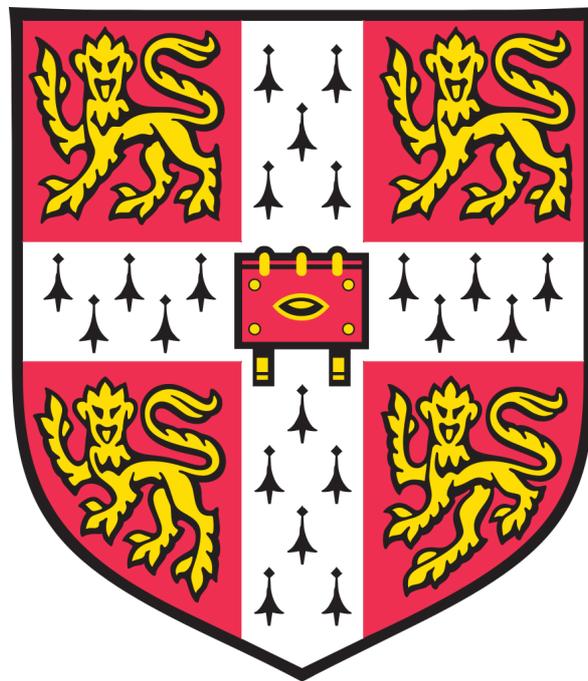


Pedagogies and Practice:

How Religious Diversification Impacts Seminaries and Clergy



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Abstract

This thesis considers how religious diversification has shaped the roles of clergy and seminaries. The focus of this qualitative, interview-based study is seminaries and clergy affiliated with various denominations of Judaism and Protestant Christianity in greater London and New York City. Religiously diversifying societies in the US and England have brought forth new challenges for clergy and seminaries, prompting new questions about how or why a faith community should or should not engage with diversity in the public square. This study investigates how seminaries and individual members of the clergy, as sources of religious authority, are responding to religious diversification in different ways – the former sluggish to recognise the impact of religious diversification in curriculum and pedagogical structures and the latter seeing it as a resource for social action initiatives, local networks, and political activism. This has created a gap between training and practice whereby clergy have assumed greater religious authority in religious life. Beyond contributing to the field of sociology of religion, this thesis concludes by allowing the experience of clergy in interreligious engagement to inform appropriate pedagogies that could be employed by seminaries.

Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit.

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I count myself lucky to have found writing inspiration amidst the Fitzwilliam gardens, but the true charm of the college is found in the people, who have gone above and beyond to make Fitz home. And, after months of staring at the same document, I also count myself lucky for the attentive eyes of Shana, Millie, Jess, Nathaniel, Abbie, Tom, and Debbie, who undoubtedly made this thesis more enjoyable to read – thank you. Any mistakes left are my own.

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A Note on Terminology and Acronyms

Anglican – Although the Anglican Communion is a global church, for this thesis this term concerns the English church and will be used interchangeably with the Church of England. In certain contexts, “Church” with a capital “C” will imply the Church of England, whereas “church” implies a gathered community.

Clergy – Although religious leaders have a variety of titles, each of them with slightly different meanings (such as vicar and priest, for example), the term “clergy” is used broadly to describe the leaders of Jewish and Christian communities, namely rabbis, priests, vicars, and pastors. Terms such as “minister” or “bishop” are only used when interviewees referred to themselves with those titles.

Denominations – Despite the Christian implications of this term, it will be used to refer to the different groupings of Christian *and* Jewish communities (such as Reform, Masorti, and Orthodox Judaism). Official denominations will be capitalised, but subgroupings will not. Examples include: mainline Protestant, evangelical Anglican, and strict Orthodox.

Gathered community – this term will refer to specific faith communities, such as an individual synagogue or church.

Interreligious – The terms interreligious, inter-religious, multifaith, interfaith, and inter-faith, for the sake of this thesis, are interchangeable. Interreligious is preferred throughout this thesis.

Interviewees – All quotations of interviewees have been anonymised, but basic information will be communicated. This includes their faith tradition and context, such as “a rabbi from London”. When appropriate, their seminary affiliation and denomination will be stated.

Ordination – Although the term has Christian origins, this term will be used broadly to describe both Christian conferment of authority to begin ministry and the Jewish equivalent, semikhah.

Seminary – The terms “theological college” and “seminary” are colloquially used in England and the United States, respectively, and should be read as interchangeable. In Judaism, the term “kollel” is also used to refer to adult educational programmes whose aim is to train rabbis. For the sake of consistency, “seminary” will be used to refer to both Protestant Christian and Jewish theological training institutions.

The following acronyms will be used throughout this thesis:

Association of Theological Schools	ATS
Continuing Professional Development	CPD
Clinical Pastoral Education	CPE
Faith-Based Community Organising	FBCO
Hebrew Union College	HUC
Initial Ministerial Education	IME
Jewish Theological Seminary	JTS
Princeton Theological Seminary	PTS
Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary	RIETS
Union Theological Seminary	UTS
United States of America	US
Yeshivat Chovevei Torah	YCT

Introduction

The Myth of Sisyphus teaches us a lesson about clergy involved in interreligious engagement and activism. In the myth, King Sisyphus of Ephyra spent each day pushing a boulder up a hill, only to watch it come back down under its own weight. Sisyphus did this act as a punishment, which was to be repeated day after day for eternity. The act has been interpreted as a seemingly meaningless task where the destiny is its own unravelling. Yet that is not the only interpretation. Homer found the king wise and prudent. In his book *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus argues Sisyphus is happy, that “the struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart” (1942, 119). Even the most mundane tasks, it could be argued, can be full of meaning.

This myth was referenced in an interview with a New York rabbi and lecturer at a Jewish seminary. One week after Donald Trump was elected as President of the United States, I asked what the election meant for interreligious relations. He claimed the repetition of his work with other faiths was similar to that of Sisyphus, but after the election “the hill is steeper, the rock is bigger”. In the wake of the unexpected election result that stoked fears and uncertainty among many in minority faith communities, the rabbi became more committed to continuing the daily task of promoting interreligious understanding and activism, saying that despite the steeper hill and bigger rock, “I’ll keep pushing”. The task, while acknowledged as difficult, was also full of meaning; the rabbi saw it as a part of his commitment to his Jewish faith. As the interview concluded, the rabbi recalled an encouraging word from his son a couple of days after the election – “*but imagine what the world would be like if you didn’t push the rock up the hill*”. Engaging with a religiously diverse social context, particularly in light of divisive political situations, is not an easy task that clergy were necessarily trained for. Nonetheless, just like Sisyphus, they “keep pushing”, recognising the inherent value and impact interreligious engagement can have on their personal faith and wider social context.

General statement

Religious diversification has brought about new challenges for clerical practice and the pedagogical approaches of seminaries, exposing a differentiation between the skills required

for clerical service in diverse contexts and the training provided by seminaries. By studying various denominations of Judaism and Protestant Christianity in London and New York, it is clear that this is a common issue that spans the boundaries of denomination, faith, and nation. Religious changes have brought forth new challenges for clergy and seminaries, prompting new questions about how or why a faith community should or should not engage with religious diversity – are other faiths a threat, or are they an asset to be partnered with and understood? The latter, this thesis has found, is the approach of most clergy to religious diversification. However, one cannot say the same for seminary institutions, who continue to focus on the traditional topics of law, ethics, theology, text, and languages. Clerical practice of religion is, according to Rogers Brubaker, “fluid” (2013, 9) and shaped by their contexts, whereas the religious worldview of seminaries is more structured, formalised, and rigid. Although examples of interreligious education exist, seminaries’ hesitation to incorporate this topic more fully reveal different responses to social change among seminaries and clergy.

To address this differentiation more fully, this thesis consists of two major components. The first examines the interreligious pedagogies employed at Christian and Jewish seminaries concerning other religions – how they are to be thought about and engaged with, and the variables that help or hinder its development. The second component investigates the clerical perspective of interreligious engagement, providing a contrast between the grassroots fluidity of religious life and the institutional structures of seminaries.

To understand the tension between seminaries and clergy, this Introduction will address the reality of religious diversification in the US and England and how previous studies have approached it. It then provides an introduction to the nature of religious authority and how it is manifested in seminaries and clergy. Afterwards, I explain the roles of seminaries and clergy and how they are changing in light of religious diversification. To understand the impact of religious diversification on seminaries and clergy, social *and* religious forces must be examined. This two-pronged examination represents the theoretical framework for this study, called sociotheology. Following an explanation of this, I will give a description of my methodology.

Religious Diversification

Religious diversification on a national level has brought about a plethora of new challenges for clergy and seminaries in the US and England. Lower levels of religious affiliation, resulting in fewer monetary resources, create challenges of sustainability while also providing opportunities for partnership with other religious communities and institutions.

Globally, by the year 2060 Pew (2017) predicts the world's population will be more religious, not less. The religiously unaffiliated will decline from 16% to 12.5% of the world's population; Christians will make up 31.8% of the global population; Islam's share of the global population will more than quadruple to 31.1%. This stands in contrast to the secularisation thesis's claims that religion and its public relevance are in a "clear and dramatic decline" (Bruce 2001, 191; see also Bruce 2013).¹ Instead, religion is experiencing a global resurgence not only in terms of adherents (Pew 2017) but also in influence of public life more generally (see Davie 1994, 2014; Knitter 2011; Milbank 2014; Williams 2012; and The Woolf Institute 2015).

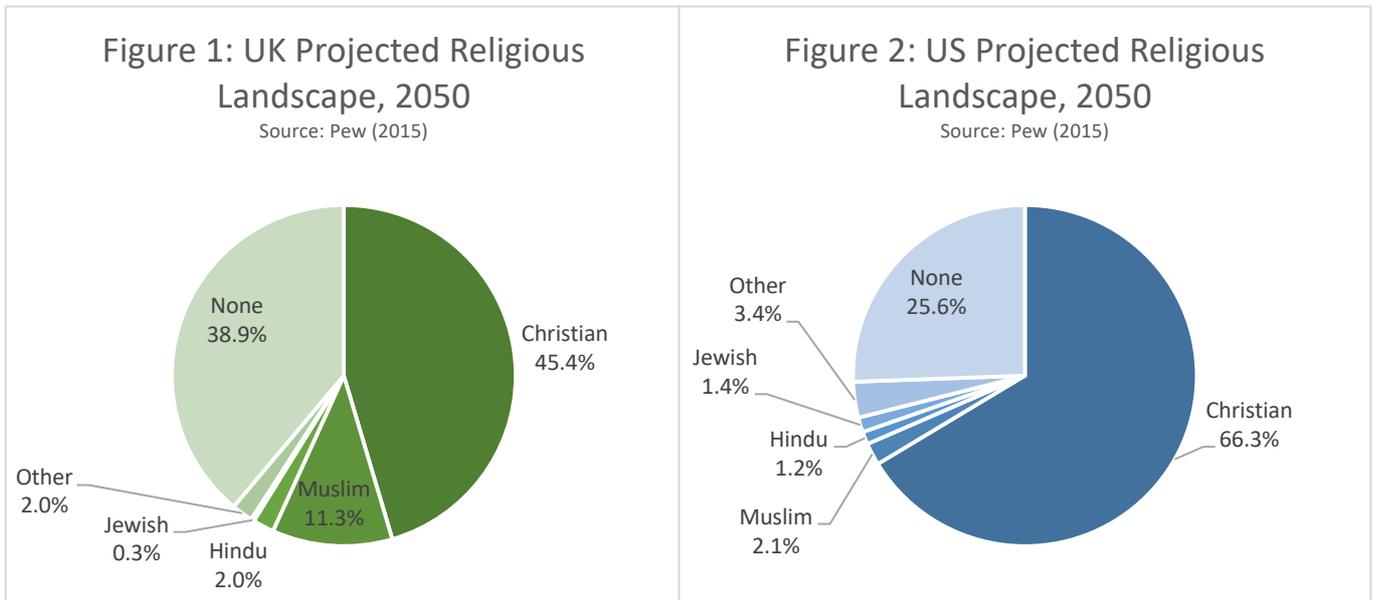
Although the two countries in my study – England and the United States – have experienced an increase in those not affiliating with a religion, the share of non-Christian religious affiliates is also growing. Despite these changes, religion continues to be relevant in both of these countries. This continued relevancy of religion can be seen through the prominence of faith-based community organising (discussed in Chapter Three), the formalised role religion plays in the English established church, and the unique embodiment of religion in the US (both of which are discussed in Chapter One).

The trajectory of religious diversification is measured by Pew (2015b), who compares data from 2010 with 2050 projections. It must be noted that although this thesis concerns England specifically, Pew only gives data for the United Kingdom as a whole. In 2010, Pew found 64.3% of the population identified as Christian, 4.8% as Muslim, 1.4% as Hindu, 0.5% as Jewish, and 1.2% as other.² Notably, 27.8% of the population did not identify with a religion. The UK is

¹ The secularisation thesis as a decline of trust in religious institutions, as described by Chaves (1994), is a more convincing argument for secularisation in western societies and will be discussed later.

² Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

expected to diversify further;³ by 2050, Pew projects 45.4% of the total population to be Christian (a change of -18.9% from 2010), 11.3% as Muslim (+6.5%), 2% as Hindu (+0.6%), 0.3% Jewish (-0.2%), 2% as other (+0.8%), and 38.9% as unaffiliated (+11.1%) (ibid.) (see Figure 1).



The US is diversifying as well, albeit at a slower rate than England. In 2010, Pew reported that 78.3% of the population identified as Christian, 1.8% as Jewish, 0.9% as Muslim, 0.6% as Hindu, 2.0% as other, and 16.4% with no affiliation. By the year 2050, Pew projects 66.4% of the total American population to be Christian (a change of -11.9% from 2010), 1.4% as Jewish (-0.4%), 2.1% as Muslim (+1.2%), 1.2% as Hindu (+0.6%), 3.4% as other (+1.4%), and 25.6% as unaffiliated (+9.2%) (Pew 2015a) (see Figure 2).

The effects of religious diversification can be seen across society, challenging norms and established institutions while prompting relevant debates on integration, multiculturalism, living with difference, and articulations of national values. Furthermore, these debates and the applicability of my research to understanding this diversity has been made more apparent

³ Using Pew data allows for easy comparison with the US regarding the trajectory of religious diversification. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) in England and Wales reported similar numbers to Pew’s 2010 study. ONS (2012) recorded that 59.3% of people identified as Christian, 4.8% as Muslim, 1.5% as Hindu, 0.5% as Jewish, 0.8% as other, and 25% as unaffiliated.

by the 2017 terror attacks in London and Manchester, President Trump's travel bans aimed at Muslim-majority countries, and the rise of hate crimes against religious minorities in both countries over the past two years.⁴

The demographic changes outlined above have challenged religious traditions to respond. Religious traditions are not stuck in time, nor are they immovable structures and traditions blind to modernity; they reinterpret themselves in light of these new realities at varying speeds and in varying directions. Throughout time, religion and society have been in a dialectical relationship whereby both are influenced by and influence each other, a facet of religious life observed by sociologists Peter Berger (1967) and David Lehmann (2009). Put into questions, how do clergy and seminaries, both situated within a faith tradition, learn about and engage with this relatively newfound diversity? How does an ancient tradition, made up of transient people and slower moving institutions, accommodate new social realities, i.e. religious diversity? Moreover, what pedagogies are employed to teach about other religions? Finally, what academic literature addresses these questions? A number of studies have been conducted on interreligious pedagogies at seminary, and the next section seeks to summarise those findings.

Reference to Previous Studies

The practice of teaching about other faiths in seminary education is piecemeal and inconsistent, but that does not mean it is entirely absent. There are ever-present questions about *how* to teach it, namely in the classroom or through practice. A handful of academics have penned articles and reports on the institutional incorporation of interreligious education, providing case studies and prompting further research.

The growth of relevant academic literature over the past few years is largely due to an increase in resources financing this research (specifically from the Henry Luce Foundation), a 2013 special edition of *Teaching Theology and Religion* on interreligious pedagogies at

⁴ The rise in hate crimes has been reported by the Home Office (Corcoran and Smith 2016) and Southern Poverty Law Center (Potok 2017). A full discussion on hate crimes and their impact on religious leadership will be considered later.

seminaries (volume 16, issue 4), and greater attention paid to it in light of new Common Awards requirements in the Church of England.

There are two traditional approaches to previous studies. On the one hand, literature stems from the experience of a faculty member at a theological institution writing about the methods he or she employs in the classroom, often writing as an advocate for that particular type of teaching. On the other hand, a few third party studies, i.e. studies done by a researcher or organisation not affiliated with a seminary, provide an overview of the training on offer and outline the challenges associated with implementation. I will briefly outline the literature's contributions to this field and identify an overarching limitation my research will address. A more in-depth review of the literature will be found in Chapter One.

Academic literature on the pedagogical study of other religions penned by seminary faculty naturally serve as case studies, often focusing on a particular teaching method and reflecting on its benefit to the learning experience. These will be discussed in Chapter One but include the contributions of Clooney (2013), Gilliat-Ray (2003), Knitter (1992), McConnell (2013), Mikoski (2013), Peace (2011), and Yuskaev (2013).

Broader studies by third party researchers or institutions provide a more complete overview of theological education. McCallum (2012) studied Anglican seminaries in England and the extent to which they incorporated teaching on Islam into the curriculum. Gilliat-Ray (2003) conducted a more detailed qualitative study into Christian seminaries across the UK, measuring the quality of teaching from students' perspectives, alongside what drives or hinders further interreligious teaching from the perspective of faculty and administration. Mumisa and Kessler (2008) also looked at the driving factors and hindrances for interreligious education within theological training but uniquely did so across a selection of Christian, Jewish, and Islamic seminaries in the UK. They also provided suggestions for course material concerning each of the religions studied. Under new curriculum requirements for Church of England seminaries, Gaston and Brealey (2016) conducted a study on how seminaries were teaching on other religions, surveying the diversity of courses offered and opportunities provided at each seminary. Lastly, and from an American perspective, Baird (2013) and Auburn Seminary (2014) surveyed best methods for teaching about other religions in

American theological education, focusing largely on experiential learning and the impact of faculty members on its implementation. Baird notably collected data on the motivations for Christian seminaries to teach about other faiths, whether as a tool for evangelism, dialogical understanding, or deepening one's faith commitment.

National-level reports in both the US and England have reinforced the need for such education to take place in seminaries. The Commission on Religion and Belief report, *Living with Difference*, recommended that:

Leaders of religion and belief groups should, *with appropriate training*, have good knowledge of the different traditions and communities within the UK, [encouraging] their members to participate in dialogue and to help develop and maintain good relations within society (The Woolf Institute 2015, 58; emphasis added).

Similarly in the US, the report *Principled Pluralism* recommended that "seminarians need to study religious diversity, too, because in a pluralistic society [clergy] must have the skills to interface with one another" (Aspen Institute 2013, 20).

Justification

Academic literature concerning interreligious pedagogies is relatively new – the oldest publication above comes from the 1990s, but the majority come from the 2010s. Developing pedagogies for interreligious teaching is a contemporary field of study that has been forced to develop amidst the constraints of denominational decline, fewer resources, and a general distrust in institutions. In the US, the lack of a central authority among seminaries has resulted in varied responses and approaches. Even with an established church in England, the increased attention given to this field is new and does not give much guidance on content.

Yet amidst this field of literature, there are consistencies, specifically regarding what the studies above lack. A quick glimpse will reveal a shortfall in Jewish perspectives or studies on interreligious education. While the Jewish populations in both countries are much smaller than the Christian ones, the inclusion of a religious minority group would be beneficial to any further research done on seminary education; it would also move the literature away from its

exclusively Christian focus. Additionally, a large proportion of these studies come from the perspective of the faculty and administration. There is little regard for the students enrolled and no consultation among clergy serving in diverse contexts. This thesis addresses some of these limitations by studying Jewish seminaries and including the clerical experience. When taking into account the clerical experience, a question arises of how religious authority is shaped by the presence of religious diversity.

Gifford (2005) names three categories of religious authority. They are scripture, tradition, and charisma, and they can be tied to Weber's (1922) three forms of authority (legal/rational, traditional, and charismatic, respectively). Scripture forms part of the foundation of a faith that guides both seminaries and clergy alike; as religions 'of the book', religious worldviews are largely constructed around religious texts. Charismatic authority, while centring on an individual, is more concerned with "exceptional sanctity [and] heroism" (Weber 1992, 216), which both Weber and Gifford attribute to the founders or exceptional characters in particular religions, such as Moses and Jesus.

Of particular focus for this thesis is Gifford's authority of tradition. This authority is the "living community" of a faith, inclusive of denominations, seminaries, and clergy. Gifford argues that one "cannot talk of the authority of scripture apart from the religious community ... [one] cannot talk of authority, scripture or tradition in isolation" (2005, 405). There are not clear cut divisions between these forms of authority; a complex and intricate relationship exists between them, and they must not be viewed in isolation. For example, it would be ill-advised to neglect the importance of scripture to clergy and seminaries. Similarly, a milder form of charisma (compared to that described by Weber and Gifford) plays a role among clergy, who are forming partnerships with other faith groups and assuming a public role.

Clergy, broadly, are a product of their seminaries and the training they received. Gifford writes that religious authority must "become routinised into standardised procedures and structures if the group is to persist beyond the life of the figure who triggered it" (Ibid., 407). Seminaries are the routinising and standardising structures that train and raise leaders to continue the faith tradition. Many of these clergy will, at some point, train students. As will be shown in Chapter Two, this happens through placements, curacy, and clergy who join

seminary faculties. The religious authority of tradition – namely seminaries and clergy – seems continuous.

However, there are differences in how seminaries and clergy relate to social change. While this may not juxtapose them into two distinct forms of authority, it reveals a wedge between them. Viewed through the lens of religious diversification and interreligious engagement, it is clear that seminaries and clergy respond to and understand social change in very different ways; it shows a differentiation taking place between the two as they navigate the increasing presence of other faiths.

Seminaries

Since the first seminary was established under the Council of Trent in 1563, seminaries have played a vital standardising role in raising and supplying future religious leaders.⁵ Over a two- to five-year period, students become clergy through a curriculum of text, history, and law (rational/legal authorities), as well as theology, language, ethics, pastoral skills, and to an extent public roles. Seminary education culminates with ordination, or semikhah in the Jewish tradition, which allows them to serve in a plethora of priestly or rabbinical contexts.⁶ Today, seminaries confront the challenges of dwindling resources, less-prepared students entering ordination training (and thus requiring more teaching in the basic courses), and limited time. These tensions are helpfully discussed by Ammerman (2014), Banks (1999), Finke and Dougherty (2002), Foster et al (2006), and Kelsey (1993), all of which will be brought into conversation with this thesis later.

In light of the questions posed by this thesis, how does an institution, shaped by scripture, denominations, and the necessity for skilled clergy, respond to changing social contexts? More specifically, through the lens of religious diversity, how does the presence of religious diversity shape seminary curriculum? What factors contribute to more or less incorporation of interreligious teaching and training?

⁵ The widely accepted residential-style training of seminaries seen today began hundreds of years after the Council of Trent in nineteenth century America (Naylor 1977, 21).

⁶ The award of semikhah is why seminaries, and not yeshivas or monasteries, are studied.

In his book *The Social Reality of Religion*, Peter Berger discusses religion as a global structure under the influence of secularisation, a well-used term at the time of publication. Specifically of religious institutions, Berger explains that they have “always been susceptible to highly mundane influences” and that “the pluralistic situation ... introduces a novel form of mundane influences” (Berger 1967, 148).⁷ They are susceptible to mundane forces but not necessarily transformed. Seminaries are institutions who, unsurprisingly, behave like institutions elsewhere. Institutions are “inflexible and survivalistic”, sluggish in their adjustment to new realities (Hertzler 1946, 241; see also Hellström 2004). Seminaries are no different; they are religious institutions who “are dominated by the typical problems and ‘logic’ of bureaucracy” (Berger 1967, 143).

As institutions, seminaries have not yet found effective methods of explaining, both practically and theologically, the presence of other religions in ways that prepare future clergy with the repertoire of skills needed for diverse contexts. This is due to the slow incorporation of intellectual and/or practical training regarding other faiths, choosing instead to focus on the core subjects of text, theology, languages, history, and ethics, citing the pressures of limited time and resources. By comparison, social contexts have certainly shaped clergy, who engage with their contexts via interreligious social activism and community organising, often doing so across lines of faith. Despite a transforming clerical profession, little of this clerical experience feeds back into seminaries.

It must be said that all seminaries behave differently, reinterpreting themselves in different ways and at different speeds. Indeed, many seminaries incorporate some kind of teaching on other religions, as seen by the literature, and many have former clergy on staff that can draw on their prior experience in local contexts. Furthermore, seminaries exist in a particular social context, and it should not be presumed that they are blind to what is happening outside their walls. It must be noted, however, that the everyday social context of clergy naturally differs from that of seminary professors and students – especially in terms of religious diversity. A

⁷ Here, Berger is writing in reference to the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century, which will be discussed later as a theological precursor to interreligious engagement.

rabbi and seminary in the same neighbourhood naturally engage in their social contexts in very different ways, like an upper east side rabbi compared to JTS. Another example is England, where many Christian seminaries function behind walls (like Westcott and Ridley), whereas parish churches are public spaces, open to all.

As it pertains to a religiously diversifying social context, seminary training on interreligious engagement is piecemeal and inconsistent whereas it is a clear reality for clergy. Therefore, clergy, as graduates of these institutions, enter their vocations lacking the preparation necessary to fulfil all of the roles expected of them.

This has led to a transformation in clerical beliefs and practice concerning other religions. In interviews, clergy articulated theologies of creation and commandments to love one another when justifying their work with other religions. They did not evoke traditional theologies typically associated with non-Christians or non-Jews, namely the Jewish and Christian doctrines of salvation that one would expect seminaries to teach. The fractures of seminary institutions struggling to adapt to new social contexts have granted the space for clergy, as a more dynamic form of religious authority, to reinterpret their religious tradition in light of the challenges and opportunities brought forth by religious diversification.

Clergy

The clerical profession is changing, but in many ways it has remained the same for centuries. Clergy have served as the cultic leaders of gathered religious communities, performing services and ceremonies to mark special occasions and guide the laity through the rhythms of their religious observances. In fact, the history of clerical roles in Christianity and Judaism was once tied together, albeit for a short period. The lineage of Jewish religious leadership was determined through the Tribe of Levi, who was responsible for cultic functions, such as sacrifice, interpretation (as through lots), purification rituals, and discernment and judgement in legal matters (Levine 1987, 535). This style of leadership largely remained intact through the time of Jesus of Nazareth. The point of separation coincided with the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, when Levitical priests had to change their function (for they had no Temple to administer), and Christianity had opened up to non-Jews, thereby becoming its own religion and not merely a sect of Judaism.

While many aspects of their role have remained constant, contemporary clerical practice is increasingly taking on more public roles, whether by “articulat[ing] visions of the social good” (Foster et al 2006, 20), gaining skills in community organising, or working alongside other faiths. Chapter Three will unpack the details of these broadening expectations that have led clergy to become, as one east London priest put it, “a jack of all trades, master of none”.

Relating to social contexts make clergy more susceptible to change. In my research, the clerical role is flexible, continually shaped and re-shaped by the roles that stem out of changing social and political contexts. For example, fewer resources have led clergy to form partnerships with others, whether in social action or in the sharing of buildings, and religious diversification means those partnerships often happen across lines of faith. As they react and respond to social contexts, they do so in a way that is informed by their religious worldviews and convictions. This includes scripture, seminary training, and wider theological scholarship. Clergy, put another way, have the agency to actively shape their role – and lead their communities – in light of the tradition and contexts they inhabit. This goes beyond practice to influence belief as well. As Chapter Three will show, religious diversification has brought forth new understandings of evangelism, moving away from the binary, black-and-white understanding of sharing one’s faith.

In summary, seminaries are less fluid, and their religious worldviews are more rigid than clergy, despite the social and theological pressures of religious diversification. The institutional lag of seminaries paired with a deficit in clerical preparation has created the space for clergy, as opposed to the ivory towers of seminaries, to more robustly define the roles of clergy in the twenty-first century. Clergy are identifying institutional partnerships, developing skills in community organising, and forging alliances across faith lines – skills hardly mentioned in seminary curricula. They shape their roles as community leaders and activists by responding to local conflicts, societal ills, and current political landscapes while forging new bonds of solidarity with leaders and practitioners of other faiths in the process. Ultimately, the lived reality of clergy differs from the clerical expectations cultivated within the walls of the seminary. This is not to suggest that seminaries are illegitimate. Seminaries still employ faculty charged with disseminating research and publications that are necessary

for the progression of religious thought; indeed they continue to occupy a vital role in the training of tomorrow's religious leaders.

This differentiation between the religious authorities of seminaries and clergy must be understood in a way that acknowledges the impact of social change *and* the importance of religious worldviews. This analytical framework is called sociotheology.

