary through which primary provision was given, whereas Golden and McConnell register any church, synagogue or group that were primary or secondary providers of sanctuary, sometimes in connection with and other times independent of the organization Sanctuary. One should also point out that, as noted in the above table, the role of the secular groups in the provision of protective hospitality in the Sanctuary Movement was a small but important one. Nicaraguan theologian Juan Hernández Pico is referenced in Chicago Religious Task Force for Central America's 1986 organizing manual, stating that "those who are faithful to the God of history may be those whose motivating convictions stand outside religious categories" and "[In the revolutionary process] seeing people die for others, and not hearing any talk from them about faith in God being the motivating factor, liberates Christians from the prejudice of trying to encounter true love solely and exclusively within the boundaries of faith. It also helps to free them from the temptation of not considering a revolutionary process authentic unless it bears the label 'Christian.'" In *Organizing for Resistance*, 1.

30. Golden and McConnell, *Sanctuary*, 68.

> If I walked down a street in Lubbock and saw a person lying in the street hurt, people would think there is something wrong with me if I didn't help. What I have done with refugees is no different. If people come here to drink from the well of kindness and we turn them away, we will have poisoned the well. Someday when we ourselves may need to drink from that same well, we will find it poisoned with floating bodies.[31]

Similarly, one of the founders of the Sanctuary Movement, Jim Corbett, found that the laws that were broken as a result of his actions were of less importance compared to the moral imperative he felt to protect the endangered lives of Central Americans seeking safety in the U.S. For Corbett, the Nuremberg trials, which he had grown up hearing about because of his father's legal profession, had proven moral responsibility was greater than inhumane laws of a nation-state.[32]

While the churches and religious communities overall in the U.S. tend not to be particularly liberationist, Golden, McConnell, and Smith all noted they have a history which points to revolutionary tendencies at certain times when the need arose, seeking liberation for those who were victims of injustice and oppression.[33] The Sanctuary Movement also found inspiration in the "dangerous memory" of protective hospitality enacted by the faithful in times past, again highlighting a "heritage of resistance" that practicing communities claimed as their own. Smith, Golden and McConnell summarize these as:

- In the declaration of "entire cities as sanctuaries of refuge for accused criminals" in the Hebrew Bible[34]

- In Christian churches "during the Roman Empire and in medieval England [which] had offered themselves as sanctuaries for fugitives of blood revenge"[35]

- In the early American colonial era when churches "protected escaped political prisoners from British agents" and Quakers were known for "harboring . . . religious dissenters"[36]

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31. Ibid., 77.

32. Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 65. For more information on Jim Corbett and his role in the Sanctuary Movement, see Davidson, *Convictions of the Heart*.

33. Golden and McConnell, *Sanctuary*, 4; Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 65–67.

34. Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 67.

35. Ibid.

36. Golden and McConnell, *Sanctuary*, 4.

- During the era of American slavery and the work toward its abolition, churches "provided refuge and protection to fugitive slaves in direct defiance of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850" via the Underground Railroad[37]

- During World War II, religious communities harbored Jews and other threatened groups or individuals.[38]

- And during the Vietnam War, when "many churches sheltered conscientious objectors"[39]

In addition to the memories of these models of protective hospitality, the Sanctuary Movement also looked to the history of the religious traditions involved—primarily Judaism and Christianity—which were both "born in the travail of escape."[40] For those involved in the work of the Sanctuary Movement, liberation theology became more real as they came to see God as "the force acting in history on the side of those first refugees, leading them from slavery to freedom" and whose "identity was rooted in action and proclaimed in verbs of struggle—leading, delivering, freeing."[41]

Golden and McConnell also noted a paradigm shift among communities that participated in the provision of protective hospitality in the Sanctuary Movement. They noted that with the "learning process and the wrestling with faith that occur[s] before a declaration of sanctuary" came a process of conscientization, a "shift of consciousness," which signals a "change of understanding and a change of heart that leads to deeper commitment."[42] Concurrently, Smith argues the conscientization occurred because as more communities "considered declaring sanctuary, they were forced to learn the reasons why so many traumatized and anguished Central Americans were flooding northward."[43]

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37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 67.

40. Golden and McConnell, *Sanctuary*, 14–15. Islam also has this history, but there is no mention in the referenced materials of Muslim involvement in the particular actions of Sanctuary Movement.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., 135. Golden and McConnell refer to Paulo Friere's term *conscientization* as "a process of critical reflection at deeper and deeper levels about how human beings live and die in this world" as it "invariably destroys old assumptions and breaks down mythologies that no longer explain reality because of new information." Smith's use of the term is much more practical and concrete, utilizing it as a means of education that informs resistance and social action.

43. Smith, *Resisting Reagan*, 69.

Political, Liberationist, and Feminist Theologies

Now that the context has been set, let us now consider the theological foundations upon which such activities can be analysed. Political theology arises out of the reality of history, suffering, and memory usually connected with some form of political upheaval. As such, political theology has been defined as "the analysis and criticism of political arrangements (including cultural-psychological, social and economic aspects) from the perspective of differing interpretations of God's ways in the world."[44]

While the term "political theology" is most commonly used in the context of Christian theology, there is no good reason to argue Christianity is the sole proprietor of such theological thought. Nevertheless, in spite of this, the majority of the literature related to "political theology" is Christian. Therefore, as far as methodology is concerned, we will consider what is available, and expand and enhance it where applicable in relation to other religious traditions.

Political theology as seen in its early days, sometimes referred to as European or German political theology, began as an ecumenical endeavor developed as collaboration between Protestant and Catholic theologians. It arose from a context of post-World War II Europe as both churches faced the common problem of secularism and lack of capacity to respond to the horrors that the previous years of conflict had inflicted upon the continent and the rest of the world.[45] Two of its primary thinkers, Johann Baptist Metz and Jürgen Moltmann, who are Catholic and Protestant respectively, reflected the inter-church nature of this theological development. While context was not as specifically identified as it would be later in liberation and feminist theologies, political theology began to lay the groundwork for considering religion's role in a world of conflict, modern explorations of ethical behavior toward one's neighbor, and the social implications of theological belief albeit from a more theoretical approach. Utilizing Marxist criticisms and a hermeneutic of suspicion that refuses to take any underlying principles at face value,[46] political theology began to emphasize praxis, considering the effect theological teaching had upon the social and political as well as the spiritual

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44. Cavanaugh and Scott, *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology,* 1.