Sociotheology

Sociotheology is a subsection of the social sciences first coined by sociologist Roland Robertson (1971, 309). It rests firmly in the social sciences, as the theological component is one part of a larger sociological study. Sociotheology "has two dimensions; the study of a group's internal epistemic worldview and the external analysis of the social world in which the group is embedded" (Juergensmeyer and Sheik 2013, 628). The latter dimension, in this case, is the impact of religious diversification and interreligious engagement on seminaries and clergy. The former dimension is what makes sociotheology unique. It "means incorporating into social analysis the insider-oriented attempt to understand the reality of a particular worldview"; put differently, it is an "empathetic immersion" into a religious worldview that recognises the agency of belief (Ibid., 624, 631).

A religious worldview, for this thesis, is the religious beliefs, theologies, and histories that guide seminaries and clergy. In understanding a religious worldview, sociotheology acknowledges the agency of belief in shaping it.

The religious worldview of seminaries will be referred to as the *ethos* of the institution, encapsulating the religious traits, teachings, and attitudes that shape how the seminary is theologically aligned, structured, and run. As mentioned, seminaries are rigid structures, and their ethos and beliefs are glacial compared to their changing social contexts. However, clergy are a different story. The more fluid worldviews of clergy are shaped by religious belief, training, *and* the dynamic social contexts that they find themselves in. Framed by the context of religious diversification, a sociotheological analysis reveals how the individual beliefs of clergy have been shaped not only by their seminary training, but also by interreligious

engagement. Furthermore, the religious worldviews of clergy are a source of motivation to participate in interreligious engagement. Therefore, understanding the agency of belief for interreligious engagement, and the changes to belief that occur as a result of it, requires an empathetic perspective.

To not employ a sociotheological framework would be to diminish the profound effect interreligious engagement has on clerical belief and vice versa. As a religious leader, forming a working relationship with a peer of another faith is practically and theologically significant. Although a clergy person may disagree with the central tenets of another's faith, he or she chooses to forge new interreligious relationships for a variety of reasons. The lack of a sociotheological framework would overlook these theological motives to engage with religious difference; likewise, the transformation of beliefs in light of interreligious engagement cannot be understood unless an "insider-oriented attempt" to understand that religious worldview is established. The lack of a sociotheological framework would objectify the religious worldviews of clergy into something that is neither empathetic nor accurate. Stripping away the agency of belief would be disingenuous to my interviewees – it would diminish their experiences, neglect their motivations, and be blind of their convictions to engage with other faiths.

Understood in this way, sociotheology allows readers to holistically understand how religious diversification and interreligious engagement intersect with seminaries and clergy in three ways. First, it analyses how particular social contexts drive engagement among faiths, like minority faith communities forming partnerships after the US Presidential election. Second, sociotheology analyses the effect of religious belief on interreligious engagement, like the teachings of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik that discourage theological dialogue with other faiths, or the theological concept of *tikkun olam* which is used for Jewish social action. Third, it analyses the construction of religious worldviews and beliefs through seminary training, and how they change as a result of interreligious engagement.

The rest of the section on sociotheology frames it within a wider body of literature that is primarily sociological in nature. What makes sociotheology unique, however, is that it does not view one's religious worldview in isolation from the external "social world"

(Juergensmeyer and Sheik 2013). Rather, the social world and religious worldviews should be seen in a dialectical relationship, whereby one continually influences the other. This relationship has direct implications for institutions, who, despite rigid structures, must adapt to social contexts to remain legitimate and plausible. Finally, the observance and practice of religious belief is elucidated with academic literature and practical examples. All of these topics concerning sociotheology are discussed in the sections below.

Sociology, Theology, and a Dialectical Relationship

Recognising the impact of religious belief is not foreign to the social sciences. Although other sociologists may disagree, Durkheim described all beliefs, even the ones that seem irrational to social scientists, as an “objective foundation” (1912, 72). Clarke stated that the discipline “would be wiser to act as if God does exist rather than if she or he doesn’t” (2011, 6). Similar hospitable tendencies towards religious worldviews in the social sciences can also be found in the works of Berger (1967) and Weber (1930). Furthermore, the sociological research of Davie (1994), Putnam and Campbell (2010), and Wuthnow (2007) are all heavily utilised to better understand the religious worldviews presented in this thesis.

This is not to suggest sociology and theological worldviews are natural bedfellows. The disciplines of sociology and theology have experienced a turbulent relationship since the European Enlightenment, when religion moved from the collective to the private (Juergensmeyer and Sheikh 2013, 3) and truth became defined by a rational and critical theory that stigmatised religion, also known as positivism (see Brubaker 2014; Parsons 1944). Religion was expected to “naturally disappear” (Parsons 1944, 178), an idea immortalised by *Time Magazine’s* iconic 1966 cover proposing the question “Is God Dead?”. Yet religion continues to survive. This is clearly seen by the religious roots and convictions of the Civil Rights Movement in the US.

Sociotheology recognises Durkheim’s view, quoted above, that a religious worldview is an “objective foundation”. However, it goes a step beyond that recognition by giving more attention to the agency and transformation of religious belief; sociotheology takes “religious thinking seriously”, but it also “take[s] the social contexts seriously” (Juergensmeyer 2013, 945). Advocating for this approach, Juergensmeyer and Sheikh write that the social sciences

should be more aware of “religious justifications for social action ... [and for] theologians and scholars of religious studies to be more aware of the social significance of spiritual ideas and practices” (2013, 1). Holding religious worldviews and social contexts together in a dialectical relationship is a defining feature of sociotheology.

Regarding these two contexts, Berger explains the importance of religion in society and the dialectical relationship between the two. Religion can be an outcome of certain behaviours or a response to social change, yet it can also influence behaviours and contribute to “concrete changes ... in the social structure” (1967, 128). Lehmann, a sociology scholar on religion and globalisation, suggests society evolves and religion redraws its “frontiers all the time” (2009, 409). Consequently, the relationship between the two is fluid and constantly shifting. Religion should not, Berger advocates, only be treated as a dependent variable (1967, 128). Religious worldviews have actively influenced our world and continue to do so through the formation of universities, social movements, igniting conflicts, the creation of states, and the development of welfare, to name a few examples. At the same time, societal issues – such as globalisation and increased plurality – influence religion.⁸ The effect of religious diversification on seminaries and clerical beliefs, as well as the effect of beliefs on interreligious engagement, are but one manifestation of this complex relationship. Sociotheology recognises and embraces both directions of this dialectical relationship, and it has implications for seminaries and clergy alike.

Sociotheology in Institutions: Legitimations and Plausibility Structures

Berger argues that within this dialectical framework, institutions must be both legitimate (answering the question of “why” things exist and are the way they are) and plausible (the institution’s viability) (1967, 29, 127). Religion, particularly in the enterprise of state-building, can be legitimised by law. (According to Brubaker, law can “legitimize, recognize, or stigmatize” (2014, 26).) A general example of this is pre-modern England, whose government used the law to legitimise the establishment of the Church of England over other faith

⁸ A specific example of society influencing religion and theology is the acceptance of women as bishops in the Church of England, which came about after tremendous pressure for the Church to reflect societal values on equal opportunities for women (BBC 2014).

traditions. The Church's theology was accepted without much resistance and reinforced by the state; the structure was therefore plausible.

Today, in religiously diverse countries like the US and England, a single religion can no longer be the only legitimate beholder of "truth", and any religious monopolies are no longer plausible. Religions must now compete with each other in a religious economy of choice (see Berger 1967; Brubaker 2014; and Finke and Stark 1988). Religion as a whole is still certainly legitimate – the very core of sociotheology verifies this legitimacy and cannot function without it. However, as institutions that are slow to adapt to change, questions remain if modern seminaries are plausible institutions to train clergy for religiously diverse contexts. A plausible theological framework must be continually developed, informed by clerical experiences and implemented pedagogically in seminaries, to train clergy for service in today's world. There is historical precedence for legitimising religious plurality and creating plausible structures to support it, found in the Christian ecumenical movement of the twentieth century.

Following the 1910 World Missionary Conference, Protestantism began to change the way it viewed its internal diversity. Berger, discussing the importance of this conference, noted a shift in attitude among the Christian denominations from enemies to "fellows with similar problems" (1967, 141). It is widely understood that this was the start of the Christian ecumenical movement. Theology was consequentially used to legitimise *Christian* plurality, making an ecumenical framework for Christian life plausible.

This thesis goes a step beyond ecumenism. As religious diversity is a legitimate facet of society and religious life, it asks if seminaries can plausibly accommodate this new reality through curricular structures. Seminaries can do this by playing "the pluralistic game of free enterprise", as Berger suggests (Ibid., 153). They could do so by recognising the presence of plurality and consciously choosing to address it, whether through interreligious dialogue or evangelism, for example. The latter, in the least, acknowledges a changing landscape and recognises the presence of other faiths. Alternatively, seminaries can refuse to engage with or acknowledge religious diversification, placing themselves "behind whatever socio-religious structures they can maintain or construct ... [professing] old objectives as much as possible"

(Ibid.). This approach maintains an isolationist theology unmoved by a changing social context. Whichever approach a seminary takes, it is bound to be affected by their ethos. The religious worldviews constructed by seminaries are built on the rational/legal and traditional religious authorities discussed earlier. How those worldviews are implemented has implications for the level of attention given to interreligious pedagogies. Regardless of whether seminaries adjust to new social pressures, or at least acknowledge them, this thesis leaves no doubt that religious diversification is felt by clergy.

Sociotheology in Practice: Taking Belief Seriously

Among clergy, sociotheology recognises religious beliefs as legitimate motives for interreligious engagement, without issuing judgment on whether that belief or theology is objectively true. Juergensmeyer and Sheik write that “the point is to try to understand the reasoning behind the truth claims, not to verify them” (2013, 4). As a researcher, it is not my role or prerogative to determine if the Christian God approves of joint social action projects with local Muslims. It would, however, be irresponsible to neglect the religious beliefs and theologies that are employed to justify those actions.

Every interviewee cloaked their responses in religious language, drawing on deeply-held beliefs that motivate their behaviours in the public sphere. To disregard these beliefs for the sake of positivism would not only misrepresent the data gathered, but it would fail to grasp the reality of the clerical experience today. The religious beliefs of clergy are not passively shaped by their religious traditions, seminary education, and social contexts; religious beliefs inspire action. Throughout this thesis, the public actions of clergy are described and analysed. Recognising the visible impact of religious belief and subsequent action is, therefore, vital. In a sociotheological framework, this then begs the question of how religious beliefs are observed and practiced. This question is answered through the writings of Plant, Habermas, and Williams.

Writing from the perspective of law, Plant finds social issues as a cause for cooperation among various religious groups. However, he argues, it is preferable to do so via secular discourse, devoid “of a specifically religious character” (Plant 2006, 258). He continues, saying that “religious beliefs have to be seen essentially as a private matter ... religious beliefs have to be

understood as internal and to have no direct purchase on the public realm” (Ibid., 259). From the perspective of law, this may be true. However, from the perspective of religious communities, from which my research comes, religious worldviews *must* be recognised. In line with the sociotheological framework, religious beliefs are legitimate forms of motivation that prompt action. Failing to recognise religious beliefs – or dismissing them as merely private beliefs as Plant does – gives preference only to the groups which are comfortable appealing to civic duties over religious ones. Being honest about faith commitments and beliefs is in contrast with Plant, but it is a position that is advocated by Habermas, a sociologist, and Williams, a theologian. Both argue for greater religious transparency in the public sphere.

Expressing this from a sociological perspective, Habermas affirms that religious belief “is not only a doctrine ... but a source of energy that the person who has a faith taps performatively and thus nurtures his or her entire life” (2006, 8); therefore, liberal states (like the US and England), “cannot expect of *all* citizens that they also justify their political statements independently of their religious convictions or worldviews” (Ibid.). In his book titled *Faith in the Public Square*, Williams, formerly the Archbishop of Canterbury, similarly argues that “religious convictions, all held in depth and with passion, give a necessary human fullness to the moral practices of a society” (2012, 300-1).

Religious belief is not something to be publicly hidden, nor should it be neglected in study. Instead, religious worldviews contribute to the “moral practices of a society” and should be valued. Collaboration among different belief systems can act as a unifier, strengthening the civic fabric of a nation. The contribution of faith groups to civil society has been evidenced, for example, by many religious communities providing care to the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire, as found by Fahy and Bock (2018, 58). Another example is England’s Near Neighbours Programme, a government-funded initiative that provides small amounts of funding to local projects that bring together a diverse set of religious practitioners for a common cause (see Cohen and Bock 2017 and Church Urban Fund 2018). Williams would affirm the work of these initiatives, but exhorts that religious convictions and principles are “non-negotiable” and “cannot be ignored or side-lined in the search for lasting welfare and justice” (2012, 301). Pope Francis, writing about the church’s responsibility to the world and

reflecting on the work of the saints, states that the Christian church is not merely an NGO who offers services, but it acts out of a commitment of faith: “the love of God and the reading of the Gospel in no way detract[s] from [saints’] passionate and effective commitment to their neighbours; quite the opposite” (Vatican 2018, 100).

There are times when religious beliefs and worldviews impede interreligious engagement. Capturing the nuance of religious belief also justifies the importance of sociotheology; belief is not merely a rubber stamp of approval for interreligious engagement. Maintaining a distinct faith identity – and rejecting compromise when the conditions of cooperation breach the lines of one’s belief system – is interpreted by some faith communities as a more valuable asset to the public sphere in the long-term than the achievement of a single welfare goal. This was expressed by an evangelical Christian priest in London. He finds merit in publicly tackling issues of justice, particularly through community organising, but ultimately, he says, if activism is “clipping our wings to the gospel, then there’s a real danger in it, I think, in terms of actually stunting our real mission [as Christians]”. By not allowing this priest to express his evangelistic mission and identity, he felt that his religious worldview was compromised.

To bring Habermas and Williams into conversation with Plant, religious beliefs should not merely be seen as a private matter but rather a public one that is recognised and valued, reflective of the deeply-held religious worldviews that individuals hold as true. This is not to suggest that multiple truths need to be accepted by all in the public sphere; the example above shows how religious belief can discourage interreligious action. Instead, Williams writes, the myriad of perspectives “sometimes interact[s] fruitfully, sometimes in profound tension” but would “be for the ultimate good of any society” (2012, 299, 301). This is entirely congruent with clerical understandings of social engagement, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

As seen by the discussion above, a sociotheological framework is appropriate for this study. Understanding the dialectical relationship between social contexts and religious worldviews in an empathetic way recognises the agency and transformation of clerical belief in light of interreligious engagement. A sociotheological framework shows how clerical beliefs and practice are evolving alongside their diverse contexts, and how that is shaped by, but

ultimately contrasts with, the more rigid religious worldviews of seminaries. Additionally, in a dialectical relationship, religious worldviews and social contexts must continually engage with one another. This is the purpose of a sociotheological framework, and it is the structure utilised for this thesis.

My Research

Using a sociotheological framework, this thesis seeks to incorporate the perspectives of all stakeholders in theological education, including faculty, administrators, and students, paired with a heavy emphasis on the clerical experience – after all, training functioning and effective clergy is the goal of theological education. In light of social change, this research identifies how the teachings of seminaries fall short when held up against clergy's experiences of engaging with religious diversity. As super-diverse cities, London and New York City serve as exaggerations of the national trends in their respective countries, and as homes to both Jewish and Christian seminaries, they are the ideal field sites for this study.

My central research questions ask how seminaries and clergy relate to a religiously diverse world, revealing the differing responses of seminaries and clergy:

- How do seminaries wrestle with the institutional tension of preserving a faith tradition while simultaneously reproducing it for a pluralistic world?
- What methods are employed at seminaries to teach students about other religions, and how that does that influence one's perception of the other; as a partner for social activism, a threat to be competed with, or neither?
- Is the education and training required by clergy provided wholly through seminary training, or is experience and knowledge expected to be developed elsewhere, i.e. placements, Clinical Pastoral Education, or continuing professional development?
- As institutions and individuals responsible for the reproduction of a faith tradition, what theological and practical discrepancies exist between the religious worldviews conveyed by seminaries and those constructed by clergy?

- From a clerical perspective, what is the role of clergy in religiously diverse contexts, and how does a religious worldview shape one's thoughts and actions towards that diversity?
- How can the clerical experience inform better seminary training?

During field work in 2016, the focus slightly expanded to consider recent developments in each field site, namely the election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States and a substantial rise in hate crimes in England.⁹ This research also addresses how clergy articulate their position in the public sphere and how these events shape interreligious engagement in local communities. Naturally, these developments reflect the initial questions of religious diversity and the impact it has on clergy and seminaries.

Methods

Data was collected using qualitative methods, grounded in active, semi-structured interviews.¹⁰ The seminaries were located in the greater New York City and London areas, inclusive of Princeton, New Jersey and Cambridge, England, representing substantial cross-sections of the Jewish and Christian traditions. The following seminaries and their graduates formed the bulk of my data collection:

Hebrew Union College, USA	Truett Seminary, USA ¹¹
Jewish Theological Seminary, USA	Union Theological Seminary, USA
New York City Megachurches, USA	Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, USA
Princeton Theological Seminary, USA	Leo Baeck College, England
Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (Yeshiva University), USA	Montefiore College, England
	Ridley Hall, England

⁹ The terror attacks in London and Manchester are certainly noteworthy, but they occurred after the majority of the data was collected.

¹⁰ Interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

¹¹ In response to the 2016 election and the political roles of clergy as a result of Trump's rise to the presidency, a handful of interviews were also conducted with faculty, students, and graduates of Truett Seminary in Waco, Texas. This aimed to provide an alternative perspective removed from the traditionally liberal context of New York City.

US seminaries are more ecumenical than their English counterparts, meaning students from a variety of theological affiliations attend both Union and Princeton Theological Seminaries. For example, evangelical students would attend Princeton, despite PTS being a traditionally mainline seminary. Megachurches with their own pastoral training schemes were also studied to gain insight into evangelical training structures. Among the American Jewish population, Hebrew Union trains rabbis for the Reform tradition, Jewish Theological for Conservative, and Rabbi Isaac Elchanan and Yeshivat Chovevei for Orthodox.

All Christian seminaries in England are associated with the Church of England. While there are many Christian denominations in England, Anglicanism uniquely holds together a diverse array of theological interpretations under one denominational banner (as discussed further in Chapter One). Using the Church of England for this research reveals how different interpretations of interreligious engagement can exist under the same ecclesial structure, abiding by the same institutional guidelines for training. Regarding the Anglican seminaries, Westcott represents the liberal end of the Church of England, which can be broadly equated with mainline Christianity in the US, whereas Ridley is on the evangelical wing of the Church of England. St Mellitus is generally associated with the evangelical wing of the Church but is included for its mixed-mode style of training. Leo Baeck serves Progressive Judaism, inclusive of the Reform, Conservative, and Liberal traditions, whereas Montefiore trains rabbis for modern Orthodoxy.

A total of 134 interviews were conducted, transcribed, coded, and analysed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. These included multiple faculty members at each theological institution, inclusive of administration and specialists on other religions or a tangential field (such as missions, public theology, or practical rabbinics). Interviews with current students were also conducted either in one-on-one or group settings. Approximately half of the interviews were with individuals actively affiliated with theological institutions; the other half consisted of clergy, although some were leading a community while also on faculty at seminaries simultaneously. Clergy that were interviewed were graduates of the seminaries listed above. This allowed them to reflect on their training, providing a historical pedagogical

analysis of the seminary they attended, and their current practices and reflections towards service in a religiously diverse context. A handful of specialists in this field were interviewed as well.

Some constraints in securing interviews were evident. Due to identity protection policies at various seminaries, faculty members were responsible for contacting students on my behalf. This limits the data, as most, but not all, students that were approached by faculty had a pre-existing interest, of varying levels, in interreligious engagement. Therefore, findings regarding students should be read with a slight bias towards interreligious engagement and teaching. Regarding Orthodox Judaism, many viewed me as an outsider. Due to access issues as a non-Orthodox, non-Jewish researcher, less interviews were conducted with faculty and students at RIETS, YCT, and Montefiore than other seminaries. Despite access issues, a substantial number of interviews (13) were conducted with Orthodox rabbis, the majority of whom were serving in local communities.

Significant efforts were made to balance the gender of interviewees (however, Orthodox Judaism does not have female rabbis, so a perfect balance was not possible). While this balance played an important role in data collection, no substantial findings could be drawn on the basis of gender as it relates to interreligious pedagogies and practice. Despite this, the gender of interviewees has been marked consistently throughout the thesis.

The standards of ethics and codes for interviews were followed for both countries involved in my study, complying with the code of ethics published by the American Sociological Association (1999) and the British Sociological Association (2017). Consent forms were signed by all participants.

Justifying a Trans-Atlantic Comparison

The comparison of religion in England and America, specifically seminaries and clergy, provides unique insights into the impact of religious diversification on seminary institutions and clerical practice. Seminaries are scattered throughout the world, begging the question why English and American seminaries, specifically, should be studied. These seminaries are situated in similar national religious contexts, namely the decline of Christian affiliation at the

expense of a rise in non-Christian faiths and the “nones”. They differ, however, in their national particularities. The establishment nature of Anglicanism is different than the organic practice of American religion, and these, in turn, impact the self-understanding of clergy and seminaries. Furthermore, England has a smaller and less resourced Jewish community, resulting in fewer seminaries that employ fewer academics and graduate fewer students; this is compared to American-Jewish seminaries, which are larger and more numerous, serving a considerably larger Jewish population. Church of England seminaries are guided by a church-wide curriculum and are faced with more pressing financial challenges than American seminaries, resulting in methods of training that reduce costs and place a large emphasis on context-based learning. American seminaries are generally better resourced in terms of personnel (limited financial resources are still a concern), and they largely function as independent institutions, having only to adhere to a very broad set of accreditation standards.

Despite differences, American and English seminaries adhere to the learning models of *paideia* and *wissenschaft*, discussed in Chapter Two. These centuries-old models of theological education establish a continuum of teaching methods that *every* seminary constantly debates – should teaching emphasis be on the classroom or in a context? How can a seminary hold both of them together? Seminaries in New York City and London are similarly confronted with the presence of religious diversity, and they respond in different ways, or sometimes not at all.

This stands in contrast to clerical practice, where the challenges and opportunities of religious diversity form major components of priests’ and rabbis’ role in both countries. This study is significant, for it does not only focus on what is taught at seminaries, but it compares seminary training to the lived reality of clergy, exposing a cleavage between the preservation of institutional norms and the fluidity of clerical practice. The traditional training provided at seminaries (focused on religious texts, histories, ethics, laws, and languages) equips clergy to serve a gathered community, but it largely neglects their outward facing, increasingly public role that includes interreligious engagement. This latter role is becoming increasingly prominent and important in areas of greater diversification, not least in London and New York City.

Limitations

It is not the purpose of this study to capture the entire breadth of these religious traditions. Fundamentalist and minority-ethnic Christian groups have not been specifically sought out for study, nor have Reconstructionist or strict Orthodox Jewish groups. Islamic seminaries were not studied due to the pressures of time and structural differences when compared to Christian and Jewish seminaries. Roman Catholic seminaries were not studied due to time and structural differences. Compared to Protestant seminaries, the Roman Catholic Church requires students to spend a significantly longer period of time studying. As mentioned above, studying the Church of England as a form of English Protestantism naturally excludes a number of other denominations, such as Methodists and Baptists. Their relatively small populations would make a robust comparison difficult to achieve in limited time. However, replicating this study on the faith groups listed above would undoubtedly be useful to this field.

In terms of interreligious engagement, it is important to note that it means just that – *religious*. Clerical engagement and interreligious pedagogies about secular humanism or the “nones” more broadly are not a focus, although their impact on society at large (via declining religious affiliation, for example) is. Furthermore, data predominantly has been collected from the regional areas of New York City and London – seminaries elsewhere in both countries would advance this field further, specifically institutions serving the faith communities not included in my study. Although this topic is inherently sociological with clear and necessary theological discussions, a study of pedagogies of the religious other would benefit from a primarily theological-oriented study within each tradition, particularly among Judaism, where literature is considerably lacking.

About the Author

Often I was asked what led me to this research topic, which warrants a brief discussion on positionality, or my stance “in relation to the social and political context of the study” (Rowe 2014, 628). My undergraduate degree was completed in “Religion”, which was an almost entirely Christian-focused degree examining religious texts, histories, ethics, and theologies. During those years, I had two community organising placements in east London, where I helped synagogues, churches, and mosques work together on issues of common concern. This

led to an interest in religious diversification, interreligious engagement, and how both could be practically understood in training and practice.

During my first degree, I had briefly considered going to seminary. Although I ultimately decided against it and enrolled in a sociology course at Cambridge University instead, I respected the institutions and their mission to raise and train religious leaders for tomorrow's world. I was keen to learn more about the ways seminaries did or did not teach about religious diversity and interreligious engagement, and how that compares to clergy. This may explain why the thesis ends with a call for seminary education to improve training regarding interreligious education.

Upon arriving to interviews, my race and gender were immediately clear – I am a white male. However, my religious background was not. Although I am a Christian, my personal faith commitment was never stated unless I was asked. A handful of evangelical Christians asked me to state my faith tradition before granting me an interview, which certainly opened doors. Nevertheless, it closed others. As a very apparent outsider, it was much more difficult to secure interviews with Orthodox Jews, as explained above.

What does this mean for the thesis? In a reflexive process, Kleinsasser (2000) speaks of learning and unlearning. Although I had previously been exposed to Judaism due to my first degree and personal interest, I learned a lot about Jewish structures and the rabbinical role. While there were great amounts of learning for Christianity as well, my history with the tradition also required substantial unlearning – whether concerning the political alliances formed among faith groups, the complexities of Christian evangelism, or the agency of students in shaping theological curricula. The presumptions I harboured about these topics were cast away throughout the research process. Considering I spent many more years studying (and practicing) Christianity than Judaism, it is likely that my analysis of Christian institutions and clerical practices is marginally more robust and, at times, nuanced. This should not diminish my findings concerning Jewish seminaries and rabbis. Intentional and substantial efforts were made to include similar numbers of Jewish voices in literature, research, and the final analysis.

I hope stating these positions lead to a more rich and substantial analysis. Ultimately, by intentionally reflecting on this research and what it can practically contribute to theological education, as done in Chapter Four, I hope to present, as Kleinsasser writes, “a more passionate, wise, and rich account” of the data (2000, 157).

Contribution to the Field

A sociological analysis of seminaries and theological education is underdeveloped and rare, and this thesis contributes to that literature. A sociotheological study of this is even more rare. This thesis will specifically contribute to literature concerning the effect of religious diversification on religious institutions of higher learning and the practice of religious leadership, uniquely balancing the impact of social pressures with religious beliefs. Aside from providing practical applications to be used among Christian and Jewish seminaries and leaders, it addresses a gap in sociological literature. The foci of the project are unique in a sociological context, with few studies looking at theological education and fewer incorporating the clerical perspective. Additionally, the sociotheological manner in which this research is presented will undoubtedly contribute to the sociology of religion for reasons discussed earlier.

Outlining the Thesis

In a sociotheological framework, the beliefs and habits of a religious community must be taken seriously. Therefore, it is appropriate to spend a considerable amount of time discussing the religious communities and the contexts from which my research is drawn. The histories, characteristics, theologies, and contemporary challenges of faith communities have undoubtedly shaped the data presented in this thesis.

This is all addressed throughout the thesis, but a closer look at these contextualising factors is found in the next chapter. Once the contexts have been established, Chapter Two will examine the state of seminary education and interreligious curricula across my field sites, discussing the variables that influence this type of education and the spectrum of theoretical and praxis-based teaching employed by seminaries in both countries. Chapter Three, in chronological fashion, leaves seminary and jumps into local clerical experiences. It focuses on

the lived reality of clergy serving in diverse contexts, showcasing how their social context is shaping their role and notions of belief. This is held alongside practice, where the different motives and opportunities to engage with other religions are explained, thereby conceptualising interreligious engagement on clerical terms. Chapter Four, which serves as the conclusion to this thesis, utilises the clerical experience to revisit seminary education, highlighting the intersections of pedagogies and practice that can be useful for interreligious education.

Chapter One – Religious Contexts and Ambiguous Encounters

While on field work, I visited a predominantly African American church in Harlem, located in the borough of Manhattan. The date was 13 November 2016, the Sunday after Donald Trump was elected President of the United States. There was no expectation that this church, found in one of the most liberal boroughs in one of the most liberal cities in the country, would be sympathetic to the president-elect. They were not. What occurred that morning was a passionate and fiery sermon from the pulpit. The preacher spoke articulately and emphatically about the state of the nation and world. “Elections have consequences”, he preached, reminding everyone of the heavy realisation that racism was still present: “the Lord knows our hearts, and the heart of America has been exposed this week”. The sermon transitioned into a call for action, encouraging members to *publicly* stand up to bigotry and racism. The church, it was said, does not need political office to make meaningful change in the world (he claimed that Martin Luther King, Jr would have never won political office), but rather each member can make a difference with their actions.

The priest, with the tradition of King and the Civil Rights Movement at the forefront of his mind, views his church not only as a gathered religious community but also as active agents that can bring about change in their surrounding context. It is his duty as the priest to speak out against racism and encourage the community to take action. More than speaking about politics, the priest invites imams and rabbis to speak, giving the community the opportunity to ask questions and challenge assumptions about the increasing prominence of other religions in their local area. For him, the pulpit is public. It serves as a conduit so that the priest, drawing from his faith convictions and teachings, can engage with the political and social contexts around him.