45. Moltmann, *On Human Dignity*, 98.

46. The origins of the hermeneutics of suspicion are discussed in more detail in the context of the thoughts and writings of Sigmund Freud, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Karl Marx in Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 32–35; and Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and The Human Sciences*, 34. See also Segundo, *Liberation of Theology*; O'Donnell, "Influence of Freud's Hermeneutic of Suspicion," 28–34; and Williams, "Suspicion of Suspicion," 36–53.

and psychological realms.[47] Through careful scrutiny, political theologians considered various theological doctrines and deemed them to be "oppressive or liberating, alienating or humanizing."[48] In this way, political theology as a method was seen as "a corrective to situationless theologies" as it counteracted naïve idealism and sought out the more difficult of human experiences for theological reflection.[49] Working particularly on the themes of memory, suffering and hope, Moltmann and Metz saw there was no such thing as an "*a*political theology"[50] and they began to formulate critiques of long-held concepts such as the nature of God, the nature of humanity, freedom, and interpretation of history necessitated by the manipulation of these ideas in war-time Europe in the early twentieth century.[51]

This early political theology had its weaknesses, namely in that it was predominantly androcentric *and* Eurocentric. It has been justly criticized as primarily reflecting "the voice of the bourgeoisie, questioning their own basic assumptions and seeking grace and hope in conversion."[52] These limitations meant political theology did not offer the full potential it encouraged when taken seriously. There were other voices to be heard other than European middle and upper class males. Over the years, the work of theologians such as Dorothee Sölle began to draw together the work of the German predecessors and the new theological voices arising from other parts of the world, and political theology's boundaries expanded into what would become known as liberation theology.[53]

Liberation theology was influenced by political theology as it took root as its own movement, but it evolved into something distinctive.[54] It carried with it substantial political and social critique, but increasingly focused upon the realities of poverty and oppression, namely in the development of the hermeneutic that emphasized God's preferential option for the poor and oppressed. It sought to go one step further than earlier European versions of political theology had done; it sought to put theory into practice

47. Moltmann, *On Human Dignity*, 98.

48. Ibid.

49. Metz, *A Passion for God*, 23–24.

50. Moltmann, *On Human Dignity*, 99.

51. Chopp, *The Praxis of Suffering*, 4.

52. Ibid.

53. See the works of Sölle: *Political Theology*; *Suffering*; *Celebrating Resistance*; and *The Silent Cry*.

54. All of these theologies (political, liberation, and feminist) could be discussed in the plural, rather than the singular, such as political theologies, liberation theologies, and feminist theologies. Usage of the plural reflects the understanding that even these different methodologies are not monolithic.

through creating base communities, fostering dialogue, and coordinating resistance around certain political issues such as social class and economic deprivation, oppressive government regimes, and the rights of indigenous and marginalized peoples. Yet, liberation theology would go through its own evolution; it was susceptible to the similar charge of androcentrism and was critiqued as being primarily Roman Catholic, particularly in its development in Central and South America.

Out of these critiques of male-centered theology both in the political and liberationist realms, feminist theology gained ground.[55] Believing women's experiences and issues related to women were not being adequately represented, feminist theologians asked serious questions about concepts of gender, power, violence, and trauma. Utilizing some of the same hermeneutical tools as liberation theologians, feminist theologians went further in that they sought to give voice and support not only to the case of the poor and the oppressed, but also to the experiences of women and the effects of women's issues upon on the faith community and society.[56]

All three of these theological approaches inspire, challenge, and borrow from one another, and the lines between them are continually blurred with the emergence of related theologies such as queer, womanist, mujerista, or Asian women's theologies.[57] Furthermore, it is possible that all three also fit within schema of contextual theology as one can interpret their theological hermeneutic as "explicitly [placing] the recognition of the contextual nature

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55. Feminist theology in a variety of forms had existed previous to this time, as seen in Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" speech given in 1851, where she states: "[The preacher] says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him. If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them." See hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?,* for further information. Similarly, Elizabeth Cady Stanton's work with the Seneca Falls collective on *The Woman's Bible* was influential, as it was the first time the Christian Bible had been published with commentary and critique that spoke to the needs of women. Nevertheless, the modern period of feminist theology quickly developed with the works of Daly, such as *The Church and the Second Sex* and *Beyond God the Father*, and with Ruether's *Mary, the Feminine Face of the Church.*

56. See also Brown and Bohn, *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse*; Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror*; Kyung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again*; and Schüssler Fiorenza, *But She Said.*

57. For queer, womanist, mujerista, and Asian women's theology examples, see the following respectively: Althaus-Reid, *The Queer God*; Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness*; Aquino et al., *Reader in Latina Feminist Theology*; Kyung, *Struggle to Be the Sun Again.*

of theology at the forefront of the theological process,"[58] whether it be in the form of a geographical, cultural, sexual, economic, or political context.[59]

While liberation and feminist theologies arguably lie under the more general umbrella of political theology, each have their unique place, and yet in cooperation with one another they each bring different aspects to the investigation of a theology and ethic of protective hospitality.

First, there is the issue of audience. My primary concern is to consider the needs of the powerless, marginalized, and threatened other by addressing those who are in the position to provide protective hospitality, those who have the power to host.[60] Those who are within the powerful mainstream are usually the ones who are in the easiest position to provide protection of the persecuted. Therefore, I wish to keep in mind the needs of the threatened other, which requires the tools of liberation and feminist theologies. Yet, it utilizes the tools of political theology by identifying theological and ethical imperatives that contribute to meaningful action for those who have the power to provide protective hospitality.[61]

Second is the issue of hermeneutics. Most useful are two particular hermeneutics within political theology: the hermeneutic of suspicion, found in all expressions of political theology, and the hermeneutic of liberation for all, found mostly in liberation and feminist theologies. The hermeneutic of suspicion can shed light on long-held, but often forgotten, ideas and traditions related to welcoming the other in the Abrahamic tradition of hospitality. Additionally, as the practice of protective hospitality calls into question ideas related to power and authority, both hermeneutics of suspicion and liberation are likely to be of particular value for theological analysis.

Third, the engagement with political, liberation, and feminist theologies highlights that the approaches here are centered upon social practice

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58. Pears, *Doing Contextual Theology*, 1.

59. It is understood, however, that while all theology is contextual, not everyone recognizes it as such, *explicitly* emphasizing the context within theological construction. See ibid., 1–4.

60. Jacques Derrida argues that hospitality relies upon one having the "power to host," as noted in "Hospitality," 110–12. This acknowledgement to hospitality's need for "the power to host" is also referred to by Reynolds, *Merleau-Ponty and Derrida*, 177–79; Newlands, *Hospitable God*, 77–78; and Carroll, "Reimagining Home," 179–81.