The anecdote above did not develop in a vacuum, but rather it is the result of an accumulation of religious histories and understandings. The priest’s ability to bond his ecclesial theology with the public realm draws from a history of religious development since the end of the Second World War, notably through the concept of civil religion, whereby religious and national languages are fused together. There is no doubt that this public pulpit has also been

formed by the Civil Rights Movement, a movement that not only legitimised the political voice of clergy but also gave legitimacy to interreligious engagement, exemplified by the relationship between the Revd Martin Luther King, Jr and Rabbi Abraham Heschel.

In a sociotheological framework, the dialectical relationship between religion and society is recognised. Religions are ancient traditions that are alive. They evolve at different paces, albeit slowly, to the pressures and influences of society. However, as religious beliefs are publicly practised, religion can, in turn, have a profound impact on society. The presence of religious diversity and the opportunity of interreligious partnerships have contributed to a more visible religious representation in public life. This has led to more opportunities for public activism across lines of faith, and it has been made possible due to a re-thinking of religion in public life more broadly. In the Introduction, Plant was brought into conversation with Habermas and Williams; Williams was quoted as saying that religious convictions are “non-negotiable” (2012, 301). Put differently, religious beliefs are not something to be set aside in the pursuit of a common goal or public deliberation.

This chapter explores these various contexts and religious developments. The willingness of clergy to engage in their wider social context is the result of religious histories, policies, and global events. Each national and religious context will be discussed from 1945 onwards. This not only provides a base of knowledge for each field site and religious denomination studied, but it also outlines how each denomination has historically approached religious diversity, whether through segregation, evangelism, or a big-tent, inclusive attitude. The focus then narrows to explore how national policies and global events have legitimised public interreligious engagement. By this point it will be clear that, in diverse contexts, interreligious engagement is not an abstract responsibility for religious leaders nor a newfound expectation. It is, without a doubt, a plausible and visible component of a contemporary religious landscape that *should* be recognised by clergy and seminaries alike.

The chapter will conclude by examining the ways in which religious diversification and interreligious engagement have been conceptualised in academic literature. These conceptualisations are helpful tools for seminaries and clergy, but they are ultimately ambiguous analyses removed from the fluidity and complexities of the clerical experience.

This problem is shared by seminaries, the focus of the next chapter, whose rigid structures and sluggish adaptation to new demands have led to largely piecemeal and inconsistent pedagogical approaches to religious diversity and interreligious engagement. By choosing to focus on the core curriculum of text, theology, languages, history, and ethics, seminaries either forego training on interreligious engagement and clerical involvement or assume it will be developed elsewhere. This not only reaffirms the wedge of religious authority between seminaries and clergy, but it also signals a reluctance among seminaries to fully acknowledge the opportunities made available through interreligious education and engagement, namely spiritual development, interreligious partnerships, and social activism, all of which will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

As the formal establishments and influence of Protestant Christianity decline, whether through a diversifying religious body in the US or a re-shaping of the establishment of the Church of England, interreligious engagement, dialogue, and action have become more common. Social unity, either in the US or England, is no longer reliant on a single faith tradition or theological disposition. The presence of religious diversity and its competing claims of truth opens up a space for interreligious social engagement.¹²

Although this thesis is not a longitudinal study of interreligious engagement, it is clear that this understanding and expectation of clergy is a product of past histories and religious developments. These have impacted the self-understanding of faith communities and their place in diversifying contexts. The next section of this chapter takes a step back from the present day to understand the religious and social contexts of each country and how it has led to today's reality. It does so by reviewing the unique qualities of each nation (establishment religion in England, for example) and religious group (Anglo-Jewry and the Church of England, for example), and how each approaches the question of religious diversity and interreligious engagement.

¹² Some scholars would refer to this as the post-secular and/or public square. A full discussion of these topics warrants a lengthy and robust discussion of the literature on each, and this thesis does not have the space to do so.

Religion in England

In England, decolonisation resulted in mass migration into the nation, leading to the presence of diverse religious communities and the creation of national structures to facilitate interreligious dialogue and understanding. Diversification has been the result of political and historical legacies. This has shaped the duty of the Church of England as the formally established national church, broadening its remit to work on behalf of all faiths and communities while maintaining its confessional faith identity. Consequently, this has helped affirm and normalise interreligious relations throughout the country, but it also creates an expectation that priests should be aware of, if not actively engaged with, the religious diversity around them.

Post-Shoah Anglo-Jewry, as a well-established and represented minority, articulates itself as a faith community engaged with wider society, for some, or one that wishes to segregate itself, for others. The Church of England and Anglo-Jewry, one situated within a majority faith, the other a minority, but both well-established, similarly confront the issues of declining numbers and the growing number of those affiliating with no religion, articulating what it means to be Christian or Jewish in a multifaith society.

Diversification of the Religious Landscape

The diversification of England is a result of decolonisation and subsequent migration into the country in the years following World War II, largely coming from the Indian Subcontinent, Africa, and the Caribbean. This brought large populations of Muslims, Hindus, and more conservative strands of Christianity to the shores of England. Under the British Nationality Act 1948, all Commonwealth citizens were made UK citizens.¹³ Many colonial residents moved to England, finding jobs in post-war reconstruction. Additionally, as one of the EU's *four freedoms*, the movement of labour brought migrant workers to England from all over the EU. This was particularly noticeable after the 2004 addition of eight ex-Soviet nations (also known as the A8); between 2004 and 2009, net-migration from A8 nations into the UK was measured

¹³ Immigration from Commonwealth nations was further restricted by the passage of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 and the Immigration Act 1971.

at 304,000 (a quarter of all net-migration), over twenty times the expected number (Vargas-Silva 2011).¹⁴

Although migrants from the A8 countries are more dispersed throughout the country (Ibid.), migrants have traditionally settled in urban areas, such as Birmingham, Leeds, or London. As an author living in the capital wrote, “to walk the streets [of London] is to become vividly aware that, for all the grand talk of globalisation, the global only ever exists within the local” (Barnes 2002, 4). Although this diversity is felt more in urban areas, it has spurred an ongoing nationwide discussion on the contributions of minority communities to English life.¹⁵

Beyond the cities, national data shows that the country as a whole is diversifying. Census data from England and Wales reports that between 2001 and 2011, the Christian population dropped to 59.3% of the whole (a change of -12.5%), Jews stayed constant at 0.5% of the population, and non-Christian religions (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism) made up 7.5% of population (+2.6%); significantly, the number of those not affiliating with a religious tradition increased to 25.1% (+10.3%) in the same timeframe (Office of National Statistics 2012, BBC 2001).¹⁶ As Figure 1 in the introduction suggests, the country is only expected to diversify further in the coming decades.

The rise in religious diversity in the latter half of the twentieth century coincided with an overall decline in religious affiliation. This group is frequently referred to as the “nones”, or

¹⁴ Data on net-migration into England specifically, as opposed to the UK as a whole, was inaccessible.

¹⁵ At the turn of the millennium, this was coined *multiculturalism* and was supported by authors such as Sacks (2002) and later Barclay (2013). However, this reality is contested as many accuse multiculturalism of endorsing the separation of communities along religious or ethnic lines, instead favouring a policy of community cohesion that embraced an overarching set of “British values” (see McGhee 2008 and Cameron 2011). Since 2016, the EU referendum has been a part of that ongoing conversation (see Ashcroft and Bevir 2016 and Bhambra 2017). For further reading on the role of minority faith communities in England, albeit published pre-Brexit, see Cooper and Lodge (2008) and Modood (1994).

¹⁶ This includes those who specifically responded with “none” to their religious affiliation and does not include those who did not respond to the census question. Similarly, not all groups measured in the census are discussed here, meaning numbers do not add up to 100%.

those who, when asked what religious tradition they affiliate, state “none”. Per the data above, this groups makes up a quarter of the population, although some surveys suggest that number is higher. For example, NatCen (2017) estimates 53% of the population in England, Scotland, and Wales do not affiliate with a religious tradition.¹⁷

The Nones

The rise of the religious nones defies the monopoly of the Church of England and religious life more broadly. It challenges assumptions about religiosity and national identity, shifting the default perception of what it means to be English. The decline in religious affiliation suggests English national identity no longer equates to a Christian, or religious, identity; it is not immediately assumed that a person walking along the street is Christian. Considering that the age demographics of non-Christian religions and the nones are much lower than that of Christians, long term trends suggest the influence of non-Christian groups will only become stronger in public life.¹⁸

In light of these statistics, what impact do the nones have on interreligious engagement? Notably, they have limited involvement in interreligious settings. This makes sense, at first glance, given there is not a widespread, organised religion of ‘none’. This group lacks the organisation and structure to engage with equivalent entities, such as the Church of England, and their lack of congregations and leadership creates an impasse of representation that is equivalent to that of clergy. Some secular groups disregard these activities entirely. For example, the National Secular Society, responding to the Commission on Religion and Belief’s (CORAB) findings, responded to every CORAB chapter except one – dialogue. The words “interfaith”, “dialogue”, or “interreligious” are not found anywhere in the National Secular Society’s (2017) report. In response to CORAB, the University of Warwick published a secular response. Warwick’s response was skeptical of the effectiveness of interfaith activities and

¹⁷ There is debate about the nuance and characteristics of the nones. For example, Davie has found that, while religious affiliation has dropped, belief has not. This is her well-known and cited “believing without belonging” thesis (1990). On the other side, sociologists such as Bruce state that belief, while it may continue to linger in English life, will eventually decline just as affiliation has (1995).

¹⁸ The median age for the nones is 30 years old, compared to 45 among Christians, 41 among Jews, and, for reference, 25 among Muslims (Office of National Statistics 2013).

questioned the “immediate social purpose” of interfaith work (University of Warwick 2016, 15-6).

There are exceptions, however. Despite limited academic research on the nones in interreligious settings, some organisations openly support such involvement. Humanists UK has local and regional chapters throughout the country, many of which are involved in local interreligious organisations, speaking on behalf of their humanist beliefs and value systems. Humanists UK provides resources for individuals wishing to take part in interreligious dialogue and have outlined a series of reasons why dialogue is important and how to engage (Humanists UK 2018). CORAB found that, since World War II, there have been a number of initiatives to bring together religious and non-religious voices through radio and television programmes (Woolf Institute 2015, 52). They went on to recommend that “there should be more structured dialogue between those who are religious and those who are not” (Ibid., 58). Despite these recommendations, groups like Humanists UK are largely, but not entirely, left out of interreligious structures in England.

Interreligious Structures in England

This changing religious landscape since World War II has led to widely diverse urban communities and has acted as an impetus for interreligious relations.¹⁹ With large scale immigration, interreligious dialogue and engagement “began to concern neighbours ... rather than hypothetical conversations with communities overseas” (Davie 1994, 26). A recognition of diversifying communities is a direct motivator for clergy to engage with other faiths, as discussed in Chapter Three, but that must not overshadow the importance of top-level dialogical organisations created during and after the war.

¹⁹ Some groups were created before the war. For example, the London Society of Jews and Christians was created in 1927 and the World Congress of Faiths in 1936. Notably, Weller found that interreligious organisations and structures “increasingly [came] to be seen as potentially important contributors to bridging social capital” (2005, 283-4). The attainment, development, and variations of social capital for clergy will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ), one of the largest interreligious organisations in England, was founded in 1942 at the height of World War II by the then Chief Rabbi Joseph Hertz and Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple. Temple, in his capacity as Archbishop and founder of CCJ, would become a public voice against the atrocities of the Nazi regime towards European Jews. The purpose of the CCJ was not only to foster understanding between the faiths, but also to raise awareness about Jewish persecution taking place across Europe under the Nazis, culminating in Temple's 1943 address on the persecution of Jews to the House of Lords (Thompson 2017, 5). The importance of interreligious structures throughout the country is most clearly evidenced by the establishment of the Inter Faith Network (IFN) in 1987, consisting of sixty member organisations at the time. Weller provides an in-depth review of the history and utility of the IFN. He states that the IFN was borne out of a recognition that interreligious activity was taking place at a local level; the establishment of a top-level organisation gave interreligious structures a national platform and "consciousness" (Weller 2013, 370). The IFN uses its national platform and broad representation to engage with public and policy-making entities on issues such as safety and education. The grassroots nature of the IFN connects the national body with the local, avoiding notions of superficiality and giving the national body a wide number of avenues to investigate issues and feed them into public policy.

To reference the preceding section, interreligious structures have gradually begun to include the voices of those who do not affiliate with religion, such as Humanists UK. Weller found that the IFN has historically involved Humanist and secular groups in consultation (Ibid., 386). A step further, the Faith and Belief Forum, an organisation promoting interreligious engagement, explicitly affirms the role non-religious people have in their work (Faith and Belief Forum 2018). The inclusion of this group of people into interreligious structures provides new opportunities for encounter and self-understanding, but it is not within the scope of this thesis to examine interreligious involvement from a non-religious point of view.

The stretch of interreligious organisations around the country is significant, but they clearly have not solved religious tensions and strife. As will be discussed throughout this thesis, antisemitism remains a considerable issue in English politics and everyday life, and the issue of Islamophobia continues to be at the forefront of policy and interreligious discussions. What

these organisations did do, and continue to do, is normalise interreligious relations, initially among Jews and Christians but now among other faith and non-faith groups as well. Groups like the CCJ provided faith leaders with the legitimacy to engage with one another and the resources to do so.

Nevertheless, they attract a limited number of people – the extent of these organisations' work is most recognised by the small section of faith communities that are actively involved or take an interest. Yet the passive influence of these groups is significant, normalising interreligious engagement for clergy and interested laity, not to mention the influence groups like the IFN have in shaping policy.

As evidenced above, Jewish and Christian groups were largely behind the creation of interreligious structures in England. As foci for this study, each faith will be discussed in the sections below, extrapolating the histories and trends of each one in England, as well as distinctive characteristics that impact engagement with other religions.

Anglo-Jewry: Fitting in and Standing Out

The Anglo-Jewish community is one of the oldest religious minorities in England and is well-established in public life, with members found in the Halls of Parliament, the lecture halls of Oxbridge, and entertainment venues (Gidley 2012, 58). Their history, however, has not always been one of acceptance and establishment. Following a wave of anti-Jewish violence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that eventually led to expulsion, Jews were admitted back into England in 1656 under Oliver Cromwell and have remained in the country since, achieving full emancipation in 1858. Historical and ongoing antisemitism has not only shaped the Jewish community but also provides the context and impetus for Anglo-Jewish interreligious engagement today.

Presently, Anglo-Jewry is generally divided into three large groups: Orthodox (Ashkenazi and Sephardi),²⁰ Progressive (Reform and Liberal), and Masorti. Central Orthodox, the Ashkenazi

²⁰ While strict Orthodox Jews largely originate from eastern Europe and would be considered Ashkenazi, they are measured as a separate category from the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Orthodox groups above.

community, has declined more than any other denomination within Anglo-Jewry since 1990, going from 66.4% of the Anglo-Jewish population to 54.7%. Sephardi Judaism has grown slightly, representing 3.5% of Anglo-Jewry (Graham and Vulkan 2010, 13). Despite being the largest Jewish group in England, the history of Orthodox seminaries has been fragmented. Originally, this community trained through Jews College, a rabbinical seminary that closed in 2004. The Sephardic community began a new rabbinical programme in 2006 named Montefiore, which only has an intake of students every four years. Among the other denominations, Reform Judaism is a minority branch experiencing decline, whereas Liberal Judaism has remained relatively steady. Masorti Judaism, while relatively small, has seen tremendous growth for its size and currently makes up 2.7% of the Anglo-Jewish population (ibid.). These communities train together at a single Rabbinical seminary in London, named Leo Baeck College.²¹ Regardless of size, each community faces the shared challenge of antisemitism and are in a constant debate over Anglo-Jewry's relationship with society, namely the extent to which the community should segregate or assimilate.

Modern Challenges and Issues in Anglo-Jewry

The challenges of Anglo-Jewry's relationship with the world is a familiar issue to Jews around the globe. They are manifested in the topics of segregation and assimilation, both of which can be understood as responses to the Shoah, or Holocaust. These two responses, segregation and assimilation, are used by former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks to describe the challenges facing Jews today (2013, 9).

The Challenge of Segregation

In this thesis, segregation describes the self-ghettoisation of Jews into communities that are exclusive spatially (with many faith institutions and resources located in the immediate area) and culturally (the larger culture surrounding it being viewed with scepticism and/or as corrupt) (Valins 2003). Sacks describes Jewish segregation as "disengage[ment] from the wider society" (2013, 9). Segregationist and exclusivist tendencies are most clearly found in strict Orthodox communities in London, where religious self-identities are robustly maintained in the community, even when it is starkly at odds with the cultural norms around

²¹ Many English rabbis will choose to train outside of country, with many doing so in the US or Israel.

it. Although this branch of Judaism is not directly studied in this thesis, they are the fastest growing segment of the Anglo-Jewish population (strict Orthodox membership doubled between 1990 and 2010) (Graham and Vulkan 2010, 13).

As a response to the Shoah, this group segregated themselves so that the Jewish religion and customs could be maintained. It was, as Sacks describes, a decision that “made immense sense after the Holocaust” (2013, 21). This inward turn, as a result, limits the amount of interreligious engagement taking place.²² There are certainly exceptions to this, for example a childcare centre established in Stamford Hill takes both Muslim and Jewish children, creating a point of contact for the two religious communities and challenging the exclusive nature of segregated communities (Amin 2006). Yet the Shoah did not only lead Jews to segregate themselves from society. Many Jews abandoned the religious identity that had been persecuted and disenfranchised for centuries, ultimately assimilating into their wider culture (Sacks 2013, 7). This demographic of non-practicing, secular Judaism is often referred to as Jewish assimilation.

The Challenge of Assimilation

Assimilation is the adoption of the surrounding culture in order to blend in. Sacks describes it as the decision “to embrace the wider society and abandon Judaism” (ibid., 9). This has not always been the sole interpretation, however. Historically, assimilation was the goal of the Anglo-Jewish community during a period of mass migration from the 1880s to 1914 (Kahn-Harris and Gidley 2010, 26; Sacks 2008, 33). Jews kept their religion in their homes and synagogues; some communities even mimicked aspects of Anglicanism. Here, assimilation did not mean abandoning Jewish values and culture but rather blending into the wider society in order to be accepted by it. The foundation of a Jewish state in 1948, along with the English wave of migration discussed earlier, made England “no longer ... a monocultural entity into which [Jews] must assimilate” (Kahn-Harris and Gidley 2010, 29). This gave Jews in England a

²² It should be noted, however, that because an area is predominantly Jewish does not mean that they are “segregated” from the wider culture and society. Areas of London, such as Golders Green, have sizable Jewish populations but are actively engaged with other faiths, as evidenced through a number of interviews.

permanent identity that no longer needed to be confined to private life. Yet by this point, the abandonment-style type of assimilation had already taken root.

Kahn-Harris and Gidley explained that the blending-in type of assimilation was “strategically articulated” by the communal leadership, but it was “too successful” (2012, 172). They explain that the “politics of belonging” that marked so much of Anglo-Jewish history eroded Yiddish culture and a collective Jewish identity (Ibid., 182). Jewish numbers dwindled from an estimated half a million to an estimated third of a million in the 1980s, as reported by Haberman et al (1983), and reports finding a 52% intermarriage rate in the US (Kosmin et al 1991) prompted further concern about the vitality and future of Anglo-Jewry. Today, the number of Jews in England and Wales sits just above a quarter of a million at 263,000 (Office of National Statistics 2012), while only 22% of Jewish couples are intermarried, far less than the intermarried rate in America at the start of the 1990s (Graham 2016). The issue of intermarriage (whereby a Jewish individual marries a non-Jew) has implications for the vitality of the Jewish culture and religion, as it impedes the raising of Jewish children in a Jewish home (Sacks 2013, 12). Intermarriage is a profound issue for all Jewish communities, but interestingly it serves as more of an impetus for interreligious understanding for Christians rather than for Jews. This will be discussed in Chapter Three. Beyond intermarriage, the challenge of Jewish assimilation is one that prompts the Anglo-Jewish community to recruit young families, exemplified by the widespread establishment of Jewish faith schools. For example, the number of Jewish children in Jewish schools has doubled since the 1990s (Staetsky and Boyd 2016, 3).

Assimilation represents one pole on the continuum of Jewish identity (secular Judaism), with segregation as the other pole (strict Orthodox) (Tiffany 2015). The middle ground between these two poles, advocated for by Sacks, represents the Judaism that is analysed in this thesis (mainstream Orthodox, Reform, Liberal, and Conservative/Masorti).²³ Despite these inward-

²³ It should be noted that Sacks’s “middle ground” has been criticised by the wider Anglo-Jewish community. Alderman described it as “the most spectacular example of [his] inability to reconcile his own inclusive agenda with the exclusivist agendas of his orthodox opponents” (1998, 402) and “symptomatic of a much deeper malaise, stemming, perhaps, from a complete breakdown of communal identity” (410). This criticism reflects

facing pressures, the community continues to play a broadly active role in interreligious initiatives and structures.

The Shoah and history of antisemitism (discussed in Chapter Three) have greatly shaped Judaism's engagement with the world and relationships with other religions, notably Christianity. Christianity's supersessionist and fulfilment theologies have been understandably met with Jewish scepticism, and any Christian compliance and silence in the face of the Shoah certainly strained relations (of course many Christians spoke out, like Archbishop Temple).²⁴ However, these events can also serve as motivations for interreligious engagement through combating hate crimes, unpacking the textual and theological issues of supersessionism, and intermarriage. As Judaism continues to work through these challenges and issues, it does so while being an active partner in interreligious structures, such as the CCJ and IFN. In many ways, as the research will show, Jewish communities are active agents in starting and sustaining interreligious initiatives, whether to help others increase their understanding of Judaism, address hate crimes, or achieve a social good. They often do this alongside a partner in such work, the Church of England.

Christianity: Establishment, Decline, and Public Roles

Following the British Empire around the globe, the Anglican Communion has an expansive reach. As the Empire came home to England following the Second World War, the Church of England began to shift its thinking and approach – namely from one that missionised the corners of the globe to one that played host to the diversity of immigrants arriving at England's shores (Davie 1994). As the state church, the Church of England is more than an ecclesial body. It has certain public roles to fulfil for a public body that is diversifying (The Woolf Institute 2015). Internally, its nineteenth and twentieth century expansion has created an organisation now struggling to accommodate a plethora of Christian beliefs, balancing

the fragmented nature among Jewish denominations. As will be discussed later, many Jews find intra-faith dialogue more difficult than interfaith dialogue.

²⁴ Supersessionism as a religious concept, described by Soulen, is a "belief that since Christ's coming the Church has taken the place of the Jewish people as God's chosen community, and that God's covenant with the Jews is now over and done" (2005, 413). Although it was never official doctrine of the Christian church, supersessionist attitudes have permeated the Christian faith for centuries and continue to do so today.

liberal theologies often found in northern Europe with the influence of conservative theologies in Africa, not to mention the growing influence of evangelicals within the English church.

This section will briefly outline the relationship between the Anglican Church and English state. It will then discuss the two wings of the Church of England included in this study – evangelical and liberal (equivalent with mainline Protestantism in the US) – and their tendencies to engage with other faiths. It will conclude with a discussion of how establishment and social change have shaped interreligious engagement and representation for the Church of England.

The Established Church: Its History and How It Represents England

During the British Empire, the Church of England served the needs of the population, replicating the country's production-type, industrial economy, focused on parochial attitudes and administering the sacraments of birth, marriage, and death to the population. The Church was and is an arm of the state.

As the country moved on after the war, the Church evolved as well, conforming to the national culture and, at times, confronting it. Davie (1994) outlines the relationship between the Church and state in the decades after the war; she describes a Church playing an active role in the reconstruction of war-torn England, aligned with the priorities of the state and culminating with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. However, it became evident in the 1960s that the Church was out of touch with many working class families, and that disconnect was exacerbated by the cultural revolutions of the decade in which the Church was perceived to be dwelling in the past. This was the beginning of the Church's drastic decline in affiliation. Despite a turn towards what Davie calls "the distinctiveness of the sacred" (Ibid., 36) in the last three decades of the twentieth century, the population preferred individual forms of spirituality over their parish churches. Like the economy of England following the Second World War, the Church's production-type economy was replaced with a consumer-driven religiosity, one that emphasises numbers and growth, "increasingly ... to attract a certain kind of religious consumer" (Ibid., 20). This consumer-driven religiosity is less restricted to parish boundaries (a trait found in non-Christian religions and Christian free-churches). While the

population's attitude towards religion shifted to a model of "consumption", the Church was also re-shaping its relationship with the state with which it was so closely intertwined with.

Despite a close alignment with the state immediately following the war, the Church developed a particularly political and confrontational relationship with the state during the Thatcher years. This is notable, as the Church had typically been aligned with the Conservative Party before (see Warren 2009). The economic policies of the Thatcher government and the implications that this confrontational position had on the role of clergy will be discussed in Chapter Three, but broadly speaking, the Church "found themselves defending their ground against an increasingly separate or sectarian government" (Davie 1994, 39). As Thatcher's austerity policies cut services and benefits, the Church of England began to confront the issues of poverty and homelessness by speaking out against deprivation in the political realm, using its established position to directly confront the Thatcher government. Those policies cut social services, making religious leaders, of any faith, "the *only* available person to whom the most vulnerable turn when there is no apparent alternative" (Ibid., 176; emphasis original). This will ultimately repeat itself in the data collected under David Cameron's and Theresa May's Conservative governments discussed in Chapter Three. Put another way, Davie wrote, "the guardians of the sacred became the defenders of the whole nation, paying particular attention to those least able to defend themselves; in many cases those, paradoxically, least likely to attend their churches" (Ibid., 39).

Mark Chapman marks this theological shift by using Southbank, a traditionally progressive part of London, as a case study for the Church's response to post-war religious behaviour. He explains Christianity took a turn away from "religion", or the traditions and liturgy of church services, and emphasised the presence of God instead dwelling "out there", beyond the walls of a gathered community on a Sunday morning (Chapman 2006, 93). This was nurtured by a form of public spirituality that could survive and thrive without the institutional "religion" of the Church. As the religious economy of England shifted from production to consumption, Chapman shows how secularisation drove clergy "beyond the church doors" (Ibid., 96). This thinking was undoubtedly predated by the social activism of Archbishop William Temple in the formation of the NHS decades earlier; nonetheless, this "beyond the church doors" view of Christian theology and mission gave religion a more socially active embodiment. Thus the

Church made a marked shift from an ecclesial body concerned primarily with its members to one advocating on behalf of all.

Modern Establishment in the Church of England

The shift to represent more voices than just those of Anglicans makes sense when looking at religious trends. As reported by the British Social Attitudes Survey, the percentage of those who identify as Anglican has dropped from 40% in 1983 to 15% in 2016 (Faith Survey 2018).²⁵ To maintain a legitimate voice of establishment, it could be argued, the Church has had to broaden its remit of representation for England's diversifying population.

The diversification of England has challenged the Church of England's monopoly on religious life and its institutional legitimacy as the established Church. The "failed monopoly" (The Woolf Institute 2015, 23) of the Church of England is now challenged by non-religious worldviews and the rise of other religious traditions, prompting debates and discussions around the establishment nature of the Church of England in a multifaith society. The relationship between the Church of England and the state is one that has historically "changed and is changing, and could change further" (Ibid., 27). Today it is "marked not so much by a position of privilege born of establishment, but rather a position of service born of duty and care", according to the Archbishop of York (Sentamu 2008, 15). On the ground, the Church's relationship with local communities has evolved, as Sentamu suggests, to serve and care for all within the parish boundaries, including those of other faiths. Politically speaking, the Church, in the eyes of the government, is charged with the provision of services such as health, education, and welfare, as well as taking a lead role in the promotion of "social cohesion" (O'Beirne 2004).

The Church, as a formally established body, has grown to understand itself as an establishment for all faiths, legitimising its place in a diverse society. In 2012 the Supreme Governor of the Church, HM Queen Elizabeth II, gave remarks that the Church of England's "role is not to defend Anglicanism to the exclusion of other religions. Instead, the Church has a duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country". More than just mere

²⁵ The survey is representative of responses from England, Wales, and Scotland.

representation, the “duty” of the Church on behalf of all faiths is also seen as a religious conviction for the Church of England. This was reflected in the Church of England publication titled *Generous Love* (The Anglican Communion 2008) and the writings of former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, who suggests that, “in a plural society, Christians secure their religious liberty by advocacy for the liberty of Muslims or Jews to have the same right to be heard” (2012, 297). The Church of England, therefore, has positioned itself not only as a confessional worshipping community, but also as one that publicly advocates on behalf of all faiths. This is a stance welcomed by minority faith communities, as found by Davie (1994) and Modood (1994). This is further evidenced by the creation of the Church of England’s Presence and Engagement Network, which describes itself as “equipping Christians for mission and ministry in the wonderful diversity of our multi faith society” (Presence and Engagement 2018).