61. Nevertheless, there are protectors as well as those in need of refuge who are part of the marginalized of this world. I think specifically of networks of women who have been victims of domestic abuse who join forces to protect one another. In their case, utilizing only general political theology as an approach can be lacking and would benefit from more specific feminist perspectives. Therefore, since this research seeks to address their plight as well, the more specific disciplines of liberation and feminist theologies are required.

and lived experience. The theological formulations presented here were not incubated in a vacuum, but were shaped and matured in response to concrete experience. Feminist theologians assert "[t]heology follows life; it does not precede it."[62] Moreover, this emphasis upon applied praxis understands that theological formulations are of no value to anyone if they are not disseminated and lived out in a constructive way. If left in the realm of doctrine only, theology becomes mere conjecture rather than practical, concrete expression of dynamic faith. Similarly, liberation theology exhorts contextual praxis, seeing everyday concerns as integral to theological formation and considering the recitation of creed and tradition without corresponding action as lifeless and empty. In this way, liberation theology sees itself not as "a new theme for reflection but as a *new way* to do theology."[63] Liberation theology does not, however, stop at reflection, but seeks "to be a part of the process through which the world is transformed."[64] Transformation is essential to the narrative of protective hospitality, and, therefore, should not be ignored.

Fourth, the emphasis upon violence, trauma, exclusion, and the needs for security as emphasized in feminist theology has great deal to contribute to the discussion of protective hospitality. Whereas European political theology and liberation theology tend to give more patriarchal understandings of suffering, feminist theology takes a different approach by giving voice and bearing witness to those who have been abused and neglected, tortured, and persecuted. Feminist theology challenges justifications for suffering as a means of redemption.[65] The refusal to "grant [violence] power"[66] and, subsequently, the emphasis upon acts of resistance to power is a foundational concept of feminist theology that can offer crucial sensitivity. Likewise, issues of social inequality, systems of patriarchy, and exploitation of the weak and vulnerable are ever present in discussing the concept of protective hospitality, and so the feminist perspective is useful to this discussion.

Fifth, the use of other types of literature beyond simply the sacred texts as evidenced in feminist theological constructions is valuable. Particularly in the practice of hospitality, looking to other sources and authorities that challenge and shape cultural practice of welcome and safety is helpful. Furthermore, in light of the fact that those in need of protection are often those

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62. Brown and Bohn, *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse*, xii.

63. Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 15.

64. Ibid.

65. See Brock and Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes*, for an example of how feminist theologians are questioning the role of violence, suffering, and trauma as being redemptive.

66. Brown and Bohn, *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse*, xii.

who have been marginalized even by the formal structures of the religious traditions, feminist theology's inspiration from extra-textual sources and primary narratives is necessary to give voice to those experiences.[67] Such sources provide "helpful insights to the human condition" and can also articulate the "experiences of those who have been marginalized by the dominant tradition."[68] In turn, they have the potential "to challenge theology, deconstructing its authoritative status and 'unmasking' theological narratives."[69] Therefore, the stories of practitioners and other instances of protective hospitality to the threatened other during conflict, even in recent history and current events, are vitally important to theological analysis presented here.

Lastly, this work emphasizes the poor as found in liberation theology, but seeks to explore the definition of who exactly "the poor" are. It does not rely upon economic poverty, per se, as liberation theology practitioners have traditionally sought to do. Economic realities certainly play a role, but are not the sole contributing factor to the need for protective hospitality. One of the most valuable contributions to this discussion comes from the liberation theologian Jon Sobrino, who asserts "the poor are those who die before their time." For most of the poor, death comes slowly through grinding poverty. For a few, however, their death is a "swift, violent death, caused by repression and wars, when the poor threaten these unjust structures . . . [and] are deprived even of their cultures in order to weaken their identities and make them more defenseless."[70] According to Sobrino, those targeted for persecution in such a way that they need protective hospitality are, indeed, "the poor." Similarly, other liberation theologians such as James Cone and N. L. Eiesland define the poor as those who have been subjected to discrimination, marginalization, and dehumanization because of their race, ethnicity, class, or disability.[71] Therefore "the poor" are not simply the economically deprived, but are all who are oppressed or marginalized within a society, anyone who is suffering because of injustice or in need of protection.

Accordingly, what is presented in the following chapters builds upon the understanding that the respective Abrahamic traditions have a strong foundation in social justice traditions. While the three traditions carry out their commitments to social justice in a variety of ways, there is a shared end

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67. Graham, *Theological Reflection*, 71–72.

68. Ibid., 72, referring to Walton, "Speaking in Signs," 2–6.

69. Graham, *Theological Reflections*, 72.

70. Sobrino, *The Principle of Mercy*, 50. Cf. Tombs, *Latin American Liberation Theology*, 213.

71. Eiesland, *The Disabled God*; Cone, *God of the Oppressed*.

result to these commitments: to live lives that honor God and the dignity of one's fellow human beings.[72]

A COOPERATIVE AND COMPLEMENTARY THEOLOGICAL APPROACH

In addition to a contextual and political approach, the second theological current drawn upon is a cooperative and complementary theological approach informed by three particular distinctive emphases identified as the inter-religious, Abrahamic, and hospitable. To succeed in this endeavor, both disciplines of Christian theology and religious studies are drawn upon, taking a step beyond a solely Christian outlook by seeking to engage more directly with lived experience in a pluralist world.

Towards an Inter-Religious Approach

The reality of a pluralist world and its role in developing self-understanding was acknowledged in the nineteenth century by thinkers such as Max Müller and Goethe, who both argued that "to know one is to know none."[73] Comparative religion scholar Ruth ApRoberts utilizes Müller's assertion, and declares "to know Judaism and Christianity we must study non-Jewish, non-Christian cultures, especially of the surrounding peoples."[74] Therefore, to truly understand Christianity's theology and ethic of protective hospitality, it is beneficial to consider other non-Christian traditions that shed light on particular aspects that may be invisible otherwise. Therefore, I seek to examine Christian theology and protective hospitality through the interpretative lenses of Judaism and Islam's own practice in such a way that is respectful of difference and highlights complementarity and enables cooperation for mutual benefit. More specifically, the theology analyzed and developed here seeks to emphasize complementarity in thought and identify potential cooperative action through extending protective welcome to the endangered other.

Furthermore, these two main theological approaches—the contextual and political, and the cooperative and complementary—are interlinked.

72. See Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*; Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*; and Yong, *Hospitality and the Other*.

73. Müller made this observation in the area of religions; Goethe, in the area of language. This statement is credited to both in several sources, including ApRoberts, *The Ancient Dialect*, 28; and Courville, *Edward Said's Rhetoric of the Secular*, 66.

74. ApRoberts, *The Ancient Dialect*, 28.

The dual usage of these approaches of Christian political theology and inter-religious hermeneutics is considered a necessity by both Asian liberation theologian Aloysius Pieris and inter-religious scholar Paul Knitter, whose work argues that if inter-religious dialogue "does not come out of an experience of human suffering, and does not explore the this-worldly, liberative message of all religions, [then it] is a violation of the very nature of religion and interreligious dialogue."[75] Yet, Pieris also questions his fellow liberation theologians by questioning if their "vision of the kingdom of God [is] perhaps too narrow because it is too Christian."[76] Pieris, therefore, understands that if one is to consider political theology, one must also consider the inter-religious; and if one is to consider the inter-religious, one must consider political theology in light of "the many poor and the many religious"[77] of this globalized world. Those of different religious traditions still live in the same world, have the same human needs, have many of the same values, and suffer the same abuses. John Donne's classic assertion that "no man is an island"[78] rings true for the inclusion of religious traditions as well in the current pluralist and globalized context. Conversely, to try to control that which is different and enforce homogeneity is to dominate and control, which is unhelpful to dialogue.

Yet, in light of the practicalities of an inter-religious hermeneutic, it should be noted that those who profess a particular faith are "never innocent of other philosophical influences."[79] Whenever theological constructs are proposed, they are contextual in that they are based in a "specific place and time"[80] and are reflective of an individual's or community's experiences and world view informed by culture, national and political identities, and other self-defining factors. The key to constructing a socially relevant and contextually oriented approach is to be aware of those factors. If one seeks for that approach also to be inter-religious and cooperative in nature, then demonstrating inter-religious literacy, making "measured judgments within the bounds of [one's] learning," and knowing when "to stop speaking about things beyond [one's] expertise" are also required.[81] Therefore, what follows

75. Knitter, foreword to *An Asian Theology of Liberation*, xi–xii. See also Pieris, *Love Meets Wisdom*.

76. Ibid., xii.

77. Knitter, "Pluralism and Oppression," 198–208.

78. John Donne, "Meditation XVII," in *Emergent Occasions*.

79. Graham, *Theological Reflection*, 138.

80. Ibid., 138–39.

81. Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 6.

seeks to highlight cooperation in ethical practice with a view to the context out of which it arises.

As Christian political theology in its various forms seeks to address suffering and violence, and no religious tradition's adherents are immune to suffering, it is no surprise that feminist and liberationist perspectives found in Judaism and Islam also take suffering, violence, and marginalization seriously. Such perspectives are relatively recent, but their existence is important.[82] While a variety of disciplines will be utilized to draw a variety of strands together, feminist and liberationist hermeneutics of the textual sources and tradition will most often prevail throughout this analysis.

A word regarding the feminist role in this discussion of suffering, solidarity, and inter-religious cooperation is required. Feminism is, according to feminist theologian Ursula King, "the missing dimension in the dialogue of religions," and "interfaith dialogue is mostly, at least on the official level, carried out by men, and gender issues have rarely been on the agenda."[83] Additionally, feminist theology fills a role in ethical formation that has been heretofore lacking: it is relational in its ethical constructions. Women tend to "develop . . . relation-centered ethics . . . [which] contrasts to the stress on rules and autonomy in male ethics."[84] As a result, the relational aspect of hospitality is attractive to many feminist-leaning scholars. Moreover, many feminist theologians emphasize "life" as the "key word," as the norm for evaluating "religious traditions in interfaith dialogue" wherein words such as "life-affirming," "life-enhancing," "survival-centered" often appear.[85] Concurrently, protective hospitality has, at its center, a dedication to the value and preservation of life, particularly on behalf of those who are threatened.

In some contexts, religious diversity is closely linked to liberation theology in that denying the need for diversity and insisting upon uniformity is to restrict life and "the right to full human and religious flourishing."[86] Likewise, feminist theology emphasizes both the global and the local as it

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82. Their legitimacy in the overall presence and structure in the respective religious traditions cannot be debated at length here, but are understood. For liberationist perspectives in Islam and Judaism, see Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*; Dabashi, *Islamic Liberation Theology*; Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation;* and Ellis, *Reading the Torah Out Loud*. For feminist perspectives, see Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman* and *Inside the Gender Jihad*; Hassan, "Challenging the Stereotypes of Fundamentalism"; Plaskow, *Standing Against Sinai*; and Haddad and Esposito, *Daughters of Abraham*.

83. King, "Feminism," quoted in Engell, "Dialogue for Life," 249. Another version of King's article can be found in May, *Pluralism and the Religions*, 40–57.

84. Engell, "Dialogue for Life," 255.

85. Ibid., 256.

86. Phan, "Living for the Reign of God," 18. See also Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously*.

is "trans-national, trans-regional, trans-cultural and trans-religious,"[87] it "recognize[s] the complex web of multiple oppression" and it "shift[s] from the politics of identity to the politics of solidarity."[88]

Additionally, solidarity with the suffering and oppressed in inter-religious spheres enables those "from diverse cultures and religions to come to shared conclusions about truth and value and action"[89] and it requires a "hermeneutical privilege" to be given to those who suffer.[90] The emphasis upon this commonality in approach is appropriate if the suffering are to be allowed to be a part of their own solution and the religious traditions represented truly seek to make effective changes against injustice.[91] In this way, then, "the questioning face of the suffering . . . enables religions to face and question each other and come to joint assessments of truth."[92]

Furthermore, as inter-religious scholar John D'Arcy May points out, "suffering poses an ethical question, to which the only appropriate response is action."[93] While what action is taken can differ depending upon the religious tradition, "the universal experience of suffering correlates with particular practical responses . . . because it is mediated to us in markedly different ways—called 'religions'—in which the common human lot is symbolised."[94]

Concurrently, Knitter states that "religions call on what is more than human (at least the human as we now experience it) in order to transform or liberate the human" and that "to transform the human context will mean, generally, to oppose or resist the forces that stand in the way of change or newness."[95] Knitter also refers to the work of David Tracy who notes "religions are exercises in resistance . . . which reveal various possibilities for human freedom . . . [w]hen not domesticated by sacred canopies for the status quo or wasted by their own self-contradictory grasps at power."[96] In the same vein, Mohandas Gandhi declared: "those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means."[97] Yet, it is this

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87. Kang, "Re-constructing *Asian* Feminist Theology," 49.

88. Phan, "Living For The Reign Of God," 49, referring to further arguments made in Kang, "Re-constructing *Asian* Feminist Theology," 222–24.

89. Knitter, "Responsibilities for the Future," 85, referring to Francis Schüssler Fiorenza's "Theological and Religious Studies," 133–34.

90. Ibid., 86.

91. Ibid.

92. Ibid., 85.

93. May, *After Pluralism*, 94–95.

94. Ibid.

95. Knitter, "Responsibilities for the Future," 76.

96. Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 84.

97. Gandhi, *My Autobiography*, 504.

value of resistance that has been lost in mainstream Abrahamic traditions while still being so vital to its ethical framework, particularly on behalf of the poor, marginalized, and oppressed. It is this value of resistance on behalf of the threatened other that I seek to rediscover and illuminate in the context of protective hospitality.

Within the emphasis upon the social relevance of an inter-religious hermeneutic, there is also the need to acknowledge the existence and authority of the subversive and prophetic in the foundations of the Abrahamic traditions, found particularly in the intra-communal discussions regarding meaning, ethics, and use of power.[98] All three of the traditions have had national might on their side at one point or another. Yet, adherents of all three traditions have also tasted the humiliation and disempowerment of being a threatened other, an oppressed and persecuted minority.