Discussing whether or not the Church should be disestablished is not the aim of this section.²⁶ Rather, it examines how current religious and public understandings of the Church of England impact the curricula of its seminaries and the practices of its clergy. On top of the issues described above, the Church of England also must manage internal tensions. The Church of England, like any religious community, is not homogenous. What makes the Church of England unique is its ability to hold together a heterogeneous faith community comprised of the liberal, parochial-minded wing that more quickly assumes a public responsibility, and the growing influence of the evangelical wing, a group that challenges the very notion of the parish with its proselytising nature.

Liberal Anglicanism

The inclusion of other religions encapsulated by the Church’s establishment position, articulated by Queen Elizabeth II, Williams, and Davie above, is not simply a perspective taken at the national level. It translates to the local as well and is often understood as the parochial duty of priests. This is a theological and practical approach largely but not exclusively

²⁶ The debate surrounding disestablishment will not be discussed here. For an introduction to this debate, see Sentamu (2008) for arguments in favour of the establishment of the Church of England, Buchanan (1994) for arguments in favour of disestablishment, and Woodhead (2013) for an overview of this debate.

prioritised by the liberal wing of Anglican clergy. As leaders of a parish, Church of England priests are required to serve all within a church's boundaries, regardless of religious affiliation. In addition to leading a gathered community, they are expected to be public figures, serving on boards, engaging local businesses, partaking in community projects and events, conducting weddings, and presiding over funerals. They fulfil many of these public tasks irrespective of the faith affiliations of those with whom they engage.

The national structures of the Church of England depend on the parochial system to gather and channel information up the hierarches from the grassroots to bishops, Spiritual Peers, and Lambeth Palace. The pressures of doing Christian ministry in a diverse context, for example, would be communicated from priests serving in diverse contexts, through the area deaneries and bishops to the top levels of the Church of England. It would then, theoretically, feed into the theological training institutions. However, as Chapters Two and Three will show, that connection – from the social contexts of grassroots clergy to seminaries – is not effectively transmitted, with training slow to adapt to contemporary needs.

The Church's contemporary challenge on the ground is how parish ministry is done in a religiously diverse context, employing the appropriate language and theologies to do so, and if the message of inclusivity extends to the growing and less parochial evangelical wing of the Church.

Evangelical Anglicanism

Evangelicals in the Church of England have grown their share of the denomination, making up 26% of the church in 1989 compared to 33% in 2005 (Evangelical Alliance 2008).²⁷ The Guardian reports that 70% of those entering ordination training self-identify as evangelical, signalling the direction in which the Church of England is heading in terms of leadership (Sherwood 2016). Their influence has notably grown through the appointment of the self-proclaimed evangelical Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby. Evangelicals in the Church of England balance the inclusivity of the Church of England with a calling to proselytise. This,

²⁷ However, with the general decline of church attendance taken into account, data shows the number of evangelicals declining as well, just at a slower pace than the rest of the Church (Christian Today 2006).

naturally, challenges the parochial organisation described above and has implications for interreligious relations.

Davie writes that evangelicals may find the parish system restrictive as the boundaries run contrary to the mission of evangelical churches, who often reach out to wider geographical areas beyond a specific neighbourhood (1994, 143). Despite a tendency to reach communities beyond the parochial boundaries, when it comes to interreligious engagement the evangelical wing of the Church of England can seem inward-focused, or unwilling to engage with those structures as much as the liberal wing of the Church might. As will be discussed later in this thesis, despite being treated with suspicion due to their evangelistic nature and desire to convert, evangelicals, in fact, engage in interreligious structures and initiatives, doing so in a way that values the importance of religious belief.

A point of contact among evangelicals with other faiths concerns social and economic issues. Despite being morally conservative (measured by attitudes on sex and marriage, for example) relative to other parts of the Church, Davie found in the 1990s that evangelicals “are beginning to look more critically at the social and economic agenda” (Ibid., 72). This trend continues today, as evangelicals frequently engage in social activism, evidenced by the outspoken nature of the evangelical Archbishop of Canterbury on social issues, such as predatory payday lending (Grice 2013).

As a church body representing a plethora of religious perspectives and beliefs, the Church of England is markedly different from Christian denominations in the US. In the Church of England, preachers of inclusivity find themselves singing from the same hymn book as those who may be more exclusive in nature. With varying belief structures under one tent, the Church of England must hold together different motives and theologies of interreligious engagement. In contrast, denominational lines in the US buffer theological engagement between traditions – a bishop in the Episcopal church does not have much agency in a Southern Baptist Church. Religion in the US is more denominationally diverse, with no single denomination holding any formal level of establishment. This is the result of a unique religious heritage and history.

Religion in America

In light of the immense social change the US has gone through since World War II, Robert Wuthnow states that the ability of religion to adapt over time “has been possible because religious organizations have had the resources with which to respond to the challenges set before them” (1988, 5). Religious affiliation, he goes on to argue, is much stronger in America than elsewhere in the global West, giving religious life more strength and vitality that one might find in, for example, England. However, I will argue that the religious institutions of seminaries have *not* wholly responded to the challenges of diversification. The point Wuthnow hints at is significant, namely that religious organisations, not national structures, are the ones resourced and capable for change. In the US, theological education is much less centralised than in England, which, as Chapter Two will show, has allowed seminaries to begin to develop methods of interreligious training independently from one another. Seminaries and American religion more broadly are centred around local manifestations of religion – in smaller denominations, as opposed to one established church, and local clergy, acting as agents that, at times, bring about great amounts of social and political change.

A political and public consciousness was noticeable among American clergy in the post-war periods. The internment of Japanese-Americans created a “relatively united critique” among clergy while also promoting “fellowship among the races” (Fisher 2006).²⁸ Later, the political activism of clergy in the Civil Rights Movement, exemplified in the Selma Marches, continued this public activism. During this period, “religious institutions provided the key organizational and recruitment vehicles” for the Movement to take place (providing a precursor to the models of faith-based community organising prevalent today) (Wood 2003, 387). Historian of American religion Patrick Allitt described Martin Luther King, Jr’s famous *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* and *I Have a Dream* speech “as much sermons as political declarations” (2003, 262). From the Civil Rights Movement to the presence of clergy at Ground Zero after 9/11, the importance of religious figures in America’s national and political heritage must be contextualised by the country’s religious history.

²⁸ Fisher also points out that while clergy spoke out against the internment of Japanese-Americans, clergy “did not succeed in arousing the conscience of the public at large on behalf of European Jews and other victims of the Holocaust” (2006).

American Religious Heritage

As a country settled by religious pilgrims, religion has historically played a significant role in shaping American society. Writing in his 1835 work, *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville found religion in America more vibrant and influential than in Europe. He explains that “there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America” (de Tocqueville 1990, 303-4).

After the Second World War, religion in the US followed a different – but not totally dissimilar – trajectory than that in England. The country experienced a religious revival in the 1940s and 1950s. During this time Judaism and Catholicism became more accepted into American civic life, largely spurred on by the work of Will Herberg’s (1955) *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*. This triad of faiths would come to define the limits of “common religion” in America, as written by Herberg (Ibid.), or “civil religion”, as penned by Bellah (2005). Both describe the particular unifying nature of religion in American discourse, whereby democracy, a strong moralistic impulse, and patriotic symbols (such as the flag) are used to unite the American people.

However, at the same time, the “sex, drugs, and rock and roll” cultural revolution sparked the rise of the Christian right, prominently manifested in Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority (Putnam and Campbell 2010). This ultimately shifted the national discourse of religion in public life to the theological and political right (which differs from the abandonment of religion found in England during this time). This gave life to the cultural and political rise of evangelical Christianity. At the end of the twentieth century, the influence of religion in American public life was further recognised, this time by respected sociologist of religion Robert Putnam. He found that the US continued to be an “astonishingly ‘churched’ society” where affiliation with organised religion was the most common type of social organisation (Putnam 1995, 67-8).

The freedom of/for/from religion granted in the Bill of Rights prohibited any single denomination from claiming a monopoly, thereby creating and sustaining a culture of religious consumption and choice. These religious “competitors” sought to attract and hold onto members, leading to a nation of higher religious affiliation that is becoming more diverse (Finke and Stark 1988, 42-3). Statistically, in 2014 Pew found 70.6% of Americans identified

as Christian (a decrease of 7.8% from 2007 measurements), 1.9% as Jewish (+0.2%), and 5.9% with a non-Christian faith more broadly (+1.2%); 22.8% of Americans did not identify with a religious tradition (+6.7%) (2015a). These numbers, as will be explained later, are exacerbated in urban areas like New York.

The Nones: American Disbelief and Spirituality

Notably, and similar to England, the size of the nones has grown in America, coinciding with a growing emphasis on spirituality and decline in Christian affiliation. This is described by Putnam and Campbell as the “second aftershock” in American religion, the first being the sexual revolution of the 1960s (2010, 122). The nones, like in England, did not arise in a vacuum. The religious economy of choice that came to dominate the American religious landscape saw a growing emphasis on individuals constructing their own spiritual traditions. This draws from various religious traditions (such as Christianity and Buddhism) and folk beliefs (Fisher 2006) while rejecting the institutions of religion, finding them too rules-focused or too closely affiliated with the right-wing politics of the Christian right.

Spirituality is not a complete rejection of religion, however. Taylor points out that this phenomenon in religion represents a “gamut of intermediate positions” (2007, 513). Similar to Davie’s believing without belonging, individuals still hold on to concepts that are not foreign to religion, such as an overarching force in the universe or convictions to be a better person, but they do so outside the realm of traditional religious authorities. Putnam and Campbell reinforce this, finding that the nones “do not seem to have discarded all religious beliefs or predilections” (2010, 126). Despite this, the nones present a challenge to American religious institutions – not least Christianity and Judaism, as these religious groups try to pull disassociated young people back into their fold.²⁹ Some churches do so by aligning with left-

²⁹ Chaves frames declining religious authority among institutions and individual belief as an aspect of secularisation. Although Taylor, Davie, and Putnam and Campbell may disagree with him regarding new manifestations of beliefs, this thesis proves that social change is affecting seminaries and clergy differently. The sluggish response of seminaries – as a form of religious authority – to respond to social change partially supports Chaves’s claim.

leaning politics, acting as members of the “resistance”,³⁰ or placing less of an emphasis on Sunday attendance and more on midweek events and activities, such as arts programmes or community outreach projects.

Whether Christian, Jewish, spiritual, or something else, there is an overarching pseudo-religious language multiple faith groups can utilise.

America’s “Common Religion”

No religion in America is established, but nonetheless religion pervades American society. Despite the separation of church and state, the line between religion and patriotism or nationalistic ideals seems incredibly blurred. This is commonly embodied in “civil religion”, as famously coined by Bellah, or “Americanism”, as written by RH Williams (1998). Putnam and Campbell describe civil religion as the “glue holding America’s civil society together”, enshrined in “a patriotic faith” (2010, 517-8). Bellah explains that civil religion has the capacity to “mobilize deep levels of personal motivation for the attainment of national goals” (2005, 50). Civil religion, an intertwining of patriotic pride and religious overtones, is separate from religious denominations and traditions, but as Bellah describes, it has a religious dimension to it. He explains civil religion as, “that religious dimension ... in the life of every people, through which it interprets its historical experience in the light of transcendent reality” (Bellah 1974, 29).

Civil religion embodies sacred beliefs about America, producing a religious language based on liberty, freedom, charity, the Constitution, and American presidents (Gehrig 1981). While many religious denominations would not identify themselves with civil religion,³¹ it

³⁰ In the 2016 election, voters between the ages of 18 and 29 voted for Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump, 55% to 37% (Galston and Hendrickson 2016). A church aligning itself with left-leaning policies could, therefore, be assumed to appeal to younger individuals.

³¹ For example, Stackhouse, a professor of Christian ethics at Princeton Theological Seminary, explains that civil religion does not draw on “certain indispensable aspects of theology” (2004, 279). He contrasts this with public theology and political theology that, unlike civil religion, can critically analyse “populist, chauvinist religion” (Ibid.). While civil religion may not be theologically sound according to many Christian scholars, it nonetheless is a powerful force in American religion.

nonetheless creates a national pseudo-religious language. First used by Protestants, this religious-national language was notably used by Catholics following John F Kennedy's inaugural address in 1961. Notably, Bellah points out, it was filled with civic-religious imagery but did not have any denominationally-specific religious language (1974a, 21-3). Thus, the language of civil religion can be used by many denominations – or even other faiths.

Whilst Christians reap the benefits of being associated with the country, minority religions are found appealing to civil religion as well. As Taylor explains, Americans understand their pluralistic society – first favouring Protestants then expanding to favour Catholics, Jews and, gradually, other religions – through “these faiths being seen [in] consensual relation to the common civil religion” (2007, 524). For example, a woman donned an American flag hijab for an interview on Fox News responding to Donald Trump's campaign plan to close mosques (Lace-Evans 2015). As another example, Eck found Hindus “tend to define their public participation through their Indian-American identity and not specifically as Hindus” (2001, 364). Thus, civil religion, while seen as separate from the religious denominations discussed throughout this thesis, is a pseudo-religious language used by a wide array of religious groups. It is not unusual to see faith groups appeal to patriotic ideals.

The American experience is a point of contact among religious groups, and it proves to be a powerful tool in interreligious engagement. This can be seen by faith communities working together in times of tragedy, like at Ground Zero, or Jewish communities reaching out to Muslims navigating the immigrant experience in America, both of which are discussed in Chapter Three. For Jews, Allitt highlights the appeal of baseball in twentieth century New York, explaining that attending games gave them “membership in a great secular nationalistic church from which nobody had ever seemed to suggest that Jews could be excluded” (2003, 90). However, as RH Williams writes, “it can be both inclusivist and exclusivist, for example, exalting our common history of immigration while opposing the newest arrivals” (1998).

Today, the election of Donald Trump to the presidency almost certainly challenges the notion that other religions, namely Islam, can be seen in “consensual relation to the common civil religion”. His statements as a candidate of “strongly consider[ing]” closing US mosques, the proposed database of American Muslims during his campaign, travel bans largely targeted at

Muslims, and the retweeting of anti-Muslim videos have all sought to further separate American Muslims from civic life (see Johnson and Hauslohner 2017; Landers and Masters 2017). Furthermore, questions have been raised about Judaism under the Trump Presidency with the increased prominence of Neo-Nazis in America. As the thesis will unpack in Chapter Three, the election of Trump and his tendency to marginalise communities has created numerous “alliances” among faith groups, notably between Jews and Muslims. For some Americans, however, civil religion is closely intertwined with Christianity alone, strengthening a certain version of civil religion that equates patriotism exclusively with Christianity.

While civil religion can be used as an exclusionary tactic, this thesis gives evidence to milder, more inclusive uses of this shared pseudo-religious language, such as Thanksgiving being used as a time for interreligious engagement and interreligious 9/11 remembrance services.

This shared language is a unifier for faiths that appeals to a common American heritage and culture, although it is often limited to the vocabularies and expressions of the Judeo-Christian tradition. It is now to these groups – mainline Christians, evangelical Christians, and the American-Jewish community, that the focus of this chapter now turns.

Mainline Protestantism: Big Tent Attitudes and Declining Influence

Although once a dominant force in American religious life, the two “aftershocks” in the twentieth century discussed earlier took a toll on mainline Protestantism. As of 2015, mainline Christians represent 14.7% of the American population (Pew 2015a). The diverse and decentralised nature of American religion, both in terms of seminary training and denominational structure, makes it difficult to explain mainline Protestantism without making generalisations. However, there are trends among mainline Protestants and the views they hold towards other faiths. They are, as McKinney states, reflective of a “big tent” identity that accepts and welcomes diversity (1998, 59). Mainline Protestantism is more socially-minded, having been influenced by theologies such as the social gospel movement (Rauschenbusch 1917), which reaffirms a commitment to faith-based social action. Mainline Protestantism in the US tends to reflect inclusive attitudes towards plurality, similar to the liberal wing of the Church of England (Wuthnow 2007).

Despite its declining influence, the profile of mainline Protestantism has been recently raised in reaction to Donald Trump's presidency, as moderate Protestants paint themselves as a Christian alternative to Trump's evangelical base. Although faith leaders had been growing more outspoken to the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim language used throughout the campaign, November 2016 was a liminal moment for mainline Christianity. Emma Green (2016a), a reporter for *The Atlantic*, found that after the election, attendance at mainline churches increased; similarly, *The Washington Post* reported that donations to left-leaning and mainline religious groups increased after the election (Jenkins 2016). During this time, *Reuters* reported that public lectures at Union Theological Seminary in New York, a mainline institution included in my study, were consistently full, drawing unprecedented crowds of more than three times the chapel's capacity (Malone 2017). Across the street from Union, Amy Butler of New York City's famed mainline Riverside Church sat down with *Vox* after the election, where she explained mainline churches are increasing their political clout by publicly challenging the narrative traditionally set by evangelicals (Illing 2016).

This big-tent attitude which seeks to embrace interreligious activity reflects their theology. This is not only true in regard to social activism, which has roots in the social gospel movement, but also in terms of salvation. Theologically, mainline Protestants are less likely to believe that "one religion is true and others are not" and more likely to believe that non-Christians can go to heaven when compared to evangelicals (Putnam and Campbell 2010, 546, 537).³² Evangelical Christianity, on the other hand, has more theologically conservative beliefs and has proved to be, in the last few decades, a more powerful force in American religion and public life.

Evangelical Protestantism: Rising Clout and Fundamentalism

The prevalence of evangelical Christianity in American public life was spurred by the first "aftershock", when reactions to the socially liberal 1960s led to an increase in evangelical church attendance. Although the "boom" level of growth found in the 1970s and 1980s was not sustained, evangelicals' representation in the American population has remained steady. Evangelicals are the largest segment of the American religious landscape, comprising 25.4%

³² 79% percent of mainline Protestants believe this compared to 54% of evangelicals.

of the American population (Pew 2015a). Evangelicals possess a substantial voice in public discourse and retain great political clout. This was most clearly seen when approximately 4 out of 5 evangelical Christians voted for Donald Trump for president (Smith and Martínez 2016). The political influence of evangelicals can also be identified in a number of powerful political organisations, including Focus on the Family, the *Christian Broadcasting Network*, and Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority.³³

Over the last sixty years, evangelicalism has been marked by the rise of religious fundamentalism and proselytisation, buoyed by the presence of megachurches (Wuthnow 2007, 105). The influence of megachurches cannot be understated.³⁴ Generally, megachurches are innovative and largely successful religious endeavours that attract large crowds through music, programming, and charismatic teaching. Their pastors are typically more "business-oriented" with "managerial experience" (Allitt 2003, 229), whilst the church acts as not just "a setting for Sunday morning services but rather ... an entire way of life" (Ibid., 227). The rise of megachurches in America has implications for both seminaries and clerical practice. Often, as will be discussed in the next chapter, megachurches do not require formal theological training for their ministers, choosing to elevate laity to positions of leadership. This, as a result, undercuts the authority and role of seminaries in religious life, bypassing them all together. Clerically, these churches value executive skills more often associated with an MBA rather than an MDiv (the common degree categorisation for American seminaries), namely organisational leadership, fundraising, and media literacy.

Theologically, the exclusionary disposition of evangelicalism can be found in their measured attitudes towards other faiths. According to Putnam and Campbell, when asked if people of other faiths can go to Heaven, only 54% of evangelicals said yes (2010, 537). This may seem like a generous acceptance of non-Christians given the traditionally exclusionary nature of the

³³ Although many evangelicals associate with the Republican Party (the GOP is jokingly referred to as 'God's Own Party'), there are a substantial number that do not. Chapter Three will show how this was reflected in my field sites, but for an in-depth look at the political tendencies of the evangelical left, see Swartz (2011).

³⁴ A megachurch is understood to have more than 2,000 attendees per week. Megachurches are predominantly evangelical, although mainline ones exist (Ellingson 2010, 247). Megachurches will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

tradition, but it is relatively low: among Christians, it was lower than Catholics (83%) and mainline Protestants (79%) by significant margins (Ibid.). Evangelical clergy, as found by the two authors, are similarly more exclusionary in their beliefs when compared to mainline clergy. When asked if there is any other way to salvation other than belief in Jesus, 97% of Southern Baptist pastors and 92% of clergy associated with nondenominational and megachurches said no, compared to 59% for United Methodist clergy and 57% Presbyterian Church (USA) clergy, both of which are traditionally mainline denominations (Ibid., 539). The willingness of evangelicals to believe “in the existence of a single set of answers”, along with proselytisation and tribalism (Wuthnow 2007, 170, 164), point towards a community more focused on making things right in the afterlife rather than on Earth – popularly characterised by the term “otherworldliness”.³⁵ Yet my research shows significant evangelical engagement with the wider world – particularly with Jewish communities. The interreligious work between the groups will be discussed later, but now the attention of this thesis shifts to American Judaism.

Judaism: Affiliation and Division as a Minority

Upon immigrating to the US, Jewish immigrants traditionally arrived in New York and New Jersey (Kaplan 2005, xv). The geographical area remains “the center for American Judaism” today (Allitt 2003, 90) with an estimated two million people identifying as Jewish living in the New York City metropolitan area (Sheskin and Dashefsky 2012, 21).³⁶ Generally Jews are an accepted religious minority in America, being viewed more warmly than any other religious group (Pew 2014).³⁷

³⁵ Typically cited is when Jesus tells his disciples, “because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world – therefore the world hates you” (The Bible, John 15:19).

³⁶ This can be compared to 617,000 in Los Angeles, 555,000 in Miami, 294,000 in Chicago, and 251,000 in Boston (Sheskin and Dashefsky 2012, 21). New York City has the largest total number of people among American cities who identify as Jewish, although the proportion of Jews to the total population is similar to that of Miami, or roughly 9-10% (Lipka 2015).

³⁷ Jews are followed by Catholics and evangelical Christians. The most negatively viewed religious groups, starting at the bottom, are Muslims, Atheists, Mormons, Hindus, and Buddhists.

Despite the lack of quantitative polling among the various denominations of Judaism, interviews clearly registered the influence of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik on Orthodox Judaism's relationship with religious diversity. One Orthodox interviewee claimed Soloveitchik "set much of the direction" of his seminary and how it understands other faiths. To explain, Soloveitchik (1964) wrote that one's own faith commitment is "totally incomprehensible" to someone of another faith, and they are not to be engaged with theologically, only socially. Interreligious dialogue on issues of peace are more warmly received by Soloveitchik, and this social-theological distinction is an important marker of American Orthodox communities involved in interreligious work. Orthodox rabbis and communities are often happy to work with other faiths on issues of hunger or housing, for example, but not to discuss theological concepts. Orthodox Jews certainly participate in interreligious dialogue, but the limitations set out by Soloveitchik make it a less common occurrence when compared with their Reform and Conservative counterparts. This is evidenced by the publication of *Dabru Emet* (Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies 2000), a document affirming positive relations between Jews and Christians. Orthodox rabbis, under-represented in the former document when compared to Reform and Conservative rabbis, released a document of their own called *To Do the Will of our Faith in Heaven*, which affirmed "a common covenantal mission to perfect the world", validating Jewish *action* with Christians (The Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding & Cooperation 2015).

Internally, the American Jewish community is faced with a number of challenges. A clear division manifests itself between Orthodox Jews and non-Orthodox Jews, and, similar to Jewish assimilation discussed earlier, a growing segment of American Jewry describes themselves as secular, not tied to any synagogue.

Divisions and Disappearance: American-Jewish Strife and Declining Membership

The divide between Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities is most apparent in institutional guidance and practice (Liebman 2005, 136). Jewish Orthodoxy, the largest Jewish community in every country except the US, seeks guidance from Israel for religious direction (Kaplan 2005, 13). Even though commitment to Israel remains an important facet of American Jewish identity and practice, non-Orthodox Jews do not seek as much guidance from Israel. This has led to unique developments within Reform and Conservative Judaism on American

soil; the evolution of these traditions, coupled with cultural influences, have moved the non-Orthodox denominations further away from their Orthodox counterparts.

Interviewees lamented the intra-religious divides between the Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities. In many ways, American-Jewry sees intra-religious tensions as a more pressing issue than interreligious tensions. An Orthodox rabbi at RIETS explained it is a “challenge [...] to try to get our graduates to even engage with other Jews who are different from them”. From the other side of the faith tradition, a male Reform rabbi just outside of New York City explained that interfaith outreach is “easier than intra-faith outreach”, citing the lack of an intra-religious “systematic framework for dialogue” found with other religious groups, such as Christians and Muslims. Despite the prevalence of Jewish organisations and conferences that bring Jewish denominations together, such as the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, it does not seem that intra-Jewish solidarity is permeating to the grassroots, with many communities preferring to work alongside other faiths before their Jewish counterparts.³⁸

Regarding practice, the issue of secularisation and spirituality is also prevalent in the American Jewish community, particularly as religious affiliation is defined by synagogue membership (Liebman 2005, 139). This contrasts with individual spirituality, an increasingly prevalent theme in American religion discussed earlier. In England, the term secular is commonly evoked, although in the US more room is made for Jewish spirituality without official religious adherence or synagogue membership.³⁹ The increasing influence of this group is cited as an “emerging divide” in American Judaism (Phillips 2005, 404), raising the issues of assimilation and intermarriage for rabbis and synagogues.

³⁸ This could be contrasted with the largely successful Christian ecumenical movement of the twentieth century, which markedly began with the 1910 World Missionary Conference.

³⁹ The tension between ethnicity and religiosity should be given more than a footnote. However, due to space constraints, it is worth briefly noting that a Jew “can be strongly ethnic without being religious [whilst] ... the traditionally religious Jew is, by definition, an ethnic Jew as well” (Liebman 2005, 141). Jewish ethnicity does not imply religiosity or synagogue membership, but religiosity and synagogue membership imply ethnicity. The latter implication is not always guaranteed, as some Jews are converts into the faith and join a synagogue.

Furthermore, it is not uncommon for spiritualised Judaism to blend in foreign spiritual practices but with a resistance to Christianity (Kaplan 2005, 9). Denying the divinity of Christ is considered an important marker of Jewish distinctiveness, albeit not as great as remembering the Shoah, Jewish heritage, or countering antisemitism (Phillips 2005, 413). It does not seem that this fosters ill-will towards Christians but is rather a defining marker of contrast. Indeed, as discussed earlier and exemplified by the data in Chapter Three, Jewish communities are able to build productive and amicable relationships across the breadth of Christianity, whether through the formation of Christian and Jewish organisations following World War II (largely with liberal Christians) or in support of Israel (a common point of unity among Jews and evangelicals since the Arab-Israeli War in 1967) (Ariel 2013).

English and American Comparisons

Within these two countries, the religious groups included in this study vary in terms of their histories and predispositions towards other faiths. These differences are vital to understanding the approach seminaries and clergy have towards religious diversification. England and the US differ in their formal establishments of religion, differentiating a formal, national establishment in the Church of England with an informal, decentralised manifestation of faith in the US.⁴⁰ Compared to the formal structures of dialogue and encounter in England, America's decentralised religion places more emphasis on the grassroots examples of religious organisation and interreligious action. Additionally, the pseudo-religious language provided by American civil religion is not dominated by any specific denomination, as in England, and therefore can be more widely utilised for inclusive and interreligious purposes.

While the US maintains higher levels of religious affiliation than England, both countries retain a Christian majority and have much smaller Jewish, Muslim, and other minority faith

⁴⁰ Both, it could be argued, embody a form of civil religion. According to Gehrig, "continued undifferentiated civil religion" can be found in England, whereby "an established religious tradition provides the context for sacred civic symbols", such as Remembrance Sunday (1981, 60). Alternatively, the US embodies a form of "differentiated civil religion" characterized by both "church-state separation and religious pluralism", which was discussed at length earlier (Ibid., 61).

populations. Other similarities exist as well, namely the growing influence of the nones, disaffiliation among Christian populations, and the growing legitimacy of religious groups to create partnerships, whether by evoking the language of American civil religion or by utilising the modern establishment of the Church of England. The histories of each nation since 1945 also have serious implications for interreligious relations, namely the effect of the Shoah on national interreligious structures and the Civil Rights Movement on grassroots clerical engagement. These religious shifts in the post-war period not only raise questions about the acceptance of religious diversity in religious institutions (such as seminaries) but also clerical agency and engagement with other religions. Particularly, this reality has been affected by national policies and global incidents. The next section shows how interreligious engagement has been recognised through presidential recognition, prompted by austerity during times of financial insecurity, and has occurred as a response to global events.

Prompting Interreligious Engagement: National Policies and Implications

As this thesis will show, clergy from a wide variety of denominations are actively participating in public life, whether through faith-based community organising or in response to political events. Although faith communities have long been involved in this type of work (one only needs to look at the Salvation Army in London or the social gospel in New York City), it has become a norm on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the US, the separation of church and state has resulted in a deregulated marketplace of religion (see Bouma and Ling 2011; Putnam 2000; and Wuthnow 2007) that has spurred religious entrepreneurship of all kinds – in terms of training, liturgy, religious life, and social action. Sustained by volunteers, faith communities acting as independent administrators have been recognised by the state. In his 1989 inaugural address, President George HW Bush called on the individuals and “community organizations that are spread like stars throughout the nation, doing good”, in what would later become a national programme known as Points of Light. His son, President George W Bush, largely reflecting the volunteerism of the Points of Light initiative, signed an executive order in 2001 establishing the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI). The 43rd president reflected on the role of faith organisations and OFBCI in 2008:

Putting hope in people's hearts is the mission of our nation's faith-based and community groups ... To me, it does not matter if there's a crescent on your group's wall, a rabbi on your group's board, or Christ in your group's name. If your organization puts medicine in people's hands, food in people's mouths, or a roof over people's heads, then you're succeeding. And for the sake of our country, the government ought to support your work (Bush, G.W. 2008).