To welcome and admit the threatened other and provide protection is to subvert the powers that call for their exclusion or demise. To cry out for inclusion in society, many times against popular opinion, is to be prophetic as it provides a vision for what the community can or should be. In light of this, I aim to emphasize the voices in the Abrahamic traditions that challenge rather than collude with the powers and national might. I also wish to highlight instances where the marginalized are subjected to rejection and oppression both in the halls of government and community as well as in the temples of religion.

This combination between the spiritual and political through the voice of the prophetic is reminiscent of Knitter's concept of the "*mystical-prophetic dipolarity*" that "vibrates and flows back and forth within all religious traditions."[99] This dipolarity

> animates a two fold project, each aspect essential, each calling to and dependent on the other, to transform both the within and the without, to alter inner consciousness and social consciousness, to bring about peace of the heart and peace in the world, stirring the individual to an earnest spiritual praxis and also to a bold political praxis . . . The dynamic and call of this mystical-prophetic dipolarity is what tells Christians that they can love God only when they are loving their neighbour, or Buddhists that wisdom is not possible without compassion . . . Neither the

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98. See works such as Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*; Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon*; Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*; Horsley, *Religion and Empire*; and Almond, Appleby, and Sivan, *Strong Religion,* for discussions on the social relevance of religion, particularly in relation to power, violence, and conflict, both for positive and negative impact.

99. Knitter, "Responsibilities for the Future," 77.

mystical nor the prophetic is more fundamental, more important; each calls to, and has existence in, the other.[100]

While Knitter's dipolarity speaks to intra-religious dialogue more than inter-religious dialogue, it is not without applicability. The mystical and prophetic in each tradition oftentimes finds itself mirrored in other traditions in very similar ways. The emphasis upon doctrine and right belief is countered by a comparable emphasis upon personal and communal responsibility. When the balance is not maintained, Knitter asserts, there are "mystics whose spirituality becomes self-indulgent, insensitive, or irresponsible . . . [and] prophets whose actions become self-serving, intolerant, or violent."[101]

Testing this balance through exposure and cooperation with other traditions is beneficial as it tests the health of the religious tradition and its place in the world. Knitter explains this by arguing that if adherents from a variety of religious traditions "can agree in the beginning that [their faith] must always promote greater eco-human wellbeing and remove the sufferings from our world, then they have a shared reference point from which to affirm or criticize each other's claims."[102] In this way, "immediate solutions to interreligious disagreements" are not provided but a "path toward solutions" is made possible.[103]

Similarly, inter-religious scholar Hendrik Vroom asks a pertinent question: Is right conduct the criterion for true religion?[104] In working out answers to this question, Vroom refers to Knitter who names this particular criterion as being a "message [which promotes] the psychological health of individuals, their sense of value, purpose, [and] freedom . . . [promoting] the welfare, the liberation, of all peoples, integrating individual persons and nations into a larger community."[105] Furthermore, Vroom highlights Knitter's argument emphasizing liberation as "the possibility for religious traditions to understand one another [which] lies in a 'communion of liberative praxis,'" making dialogue, then, a "'shared praxis' from which a 'communication in doctrine' is possible."[106]

Vroom's assertions concerning right conduct are valuable. In this approach, the test of healthy theology is based in how it is practiced and the

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100. Ibid.

101. Ibid.

102. Ibid., 85.

103. Ibid.

104. Vroom, "Right Conduct," 107.

105. Knitter, *No Other Name?*, 231. Cf. Vroom, "Right Conduct," 107.

106. Knitter, "Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions," 183. Cf. Vroom, "Right Conduct," 107.

effects it has not only on the believers themselves, but also on those around them. Therefore, if one were to form an inter-religious theology around the concept of protective hospitality, it can best be tested as it is formed into an inter-religious ethic.[107] If a theology has no valuable, corresponding ethic, that theology is practically meaningless. Conversely, if an ethic has no underlying system of belief,[108] it is often empty and simply duty for duty's sake.[109] In this way, religious ethics are deeply rooted in spiritual belief and practice and to separate the two is to misrepresent both.[110] Theory and practice, or theology and ethics, "mutually drive each other forward" and "do not belong in two different kingdoms," but at the same time, they also "never wholly correspond with each other . . . [and] do not come to a unity in history."[111] Instead, as Jürgen Moltmann asserts, theology and ethics "constantly overlap so that theory must incorporate practice and practice must incorporate theory."[112]

Furthermore, a cooperative ethical hermeneutic rooted in Abrahamic theologies takes into account and shows sensitivity to the diversity of traditions and approaches found in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. All three traditions uphold the imperative of "prophetic responsibility" when it comes to developing the links between theology and ethics,[113] and yet each is particular in how that prophetic responsibility is carried out. As such, the effort toward pluralism in order to illustrate the positive potential for an Abrahamic theology and ethic of protective hospitality needs to consider those particularities and the "apparent mutual incompatibility of cultures and religions, presenting its ethical credentials precisely in its sensitivity to differences and its solidarity with the marginalised."[114]

While they are often unable to be uniformly changed, particularities can be "imaginatively transcend[ed]" when it is realized that "there are aspects

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107. With "ethic" being defined as the code of behavior one has toward others—both on an individual and societal/communal level.

108. Whether it be based in "theology" per se—meaning a belief in God and a view of God's place in the world—or in humanism or some other similar value system.

109. However, duty for duty's sake should not be summarily discounted, as it is a recognized value system stemming most familiarly from the work of Immanuel Kant and the development of deontological ethics. Despite its noble intent, it does not, nevertheless, point to the ideal of religiously-motivated ethics and lacks in authority to maintain practice, particularly in more dangerous or conflicted contexts.

110. May, *After Pluralism*, 84–85.

111. Moltmann, *On Human Dignity*, 107–8.

112. Ibid.

113. Esack, *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism*, 17.

114. May, *After Pluralism*, 60–61.

of them which are philosophically limited or ethically unsatisfactory."[115] It is here where the cooperative and inter-religious nature of this ethical formation is useful, in that where there are weaknesses in one tradition, another tradition may be utilized in order to teach, challenge, and strengthen. May considers this in the context of inter-religious communication, noting interaction between traditions "can transform both persons and situations . . . [because] by acting together on behalf of the suffering . . . religious people, no matter how different their backgrounds, truly come to know what they believe."[116]

May's consideration of inter-religious communication necessitates a discussion related to the method of inter-religious hermeneutics in general. There are a variety of ways in which inter-religious communication takes place. Comparative theologian Catherine Cornille identifies them as the following:

1. the hermeneutical retrieval of resources for dialogue within one's own tradition;

2. the pursuit of proper understanding of the other;

3. the appropriation and reinterpretation of the other within one's own religious framework; and

4. the borrowing of hermeneutical principles of another religion.[117]

The first approach identified by Cornille emphasizes the internal dialogue—or intrareligious dialogue—that occurs as a result of exposure to or desire to interact with the other. As a result, a number of hermeneutical tools can be utilized to examine the resources within one's own tradition that may inform and foster "greater openness toward other religions."[118] This work relies upon the conversations previously conducted within the boundaries of this approach in each of the traditions and upon the centuries of theological debate that has addressed issues of exclusivism and pluralism, and discussions of supercessionism, soteriology, revelation, and religious authority.

The second approach is, perhaps, the most common hermeneutic in inter-religious dialogue as it focuses upon learning about the other as a means of gaining understanding. The Qur'anic admonition that each

115. Ibid., 99–100.

116. Ibid.

117. Cornille, "On Hermeneutics in Dialogue," introduction to *Interreligious Hermeneutics*, edited by Catherine Cornille and Christopher Conway, x.

118. Ibid., xi.

tradition was created "so that you may know one another" encapsulates such an approach."[119] Yet, over the years, optimism has battled with pessimism as to whether or not such understanding can ever really be achieved. Cornille points out that the experimental and affective dimensions of inter-religious study where ideas and teachings that resonate with one's experience are secondary to "rational comprehension or historical knowledge"[120] have been neglected.

Yet, comparative theologian Samuel Youngs argues such a process is becoming more popular as the global nature of "contemporary religious and secular pluralism . . . is having a marked influence on the ways in which academia studies religion and theology," causing a move "beyond a typically Christian way of studying religion and theology in order to advocate a more sympathetic outlook and approach with regard to other religions."[121] Youngs identifies this process as one whereby "a religious scholar or theologian reaches out from their own faith tradition—without denying that tradition—in order to intentionally and sympathetically interact and exchange with other systems of theological belief in a comparative way."[122]

The third approach looks to gain "not only proper understanding of the other religion but also mutual enrichment and growth in truth" through appropriation and reinterpretation.[123] It looks for the original meanings in the religious contexts from which certain truths and teachings arise, while utilizing those same teachings to enhance, challenge or integrate into one's own religious tradition. In this approach, there is the acknowledgement that traditions borrow from, are in conversation with, and transform because of other traditions, both from within and without. Some find this approach disturbing, labeling such practices as syncretism, spiritual colonization, or simple theft. The comparative theologian Francis Clooney writes of the "persistent colonialist tendency to co-opt . . . others, consuming them simply for our own purposes."[124] His concern is valid and should serve as a corrective, ensuring appropriation is not consumption, but careful consideration, dia-

119. Qur'an 49:13. Muslim scholar Reza Shah-Kazemi notes the Arabic meaning for *ta'arafu* (know one another) does not refer only to "knowledge in the ordinary sense, but to spiritual knowledge." See Shah-Kazemi, "Light upon Light?," 121.

120. Cornille, "On Hermeneutics in Dialogue," xv–xvi. Cornille has written about this further in her 2008 book, *The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue*, 137–76.

121. Byrne, *The Names of God*, 3, referring to the work of Youngs, "The Frontier of Comparative Theology," 1–10.

122. Youngs, "The Frontier of Comparative Theology," 4. Cf. Byrne, *The Names of God*, 3.

123. Cornille, "On Hermeneutics in Dialogue," xvii.

124. Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 52.

logue, and integration for shared benefit. However, from a more positive perspective, this particular inter-religious hermeneutic, Cornille asserts, also has a greater capacity to "lead to the rediscovery of certain forgotten, neglected, or implicit dimensions"[125] in the traditions being explored and providing "opportunity for continuous growth."[126] Ricoeur's version of linguistic hospitality most likely resembles appropriation[127] according to Ricoeur scholar Marianne Moyaert who notes appropriation is "never an act of 'absorption,' but rather the reception of the other as other" requiring a willingness on the part of the host "to undergo a form of *alienation . . .* [presuming] *expropriation . . .* [and] becoming *oneself another*."[128]

The final inter-religious hermeneutic appropriates particular skills and hermeneutical tools used in one tradition for use in another. Such an approach can be seen in the practice of applying the Jewish tradition of midrash to non-Jewish texts, or applying the hermeneutical tools of Christian political theology to assist in interpretation of Jewish and Muslim sources as they pertain to the practice of hospitality.

Nevertheless, of the approaches explored here, the third inter-religious hermeneutic, which seeks to gain understanding of other traditions while using that understanding to sharpen and enrich one's own, has the greatest resonance with the approach adopted here. While elements from the other approaches will be utilized, as has been noted, the majority of the work presented here seeks to rediscover the tradition of hospitality in the Christian tradition while utilizing the traditions of Judaism and Islam to identify the gaps that need to be addressed. This particular approach will, however, inevitably lead to further identification of complementarity present in the three traditions that provides material for meaningful dialogue, cooperative theological development, and faithful social action.[129]

May helpfully sheds light on the cooperative nature of shared religious life together by exploring the language used. Borrowed from the language of science, inter-religious concepts of "complementarity" and "symbiosis" are

125. Cornille, "On Hermeneutics in Dialogue," xviii.

126. Ibid., xix.

127. This will be discussed later in this chapter in the context of a hermeneutic of hospitality.

128. Moyaert, "Absorption or Hospitality," 85. See also Moyaert, "The (Un-)translatability of Religions?," 337–64.

129. I do, however, admit that the more orthodox or fundamentalist/conservative branches of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam may take issue with some approaches and assumptions found here. As there is no monolithic expression of religious adherence, this is unavoidable. Nevertheless, all three traditions have theological traditions related to liberation and feminist theology that have more in common with one another than difference.

necessary as they emphasize the role of imagining, theorizing, and building models where "two organisms need to engage in an exchange of life-giving substances with one another in order that both may survive."[130] Building upon this, May asserts two other ideas for inter-religious life borrow from science: "synthesis" in which "elements combine to create a substance which contains the old elements in a new form"[131] and, what May calls, a corresponding "osmosis of discourse"[132] in which religious ideas maintain individual identity but move through their self-identifying boundaries in order to borrow and use language, theological formulations, and ethics of other traditions that can provide new ideas and ways of being faithful.

Furthermore, May highlights the "danger of dualism" that can often be found in inter-religious dialogue where distinct entities enter into relationship under the auspices of "us" and "them."[133] To counteract this, May suggests dialogue not be "merely the reciprocal presentation of proposals for belief, but the profoundly religious act of making oneself able to welcome the stranger by facing the alien in oneself," as difference "becomes an agent of self-discovery and a source of mutual enrichment."[134] Indeed, May says, "[o]ur own spirituality is neither fully real nor genuinely autonomous until we acknowledge that other people's can be too" and, therefore, we "must be strong enough not only for the dialogue of like with like, but for the encounter of unlike with unlike."[135]

No religious tradition is monolithic and unchanging. Every religious tradition including Christianity's claim to *ecclesia semper reformando* undergoes reformation as it encounters new questions, challenges and contexts.[136] Furthermore, inter-religious scholar James Heft concludes it "is the *responsibility* of each religion to correct itself, to perform the sacred task of self-criticism."[137] For this to happen, dialogue needs to take place and new ideas need to be disseminated, allowing for a "new consensus of authorities that will not tolerate" inherited claims to be developed.[138] As a result of this

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130. May, *After Pluralism,* 57.