This office was continued under Presidents Obama and Trump (albeit with slightly different aims), signalling that the importance of faith-based community activism is recognised by both major political parties in the US. The agency of faith communities in service provision has been spurred by the government's reluctance to provide those services, preferring local perspectives and resources to the blunt tools of the federal government.

The relationship between American religion and government naturally differs from the English context. Here, the establishment nature of religion has led to more policy-driven guidelines and initiatives that government and faith communities create in tandem, particularly since the 1990s (Baker and Smith 2010). This includes the Inner Cities Religious Council (later the Community Consultative Council), 2004 Home Office guidelines on working with faith groups, the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund of 2007, and the current role of the Minister of State for Faith and Communities within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Pickles 2015). Under the Conservative Government that came into power in 2010, faith communities have become service providers in the wake of austerity cuts to social services and David Cameron's "Big Society" project. Similar to the models of social action and volunteerism in the US, Parliament expected faith communities to fill the gaps in social provision. This was, however, a top-down implementation of social responsibility on faith communities, rather than recognition and support for pre-existing grassroots projects, as done in the US under both Bushes.

How Events Prompt Interreligious Engagement

While policy changes systematically and gradually shape the actions of faith communities and interreligious structures, these actions can also be influenced by events. In our post-1945 framework, the Shoah is of great importance. Following the atrocities committed against Jews and others by the Nazi regime, Christianity began to re-think its relationship with Judaism, resulting in new interreligious structures and Christian understandings of other faiths. Furthermore, the creation of the state of Israel also greatly impacted Christian-Jewish relationships. Following a more in-depth discussion of the Shoah's impact on interreligious understanding and structures, I wish to also highlight two other events that exemplify not only interreligious engagement, but the growing social activism of clergy. The first is the relationship of Martin Luther King, Jr and Abraham Heschel in the Civil Rights Movement, and the second is the multifaith response to the 2017 Neo-Nazi rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. These three examples show how events prompt and legitimise interreligious engagement.

Shoah and the State of Israel

The immense loss of life that occurred during the Shoah invariably affected global Judaism, systematically destroying millions of Jewish lives and shifting concentrations of Jews globally from Eastern and Central Europe to the US and, after the founding of the state of Israel, the Levant. The importance of the Shoah acting as an urgent call for interreligious understanding and engagement, at least in Judeo-Christian traditions, cannot be understated. Moyaert explains the importance of this event in shaping Christians' views of Judaism: "it is certainly no exaggeration to state that the Shoah is one of the most important factors leading to revolutionary change in the church's attitude *vis-à-vis* Judaism. In that sense, interreligious dialogue is also a post-Holocaust development" (2013, 197). Her statement that interreligious dialogue is directly tied to the Shoah certainly has grounding, particularly in light of the CCJ and subsequent doctrinal statements addressing Christianity's relationship to Judaism.

Although this thesis primarily concerns Protestant Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church spearheaded Christian reflection on Judaism in light of the Shoah, reshaping and redefining Jewish-Catholic (and eventually more broadly Christian) relations. In the decades following World War II and the Shoah, the Vatican dramatically re-articulated its relationship with Jews

through the document *Nostra Aetate*, in which the church explicitly affirmed interreligious understanding and condemned antisemitism:

Since the spiritual patrimony common to Christians and Jews is thus so great, this sacred synod wants to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit, above all, of biblical and theological studies as well as of fraternal dialogues ... Furthermore, in her rejection of every persecution against any man, the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone (Vatican 1965, Article IV).

This document reshaped relations between Catholics and Jews, acknowledging that Jews should not be blamed for Christ's death and that it is the duty of the church to decry antisemitism committed by anyone, past or present. A more recent document (although not doctrinal) called *The Gifts and Calling of God are Irrevocable* built on *Nostra Aetate*, stating that the Catholic Church "neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed towards Jews" (Vatican 2015, Article V). Thus, the Catholic Church has reshaped Christian attitudes towards Jews, decrying antisemitism and viewing them as partners, of sorts, with the faith. This is reflected among Protestant denominations as well. For example, the Alliance of Baptists, a moderate, nationwide Baptist entity in America, explicitly stated that the church needed to "confess our sin against the Jewish people" and "seek genuine dialogue with the broader Jewish community" (Alliance of Baptists 2003). Other mainline churches, such as Presbyterian Church (USA), have published documents on Christian-Jewish relations since the Shoah, explaining how Judaism fits into Christian theology and actively repudiating anti-Jewish teachings in the church (Presbyterian Church (USA) 1987).

More than an impetus for Christian-rooted interreligious dialogical structures, the Shoah provides a practical opportunity for Jewish clergy and laity to engage with Christians as well. This has been chronicled and explained in academia but is also widely accessible and

advertised to the general population.⁴¹ The US Holocaust Memorial Museum, for example, provides resources on the Shoah to individuals and groups interested in interreligious work. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust in England provides resources and publicity for interreligious and civic events that are held across the country every year to recall the Shoah and speak out against more recent genocides. Leo Baeck College, a seminary included in this study, helped establish the International Conference for Dialogue between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the 1960s, which continues to bring together seminary students and faith leaders every year for interreligious dialogue and encounter. The conference takes place in Germany, which is not accidental. The location highlights the challenge of Jewish-Christian relations, specifically in the decades immediately following the war, but now it serves as a benchmark for how far interreligious relations have progressed.

In addition to the development of doctrinal statements and dialogical relationships between Catholics and mainline Christians with Jews, the creation of the state of Israel also ignited a new interest in Judaism from evangelical Christians. This is commonly referred to as Christian Zionism, which Spector describes as “Christians whose faith, often in concert with other convictions, emotions, and experiences, leads them to support the modern state of Israel as the Jewish homeland” (2009, 3). Although Christian Zionism had existed for hundreds of years before the middle of the 20th century – particularly in England – the creation of the state of Israel made Christian Zionism much more popular, particularly among American evangelicals. Therefore, the Shoah and its aftermath, as it pertains to the creation of the state of Israel, changed the relationship between Jews and the breadth of Christianity. Specifically regarding evangelical Christians, dispensationalist theology (whereby the return of Jews to the Levant is necessary for Christ’s return⁴²) reaffirms their desire to forge bonds with the Jewish people and the Israeli state. As Goldman explains, “dispensationalist ideas play a crucial role in encouraging favorable attitudes toward Israel among America’s conservative Protestants.

⁴¹ See Garber (2013) for discussion around Shoah theology being used by Christians and Jews in dialogue settings.

⁴² According to this theology, “apostates and unbelievers, including the Jews, will remain behind” and not be granted salvation (Spector 2009, 14). Christian Zionism is often interpreted as merely an instrument to ensure the second coming of Christ, although that is a highly debated point and outside the remit of this thesis. For more on this debate, see Merkley (2001). Christian Zionism also sparks a worthy discussion around replacement theology and supersessionism, the latter of which is briefly explained later in this thesis.

Particularly after the Six-Day War, tracking signs of the times ... became something of an obsession among fundamentalists and evangelicals” (2018, 6). These “obsession[s]” and “favorable attitudes” have led evangelicals to develop deep organisational ties with Jewish organisations to promote and defend Israel. This includes Christians United for Israel and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, among many others (see Merkley 2001, 176-83).

There is also a political aspect to Zionism, found especially in the United States. Goldman explained many believe God “selected America do to His work in the modern age” as Israel was selected during Biblical times (2018, 8); Spector explains the US “has a mission to be the modern Cyrus ... who allowed Jews to return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile” (2009, 21). There is a considerable body of literature concerning the complex and debated topic of Christian Zionism in terms of theology, ecclesiology, and politics; discussing this literature at a deeper level is outside the scope of thesis. Further discussions, particularly in Chapter Three, will discuss the practical relationships between evangelical Christians and Jews as found in the data as opposed to the theologies and complex history of Christian Zionism.

The aftermath of the Shoah, while leading to profound changes in Jewish life, culture, and practice, shaped doctrine but also brought forth the structures and statements to help legitimise interreligious relationships and understanding, of varying levels, in the US and England. Over time, interreligious activity has become more commonplace among clergy. This can be seen through two examples, both of which occur in America. The Civil Rights Movement showcased politically active clergy who were willing to confront societal and political issues, namely that of race but also, as seen through the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr, opposition to the Vietnam War. Decades later, clergy asserted their public role again in Charlottesville, Virginia, where they led confrontations against fascist and neo-Nazi protestors.

Civil Rights Movement

Whereas the Shoah created structures that facilitated dialogue across lines of faith, other events sparked interreligious action at the grassroots. Although the impact of the Civil Rights Movement in the US spans a number of disciplines and decades, I want to briefly mention the symbolic interreligious nature of the Movement.

Although the Civil Rights Movement largely originated in African American Christian churches, where King himself pastored, it was soon evident that King wished to appeal to larger segments of the population for support. This included white Christians and members of other faiths. One of the most storied interreligious relationships of the Movement was that of King and Rabbi Abraham Heschel, who marched together at Selma in 1965. King himself wrote of Selma, “there never was a moment in American history more honorable and more inspiring than the pilgrimage of clergymen and laymen of every race and faith pouring into Selma to face danger at the side of its embattled Negroes” (1965). King and Heschel found common ground in their religious convictions, interpretations of scripture (King often used the story of Exodus to speak about civil rights, which greatly appealed to Heschel), and the activist understandings of their religions (S Heschel 1998). The daughter of the rabbi, Susannah Heschel, wrote that the relationship between her father and King “carried profound meaning”, and affirmed that both were “aware of the symbolic significance of their friendship, and used it as a tool to foster further alliances between Jews and Blacks” (Ibid., 140). While their friendship certainly prompted interreligious relations between African American Christianity and American Judaism, it also had wider effects as well. The relationship of these two men was symbolic for Christian-Jewish relations, and also for the legitimacy of interreligious activism on the national stage.

King exemplified the significance of different faiths working together for a common cause. He summarised it himself in his well-known “I Have a Dream” speech at the March on Washington in 1963:

We will be able to speed up that day when all of God’s children – black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants – will be able to join hands and to sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, ‘Free at last, free at last; thank God Almighty, we are free at last!’ (King 1963).

Charlottesville, Virginia

Despite the progress made by the likes of King, Heschel, and other clergy, issues of race have not been eradicated in America. This was on display in the summer of 2017 during the deadly

“Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Here, Neo-Nazis and other white supremacists gathered, chanting, “the Jews will not replace us”. Fuelling the tension was the political situation of the nation, under the presidency of a man who, in his campaign, initially refused to disavow the endorsement of David Duke, an antisemitic former grand wizard of the Klu Klux Klan. Following this unsettling rally, President Trump would cast blame on “many sides” – his failure to condemn the hate groups unequivocally led to domestic condemnation and international rebuke, most notably from the United Nations (Chan and Cumming-Bruce 2017). However, clergy promoted a different narrative at the event and in the days following.

Clergy from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim traditions responded to the call from a local interfaith organisation – Congregate C’Ville – to participate in three days of interreligious services and trainings on nonviolent direct action. As the “Unite the Right” rally became violent, clergy were sent to areas of conflict to “protect the community from the alt-right” (White 2017). There were reports of clergy being beaten and trampled by Neo-Nazis (Kennel-Shank 2017). In the face of such threats, local clergy formed lines with their bodies to protect the community, resulting a now-iconic image of clergy from various traditions standing together, seen below.



An interreligious group of clergy link arms in Charlottesville, Virginia. Photo by Steven Martin/National Council of Churches.

Neo-Nazis also stood outside of a local synagogue, clad with Nazi symbols and semi-automatic rifles. According to the synagogue’s President, who reflected on the events for

ReformJudaism.org, threats to burn down the synagogue followed (Zimmerman 2017). Despite these acts of intimidation, Zimmerman rushed to the deadly scene where a peaceful counter-protestor was hit and killed by a car; rabbis from the synagogue joined clergy of other faiths and denominations “on the front lines” of Charlottesville (Ibid.). He ultimately thanks God for the interreligious solidarity, but he goes on to note the significance of non-Jews visiting their synagogue during that time, “stand[ing] with us” (Ibid.).

The importance of Charlottesville for American religion and interreligious relations is yet to emerge in academic publications. Nonetheless, the actions of clergy are symbolically significant, echoing the activism of King and building on the interreligious bonds created after the Shoah. Although racism still persists, it continues to be a motivation for clergy to act in unity with other faiths.

Each of these scenarios exemplifies the impact social contexts and events can have on interreligious dialogue and engagement. They range from an international event that led to legitimising structures at various levels, to national and local examples where clergy used their positions of leadership to promote justice in an interreligious manner.

What do these events and clerical responses mean for seminaries? Seminaries cannot be expected to develop a new curriculum in response to events like Charlottesville – to expect that would reflect a poor understanding of the purpose and evolution of theological curricula, not to mention the pressures seminaries face in terms of time and resources. Similarly, it has been pointed out that seminaries are sluggish when it comes to pedagogical change. However, the manner in which seminaries train their students about interreligious engagement and religious diversity will, ultimately, shed light on their view of the clerical position in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Teaching students about religious diversity recognises the contexts clergy enter into, not to mention the more public roles commonly associated with clergy today. Refraining from that teaching could imply a focus on the religious community itself, with little or no concern for wider social contexts. Yet this begs the question, how have interreligious engagement and the underpinning theological beliefs been conceptualised by scholars? This is the focus of the next section.

Conceptualisation: Interreligious Engagement, Theologies of Other Faiths, and Seminary Pedagogies

All forms of interreligious dialogue are not the same, nor should they be conflated. Similarly, every religious adherent does not actively seek out or value interreligious dialogue. To better understand these nuances, this section of the chapter will conceptualise different forms of interreligious engagement and theologies of other religions, showcasing a breadth of methods and theological dispositions. This results in a finer tool that allows scholars and practitioners to better understand different types of engagement. It will then conclude with a discussion around previous literature explaining how this very topic is communicated in seminaries.

Interreligious Engagement Conceptualised

There are many types and venues for interreligious dialogue, ranging from issue-based discussions and joint worship services to studying religious texts together. Although this thesis is primarily concerned with clergy, it must be noted that some structures are for laity, theologians, or academics. Thus, the practice of interreligious dialogue is broad and difficult to completely capture. There are a number of academics who have sought to categorise and conceptualise these interreligious encounters, but for the purpose of this thesis I wish to discuss the writings of Marriane Moyaert (2013). She provides five different types for interreligious dialogue and engagement: the dialogue of life, spiritual dialogue, theological dialogue, dialogue rooted in action, and diplomatic dialogue (Ibid., 202).

Dialogue of Life

The dialogue of life concerns the everyday encounter with other faiths, happening at the work place or school gates. As cities become more diverse, this type of dialogue is becoming more common. It is rooted in conscious or unconscious co-existence, or the daily interactions with people of other faiths in which religious values and practices may or may not be discussed. Although commonly thought of in terms of laity, a recognition of diversification also proves to be a powerful motivator for interreligious understanding among clergy (discussed in Chapter Three).

Spiritual Dialogue

Spiritual dialogue concerns joint prayer and meditation across faiths. Examples of this are the Pope's 9/11 interfaith memorial service and the interfaith service that took place in Charlottesville, discussed earlier. Given the diverse nature of participants, it focuses on spirituality and contemplation. Interfaith services like this were rarely discussed in the data, but those who did were critical of the relativist nature of such events.

Theological Dialogue

Theological dialogue, also called the "dialogue of discourse", concerns people of various traditions coming together to discuss a specific theological concept or passage of scripture (Ibid., 203). It encourages participants to understand one another's perspective on faith, text, and religious practice through discussion and study. This type of dialogue has been widely implemented under the programme called Scriptural Reasoning. This programme, originally an academic practice but now one that is used more widely, brings together people from the Abrahamic traditions to read passages of scripture from each tradition, often around a specific theme. Passages from Christian, Jewish, and Muslim texts are discussed with the goal of developing a respect and appreciation for the different religious traditions. Ford, one of the developers of Scriptural Reasoning, writes that participants must "care deeply about their scripture", as it is not exclusively an academic practice (2013, 144). Despite the popularity and success of this programme (interviewees in England and the US spoke of it) and its utility in furthering interreligious understanding, it is more naturally utilised by people who have a developed interest in the study of religious texts, like clergy or students of religious studies. For seminaries and clergy, theological dialogue is a natural fit. As institutions studying texts and theologies in great depth, these are natural environments for comparative theological discussions.

Dialogue of Action

Describing the dialogue of action, Moyaert writes of individuals of faith working together "in development, emancipation, and liberation of all humankind ... in the context of collaboration in humanitarian, social, economic, or political fields" (2013, 202). The focus is not on the theological motivations underlying such action, but rather the emphasis is on shared

problems and the effectiveness of pooled resources in addressing a social need. Examples include homelessness, hunger, refugee resettlement, and environmental issues. Often, this type of dialogue naturally takes a political leaning, as people of faith collaborate with civic entities as well, like local authorities or community organising structures. The dialogue of action will be discussed at length in Chapter Three.

Diplomatic Dialogue

For diplomatic dialogue, the final of the five, Moyaert centres on the representative roles of clergy in interreligious settings (Ibid., 204). An example of this would be a round table discussion of faith leaders, perhaps concerning crime. She raises legitimate concerns about representation in this type of dialogue – can religious leaders *really* speak for entire communities? Although one clergy person cannot reflect the diversity of their gathered community, I would suggest that the religious authority and social capital of clergy legitimise their representative role in interreligious settings. Through this widened understanding (discussed at length in Chapter Three), diplomatic dialogue underlies every action of clergy as they engage with diversity. It is rooted in their capital as leaders, and it is what provides them with legitimacy in their wider social contexts.

Moyaert's conceptualisations of interreligious dialogue are helpful tools to dissect the various approaches to interreligious engagement. Differentiating these types allows readers to see the myriad of ways interreligious dialogue could be framed in seminary pedagogies and clerical practice. Theologically, and from a sociotheological perspective, also tapping into theologies of other faiths can shed light on clerical predispositions towards others, ultimately defining the boundaries of engagement. For example, the dialogue of action casts a wide net, as many faith groups can recognise the value of feeding the homeless. However, a conservative evangelical Christian minister – who believes that Christianity is the *only* true religion and that other religions' texts and teachings are inherently false – may not want to partake in joint action with other faith groups, and, furthermore, they would be much less likely to engage theologically through scriptural reasoning. These motivations that are driven by beliefs are vital for understanding what leads or hinders someone into interreligious engagement; beliefs, therefore, are the focus of the next section.

Theological Conceptualisation: Three-Fold Typology

In 1983, Race conceptualised Christianity's relationship to other religions through a three-fold typology – pluralism, inclusivism, and exclusivism. In a sociotheological framework that takes religious belief seriously, these types are worthy of debate, explanation, and utilisation.

Since the publication of Race's book, this typology has been considerably scrutinised, expanded, and defended by theologians. For instance, Hedges (2008, 2016) adds a fourth category – "particularities" – which stresses "indeterminacy" (Hedges 2016, 80). This acknowledges that the "status" of another religion cannot be known but the differences between traditions can still be respected (Ibid.). Knitter (2002) reframes the discussion with new terms that broadly align with the typology mentioned: the replacement model (aligning with exclusivism), fulfilment model (aligning with inclusivism), mutuality model, and the acceptance model (both of which align with pluralism). Race's typology is often viewed as a soteriological approach (one based on doctrines of salvation), whereas much of the field has moved on from this approach. For example, Gaston (2016) advocates for a practical theology of interreligious engagement, and Harris, Hedges, and Hettiarachchi (2016) outlined the rise and usage of comparative theology as an alternative to soteriology; an evolution in the discipline that even Race recognises (2016, 376).

Of particular note is Gaston, who teaches interreligious engagement at an ecumenical seminary in England. While he stresses the importance of "reflective practice, rooted in real experiences of interreligious encounter" (which will be echoed in Chapter Four), he nonetheless utilises Race's typology in his own classroom. He writes, "the typology ... is a useful pedagogical tool to enable reflection on attitudes to other faith traditions" (2016, 45). Although Race's 1983 work is dated and has been rightly critiqued, the three-fold typology continues to be recognised as "logical markers of the debate" (Harris, Hedges, and Hettiarachchi 2016, 2). While the limitations to this typology have and will be discussed, it nonetheless serves as a helpful guide for this thesis.

While it is not the purpose of this thesis to explore each of these in depth, this section will discuss each of the three types, drawing on theological literature in the process. It will explain how each type is manifested in Christianity and Judaism and conclude with the practical

limitations of this three-fold approach.⁴³

A guiding question for this typology was asked by William Cantwell Smith, a Director of the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions. He asked, “we explain the fact of the Milky Way by the doctrine of creation, but how do you explain the fact that the Bhagavad Gita is there?” (Smith 1972, 133). It is a very practical question that would lead a pluralist, inclusivist, and exclusivist to very different answers.

Pluralism

Pluralism, or the term to describe religious diversity, differs from the *theological* pluralism discussed here. Knitter, himself a supporter of theological pluralism, writes that “the Christian truth which we have discovered, or which has been given by God, can be neither “the whole truth” nor “nothing but the truth” (1991, 424). Race describes theological pluralism by writing, “knowledge of God is partial in all faiths, including the Christian. Religions must acknowledge their need of each other if the full truth about God is to be available to mankind” (1983, 72). This type of pluralism is also supported by scholars such as Hick (1989) and Schmidt-Leukel (2008). From the perspective of a Christian, a pluralist would claim that the Bhagavad Gita is as divinely inspired and true as the Holy Bible, guiding people to divine truth and salvation.⁴⁴

A Jewish pluralist, such as Michael Kogan (a Jewish scholar on Christianity), would accept that Christianity and Judaism, for example, “share in the same promises of the Hebrew Bible” (Kogan in Brill and Neiss 2012, 52). Kogan boldly states that Christianity is a “conveyer of the word of Israel’s God to the nations” (2008, 118), intertwining the stories of Christianity and Judaism into one. When confronted with the issue of other religions besides Christianity and Judaism, Kogan explains that individuals can follow their own path to the Divine through several religious traditions, and that the Divine has made itself manifest in each – a

⁴³ Brill and Neiss also propose a “universalist” type based on Sa’adiah Gaon that taught a “type of religious truth transcending Judaism” (2012, 48). Although a marginal view in Judaism today, Brill and Neiss explain it was more common in medieval times.

⁴⁴ Textual support for this view can be found in Amos 9:7 and 1 John 4:7.

traditionally pluralist approach (2008, 176).⁴⁵

Inclusivism

Inclusivism is, perhaps, the broadest type of the three. As Race explains, it is “both an acceptance and a rejection of the other faiths, a dialectical ‘yes’ and ‘no’” (1983, 38). To use Smith’s example, an inclusivist would explain that there is certainly some divine truth in the Bhagavad Gita, but ultimately salvation can only be found in Christ.⁴⁶ Other faiths may have legitimate truth claims, but they are not ultimately sufficient for salvation. Roman Catholic theologian Karl Rahner (1986) believed in the centrality of Christ for salvation but was inclusive of those who had never heard of Christ. The concept of the “anonymous Christian” was developed by Rahner and greatly influenced Vatican II (see Vatican 1993 and Vatican 2000). This inclusive theology claimed that, despite never hearing about Christian salvation, a non-Christian, by following his or her “conscience”, can still accept the grace of God offered through Christ (Rahner 1986).

An inclusive strand of thought exists in Jewish theology as well, insisting that other religions’ claims of truth are false but affirming the value of other religions’ “positive role in the dramatic unfolding of history” (Shatz 2011, 372).⁴⁷ While not Jewish, and therefore not chosen by God to be a particular appointed people, other faith groups – such as Christians and Muslims (Reif 2005) – were to be treated as monotheists by adhering to the Noachide Laws. According to Maimonides, by adhering to these laws, the “righteous people of all nations have a share in the world to come” (Maimonides in Shatz 2011, 370). Eugene Korn, writing on Jewish theologies about Christianity, discusses the differences between the seven Noachide Laws to be followed by non-Jews and the 613 commandments to be followed by

⁴⁵ For more on Jewish pluralism, including the tension between Halakhah and theological pluralism, see Jospe (2012) and Sagi (2012).

⁴⁶ Textual support for this view could be found in the story of Paul and the “Unknown God” in Acts 17:22-31. *Nostra Aetate* is also commonly referred to as an inclusivist document.

⁴⁷ Other supporters of this view in Judaism include Yaabez (cited by Heschel 1975, 346), Rabbi Jacob Emden (1757), and Judah Halevi (1140; see also Brill and Neiss 2012, 45).

Jews.⁴⁸ Despite the differences, he says, they are both part of a “double covenant theology” (Korn 2012, 194). Under this dual covenant, non-Jews would not need to convert to Judaism to partake in a divine covenant with God. Thus, aspects of other religions, such as Jesus’s virgin birth, can be rejected, while belief in God can be affirmed.

Exclusivism

The exclusivist model is more of a binary perspective which clearly delineates one group from another, and it has historical grounding. In the third century, St Cyprian wrote *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, or “no salvation outside the church”. This thinking has continued for centuries, as exclusivism was the stance taken by many Christian theological heavyweights, such as Calvin and Luther.⁴⁹ Today, continuing our example proposed by Smith, someone who is an exclusivist would reject the Bhagavad Gita as entirely untrue and a book used to distract people from the true faith, Christianity. As described by Race, Christian exclusivism “counts the revelation in Jesus Christ as the sole criterion by which all religions, including Christianity, can be understood and evaluated” (1983, 11). Religions that do not accept the sacrifice and salvation of Jesus Christ, therefore, are fundamentally wrong. Daniel Strange (2008), one of the most prolific Christian exclusivist writers of today draws on theological history to support this view, particularly the five solae of the Protestant Reformation – *sola Scriptura* (by scripture alone), *solus Christus* (by Christ alone), *sola fide* (by faith alone), *sola gratia* (by grace alone), and *sola Deo Gloria* (glory to God alone). Today, he explains that “evangelicalism is still largely a confessionally exclusivistic movement” (Ibid., 45).

Considering that evangelical Christians are largely exclusivists, at least according to Strange, how can a non-missionising religion be theologically exclusive? Exclusivist Judaism once again goes back to the question of revelation. In this type, Brill and Neiss explain that the Torah is the only source of divine truth and Judaism is the world’s only truly revealed religion (2012,

⁴⁸ The Noachide Laws encompass the following: (1) the establishment of courts and (2) refrain from blasphemy, (3) idolatry, (4) murder, (5) theft, (6) forbidden sexual relationships, and (7) preforming vivisection, or eating the flesh of living animals.

⁴⁹ Both Martin Luther (1529) and John Calvin expressed exclusivist tendencies, with the latter saying, “all the more vile is the stupidity of those who open heaven to all the impious and unbelieving without the grace of [Jesus]” (Calvin 1559, 2.6.1).

54). Interestingly, Jewish exclusivism differs from Christian exclusivism, as the former does not deny salvation to non-Jews. Instead, discussion about non-Jews is generally limited to their moral code, as seen in the discussion on the Noachide Laws above.

Limits to the Typology

As helpful as they are, this typology is incomplete, for it does not fully reflect the complexity of religious life. Williams describes exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, respectively: “the first rules [interreligious dialogue] out in principle, the second makes a bid for ownership of all that is tolerable and recognisable in other traditions, the third allows no more than unquestioning co-existence” (2000, 95). Barnes, a Catholic theologian quoting Williams, continues by suggesting that in this typology there is “no sense of mystery and no sign of a God who seeks to go on speaking God’s word in the demanding but richly rewarding ‘middle ground’ of human interaction” (2002, 17). As Barnes suggests, the “middle ground of human interaction” – and I would add clerical interaction – is more complex than a three-fold approach, nor can it be fully captured by Moyaert’s five types of interreligious dialogue. They are, as the chapter title suggests, abstract when compared to actual practice. Rather, the typology outlined above helps people of faith better understand the broader spectrum of theological belief concerning other religions, and Moyaert shows how interreligious dialogue is more than just conversation by capturing the breadth of such engagement.

After his overview of the typology from a Jewish perspective, Korn helpfully explains that each of Race’s categories are not concrete, but rather “we accept different approaches in different situations” (2012, 58). People tend to be more pluralist in civic situations, like protesting hate crimes, and more exclusivist in their own houses of worship. Although Strange, cited above, states that most evangelicals are exclusivists, my data shows that evangelicals also consider interreligious engagement as something to be valued and not merely for proselytising, highlighting that different types can, indeed, be used at different times. Davie explains that the presence of diverse communities leads to two languages being spoken – one for one’s own faith community and another “public” one for “shared or national discourse”; she says, “quite simply we speak in different ways in different contexts” (2000, 122).