131. May explains this further by giving examples: "Zen Christianity pioneered by Hugo Enomiya-Lasalle SJ . . . the universalist and peaceable Baha'i faith as a transmutation of Islam; the incorporation of traditional and Christian rituals in the African Independent Churches" (*After Pluralism*, 57).

132. Ibid., 58–59.

133. Ibid., 70–71.

134. Ibid., 80.

135. Ibid.

136. Reynolds, "Improvising Together," 62.

137. Heft, "Resources for Social Transformation," 7 (italics mine).

138. Greenberg, "Religion as a Force for Reconciliation and Peace," 101.

reformation in each tradition, a natural outcome will be that those adherents who move toward justice-oriented theologies feel as if they have more in common with believers from other religious traditions "than they have with members of their own communities" who are not concerned with the same issues.[139] Such realities require further encounter with the religious other and dialogue in order to build stronger frameworks for shared action.

Welcoming the religious other is an essential premise of this research. On a theoretical level, some will find this welcome difficult, particularly in relation to exclusivist truth claims. Nevertheless, welcome should not be dependent upon these claims. Instead, the welcome of religious others acts as "subversive presences" where traditions "embark [with one another] on a dialogue of life and of thought, a theological and philosophical negotiation."[140] In light of this, Catholic inter-religious scholar Joseph Stephen O'Leary speaks of the unavoidability of complementary theological dialogue by stating:

> Radically to separate the religions is impossible. Their roots intertwine. Their lights are always ready to blend, even across thick veils of language . . . Thus any attempt to judge, or reject, the other religions in the light of a single one elevated to normative status comes undone. A religious tradition is not a cathedral which contains everything, but a crossroads open to everything. Every religion . . . has a police which guards its frontiers; this theological vigilance is a necessary precaution, but of uncertain effect, for spiritual movements are characterised by great permeability, so that [each religion] is incessantly transforming itself in response to the pressure of all the currents of the surrounding culture and of newly encountered foreign cultures.[141]

Likewise, the differences between each religious tradition are changing. Each generation sees what differentiates one faith from another in disparate ways. Those changes, in turn, then have the potential to "challenge even our most treasured assumptions about interreligious hermeneutical methods and possibilities."[142] As such, I seek to voice some of those challenges and highlight new possibilities.

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139. Gross, "Religious Pluralism in Struggles for Justice," 1.

140. O'Leary, *Religious Pluralism and Christian Truth*, 1.

141. Ibid., 14–15.

142. Jeanrond, "Toward an Interreligious Hermeneutics of Love," 45.

Towards an Abrahamic Approach

The use of the term "Abrahamic" is widespread, most often applying to the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.[143] It refers to the religions that look to a common spiritual ancestor in the person of Abraham, whose narrative is found in the Torah, the Bible, and the Qur'an, and that claim to worship the God of Abraham and follow his spiritual tradition of monotheism also referenced in these texts.[144]

There are several practical reasons why I choose to use the term "Abrahamic." Firstly, using "Abrahamic" is a stylistic convenience. To refer each time to the traditions discussed here as "Judaism, Christianity, and Islam" is unwieldy. The only other shorter term used to refer to these three traditions is the blandly generic "monotheist traditions," which lacks the convenient and applicable emphasis upon Abraham and the impression of common roots and heritage. Secondly, to embrace all religions would be too broad. Furthermore, by using the term, there is recognition of a level of debate that already exists as to what *Abrahamic* entails and a decision to follow the common usage, which refers to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as the primary Abrahamic family of faith.[145] Thirdly, the person of Abraham in these three traditions is emphasized and is a "point of reference" by which each community "can and must be measured critically,"[146] particularly in relation to conversations about hospitality.

In the vein of O'Leary's statement about the intertwined roots of religious traditions, the intertwined relationship between the three monotheistic Abrahamic traditions has been chosen for three reasons. First, to concentrate solely on Christianity would give a myopic view of a rich tradition—that is, hospitality—found in a variety of religious cultures that has transformative potential worldwide. Second, ecumenical and Abrahamic scholar Lewis Mudge points to the Abrahamic traditions as being "among the worst religious troublemakers through the centuries" despite the fact that "these three faiths are historically interrelated and look to overlapping scriptures . . . [suggesting] that there is potential . . . among them for something

143. There are other traditions that also see themselves as Abrahamic, such as Ba'hai, Druze and Rastafarianism. However, usage restricts itself to (what so far is) the more widely-used categorical definition which restricts "Abrahamic" to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as found in works such as those comprising Burrell's Abrahamic Dialogues series; Ochs and Johnson (developers of the Scriptural Reasoning movement), *Crisis, Call and Leadership in the Abrahamic Traditions;* and Fitzgerald, "Relations among the Abrahamic Religions."

144. See also Goodman et al., *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites.*

145. See also Mudge, *The Gift of Responsibility;* and Swidler, "Trialogue," 493–509.

146. Kuschel, *Abraham,* 204.

new."[147] Last, to focus on the specific commonalities of the Abrahamic traditions have regarding hospitality—especially when the common patriarch of Abraham is held up as an example of one who gives hospitality—provides a good test case for the development of an Abrahamic theology and ethic of protective hospitality that will hopefully be a model for further values and practices in religious traditions for common social benefit.

The role these Abrahamic traditions play in the public, globalized sphere have tremendous importance in the societies in which they are found. Unfortunately, the impression the traditions and their respective adherents have created has been largely negative.[148] Since the Abrahamic traditions are, to reiterate Mudge's assertion, "among the worst religious troublemakers through the centuries,"[149] it seems only right these three traditions also cooperate with one another in order to address particular grievances. Much needs to be done to heal the wounds that have been inflicted over the centuries; yet, one must start somewhere constructive. Cooperating with one another, particularly in areas that have the potential to heal and reconcile such as the practice of protective hospitality, has tremendous power to provide an alternative vision of religious life together.

Conflict and competition are not the sole means of relating to one another. The following chapters work to examine complementarity, collaboration, and cooperation as transformative and effective methods for the Abrahamic traditions. This complementarity, collaboration, and cooperation has the positive potential to enable the Abrahamic traditions to be in relationship with one another, seeking the welfare of the other through welcome, sustenance, dialogue and the provision of safe space.