This chapter has explored the literature behind the *what* – what are the contexts, beliefs, and theologies that shape how a religion addresses the presence of other religions? The remainder of this chapter concerns *how* – how are the questions of religious diversity and interreligious engagement communicated in seminaries? The chapter answers this by examining the literature – much of which comes from those within theological education – of interreligious pedagogies. To be clear, seminary education alone does not dictate one’s beliefs about other religions or interreligious engagement. As discussed earlier, social contexts and the “fluidity” of clergy shape those beliefs as well. Yet, there are a variety of methods employed for teaching about other religions enshrined in academic literature, and this section seeks to review those perspectives.

Developing these Skills in Seminaries: Institutional Attempts

The number of academic publications concerning interreligious pedagogies in seminary education has increased over the last decade, but they are still limited in number. Due to the context from which they arise, many are from the perspective of a particular faculty member engaged in such teaching, with only a handful of studies dedicated to a broader, comparative-based approach. This section will discuss the literature and studies pertaining to my research – namely that which directly concerns how other faiths are presented and taught in seminary curricula.

A relatively new field, the pedagogy of interreligious education in seminaries is, frankly, a strategy of throwing spaghetti on the wall to see what sticks. Due to the lack of central authority or guidance on this topic, the approach utilised by seminaries to teach about other religions has largely been one of unique innovation and particularities regarding the geographical context and theological disposition (evangelical, Orthodox, etc.) of the seminary. This brings about a diverse set of practices and pedagogies, a reality found in the literature discussed below and confirmed by the data in the next chapter.

Case Studies

Individual case studies provide a glimpse into how other religions *can*, not necessarily should, be taught in seminaries. Given the newness of the field and recent attempts by some

seminaries to incorporate more courses into their curriculum, case studies prove to be a useful resource for disseminating new ideas and reflections to others wishing to develop a similar course of their own. The studies presented here are ordered beginning with the most extra-curricular, or voluntary opportunities that take place outside the classroom and ordination requirements, eventually moving towards a fully integrative approach of interreligious education.

An advocate for taking students outside of the classroom, Mikoski of Princeton Theological Seminary enabled students to encounter other religions through short-term trips, notably a Christian-Muslim-Jewish relations course centred around a trip to Jerusalem. This develops an “empathetic imagination” about the religious other while growing students’ “self-knowledge” of their own tradition (Mikoski 2013, 355). It should be noted that such a trip is financially costly, so it cannot feasibly be available to all students or expected to be carried out by other, less wealthy, seminaries. Of note, Princeton Theological Seminary is one of the wealthiest seminaries in the US with assets upward of \$1.2 billion, therefore they have unique resources to conduct such a trip (Princeton 2016). An alternative that offsets these costs would be to create an experience similar to Mikoski’s but bound to the immediate geographical area.

Yuskaev of Hartford Seminary directly responds to Mikoski in his article, reflecting on the benefit of using local areas as a classroom. He advocates for the development of programmes that expose students to religious practices, lived realities, and the challenges of neighbouring faith communities – an approach that utilises both contextual and classroom learning. Pedagogically, encountering another faith, whether through guest speakers or site visits (both of which are employed by Yuskaev), is a key experience that forms the basis for this course, training students to be “competent participants” in religiously diverse settings, as well as “resourceful teachers, organizers, and activists” (Yuskaev 2013, 369). He writes that adding these courses “requires relatively little effort”, but that is a privilege granted by the theological nature and geographical location of his seminary, Hartford (Ibid., 367). Located near New York City, Hartford can easily send students to the diverse neighbourhoods of Brooklyn or Queens; additionally, Hartford is an interfaith seminary, accepting students from a variety of faith traditions.

Largely in the same vein as Yuskaev is McConnell of Fuller Seminary, a large and confessionally evangelical Christian seminary in California. He uses case studies in his course, which he describes as the “most broadly effective” pedagogy for contextually teaching about other religions (McConnell 2013, 333). These studies are socially oriented and contemporary in nature, using issues such as migration to understand other faiths. More specifically, McConnell uses this method to teach students to lead gathered communities with “convicted civility”, or “being rooted in their religious beliefs yet engaging in appreciative inquiry into the ideas and practices of other traditions and religions” (Ibid., 333). “Convicted civility” is not unique to an evangelical perspective but rather a foundational aspect in exclusive, inclusive, and – to a lesser extent – pluralist theologies.

Perhaps convicted civility is best practiced in a context where other religions are casually interacted with on campus and in the classroom. Peace (2011) of Andover Newton Theological School wrote about her seminary’s partnership with a Jewish seminary next door.⁵⁰ By drawing on one another’s resources and personnel as neighbours, faculty can team-teach courses and students can be paired up with a colleague from a different faith, both of which “enhance” the curriculum in an academic and formational sense inside *and* outside the classroom (2011, 3). Peace provides an example of how neighbouring institutions, particularly those of different faiths, can utilise each other’s resources and personnel to enhance interreligious training, providing a more integrative approach. Having a neighbour such as this is rare, severely limiting wider implementation. However, a neighbourly relationship such as this takes place in New York City between Union Theological Seminary and Jewish Theological Seminary. Knitter is a distinguished professor at the former.

Knitter suggests that the “Christian tradition ... cannot be the *only* content” of Christian theological education (1992, 420). Rather, classes should be broadened to include other religious traditions. Knitter, a proponent of theological pluralism, wrote in a later publication that “the sources of Christian theology are not just Christian” (2011, 124). His work advocates

⁵⁰ Recently, Andover Newton Theological School sold its campus and merged with Yale Divinity School and therefore no longer shares common space with a Jewish seminary.

for a theology that has a “universal validity” that can be accepted by all, Christian or not (Knitter 1992, 426). To achieve this pluralist theology in the seminary context, students must be required to gain knowledge about and alongside other religious traditions – to a point where Knitter recommends students “genuinely feel ... the truth of other ways ... *to be* Hindu or Buddhist or Muslim” (Ibid., 435; emphasis original). Knitter calls for theological dialogue to be incorporated throughout the curriculum, something also supported by Clooney.

Clooney, of Harvard Divinity School, uses a text-based study of other religions, alongside his seminary’s Christian tradition, to develop a deeper understanding of the two religions at the same time. More than a single course, Clooney suggests that the teaching of other religions should be integrated into the core curriculum of a seminary (2013, 325), relieving a crowded curriculum by “complicat[ing] and enrich[ing]” pre-established courses with “new insights indebted to the study of another tradition” (Ibid., 327). This is essentially a fully integrated approach to teaching about other religions, threading interreligious teaching throughout the curriculum.

Each of these studies are reflected in my findings, which will be discussed in the next chapter, and represent current approaches to interreligious pedagogies. The debate in theological education that pits contextual learning (Mikoski and Yuskaev) against classroom-based “threading” techniques (Knitter and Clooney) must also consider a blend of the two (McConnell). Furthermore, limited resources bring forth the viability of institutional partnerships that draw on the expertise of nearby institutions, as described by Peace. Foster et al correctly point out that, particularly in the de-centralised nature of American theological education, teaching practices among seminaries vary because “varying religious and cultural assumptions about clergy practice [are] embedded in the culture and mission of each seminary” (2006, 34). These case studies provide some answers to the question of what seminaries offer from internal perspectives, yet they do not fully address common questions facing seminaries more broadly;⁵¹ these are questions of accreditation, requirements, student

⁵¹ As mentioned in the introduction, a handful of external studies were conducted on interreligious training in seminary contexts. McCallum (2012) studied the teaching of Islam in Christian seminaries; Gilliat-Ray (2003) studied the perception of interreligious training among students and faculty; Mumisa and Kessler (2008)

preparation, the availability of faculty, and challenges associated with starting or sustaining such a course, all of which will be discussed in the next chapter. Despite the variance among pedagogies of other religions in the seminary context, these case studies are useful reference points for examples taking place outside of the remit of my study.

Where Do We Go From here? Abstract Models and Ambiguous Encounters

Weller states that “although there is a role for dialogue in itself at the theological and philosophical levels, in order to gain a wider public benefit, it is also important for public authorities to be involved” (2005, 284). Today’s landscape has led clergy not only to have theological conversations about diversity but to publicly engage with their wider social contexts and the diversity that resides there. It has, as will be discussed later, changed clerical understandings about the role of clergy and beliefs about other religions, leading to more nuanced theologies that, as Korn wrote, embody “different approaches in different situations”.

Meanwhile, the discussions above on interreligious engagement remain compartmentalised and, at times, removed from reality and the immediate social contexts of clergy. When studying interreligious pedagogies and engagement, what is instead needed is a multi-faceted approach that values the theological underpinnings of seminaries and clergy, the contexts (geographic, financial, and institutional) in which seminaries and clergy are situated, and the clerical experience of interreligious engagement on the ground. It requires a sociotheological framework.

The theological conceptualisations described by Race broadly explain how clergy and seminaries understand themselves in relation to other religions. Moyaert’s five types of interreligious dialogue provide categories that identify different ways religious people can engage with one another. However, these conceptualisations can only go so far – on their own, they are abstract models that seek to conceptualise ambiguous encounters. Barnes discusses shortfalls in interreligious understanding today, stating many “exhortations are

conducted research into how Abrahamic seminaries taught about other faiths; and Baird (2013), closest to my study, identified pedagogical methods of teaching about other faiths and the motivations for doing so.

made about recognising common values [among faiths, but] the sources of motivation in the particular traditions themselves are rarely touched” (2002, 13). Realistically, theologies of other religions cannot be limited to the triad of inclusivism, exclusivism, and pluralism, nor can the best method to teach other faiths be captured with one case study. Manifestations of faith and how it is taught are more complex and nuanced, and every individual and institution has different theological and practical motivations that prompt – or inhibit – engagement. To fully understand interreligious engagement, one must recognise the importance of beliefs (Race), the realities of practice (Moyaert), and the motives underlying it all (Chapter Three) for clergy and seminaries alike.

This, then, shifts our discussion to the topic of the next chapter – seminaries. Interestingly, despite decades of interreligious engagement around social issues, seminary institutions have largely not developed curricular pedagogies to train for this side of the clerical role, preferring to focus instead on the core topics of the curriculum, such as text, theology, history, languages, and ethics. Despite the employment of politically active clergy (Rabbi Abraham Heschel was on faculty at two seminaries included in my study, UTS and JTS) the wider curriculum has yet to adapt to these social changes, and, when offered, these skills are seen as less important than others. Thus, the decision by seminaries not to adjust to these social changes and implement new methods of training have left their graduates underprepared for social engagement that is increasingly defined by religious diversity and political activism.

But one must also ask, is this training appropriate for seminaries? Would the implementation of such topics and responsibilities be achievable and sustainable? How does a particular set of institutions, with unique theological underpinnings and pedagogical practices, train clergy to be leaders in a particular tradition but also as leaders in their wider social contexts? How do seminaries train for public clerical engagement with other faiths? Have they neglected to respond to the growing public responsibilities of clergy in a religiously diverse society? These questions – the institutional response and resistance to interreligious pedagogies – are the focus of Chapter Two.

Chapter Two – Pedagogical Change (or Lack Thereof)

The Carnegie Foundation has published a series of books about preparation for professional programmes. Alongside literature on the training and profession of engineers, lawyers, physicians, and nurses, seminary training is also included in the series (Foster et al 2005). A seminary, an educational institution that trains students for the profession and vocation of ministry in the Jewish and Christian traditions, is similar to these other professions but profoundly distinct. Seminaries possess a unique mission, shaping individuals in light of and for a specific religious tradition – teaching ethics and values that convey certain moral qualities considered necessary for leading a religious community. It is the shaping of a spiritual life of a leader-in-training through ritual, belief, practice, and education. Additionally, seminaries often occupy a space between academia on the one hand and a religious organisation, such as a denomination, on the other. This middle space, as will be discussed, is nuanced and contested, but in the ideal scenario a seminary strikes a “balance between spiritual formation, professional development, and academic excellence” that manages “to integrate theory and practice, and relat[e] theology to significant contemporary issues” (Banks 1999, 10). Seminaries take it upon themselves to strike this balance and fulfil these goals – goals that I have personally found vitally important for religious life today. However, my research has found an uneasy balance between theory and practice, resulting in a sluggish and inconsistent response relating theology to contemporary issues.

The question I wish to address in this chapter is how profound social change, seen particularly in light of religious diversification but also inclusive of limited financial resources, a shift towards vocational training over academic learning, and differing expectations of clergy, affects seminary education. At the beginning of this chapter, it must be made clear that seminaries serve a vital and necessary function for faith communities and will continue to do so in the future. Furthermore, many seminaries, particularly in the US, have historically been at the forefront of social change. For example, UTS was at the forefront of the social gospel movement, black theology, and womanist theology; furthermore, the seminary welcomed the Revd Dr Martin Luther King, Jr during the Civil Rights Movement.

However, changing religious and social landscapes have added new challenges to the role of clergy, and therefore to seminaries. Seminaries are not entirely insulated from social pressures and contexts. Indeed, seminaries and faculty are situated within social contexts, but one that is largely faith-specific and often removed from the everyday practice of grassroots clergy. This “widening gap” can be linked to seminaries’ ties to the academy, which is by itself a unique social context that differs from local communities (Banks 1999, 11).

However, many seminaries attempt to construct a religious worldview sensitive to the presence of other faiths. However, as the literature in Chapter One has shown, and as will be reinforced by these findings, interreligious education is piecemeal, inconsistent, and underdeveloped. In her description of this problem, Nancy Ammerman, a sociologist in the Department of Theology at Boston University, states that, “all things seminaries have learned to do are still essential, but they are no longer sufficient” (2014, 33). Put differently and broadly speaking, seminaries are still legitimate institutions, but their training structures, particularly as they relate to contemporary issues, are no longer plausible.

As seminaries must also relate “theology to significant contemporary issues”, curricula must also be developed in relation to social contexts (Banks 1999, 10). The demands of contemporary social contexts – particularly the contexts outside of the seminary and specifically the growth of religious diversity – is beckoning curricula and pedagogies employed at seminaries to change. This chapter seeks to analyse how seminaries are pedagogically responding to religious diversification. Specifically, how does the presence of religious diversity shape seminary curriculum? What factors contribute to more or less incorporation of interreligious teaching and training?

To begin this chapter I will offer a brief description of Jewish and Christian seminaries, discussing what makes them unique from one another but remarkably similar in their responses to interreligious education.⁵² This will lead into an overarching examination, based

⁵² There has been very little academic literature written on Jewish rabbinical education, meaning much of the published work focuses on Christian perspectives. Although the mechanisms and limitations of training are

on other literature, of the purpose and history of seminary education, including the two models of education that have greatly shaped theological training for centuries (Athens and Berlin). The chapter will then explore how seminaries teach about other faiths today, based on the data collected in London and New York. In doing so, it will examine accreditation requirements, the placement of interreligious training in the curriculum, and how these factors shape its perception of importance – through *explicit* reference, *implicit* assumption, or none (*null*) at all. These types of curricula, shaping students’ perception of what is important and what is not, are indicative of a seminary’s goals and values, informing the expectations of future clergy. Despite accreditation requirements, individual seminaries ultimately decide what and how courses are taught. This leads to piecemeal and unique approaches to interreligious training, resulting in variables that inevitably influence the availability and pedagogical approach of teaching other faiths in seminary curricula. These variables, in addition to the offered curriculum, are: the employment of contextual learning, geographic proximity to areas of religious diversity, university affiliation, the makeup and skills of the faculty, and the influence of the students. The discussion of each variable will draw on specific cases found in the data and consequently offer critical analysis about its impact on interreligious education.

The lack of an effective central administrative body to shape the curriculum for the non-traditional roles and expectations of clergy has greatly shaped the landscape of interreligious education.⁵³ In response, and the most noteworthy of the variables listed above, seminaries have largely employed a contextually-based learning mechanism to provide these skills. However, research shows that a reliance on contextual learning lacks the structure and accountability needed to create consistent clerical training. This, consequently, further

largely similar between the two faiths, I will point out areas where Jewish rabbinical education is markedly different.

⁵³ The non-traditional roles of clergy include the tasks outside the normal worship and life cycle events (weddings, funerals, baptisms, bar mitzvahs, etc.). Non-traditional roles vary in accordance to the needs of the gathered community and the prerogative of the clergy person, often inclusive of the clergy person acting as a community organiser, public representative to civic or interfaith groups, social activist, fundraiser, and counsellor, among many others.

expands the role of clergy, who increasingly serve as contextual teachers and supervisors to seminary students.

Christian and Jewish Seminaries

Structurally, Jewish and Christian seminaries are largely similar. In both faith communities, contemporary theological education works towards a specific goal in which the student receives qualification after a period of academic study and practical experience. Students must complete courses in languages, religious texts, theological discourse and commentary, history, professional skills training (such as skills for conducting services or pastoral counselling), and more contemporary issues, such as those of race, gender, sexuality, or social policy.

There are some differences. Jewish seminaries allocate more time to studying religious law, such as Talmud and Halakhah,⁵⁴ and they also require students to attend seminary for longer – usually five years compared to the two or three required for Protestant Christian students (the time difference is due to a more in-depth study of texts and longer field placements). The perspectives communicated from the faculty and syllabi are no doubt different between the faiths and denominations, but the structures requiring a core set of classes and the utilisation of placements, for example, are similar.

⁵⁴ Halakhah, literally translated as “to go”, is the law of Judaism that directs Jewish life (Jacobs 1972b). The difference of attitudes towards halakhah is a “major practical difference” between the Jewish traditions; Orthodox Jews see halakhah as “absolutely binding”, Reform do not and will also draw upon non-halakhic categories, and Conservative (Masorti) sees it as binding but will also look for fresh interpretations that preserve the “dynamic principle of the legal development” (Jacobs 1972a, 1166). In Jewish rabbinic education, a large portion of study is dedicated to halakhah, encompassing the written law (such as the 613 commandments), kabbalah (statements handed down through the tradition, such as through the Prophets), the oral law (or the interpretation of the written law), the sayings of the scribes (a statement from Torah but scribal explanation, including the authority of the Bet Din, or the religious court), and custom (or a legal source when halakhah is unclear, which can be introduced by a distinct group, such as a town or a group of men or women) (De-Vries 1972).

Despite each having a unique faith perspective or ethos, every seminary in this study encountered the same problems, regardless of denomination or faith, when confronting the challenge of training for religiously diverse contexts. Faculty and administration at each seminary expressed the desire and need to incorporate more interreligious education, but the constraints of the timetable, limited financial and professional resources, and the diminishing theological base of incoming students were cited as reasons why more is not done. Each seminary, some with more resources or less faculty, more institutional partnerships or less flexibility in the curriculum, uniquely responded to this issue in its own fashion (if it responds at all). Those who developed programmes and opportunities for students did so based on their denominational theology and the variables listed above.

Thus, based on the research conducted within Jewish and Christian seminaries, all seminaries struggle to adapt to the changing needs and expectations of clergy brought about by increasing religious diversity, and this is most evident when examining how little time is dedicated to understanding and engaging with other religions. For most, interreligious teaching and engagement have not become a core requirement in seminary education, regardless of denominational or faith background. Given the necessity of interreligious engagement in clerical life, as will be discussed in Chapter Three, a cleavage has been exposed between pedagogies and practice.

This does not diminish the role of seminaries in modern religious life, nor is it to challenge their existence. Seminaries in both Christian and Jewish traditions, across all denominations, are necessary legitimising structures that develop required leadership – theological and practical – for local communities. This thesis does not seek to undermine their purpose, but rather critiques their response to social change.

Purpose of Seminaries

The purpose of seminary institutions is to shape and train individuals for religious leadership.⁵⁵ The authority of seminaries rests on the ability to provide academic and

⁵⁵ In addition to the seminaries studied, there are a number of other methods available to students. Church-based training schemes exist outside a formal education system, and academic institutions exist to study

vocational requirements that satisfy the standards of religious denominations and fulfil the religious, civic, and pastoral expectations of a gathered religious community. Finke and Dougherty identify two different components of student development in seminary education, one being the “mastery of religious culture, which includes instruction in religious doctrine, religious history, and the performance of rituals” and the other as the “emotional attachment to religious culture ... [which is] accumulated through religious practices and experiences: worship, prayers, rituals, miracles, and mystical events” (2002, 116). Put differently, seminaries foster a learned knowledge base and unique habitus for their students. Navarro describes habitus as a “durable set of dispositions that are formed, stored, recorded and exert influence to mold forms of human behaviour” (2006, 16).

In this case, the habitus is a uniquely religious one in which theological institutions train individuals to effectively express and externalise a faith tradition to a gathered community through overseeing life cycle events, providing leadership, and theologically discerning religious texts and their applicability to contemporary life. Simultaneously, the cultivated habitus – in its ideal – is internalised as well through belief and personal study (Finke and Dougherty’s “emotional attachment”). To use a phrase of Bourdieu, it is “a dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality” (1977, 72). Put into religious language, a habitus can also be, and will be, referred to as *formation*.⁵⁶ How the external – i.e. the influence of society, such as diversity, politics, and the marginalisation of populations – shapes clergy will be discussed in the next chapter, but this chapter discusses how seminaries are internalising the external, or responding to modern challenges and social change. In addition to studying the external forces on seminary education, internal forces are at play too. This primarily comes in the form of each seminary’s unique ethos, or theological disposition. These dispositions were broadly discussed in Chapter One. It must be recognised, for example, that an Orthodox Jewish seminary, like RIETS, would embody a different ethos

theology but not train for the practical aspects of ministry (often referred to as the graduate school model as opposed to the seminary). Similarly, a Jewish yeshiva is an educational institution for the study of the Torah and Talmud, but it does not serve as a qualifier for the role of rabbi (Mumisa and Kessler 2008, 16).

⁵⁶ Finke and Dougherty identify formation as the “emotional attachment to the religious culture” (2002, 116), developed by sacrifice for the faith tradition (such as accepting low salaries), piety (as in celibacy), and participation in “outward signs” of practice, such as prayer, rituals, etc. (Ibid., 107).

than a mainline Christian seminary, like Union, or a Reform seminary, like HUC. RIETS, a more theologically exclusive institution that is also influenced by theologians like Soloveitchik, would have limited interreligious opportunities. Union, as a more inclusive, progressive mainline institution, would be more willing to cultivate a culture of interreligious engagement. Likewise, HUC's liberal and Reform tradition similarly make it more open to interreligious engagement. In England, for example, a similar contrast can be made between Montefiore and Westcott House. This is, of course, in line with the sociotheological framework utilised throughout this thesis.

Broadly speaking, overseeing the training of religious leaders has been a goal of seminaries for hundreds of years. Individual communities have grown to expect seminaries to produce competent priests or rabbis that can fulfil the duties of clerical life. For centuries, seminaries have been doing just this – training students with a classical model of education that touches on the histories, ethics, theologies, languages, and laws of the religious tradition.

History of Theological Education

The word *seminary* comes from the Latin term *seminarium*, meaning breeding-ground or nursery. The first theological seminary was established under the auspices of the Council of Trent in 1563. Its purpose was to educate Roman Catholic priests for ministry. Between 1550 and 1700, thirty-three Protestant universities aimed at educating clergy were created (Holifield 2007, 32). Today, the term seminary has been widely adopted by Christian Catholics and Protestants and, to an extent, Jewish theological institutions, although rabbinical college is an interchangeable term. The methods of teaching in theological training have evolved over time, largely influenced by two schools of educational development. The Athens model concerns the development and formation of one's character through mentorship and private study, also known as *paideia*. Berlin is a professionalised approach to ministry that engages in critical research and analysis, also called *wissenschaft*. Over the past two centuries, a debate has taken place within theological education about the appropriateness of each

model.⁵⁷ Today, the tension between practical experience (Athens) and academic learning (Berlin) continues, equally manifested in courses concerning other religions.⁵⁸

Athens, Berlin, and Theological Education Today

Many words have been used to describe these two camps, merely echoes of the same debate: academic versus practical, theory versus praxis, professional versus vocational, knowledge-based versus contextual, formation of the mind versus formation of the soul. Most interviewees, when discussing the best method to learn about other religions, preferred a combination of practical and academic knowledge. Therefore, when examining the effectiveness or viability of interreligious education, faculty and administrators must consider and balance both schools of thought and how they pertain to the learning experience. To better understand this ongoing debate, it is necessary to briefly examine the origins and frameworks of each model.

Athens

Paideia, or the Athens-oriented model of study, was co-opted from Plato's ancient Greek model for creating good citizens. Platonic *paideia* included the cultivation of the soul, an acknowledgement that the "Good" was the "highest principle of the universe"; learning occurred through contemplation and insight (Kelsey 1993, 9). It is clear how the centrepieces of *paideia* could be co-opted by Christianity, replacing the orientation of the "Good" with "God". The goal of Christian study under this method, therefore, is primarily understanding God and the formation of the student. John Henry Newman, an influential character in

⁵⁷ For greater consideration of this debate between the two schools, see Farley (1983) and Mud Flower Collective (1985), which advocates for *paideia*-style learning, and Hough and Cobb's (1985) case for *wissenschaft* ministerial training. For an overview of the debate, see Banks (1999), Foster et al (2006), Kelsey (1993), and Newman (1899).

⁵⁸ The difference between the models of Athens and Berlin are not the only categories of theological education but rather those utilised for this thesis. For further reading of differing descriptions, please see Carroll's four "types of theological education" (1971), Rooy's four "theological cultures" (1988), and Cheesman's five "paradigms" for theological education (1993). It should be noted there is a lack of literature discussing the categories of rabbinical training, which follow denominational trends and emphasis on halakhah as discussed earlier.

nineteenth century English religious life, suggested the goal of education was the “cultivation” of the mind through a “mental process”, a process in which theology unified all subjects and was not defined by a specific end (1899, 151). The *paideia* model took place through private divinity study, often under an academic or an ordained minister (Naylor 1977, 18). This pedagogical approach is widely adopted in contextual learning, where a student is individually placed with a clerical supervisor charged with the provision of experience, teaching, and formation.

Berlin

Wissenschaft, or the Berlin-oriented model of study, can be traced back to the University of Berlin in the eighteenth century, whose newly-founded Faculty of Divinity stressed “disciplined critical research ... and ‘professional’ education for ministry” (Kelsey 1993, 12). The role of clergy, it could be argued, was already professionalised by this point, but what is notable is the University’s reliance on critical scholarship and research (not merely assumed knowledge and values) as a necessary step to become a member of the clergy. It relied on instruction from academics, as opposed to practitioners, which resulted in the recruitment of faculty that engaged in research, establishing a “widening gap” that continues today “between the seminary and church, part of it stemming from the fact that these days faculty have less ministry experience” (Banks 1999, 11). It is no surprise that many seminaries, born out of and still connected to a research university, reflect this model.

Wissenschaft is traditionally rooted in history, philosophy, and practical theology, although the latter has evolved into a “professionalism” of a “heterogeneous set of ministerial functions”, such as funerals, weddings, conflict resolution, and budgeting (Kelsey 1993, 50). Additionally, the academic, professionalised nature of the model helps explain the continued reliance on a set curriculum and structure when studying other religions.

Athens, Berlin, and Today

Foster et al state that, between these two models, Christian seminaries “will reflect more clearly the values of one or the other in their programs and policies” (2006, 48). Today, seminaries utilise different traits of each method based on the course being taught (for

example, halachic study would differ from practical theology). Yet, as my research shows, both in curricula pertaining to other religions and by speaking to faculty and administration about the challenges of theological education more broadly, ministerial pedagogies typically try to incorporate both models. One is not wholly exclusive of the other, and many seminaries embrace what is called a “dual-track educational model” (Scharen and Campbell-Reed 2016, 47). A male PTS administrator explained the importance of holding the two methods in balance in an interview:

We do not want to go simply the route of religious studies. We are not simply a training school for clergy. But to navigate with a university *wissenschaftlic* Berlin-model on the one hand, and a concern for *paideia* and formation and the church on the other hand, and to hold these things together, fruitfully, is our vocation here. It has been for 200 years. But it's deeply challenging.

Each seminary navigates this balance differently. Many American Protestant seminaries were founded by research universities and therefore retain a strong culture of *wissenschaft*. Yet other seminaries provide alternative structures and methods of ministerial training. For example, historically English seminaries have identified with a *paideia* model of learning, training clergy with a model of personal study and supervision. This can be seen by the reliance on curacy (which will be discussed in detail later) and the growing popularity of St Mellitus College’s context-based, mixed-mode training. Yet, in other parts of the Church of England, a *wissenschaft* tradition remains firm, like in the theological colleges associated with Oxford and Cambridge Universities. As a Church, respective of the broad theological training offered, Anglicanism is fairly balanced between the two models. A clear example of a balanced approach within each individual seminary can also be found in Jewish rabbinical seminaries.

Jewish Rabbinical Seminaries

Judaism is an interesting case in the debate between *paideia* and *wissenschaft*. On the one hand, the Talmudic study of *havruta*, a method of learning in which a pair of students read, study, analyse, and debate a text together, is in line with *paideia*. On the other, the value of scholarship and *wissenschaft des Judentums*, “the scientific study of Judaism”, also situates

Jewish seminaries firmly within the Berlin model, particularly as found in Conservative and Reform seminaries (Alexander 1997, 260). *Wissenschaft des Judentums* was a nineteenth century effort to critically examine Jewish culture, religion, and literature at greater depths, while also seeking to show Europe that Judaism was normal and to be accepted (Jacobs 1995).⁵⁹ Today, “scholarship [remains] at the heart of rabbinical identity”, and Jewish seminaries ensure this by combining rational and communal learning (Foster et al 2006, 48). Yet considering how few Jewish seminaries there are compared to Christian ones, there is less diversity in the curricular structure, and those differences are largely along denominational lines, as discussed in Chapter One. The balance of *paideia* and *wissenschaft* is much less debated in rabbinical schools, with both being clearly executed and valued.