Judaism, Christianity, and Islam each consider Abraham to have been a friend of God[150] who embraced his identity as a "stranger and sojourner, a displaced person whose homeland lay elsewhere."[151] The friendship between God and Abraham was not characterized as one of exclusion, but as one rooted in Abraham's identity as a stranger wherein he was "impelled by

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147. Mudge, *The Gift of Responsibility*, 4, quoting Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 10–11, 157–58. While the Abrahamic traditions are very similar in many ways, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are still very different religions. Therefore, this work treads a fine line as it seeks to highlight common belief and practice while honoring each tradition's particularity.

148. Particularly in light of current events as seen in global terrorism, the liberal vs. conservative religion wars in US culture and politics, and issues related to Israel/Palestine, all of which are arguably caught up in one another.

149. Mudge, *The Gift of Responsibility*, 4.

150. 2 Chr 20:7; Isa 41:8; Jas 2:23; Qur'an 4:125.

151. Kuschel, *Abraham*, 14.

his trusting relationship with God to intercede for those who are in need . . . someone who is open to the needs of his brothers and sisters."[152] To be called the children of Abraham implies the same devotion to caring for others.[153]

In Islam, the Arabic name for Abraham is *Ibrahim* and later tradition interpreted the name to mean *ab Rahim,* which translates to "compassionate father."[154] This interpretative tradition sees Abraham and his wife Sarah as the parents of those in need of parents in paradise.[155] Abraham is the "father to those who have no father . . . [and] is the embodiment of the Qur'anic injunction to care for the orphans and the needy."[156]

As such, the Abrahamic traditions require its adherents be their brothers' and sisters' keepers. One is bound to another and religious practice is made more relevant when attention is given to "the insights, symbols, ethical demands and religious practices of other religions and alternative movements," not in an effort to replace one's own but to complement, enrich and challenge it.[157] Given the inter-relatedness of these traditions, Mudge noted "there is potential, some of it already beginning to be realized, among them for something new, for what Hannah Arendt calls 'natality,' to arise on the stage of history."[158] I wish to build upon that natality, to offer a possible model from which other complementary theologies and cooperative ethics from these traditions can be born.

Towards a Hospitable Approach

A distinctive aim of this book is to explore the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and their theology and practice of protective hospitality; but it also is an endeavor in hospitality in itself. The work here is rooted in a self-consciously Christian theological tradition. Yet, to be hospitable in

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152. Fitzgerald, "Relations among the Abrahamic Religions," 75.

153. Ibid.

154. Ayoub, "Abraham and His Children," 122.

155. The Qur'an version of the story of Hagar does not depict Abraham turning his back on her and casting her off as the Torah does. Instead, he leaves, trusting God to take care of her and she acknowledged that if what he was doing was because of the bidding of God, that would happen. She has more agency in the Islamic tradition than in the Jewish and Christian versions.

156. Ibid.

157. Küng, *Islam*, 651–52.

158. Arendt describes natality as the state where each birth represents a new beginning, and as such, the potential for newness and novelty to enter the world with each birth. Mudge, *The Gift of Responsibility*, 4, quoting Arendt, *Human Condition*, 10–11, 157–58.

its approach, this work also requires a certain level of openness, accessibility, and welcome in one's method, structure, and language. This is particularly necessary here where belief and practices of other traditions beyond Christianity are addressed, while seeking to give a voice to the needs of the threatened stranger, and generate shared interest in growing alongside others through cooperative efforts of protective hospitality. Therefore, this work will be an exercise in Christian hospitality in the spirit of philosopher Paul Ricoeur's idea of linguistic hospitality as discussed by inter-religious scholar Marianne Moyaert, where the foreign is welcomed and aims of perfection in translation and interpretation are set aside for greater meaning and context.[159]

One could proceed along the different route whereby religious identity is protected and preserved,[160] and inter-religious contact is for the benefit of strengthening one's own identity.[161] Ricoeur referred to this need to protect identities, namely by withdrawal into one's own linguistic tradition, as the "theological exemplification of a resurgence of sectarianism and tribalism . . . [wherein the] protective withdrawal is prompted by a fear of otherness."[162] In contrast, a theology of hospitality can reach out to other traditions by means of mutual encouragement, challenge, and integration as an act of hospitality.

Ricoeur looks to hospitality as "a model for integrating identity and otherness," recognizing the practice of hospitality is embedded in the recognition that "we all belong to the human family" and is encapsulated by "showing concern for a concrete other because she or he is human."[163] As such, hospitality is antithetical to sectarianism or tribalism.[164] Furthermore, Moyaert claims that where "tribalism locks the community safely into a given tradition, the praxis of . . . hospitality calls for another approach: 'that of taking responsibility *in imagination* and *sympathy*, for the story of the other.'"[165]

In the context of the inter-religious nature of this research, the applicability of Ricoeur's idea of "linguistic hospitality" is appropriate. As one considers examining the traditions of the religious other, such approaches

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159. See also Ricoeur, *On Translation*.

160. Moyaert, "Absorption or Hospitality," 64.

161. Ibid., 67, referring to Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine*, 54–55, 61–62.

162. Moyaert, "Absorption or Hospitality," referring to Ricoeur, "Universality and the Power of Difference," 146.

163. Moyaert, "Absorption or Hospitality," 83. Moyaert says this in the context of discussing Ricoeur, "New Ethos for Europe," 4–6.

164. Moyaert, "Absorption or Hospitality," 83.

165. Ricoeur, "New Ethos for Europe," 7.

are, in essence, "translating the untranslatable, commensurating the incommensurable, and comparing the incomparable."[166] Ricoeur's idea of linguistic hospitality accepts the need for the other in development of religious traditions and that the "denial of translation equals the refusal to recognize what is foreign as a challenge and a source of nourishment for one's own 'religious identity.'"[167]

Instead of being "one more form of colonizing the other," I hope that this work will hold to Ricoeur's argument that the "model of hospitality implies a reciprocal process: 'it is really a matter of living with the other in order to take that other into one's home as a guest.'"[168] For Ricoeur, linguistic hospitality "is the act of inhabiting the word of the Other paralleled by the act of receiving the word of the other into one's own home, one's own dwelling."[169] As such, the hope is that a prevailing hermeneutic of hospitality is visible here. Rather than absorption or colonization,[170] where ideas, texts or traditions are taken without regard for their original context or meaning to its followers, I seek to take the texts and traditions of Judaism and Islam pertaining to protective hospitality into my Christian "home"; to treat them as guests; to question, find complementarity with, recognize the humanity in, and accept gifts from them as they challenge and add to my own as a result of this interaction.

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166. Moyaert, "Absorption or Hospitality," 84.

167. Ibid., referring to Ricoeur's ideas presented in both "New Ethos for Europe," 4, and *On Translation*, 4.

168. Ricoeur, "New Ethos for Europe," 5.

169. Ricoeur, *On Translation*, 10.

170. For significant work on the issue of colonization, see Said, *A Critical Reader*.