Despite the obvious differences between Jewish rabbinical education, English theological colleges, and American Protestant seminaries, it is not the purpose of this thesis to say *which* model of theological education should be employed at every seminary, although it is appropriate to discuss the strength of combining the models in interreligious education. In well-developed programmes, namely Union Theological Seminary’s *Religions in the City* and Leo Baeck’s course on world religions, interreligious education is a balance of both. These courses pair academic study – critical research and reliance on academic literature and expertise – with components of frequent contextual engagement. They remain open to the input of tangential research that could benefit the profession of clergy, such as the social and human sciences, but also require students to immerse themselves in different contexts (or actively bring practitioners of other faiths into the classroom). This structure that merges academic learning with contextual exposure is a helpful example of combining the two models of interreligious education, and, as will be explained in Chapter Four, represents the learning experience clergy find most effective.

Curriculum: Shifting Expectations

Elliot Eisner, a leading academic in the field of education, says “we teach what we teach largely out of habit”, and that certainly applies to seminaries (2002, 103). Consequently, it is

⁵⁹ For further reading on *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, see Schorsch (1994) and Johnston (2013). For original material during the original development of the topic, see Graetz (1870).

still common for seminaries to prefer a *wissenschaft* model of theological education in practice (Foster et al 2006), but that is being challenged by seminaries with mixed-model models of education (such as St Mellitus), large churches who conduct their own training, and rabbinical seminaries.

Ultimately, change comes slowly in seminary institutions. They cannot instantly create a culture supportive of interreligious education, nor can a specific learning environment be created overnight. The institutional and inflexible nature of seminaries therefore “neglect areas of study that could prove to be exceedingly useful for students” (Eisner 2002, 103). It should be no surprise that understanding religious diversity on practical and theological levels is not a high priority of seminaries. It is a relatively new field, but the growth of religious diversity and the importance of understanding one’s own faith in relation to another has put pressure on seminaries to provide appropriate and relevant training. As one interviewee, a Muslim who often gives guest lectures at a Christian seminary, explained:

I think that now the time has come where seminaries should seriously consider having [a] more systematic approach to multifaith education and studies, just like we have a systematic approach to studying theology or preaching or pastoral care. Because I think we live in too interconnected of a world to not engage in the type of multifaith and interfaith studies. That’s essential.

Clergy and seminaries, two authorities in religious life, have been simultaneously pressed to “expand their own theology with a theology of world religions” and prepare ministers for “interreligious interaction and engagement” (Graham 2012, 1), as written by the then-director for faculty development and initiatives at ATS, an accreditation body for seminaries in the US.

The remainder of this chapter works through each variable affecting interreligious education, discussing the nature and impact of each one. Every section draws on literature and collected data to explain and analyse the nature of each variable. It starts with the overarching accreditation bodies in theological education, moving to the requirements and expectations of curricula, and the opportunities and limitations of contextual learning. The chapter will

then discuss the resources available to some, but not all, seminaries – namely the geographical location of a seminary relative to areas of high religious diversity, affiliation with larger, traditional universities, the interreligious literacy of faculty hired by seminaries, and the educational demands of students that attend.

Accreditation

One way to impose interreligious requirements is through formal accreditation, which takes place on both sides of the Atlantic. In 2014, the Church of England rolled out a new academic curriculum called Common Awards, which currently serves as an attempt to synchronise accreditation across all Anglican seminaries (previously, qualifications were set by the individual seminaries). Most seminaries are accredited by Durham University, although Cambridge and Oxford Universities validate degrees for local seminaries as well. In this new curriculum, the Church of England ensures that students on a number of academic paths (including the BA, Graduate Diploma, postgraduate diploma, and the MA) have the *opportunity* to learn about other faiths (Durham University 2017). However, as will be discussed later, this does not mean that students are *required* to learn about other faiths. In the US, ATS revised the standards of accreditation to include the following statement for a Masters of Divinity (MDiv) degree:

MDiv education shall engage students with the global character of the church as well as ministry in the multifaith and multicultural context of contemporary society. This should include attention to the wide diversity of religious traditions present in potential ministry settings, as well as expressions of social justice and respect congruent with the institution’s mission and purpose (The Association of Theological Schools 2015, A.2.3.2).

This replaced a former statement by explicitly emphasising the “potential ministry settings” of a “multifaith” context, a recognition of religious diversification in North America and a call to acknowledge “expressions” of social justice, which often serve as a conduit for interreligious engagement and encounter (see Baker 2014; Cohen 2012, 2015; and Williams 2012).

ATS does not accredit the Jewish seminaries included in my study. Instead, they are accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (HUC and JTS) and the New York State Education Department (RIETS). Neither of these accreditation bodies require any teaching on other faiths. In England, Leo Baeck is accredited by Middlesex University, and awards at Montefiore are validated in conjunction with Eretz Hemdah Institute of Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem.

The importance of preparing students for “the wide diversity of religious traditions present in potential ministry settings”, to use the language from ATS, is a view not only shared by accreditation bodies – interviewees expressed this as well. In an interview, a former Anglican leader said, “you will get quite a lot of people coming forward for ordination who [...] may not know very much about the world of faiths [...] so I think it’s crucial that that be opened up in the early stages of training”. Similarly, a priest in New York City expressed a similar statement, “I really think one ought to be made, by virtue of the construction of the curriculum, to learn about engag[ing] in dialogue with other faith traditions. It’s essential in the world we are living in today”.

Despite formal requirements for interreligious education, both administrative accreditation bodies lack the power to enforce any specific method of teaching; the individual seminaries, in both countries, retain the autonomy to decide how this requirement is fulfilled. A male interviewee in the Church of England’s formation office explained, “the practice tends to be that [all seminaries] are kind of left to be slightly independent”, free from any specifications in the implementation of interreligious education. In the US, a senior administrator for ATS explained that member seminaries “would be given freedom where they actually incorporate this and how they do”. Although all North American seminaries accredited by the ATS must explain how they fulfil this requirement, the ATS does not give an instruction on *how* this should be carried out; this is left to the discretion of the individual seminaries, “congruent with [their] mission and purpose”.

Thus, central accreditation bodies are not entirely effective agents in the formation of interreligious education at the seminary level – they can create a box to be ticked but cannot address *how* other faiths are taught. The result is that seminaries individually form their

courses and encounters in a way that is aligned with their mission, thus creating the need for a sociotheological framework. For example, seminaries utilise interreligious education as a basis for conversion (as found in a Texas seminary's curriculum),⁶⁰ by threading Jewish history into Christian history classes (as found in Princeton Theological Seminary's curriculum), or by conducting an ethnographic study of religious communities in the surrounding neighbourhood (as done at Union Theological Seminary). It could also be outsourced to placements, whether in a religious community or through Clinical Pastoral Education training, both of which will be discussed in detail later. This de-centralised approach creates a wide array of pedagogies concerning other religions, with little conversation or critical analysis taking place between the different approaches.

Curricula: Explicit, Implicit, and Null

How curricula fulfil the requirements above is understood through an evaluation of three different categories. They are null, implicit, and explicit (Eisner 2002). Null, in summary, is the interreligious training that is not required for ordination. This is the opposite of explicit curriculum, or the interreligious training that *is* required for ordination. Explicit curricula, like text or history, are topics all students must engage with while at seminary. Between null and explicit is a more nuanced, hidden curriculum – implicit. It is the training that occurs by way of another discipline, such as a text-based class discussing supersessionism, or through placements. The nuances of implicit curricula – what and when it is offered, who teaches it, and what the lack of requirement implicitly says about it – shape how the topic is perceived. Additionally, seminaries can embody two types of curricula at the same time. Although interreligious education may not be an explicit requirement for a seminary, for example, a specific course could implicitly incorporate teachings on other faiths.

Whereas Eisner (Ibid.) conceptually examines course syllabi (studying what is explicitly listed in the course, what does the teacher implicitly bring into the classroom by way of teaching assumptions, the placement of different modules, and what is not taught), I find that applying Eisner's three categories to the *whole* curriculum is a helpful tool. A broadened understanding

⁶⁰ This seminary was not formally included in my study; rather one interview was conducted with a faculty member teaching on Islam.

of explicit, implicit, and null curricula examines how interreligious education is (or is not) incorporated into training programmes, how it is valued, and its perception among faculty, students, and graduates.

Null

A null curriculum is one “that does not exist” (Ibid., 83), but it is still worthy of the utmost examination. Reaffirming Eisner’s emphasis on a null curriculum, Milner states, “*what is absent or not included is actually present in what students are learning*” (2010, 3; emphasis original). The null curricula are the topics, courses, and skills left out of ordination requirements, and it should be studied as scrupulously as what *is* included. For the sake of clergy-in-training, the opportunities not given during training have an impact on students’ expectations for leadership and clerical work more broadly. Eisner writes, “what students cannot consider, what they don’t know, processes they are unable to use, have consequences for the kinds of lives they lead”, or, for my research, the types of religious leaders that they become (2002, 88). Null interreligious curricula send a message that interreligious learning is not a vital part of clerical life, thereby limiting the opportunities students have to develop those theological and practical skills at seminary. A curriculum in which no interreligious education is formally offered could imply that interreligious activism or serving in a diverse context is not part of the job or the repertoire required for the profession.

Two examples of null curricula can be seen at PTS and RIETS. Neither seminary requires any explicit teaching on other religions, nor is there specific field education facilitated to meet these needs. In an interview, a graduate of RIETS currently serving in Manhattan affirmed the null curricula. He said no courses on other religions were required, but that it was the seminary’s role to provide that type of teaching:

Now the sad thing is, many people go from that [seminary] environment into congregations where they’re not forced to interact with the people around them, and they end up living their whole life in an intellectually closed environment. And they stand to lose more than to gain for playing, for standing up for other people.

He said this was a result of the inward-focusing culture of the Orthodox Jewish community, a trend discussed in Chapter One.

PTS, while offering several electives and employing implicit methods of teaching about other religions, similarly has no explicit interreligious requirement; one faculty member remarked, “we have a lot that's offered, but it's possible for our students to go through the place without getting any [interreligious education]”. For example, Mikoski’s student trip to Jerusalem, discussed in Chapter One, would be offered but not required, limiting the reach of the seminary’s interreligious education. The students notice this, with one female student saying the lack of a requirement “seems very problematic”. As someone who is not already interested in interreligious engagement, she continued, “[the] temptation is then I just won’t take it [... it] definitely seems to be a problem with that not being a part of mandatory courses”. For students who are already interested in the topic, another explained that there is a “frustration among those of us who care about it, the lack of resources to talk about it”. As described by Milner, a null curriculum feeds an assumption that a topic – say Christian responses to antisemitism or Jewish understandings of Islam – “is not important or that it is inappropriate to consider or discuss that topic” (2010, 3). As will be discussed in Chapter Three, these topics are of great importance for clergy and society today.

The opposite category of null curricula is, perhaps, the most obvious. Explicit curricula are more straightforward; indeed, all one needs to do to discover the explicit curricula is look at ordination requirements.

Explicit

In the data collected, there is a distinct line between American and English seminaries concerning curricular requirements. In the US, only Union Theological Seminary explicitly requires interreligious training for every student; in England, every seminary studied – Westcott House, Ridley Hall, St Mellitus College, Leo Baeck College, and Montefiore – require a module of some sort on interreligious engagement.⁶¹ This, as discussed in Chapter One,

⁶¹ Montefiore requires a course called “Relations between Muslims, Christians and Jews and between Jews and Jews” (Montefiore Endowment 2017). Due to a lack of access within the Montefiore community and the limited

could very well be a result of the more visible diversification of England and the multifaith awareness present in Anglican seminaries. There is no doubt that the emphasis of the Church of England to represent all faiths prompts Anglicans to think more seriously about their role alongside other religions; likewise, the historic and minority nature of Judaism in England also lends itself to learn about other religions for reasons discussed in Chapter One.

There is a further distinction among seminaries who offer an explicit curriculum on other religions. Three seminaries, Union, Leo Baeck, and St Mellitus (which offers a half module on “Christianity and Inter Faith Engagement”), require an interreligious course that runs for an entire term; the others (Westcott and Ridley) offer a course that is more limited in time and scope via an intensive course that takes place over 1-3 days and between terms.

There certainly is value in teaching other religions for an entire term. A longer period of time allows courses to unpack the nuanced differences and diversity in other religious traditions and provide first hand exposure to the tradition itself, whether through guest lecturers from practitioners or visits to houses of worship. For example, UTS requires a course entitled *Religions in the City*, which examines religious texts, invites a guest speaker, and includes a site visit for every tradition studied, similar to Yuskaev’s course discussed in Chapter One.⁶² Additionally, students are encouraged to try a spiritual practice of each tradition. Beyond *Religions in the City*, students at Union are required to enrol and take one other course on other religions. These requirements convey a weight of respectability of the topic to students, who felt like the seminary valued the importance of interreligious engagement and learning. One female student said, “I feel very strongly that the administration here is super into interfaith stuff” to the point that she questioned if it had become the “trendy” topic among

number of graduates that have completed this young programme (the college has only awarded semikhah to two cohorts of students since its founding in 2006), I was not able to conduct enough interviews to confidently examine the curriculum and the perception of the course from those who have taken it.

⁶² Since conducting my field work, UTS now offers MDiv concentrations in “Islam & Interreligious Engagement” and “Buddhism & Interreligious Engagement”, both of which lead to ordination. As opposed to the two courses required for all MDiv students on interreligious engagement, these concentrations require five courses on interreligious engagement. Additionally, nine courses must be taken on the specific faith tradition referenced in the title.

the seminary's faculty. Leo Baeck has a similar course to *Religions in the City*, where four different faiths are studied in three-week periods. This includes an introduction to the faith tradition, a guest lecture from a practitioner or a site visit, and a reflective seminar. Similar to Union, graduates of Leo Baeck largely affirm the seminary's commitment to interreligious engagement, with one female graduate expressing that interreligious education was "an extremely important part of our training".

Implicit

During field work, most interviewees were keen to meet with me and affirm the importance of interreligious education. However, seminaries implicitly tell a different story, excluding interreligious courses from the list of requirements or leaving interreligious education to be picked up somewhere else in the training process, such as curacy or placements. Others implicitly (and quietly) promote interreligious education through programmes that are interreligious in nature but not description, a process known as threading. In seminary education, the implicit curricula may not be spoken or executed but rather expected and assumed, both through formal structures and social dynamics. Eisner says it makes up "no formal part of the curriculum, yet [it is] taught" (2002, 81).

Implicit curricula, in the form of an elective for example, can be listed in the syllabus, but other aspects of implicit curricula are not typically articulated. They are the traits, teachings, or attitudes that underlie a course or the institution. On one hand, this is the ethos of the seminary, the context in which you approach each class, not always formally dictated or taught yet nevertheless running throughout. It also concerns how the course is taught – at what point is teaching about other religions placed in the curriculum? For instance, a course conducted during a break between terms, such as the *Jewish-Christian Relations* intensive through Westcott House and Ridley Hall, implies it is not as important as those taken during term-time. As Foster et al describe, "the placement of a course in the curriculum ... reveals explicit faculty decisions and, often, implicit faculty assumptions about the value and function of any given course in the education of their students" (2006, 52).

The implicit curricula do not only apply to the placement of courses, but it begs the question of what it means when an interreligious course is not required, similar to and briefly discussed

in the section on null curricula. While the courses are recognised as explicitly part of the course offerings, implicitly the lack of a requirement implies that it is not as important. This can clearly be seen via the two examples of JTS in New York and the Common Awards programme in England.

At JTS, there is no requirement that students take a course on interreligious engagement. However, studying interreligious engagement is possible, whether through the formal partnership between JTS and UTS, Clinical Pastoral Education (both of which will be discussed later), the Milstein Center for Interreligious Dialogue on site, or as a component in the Professional and Pastoral Skills seminar (this course, explained by one of the lecturers in an interview, also incorporates training in community organising and social justice, bringing in local leaders of many faiths to speak to the students). Yet an implicit curriculum is not always perceived as interreligious training. Therefore the content that is not required but *is* offered runs the risk of limited student involvement and/or not being seen as vital to the rabbinate. I interviewed a rabbi who graduated from JTS in 1986 and is actively involved in interreligious work through his Manhattan synagogue. Our interview transcript shows how his engagement with the implicit curriculum was derived from a personal interest, not dictated by any requirement:

Me: Do you feel that your training at Jewish Theological prepared you to work in interfaith and with other religions?

Interviewee: Not at all, not at all.

Me: Do you recall any courses on other religions?

Interviewee: No, I actually, I specifically chose, because Union Theological Seminary is across the street, I chose to take some courses with, at Union Theological Seminary. So I took a course on the gospels, and I took a course on Apocrypha [...] the history of the early church, church fathers, you know, and the Jew, and the parallel in the Jewish tradition. And so I mean I chose, these things were available to us but not many people signed up for those things. I have no training whatsoever at the seminary itself on any Christian history or theology, and not about Islam, not about other religions. And so everything was acquired later through my work, basically, and the readings that I did.

Another example, the Church of England's ordination requirements set by Durham University but taught at all Anglican seminaries, also known as Common Awards, require students to take 20 credits in the sub categories of "Ministry and Mission", including *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations* and *Multi Faith Awareness*, both of which are worth 10 credits each.⁶³ However, a student could easily take *Christian Discipleship*, a 20 credit course that does not explicitly have an interreligious focus (Durham University 2015). Consequently, a student could tick the ministry and mission requirement box without taking a course on interreligious engagement. Furthermore, it is impossible for Common Awards to provide the same teaching with the same faculty with the same experiences at every seminary on the Common Awards throughout England. Gaston and Brealey, in their study of interfaith education in 21 theological education institutions providing Common Awards, found that the content of the teaching varied across the country, and understandably "high quality" teaching could be a challenge in rural areas where access to interreligious partnerships and expertise is limited (2016, 50). Thus, even if a course is offered under the Common Awards curriculum, few seminaries would have the resources to teach it.

Implicit curricula should not only be seen in a negative light; seminaries have implicitly *added* interreligious education into the pre-existing curricular structure as well. This process is known as *threading*.

Threading: an Example

One of the most innovative methods to implicitly incorporate more interreligious education is via a process Clooney calls "weaving" (2013, 323), but to be reflective of the collected data, I will refer to it as *threading*. In this method, teaching and reflection on other religions is woven throughout a curriculum, primarily through a core requirement such as theology. Clooney explains that faculty can "teach interreligiously and comparatively as [they] teach already within [their] disciplines and areas of expertise" (Ibid., 327). Clooney is not unique in

⁶³ The degree discussed is the BA Hons, a two- to three-year programme, at Levels 4 and 5 of seminary education. Level 6, the top level, is only required for students under a certain age. Therefore, all students must complete Levels 4 and 5 for ordination, but not all have to complete Level 6.

calling for this. Knitter envisioned a “restructuring” of theological education with a greater multi-religious emphasis in curricula. He wrote that “what is needed and hoped for is that a conversation with other traditions may, to some extent, be made an integral part of all courses in a Christian curriculum, especially those courses traditionally identified as systematic or ethical” (Knitter 1992, 436). Gilliat-Ray stated, “it seems important that the subject of other faiths is both integrated into the whole theological curriculum”, although she would like to see other faiths form a “distinctive” part of curricula as well (2003, 14).

The awareness of threading interreligious education throughout a theological curriculum has been present for quite some time (Knitter was writing in the early 1990s). Although Gilliat-Ray sought for the teaching of other faiths to be incorporated throughout a seminary’s curriculum, and Knitter envisioned threading taking place systematically throughout theology and ethics, it is more often found in texts and history, with less emphasis in theology.

As a seminary, PTS actively encourages faculty to thread the teaching of other religions throughout their pre-existing courses. A male PTS administrator explained, “the greater challenge, I think not only for Princeton Seminary, is how do we thread through the curriculum the awareness of the other [...] and I think our History and Ecumenics Department is pioneering this”. This is shown in a medieval history course titled *Muslims and Christians from Mohammed to Luther*, whose professor also teaches a church history course, in which he explains, “some issues of Jewish-Christian relationships” are taught. The history department also brings in a Muslim chaplain from Princeton University across the street to discuss the emergence of the Prophet Mohammed and Christian-Muslim relations. This practice is not limited to Christian seminaries, however. On the Jewish side of my study, HUC lectures on the interaction between Paul and Rabbinic Judaism, as well as Judaism under Islam in the Middle Ages; in professional development classes, the lecturer, whom I interviewed, brings in a Christian pastor to speak about the importance of interreligious dialogue.

Textual classes are also a common location for threading. At Westcott House, a female Old Testament tutor leads students through “specific Jewish commentaries and how a Jew [would] understand” the text. One priest recalled his PTS seminary lecturers cultivating a

sensitivity for the relationship between antisemitism and New Testament texts, most notably in discussions around the Gospel of John and its anti-Jewish, supersessionist interpretations. Yet when it comes to threading, it is not an entirely a two-way street between Jewish and Christian seminaries. There is less threading of Christian teaching into Jewish textual classes, which is not surprising. Considering Christians share the Old Testament with the Jewish tradition, and given the issue of supersessionism in the New Testament, the threading of Jewish interpretations into textual classes is more natural for Christian seminaries than it would be for Jewish ones. Nevertheless, threading is an economical method of implementation for interreligious education that can be congruent with a seminary's ethos. The ease of implementation is particularly attractive given the crowded curricula of seminaries, but it is not without challenges.

The main issue with threading is faculty. Knitter, who served on faculty at UTS, explained that "changes in the composition of a theological faculty are also required" and they must include "one or more faculty members specifically trained in one or another non-Christian tradition" (1992, 437). UTS does this, currently employing both a practising Buddhist and Muslim onto their faculty, just as HUC employs a Christian. Other seminaries, such as PTS, do not employ non-Christian faculty as a hiring practice. One male PTS faculty member explains, "I think [the administration] would probably like the current faculty, the Christian faculty, to address [other religions] more frequently, and more often. They don't want to hire [more] faculty; they don't want to hire a rabbi or an imam". A seminary can refocus their hiring practices to favour applicants that have a knowledge and experience of other faith traditions, but that does not create a faculty body that can incorporate interreligious teaching overnight. It is a long process.

Threading is the most logical solution in the face of a crowded curriculum and the limitations of time. It is perhaps the most wholesome classroom-based solution to address questions of religious diversity. It is not "like interfaith exists in a silo [...] those questions need to belong in doctrine, they need to also belong in Biblical studies [...] because, actually, life is not systematic", as a senior faculty member at Westcott House put it. Despite the benefits of threading, it is inherently limited by the skills and expertise of the faculty, many of whom did not receive interreligious training themselves as students at seminary. However, in an

institution plagued by the limits of time and resistance to structural change, threading is the best-suited response in the classroom to address the issue of religious diversity.

From the Classroom to a Context

Whereas course curricula and syllabus requirements can be easily classed as explicit, implicit, or null, it must be noted that some mechanisms for training, particularly interreligious learning, are shifting away from classroom-based methods and towards a contextual focus. Broadly speaking, classroom and contextual learning, where the latter takes place under the supervision of a priest or rabbi, can respectively be described as *wissenschaft* and *paideia*. As discussed, this polarised generality does not reflect reality, with many contextual placements often (but not always) incorporating structured supervision and measured outcomes.

Despite a deep-rooted *wissenschaft* tradition in theological education today, a hybrid model is gradually emerging. Auburn Seminary, a New York City seminary in its founding but now a research and resource centre for theological education, identified this trend across the US, finding American seminaries “are shifting the educational model from content transfer to adaptive learning” that teaches “in relation to real-world challenges” (Scharen and Miller 2016, 43). This was simply put in an interview by a senior administrator at ATS, who said, “I think there's a recognition of a need to return to more deeply embedded theological education that is closely connected with contexts of ministries of various kinds”. This sentiment and the usefulness of contextual learning was highlighted in Chapter One by Yuskaev, who wrote that encouraging students to learn from their local contexts “forces [students] to encounter the diversity next door” and become “adept partners in the shaping of a more positive community life, within and beyond our specific congregations and institutions” (2013, 363). The benefit of contextual learning is also shared by recent graduates of seminary institutions, including a female JTS graduate who stated that “there’s absolutely no replacement for the field. You can't, you simply can't learn about doing a thing as much as you learn doing the thing”.

The shift towards contextually-based learning is clearer in England, evidenced by the growth and expansion of St Mellitus College, a seminary that has largely pioneered the mixed-mode model of learning. In its first year in 2007, St Mellitus had 9 students; by 2015 that number

had swelled to 215 and it shows no signs of slowing (Sherwood 2016). St Mellitus places students in church contexts for the entire duration of their full-time study. They are also expected to attend seminary classes. Classroom learning manifests itself in one day per week on site, seven residential weekends each year, and an annual residential week (St Mellitus College 2017). The impact and innovation of this model was noted by clergy in the US, with one female Manhattan priest stating that the St Mellitus model “will probably end up being the kind of thing we do here”.⁶⁴

All contextual learning practices are not the same, differing in what students are expected to learn from them, how they are accredited and managed, and the impact they have. In the following pages, I will provide a snapshot of various methods of contextual learning seen through the data. First, I will discuss models of field education alongside classroom learning, as well as the use of Clinical Pastoral Education, or CPE. Afterwards I will move on to the Church of England’s two phases of theological education – Initial Ministerial Education Phases I (classroom) and II (curacy placements) – where the division between classroom and context, respectively, creates a crisis of continuity and accountability.

Contextual Learning: Incorporating Placements

Harkness, writing an article from the perspective of a seminary professor in Singapore, said it is “crucial” that “equipping for ministry is done in the context of ministry” (2001, 151). Scharen and Campbell-Reed found that contextual learning, whether in the field or in a vocational-based class, was the “most formative” learning for students (2016, 18). In a review of multifaith education in American seminaries, Baird found that “the most widely cited factor affecting the impact of multifaith education ... was experiential learning” (2013, 314). In all of the seminaries I studied, placements are done throughout the ordination curriculum, taking place over summers, long breaks, and sometimes throughout the term. In Jewish seminaries,

⁶⁴ There is certainly a debate to be had and more research to be done on the viability of mixed-mode models of theological education in the US. While I do not have the space nor data to discuss it further here, it should be noted that there is little impetus for American seminaries to radically change their structure and change to a mixed-mode model. Such a shift would need to be directed by an accreditation body or a denomination, neither of which have the influence over American seminaries, which are more ecumenical and self-sustaining than their Anglican counterparts.

where the training programme is longer and typically takes five years, students are required to complete two years of “in-field experience” during which the student is mentored by a rabbi and “gains a realistic perspective on the life of a congregational rabbi” (Hebrew Union College 2017). Placements are largely coordinated around the student’s interest and any needs a faculty member may identify for the student. The field supervisors used for placements must also undergo training in order to supervise seminary students. At JTS, for example, field supervisors must sign a mentoring contract and participate in professional training provided by the seminary before taking on a student.

It is also common to find seminaries employing short-term contextual learning in the form of trips, as found in Mikoski (2013) and discussed in Chapter One. Example of this are Leo Baeck’s Jewish-Christian-Muslim (JCM) Conference and Bible Week that take place every year in Germany, during which rabbinical students meet Christian ordinands from throughout Europe. Leo Baeck no longer requires its students to participate in these events, although the college encourages it. This change in requirement is in line with the turn more broadly to local placements and experiences. A male graduate of Leo Baeck, who went to JCM during his time at the college, captures why seminaries are shifting towards localised placements:

I remember [JCM] feeling very un-contextualised [...] I don't think we ever did a period of reflection. And I don't think we ever did anything in advance to explain why it was important. It was just taken for granted that it would be something we would want to do without that kind of contextualisation.

Despite the concerns aired about JCM, placements are not always stand-alone in nature; they often, but not always, happen alongside teaching and reflection in a classroom setting. This is the case at UTS, where students spend one year taking a required course called “Field Education Seminar: Part-Time Concurrent Internship”, where they are expected to be in placements for 12-15 hours per week. A female faculty member overseeing field education explained that students are “not only taking the theologies and what they’re learning in the classroom into the field, but the field has something to say about what [they’re] learning [in class]”. Another balanced model for contextual learning can be found in Jewish seminaries, where long-term placements are being done alongside their residential training, allowing the

students to feed difficulties and concerns back into a classroom setting where they can ask questions.⁶⁵ This tandem-style approach combines the contextual learning that is increasingly seen as necessary for future clergy with a guided format of reflection and formation that seminaries deem as vital for theological education.⁶⁶ This reflection, described by McConnell (2013) in Chapter One as “convicted civility”, is a foundational part of interreligious education that ties back the experiences of students to their specific faith tradition. Given the faith-specific ethos of seminaries, this is a vital component for contextual and classroom learning.

When discussing interreligious pedagogies, seminary faculty and administrators will often cite contextual learning as a helpful space for interreligious education.⁶⁷ While every seminary studied may have some sort of contextual placement, none have prescribed requirements to engage with other religions in that placement, or for the field supervisor to discuss or provide any interreligious experience. Some contextual learning placements are interreligious in nature – one Christian student from UTS was granted a placement at a synagogue – but placements like this are not the norm. Despite the possibility of placements generating interreligious encounter, it is wrong to assume that they actually do. In placements, despite oversight and training, the field supervisor has the agency to facilitate experiences for the student that he or she deems necessary. Some clergy do not see interreligious encounter as a necessary function of their job, whereas others do. During her rabbinical education, one rabbi recalled the impact of her field supervisor, Rabbi Hugo Gryn, at the synagogue she worked at during her studies. Rabbi Gryn, she said, introduced her to interfaith work by requiring her to meet with black evangelical Christians – an action that she described as lighting “the greatest candle”. The rabbi spoke at length of her fond memories and experiences under Rabbi Gryn and the impact his supervision had on her. She has since made

⁶⁵ For example, students at JTS are required to complete one year of field education with a rabbinical mentor alongside weekly classes in the seminary, as well as CPE, during their final three years of study (Jewish Theological Seminary 2017).

⁶⁶ The importance of reflection as a pedagogical trait of interreligious education will be discussed in Chapter Four.

⁶⁷ This is different from courses that incorporate contextual learning as a pedagogical approach in an established class, such as *Religions in the City*.

interreligious work a major part of her role, serving in executive positions with the Inter-Faith Network and the World Congress of Faiths.

Placements like the one above exist but are not commonplace. Despite the formative role of contextual placements in other aspects of religious leadership – such as leadership development, insight into the daily functions of clergy, preaching, and conflict resolution – these placements do not consistently provide the interreligious contact and learning that modern day clergy desire and seminaries assume takes place. However, another form of contextual placement in the US has proven to be an effective method of interreligious encounter, practice, and reflection. It is called Clinical Pastoral Education.

Clinical Pastoral Education

In the US, Clinical Pastoral Education is a structured programme required by many seminaries that generates interreligious encounter. CPE, as described by its accreditation body, is “interfaith professional education for ministry” that brings theological students from a variety of faiths “into supervised encounter with persons in crisis” (ACPE 2017). This is predominantly done in hospital and military chaplaincy settings. One interviewee who had reviewed CPE as a method of interreligious education explains it as “the best example of, and maybe frankly, where more clergy learn more about other faiths than any other programme, which is not its primary goal”. All but two seminaries that were studied required CPE training for their students.⁶⁸ A male administrator of JTS’s rabbinical programme said CPE was the “primary way that we help train people” for multifaith contexts. Under CPE, students spend a set number of hours doing chaplaincy training either in hospitals or military outposts. They are assigned to groups with fellow students from across the country, often representative of various denominations and faiths. In these groups, students reflect on their experiences together and with their CPE supervisor, who can also be of a different faith. In interviews with faculty, many seminaries state that their students are getting interreligious training in CPE, which aligns with my findings.

⁶⁸ Seminaries that did not require CPE training were RIETS (Jewish Orthodox) and Truett Seminary (Christian Baptist).

One rabbi who attended HUC recalled CPE training as her “first real exposure to fundamentalist Christianity”, which ultimately helped her understand the differences between mainline Protestantism and other denominations, such as the Roman Catholic, evangelical, and fundamentalist wings of the American church. The encounter went both ways too. The rabbi explained how she shared a room with a girl from Alabama, who had never met a Jew until that CPE placement.

In addition to working alongside students of other faiths, it is also common for students to care for patients of other faiths. A Jewish interviewee explained the student-patient encounter:

Then of course the patients, the people you are going to visit, will be varied. And so a large part of it is about becoming curious. You know, when you walk into a patient's room [...] they're Jain and you don't know anything about being a Jain, and like, so how do you help them find their own faith resources and not try to impose your own agenda?

Both levels of encounter – student to student and student to patient – help foster an empathetic understanding of other religions. For many students, this could be the first time they are in such a diverse context. The experience is valued not only by seminaries but also those who have gone through the programme, with no interviewees speaking negatively about CPE.

It is worthy to note that the two seminaries who did not require CPE are a predominantly evangelical Christian seminary and an Orthodox rabbinical programme – two groups that are often painted as less integrated or choose to identify less with the larger culture when compared to their other co-religionists, such as mainline Christianity or Reform Judaism. For some seminaries, especially those that may be more exclusive theologically, the interreligious nature of CPE could make it less attractive. However, as a hospital chaplain trained at Ridley Hall (an evangelical Anglican seminary), one female interviewee explained the balance between her multifaith context and evangelical identity:

I have the same view of multifaith work here, that I need to have roots down into Christianity, I fall on Jesus Christ, the Son of God, unquestioningly. That is my faith. If people ask me, I will tell them that. However, part of the code of conduct for hospital chaplains is to not seek to convert, not proselytise. But I think conversion [...] often happens through people, in any case, because they're changed by the extreme circumstances they're facing here. We see our role as accompanying them on that conversion journey, not being the one who triggers it or who forces it. So my identity, I think, is quite secure.

Across the board of American theological education, CPE was the most consistent and reliable introduction to interreligious education found – much more so than term-time placements. CPE's multifaith student cohorts promote interreligious encounter for students who likely would not have a similar experience at seminary. From the perspective of seminaries, it is understood that CPE has historically and continues to be an impactful way to teach pastoral care (Miller-McLemore 2008), develop correlations between real world experiences and theology (Cooley 1973), and foster an awareness of other religions. The availability of a CPE supervisor for students fosters the formation that is critical and unique to theological education, and it encourages, if not requires, students to approach all patients, not least those of other religions, with empathy.

CPE is, however, inherently limited, as one male interviewee put it, “to issues of illness and health and recovery and death; [...] very pastoral issues, [and] not about the larger social issues”. Although CPE provides group settings for reflection and supervised guidance, the multifaith nature of the programme keeps it from providing “theological content or dogmatic answers based on the texts of specific religious traditions” (Miller-McLemore 2008, 13). Formation opportunities certainly exist with the CPE supervisor, but faith-specific formation is increasingly seen as important to students and graduates of seminaries. The lack of faith-specific formation in CPE implicitly separates CPE from the rest of the theological enterprise. This separation between the seminaries and CPE only becomes clearer when examining the complicated relationship between seminaries, CPE, and the North American accreditation body, ATS.

When asked how seminaries fulfil the ATS requirement of “ministry in the multifaith and multicultural context of contemporary society” (The Association of Theological Schools 2015, A.2.3.2), they often point to CPE. However, CPE is not accredited by the ATS, and therefore the ATS has no jurisdiction in how CPE is run. This is not so much an issue of individual seminaries fulfilling the requirement set forth by the ATS, but rather it lends itself to yet another fragmented trait in theological education. To reiterate an earlier quote, the interviewee at ATS explained seminaries are “given freedom where they actually incorporate this [requirement] and how they do”, and, ironically, seminaries do so by contracting out this responsibility to a programme that is not necessarily under the direct jurisdiction of either the accreditation body, their sponsoring denomination, or the seminaries themselves.⁶⁹ The weakness of the central authority in American theological education (ATS) inhibits broad-scale implementation and accountability of interreligious teaching, whether through curriculum or placements. The ability and authority to be directive from the centre could lead not only to specific requirements for interreligious education, but to the establishment of standards that could be checked and ensured over time.

In the Church of England, a central authority in theological education can establish requirements. It directs classroom-based learning and contextual opportunities that address the everyday needs of clerical life. This contextual focus is the Church of England’s IME Phase II, also known as curacy.

Curacy in the Church of England

The Church of England has a multi-year, contextual placement built into to their ministerial training programme called curacy. Despite a formalised structure of contextual learning, the Church has developed an over-reliance on curacy as a catch-all mechanism for everything that was not covered in seminary, including interreligious education.

⁶⁹ Regarding denominations, only the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship are members of the ACPE (ACPE 2018a). Ironically, Truett, the only seminary affiliated with BGCT or CBF in the study, does not require CPE. Regarding seminaries, the only seminaries included in my study with ACPE membership are HUC and UTS (ACPE 2018b).

Theological education in the Church of England is divided into two sections – IME 1-3 (Phase I) and IME 4-7 (Phase II). Phase I occurs in seminaries, with a set curriculum that is accredited by a university, as discussed earlier. The purpose of this section is to discuss the nature and challenges of IME Phase II, or curacy. This immersive, contextualised learning experience is required for all future Church of England ministers. During this training process, students are assigned to a training incumbent, or supervisor, for 2-3 years. The methodology behind this training is not new, embodying the *paideia* model of learning under a wise priest. Today, the Church expects its curates to gain experience in a variety of tasks, including but not limited to preaching, prayer, staff and community meetings, managing finances, and “engaging in the community and relative institutions” (The Church of England 2018, 18). By developing these skills, by the end of the curacy, every ordained minister should “be able to represent the Church in public life and engage in partnerships across wider groups of parishes, including, where possible ... other faith communities and their leaders” (The Church of England 2014, 13). Thus, developing skills in interreligious engagement, where possible, is an articulated aim of Phase II.

Unlike Phase I, which is directed from the central authority of Church House (the administrative body of the Church of England), Phase II is left to each individual diocese, who provides training and guidance to the incumbent supervisors and curates directly. This means the Ministry Division of the central body of the Church of England that oversees theological curricula does not have the authority to ensure dioceses include interreligious training in the curacy.

The inclusion of interreligious learning for curates is largely spurred on by interfaith advisors. Many dioceses have interfaith advisors, and as one male Anglican interviewee said, “it’s important that they be used in the training process. They’ll be able to identify the projects, the contexts where there’s good practice”. Additionally, these advisors can help curates reflect on ministry in diverse contexts, the nature of salvation for others, and the impact that has on the self-understanding of a Christian minister. The interviewee continued discussing the importance of interreligious work in curacy: “quite properly, you’re pushed up against tough questions that you can’t avoid”.

In some locations, dioceses actively ensure that their curates are given formal education and teaching on ministry in multifaith contexts, like the Diocese of Leeds and Bradford where interreligious relations are an important part of the community. One interviewee served as a curate outside Bradford, England, where, as a part of his curacy training, the diocese brought in an interfaith advisor. Reflecting back on that education, the male interviewee said, “I think [the interfaith advisor] provided a very effective model of creating good community relations and relating well to colleagues at the local mosque”. He also recalled numerous training days that included site visits to non-Christian places of worship.

However, my research shows that granting training autonomy to the dioceses can lead to a fragmented IME Phase II. Many dioceses simply do not provide interreligious training or education. The following exchange is a snapshot of my interview with the hospital chaplain quoted above, who began her curacy in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in 1998:

Me: Did you have any encounter [with other religions] in your curacy?

Interviewee: Not particularly. Again, that part of London. If I had been East End, I think I probably would have, or northwest London. But no. Nothing.

Looking at the 2001 census data for the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, 62.0% of the borough identified as Christian (higher than the London average by 1.8%), 8.4% identified as Muslim (lower than the London average by a meagre 0.1%), and 2.2% as Jewish (only 0.1% higher than the London average) (The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea 2010). In terms of overall diversity, this borough is more diverse than England as a whole and roughly on par with London (Office of National Statistics 2016).

Another interviewee was a curate between 2014 and 2016 in a Hackney parish, the part of east London the now-chaplain assumed dioceses would provide interreligious training. When asked if there was any formal training about interreligious engagement provided by his diocese throughout his curacy, the Hackney curate replied, “no”. This was echoed by another Hackney curate in the year below him, who explained that “the diocese [...] provided no interfaith training at all during the curacy”.

This issue is only exacerbated for those who are placed in more rural parishes. One interviewee formerly served as a curate in a rural part of England. Later as an IME officer in a similarly rural area, she explained that the diocese struggled to provide interreligious opportunities to curates, saying, “we really struggled to offer anything very much in terms of practical experience because the lack of diversity [... unlike] a place like Leicester or Manchester or a place where there's a lot going on”. This IME officer echoed the assumption that dioceses with greater amounts of local diversity would provide more “practical experience”, but, as shown, that assumption does not reflect reality.

Foundationally, the problem in Church of England theological education is assumption. As the two divisions of IME are funded by different bodies (Phase I is funded nationally and Phase II is funded by the dioceses), the two are relatively autonomous in relation to the other. This leads to a habit of assuming the other will cover a certain set of skills.

Beyond assumption, there is an underlying distrust the two phases in the provision of ministerial training, which only exposes its fragmented nature. One interviewee described the “suspicion” that the other will not cover everything they are expected to. A seminary principal described this separation as: “the left hand doesn't usually know what the right hand is doing in the Church of England. So the left hand is encouraging this joined up thinking, and on the right hand, more power is given back to individual dioceses”. He is addressing the debate from the perspective of Phase I training. It has been suggested that seminaries provide more oversight of and involvement with curacy training, but the current trend within the Church of England is to grant more authority to the dioceses concerning how money is used for theological education. This, I believe, would only fragment theological education further.

The fragmented and disconnected nature of IME Phase II stands starkly in contrast with the central authority of the Church of England in accreditation, requirements, and competencies. Giving more power to the individual dioceses for curate training, as seen through the lens of interreligious education, will only deepen the fracture between the two phases. The fragmentation of Phase II training among the 43 dioceses in England fails to consistently address the issue of being a religious leader in a diverse context – even the dioceses in the most diverse areas of the country do not always provide this training. There is no evidence to

suggest clergy placements are effective pedagogical conduits for interreligious education, whereas a firm, Church-wide requirement for curates to partake in such experiences might be more helpful.

Church of England dioceses, particularly those in urban contexts, would be well suited to strengthen the requirements for curates to engage with other faiths, articulating the expectation for students and incumbent supervisors alike. This could be done by including a specific requirement for direct interreligious engagement, whether done by supervisors or diocesan staff.⁷⁰ More broadly, there is a desire among clergy to broaden the experience of ministry one gets during curacy. As a male priest in east London put it:

I don't necessarily think that it should be sacred that you learn best by being in the same worshipping community every week for three years. Like, I think you should have a base where you are consistently attached, but I think that base should allow you to go and experience other stuff and bring that back.

Further up the chain of command in the Church of England, this was repeated by a London bishop, who explained in an interview that his diocese has given thought to “having a curate in a number of different parishes, in a number of different settings, which actually gives a [...] broader viewpoint in terms of how they are then being trained up”. The intentional diversification of experiences in IME Phase II would broaden a curate’s understanding of the role of ministry and expose them to more social contexts and clerical practices.

Although the trend in theological education towards a pedagogy of placements is evident, it is not without issue. The finite scope of placements and limited influence of clerical supervisors cannot serve as a catch-all mechanism for theological education. Additionally, the reliance on clergy as teaching supervisors gives more agency to clergy rather than the seminary institutions primarily responsible for the training process.

⁷⁰ This is done in the Diocese of Ely, where both Westcott House and Ridley Hall are located.

Despite its faults as a pedagogical method, the general shift in theological education towards contextual methods of training begs the question: are classrooms even necessary, and can priests be trained solely in a contextual model? There is contemporary precedence for this found in megachurches, where pastors are not required to attain ordination and are typically hired from within a gathered community.

Training without a Classroom: Megachurches

As seminaries struggle to confront the challenges of religious diversity, the issue is only exacerbated by the prominence of megachurches.⁷¹ Megachurches, specifically evangelical ones, commonly but not exclusively, employ pastors with no formal seminary education. As identified by Finke and Dougherty (2002), there is a historical precedent for Christian communities not hiring ministers with a seminary education.⁷² In the eighteenth century, many American churches were sceptical of seminary educated leaders, fearing they would be out of touch with the practical needs of the community (Ibid., 104). Although this scepticism of seminary education waned throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, seminary education is not valued by all today.⁷³ Many Pentecostal and large evangelical churches do not see seminary education “as a requisite for ordination” (González 2014, 46), choosing to instead provide their own training. A male evangelical minister I interviewed in New York stated, “I was in seminary for four years. Completely unnecessary”, citing a disconnect between his theological education and current practice.

There is still a large segment of American Christianity that does not expect ministers to undergo formal seminary training, instead raising leaders up from those who invest in the life

⁷¹ Megachurches, or churches with a membership that exceeds 2,000 members, do not prohibit ministers with seminary training – I talked to numerous ministers at megachurches who attended seminary. But unlike other churches, they often do not require their ministers to be trained via a seminary.

⁷² Further discussions on the historical scepticism of seminary-trained clergy in eighteenth century America can be found in Hatch (1989). For original sources, see *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, which states, “gaining knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is better” (in Wilson and Hitt 1808, 35), and the 1871 *Baptist Quarterly* (in Finke and Stark 1992, 76).

⁷³ Of note, neither the Mormon Church nor Jehovah’s Witnesses require their ministers to have a seminary education.

and ministry of the gathered community over time. Identified to a limited extent in my research, megachurches “emphasize classes combined with hands-on training from a pastor at the local church” reflecting a *paideia* model of learning that typically takes place entirely within a gathered community (Finke and Dougherty 2002, 105). They do so by identifying lay members with ministry potential, entering them into a church-based ministerial programme, and eventually hiring them onto the church staff. In essence, they raise up their own leaders and systematise their own training. This vertical hiring practice from layperson to minister was described in this brief exchange with a female employee of a New York City evangelical megachurch who had its own training school:

Me: Is there a lot of crossover between [the church’s training school] and people who now work at the church?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. There are quite a few of us here.

Another staff member at the same Manhattan megachurch explained that he was first employed there as a maintenance worker doing janitorial work. He eventually became the Missions Director, a senior level position, explaining that his time as a janitor provided the theological lessons necessary for his job. He explained, “God [...] trained me from the bottom how to see people differently [...] if you come in strictly from an academic perspective, and you’re looking in [to ministry], you’re actually looking down and you don’t realise it”. He continued to say that when he entered his post as Missions Director, he “didn’t feel qualified to do it” but “God had been teaching me things in all these different capacities”, thus making him qualified for the role.

The influence of megachurches and the vertical integration of theological training within a gathered faith community certainly undermines the authority of seminary institutions by completely avoiding them. It is an exaggeration of contextual learning, as *all* training and education happen within the context of a gathered community. The limitations are more extreme as well, with students getting less exposure to the breadth of their faith tradition and fewer opportunities for inter-denominational encounter, much less interreligious encounter.

Particularly in the US, evangelical megachurches carry a historical scepticism of theological education, relying on their own means and mechanisms to train their leaders from within. By training clergy in this way, megachurches assume the authority of seminaries (and for non-denominational churches, the denomination) on their own. A stark diversion from Christian patterns of leadership practice, all of the synagogues I encountered had a seminary-trained rabbi as their leader. Scholarly study remains a vital component of the rabbinate, which makes it distinct from the models of megachurches explained above.

Considering the decline of mainline denominations (those who typically require ordination) in the US, and the growth in numbers of evangelicals, the vertical training structures of megachurches could have a direct and lasting impact on seminary education.⁷⁴ The monopoly of seminaries on the training of Christian ministers in America is, as González says, “broken” (2014, 46). This is not new, as the discussion above shows the monopoly has been broken for quite some time. However, clearly underwriting this discussion is the growing wedge between seminaries and clergy as they react to social changes. Since the former can be interpreted as disconnected from actual ministry, some churches bypass it, believing that faith, leadership, and authority is learned best through practice in a specific context rather than in a classroom.

Not All Placements are Created Equal: The Division of Labour

The growing preference for contextual styles of learning is not without challenges. Miller-McLemore warns against the “reduction of the aim of theological education” away from the “wisdom of the divine”, or academic, *wissenschaft* learning and, “[towards] a narrow preoccupation with teaching ministerial skills to individual pastors” (2008, 6). Hauerwas, a respected American theologian, warns that an increased preference for context-based and practical learning could be at the expense of academic rigour. “Seminaries are in trouble”, he says (Hauerwas 2007, 206). Hauerwas explains that context-based theological education is “too close to [its] constituency”, as the focus on “pastoral care” ultimately “dumbs down” ordination curricula (ibid.). Niebuhr, another prominent American theologian, similarly praised the academic pursuits of the seminary, saying seminaries are the “intellectual center

⁷⁴ Pew (2015a) found that the number of evangelical Protestants grew by an estimated 2.4 million between 2007 and 2014, while mainline Protestants decreased by an estimated 5.1 million over the same period.

of the Church's life" (1956, 130). One interviewee spoke of the benefits of context-based learning but fears it will take over from the classroom-based, residential style of learning. He explains that if that style were to "peter out [...] it would be a huge detriment to the Church", highlighting the benefits of rigorous academic study in a community of students.

The individualised nature of placements, as considered earlier, leads to a fragmentation of experiences that values the skill set of a particular clergy person, not a curriculum to be fulfilled. Pushing back on the claims made by the authors above, the interviews cited in this section on contextual learning show the usefulness of context-based education, but it is inherently limited and cannot reliably provide the breadth of theological training necessary for tomorrow's clergy. Mixed-mode models of education and curacy are inherently prone to this weakness.

In addition the growing number of responsibilities for religious leaders, a contextual emphasis on theological education adds yet another role on the clergy person – that of teacher. This facet of the role is best seen in Judaism. A female rabbi in London described that, among many responsibilities as a community rabbi, one of her roles "is as a teacher to children, to adults. Rabbi means my teacher". Whether teaching at a religious school or behind the pulpit, *teacher* is nonetheless an assumed role for the modern-day clergy person whether they realise it or not.

The influence of contextual learning in clerical training is growing, as seen by the practice of internalised, vertical training in megachurches. As seminaries place more emphasis on context-based learning, clergy in gathered communities are being called upon to teach and supervise students more and more. This is a recognition that clergy – not the institutions of theological education – are pivotal for understanding social contexts and providing the necessary training for future priests and rabbis, whether that concerns the leadership of a church, civic engagement, responding to antisemitic activity, or relating to other faiths.

Yet the assumption that clergy immediately and effectively respond to social change is not fool-proof. As is the case in placements, the teaching is only as good as the teacher. During an interview, one Christian minister and educator explained the danger of relying on

unstructured field education, saying a poor supervisor would “suck” and could also “do harm”. Therefore, despite structures to vet potential supervisors, students may be placed with a clergy person who is not well suited for teaching, or one who is not concerned with the way their faith tradition engages with other religions. Some clergy, as described in Chapter One, may choose to segregate themselves from wider society. Contextual learning ultimately limits the education of the student to the strengths of the clergy person. There is a responsibility on behalf of theological institutions to prepare their students for a plethora of experiences for a broadening profession. To train for this, placements are a necessary and vital part of theological education, but, as seen through the lens of interreligious education, they can be mistakenly- and over-utilised.

Despite the shortcomings of implicit and null curricula, the fragmented nature of placements, or the assumptions present in the Church of England, interreligious engagement and education *can* be incorporated into the seminary experience. This is done by the cultivation of a seminary ethos, or a culture whereby the importance of interreligious education is implicitly assumed. For example, the ethos of Leo Baeck is shaped by its Progressive Jewish affiliation, which has socially and theologically been more open to interreligious engagement (see Chapter One). This would, effectively, predispose the seminary to adopt interreligious education. Contrast this with Princeton Theological Seminary. While more mainline and liberal than many seminaries in America, Princeton is seen as more “middle-of-the-road” theological institution, especially when compared to the more progressive UTS. As PTS’s ethos is more theologically conservative than its regional counterparts, Princeton, as will be discussed, only hires Christian faculty members, whereas UTS and HUC both hire faculty from outside of their religious traditions.

An ethos of a seminary gradually changes, based on its faculty that are teaching and publishing research and the priorities set by the administration. Therefore, the ethos of one seminary may be more open to interreligious education than others. The following discussion examines what variables affect the implementation of interreligious education, and how this shapes the ethos of the institution. These variables are a two-sided coin, however. When used, they can enhance interreligious curriculum, but neglecting them can similarly impede any such training from taking root.

Other Variables

Developing a curriculum of interreligious engagement and learning does not come out of thin air. In addition to accreditation, curricular requirements, and the utilisation of context-based learning, seminaries employ several other variables to develop interreligious education. These variables go beyond what is simply taught or the concentrations offered, drawing on geographic and human resources that enhance interreligious curricula. They are the geographic proximity to areas of religious diversity, affiliations with other universities or seminaries, the demographics and skills of the faculty, and the influence of students.

Geographic Proximity: Won't You Be My Neighbour?

The phrase “won't you be my neighbour” is a fond memory of many Americans, immortalised by *Mr Rogers' Neighborhood*,⁷⁵ a state-funded television programme that encouraged children across the country to get to know, care about, and learn from their neighbour – a simple lesson for children and seminaries alike. In London, a rabbinical graduate of Montefiore emphasised the importance of seminaries creating partnerships, not just local ones but partnerships around the globe as well. “For a seminary to exist on its own is precarious”, he said.

Institutional partnerships are important, but large distances between two partners invariably hinder the effectiveness of the partnership. Nonetheless, partnerships can be created beyond an immediate geographical area. Of particular note are the partnerships between Leo Baeck College in London with the Queens Foundation Birmingham (separated by approximately 95 miles), which has been functioning for a few years, and PTS and JTS (separated by approximately 50 miles), a partnership that is in the process of being expanded. Both are either facing or anticipating issues. For Leo Baeck, one of the college's lecturers, a woman, explained the partnership with Queens had not “taken off” due to the mismatch in number between Jewish and Christian students, and because the geographical separation poses “a

⁷⁵ Fred Rogers was an ordained Presbyterian minister and student of world religions, where, according to the director of his recently-released documentary, Rogers “looked for what the messages were that united religions. And that really undergirds really his message of the show” (Neville 2018).

huge challenge". Between PTS and JTS, the two seminaries have a history of swapping professors but wish to expand this opportunity to students as well. However a JTS administrator pointed out that "it's easier to move faculty than it is to move students, because there's only one from each institution". He continued, saying that "you're essentially giving up a whole day" to travel to the other seminary, particularly given that public transportation is the most suitable option for travel between the two. Geographical separation will surely strain any attempts to create institutional partnerships, with limited time and the misalignment of seminary timetables also acting as major inhibitors. Therefore, it makes more sense for seminaries to focus on the resources in their immediate surroundings.

As financial resources in seminary education have diminished, institutions increasingly rely on their neighbours to provide expert teaching and training for their students through institutional partnerships. As described by a male ATS administrator, seminaries are "fulfil[ling] their mission more effectively by working in partnership with other organisations". In the data, three noteworthy institutional partnerships emerged. The first concerns university affiliations between seminaries and research universities, the second examines the unique interreligious relationship between UTS and JTS in New York, and the third looks at the consortium model found in the Cambridge Theological Federation.

University Affiliation

With many seminaries tracing their origins to research universities, especially in North America, it is no surprise that seminaries retain ties with those universities. These ties create an active relationship between the two institutions whereby students can easily access university resources and personnel as part of their seminary tuition. In my research, this is found in the majority of the seminaries studied. RIETS is affiliated with Yeshiva University; UTS and JTS are affiliated with Columbia University; HUC is affiliated with New York University; Ridley Hall and Westcott House are affiliated with the University of Cambridge.⁷⁶ An interviewee at ATS estimated that 40% of seminaries are "embedded in larger institutions, colleges, [and] universities". The trend, he continued, is for this to become more common. The utilisation of institutional partnerships helps seminaries fulfil their goals more effectively,

⁷⁶ Similarly, Truett Seminary is affiliated with Baylor University.

particularly in light of limited financial resources, by drawing on specialised, external resources.

Access to courses and lectures within a university provides a breadth of experiences that can be offered to seminary students. This is incredibly useful. As the role of clergy expands, access to university classes, in theory, offers a practical and economical way of providing more training that aligns with student interests (assuming enough electives are made available that allows students to utilise such courses). This is particularly notable as seminary students are increasingly going into roles outside of the clerical profession. Wheeler et al found that fewer Christian students are going into vocational ministry, opting instead to work in the education sector, for faith-based organisations, non-profits, or businesses (2007, 8). JTS is aware of this trend, which is why they created a joint programme between the seminary and Columbia University's School of Professional Studies in Non-Profit Management.

The sharing of personnel is also prevalent with university affiliations. Universities with large student bodies, like Princeton, Columbia, NYU, and Cambridge, have diverse student bodies and employ faith-specific chaplains. At Princeton University, for example, a Muslim chaplain regularly guest lectures at PTS for a number of courses, including *Islam in America* and a course on the Abrahamic faiths; at the University of Cambridge, Jewish chaplains regularly lead sessions on a course titled *Jewish-Christian Relations*. This relationship can extend beyond a particular subject area. For example, RIETS utilises Yeshiva University's School of Psychology to provide pastoral training for their rabbinical students. A faculty member at the seminary explained, "when they're embedded in the rabbinical school, they're still teaching a little like a rabbi, which is good, but not enough. And once we expose our students to the regular faculty at the psychology school, they got a different level of training".

University affiliation is a resourceful tool for modern day seminaries, both in terms of finances and expertise. It broadens the teaching available for students by encouraging them to take courses outside the seminary or by inviting university personnel in, accessing a wider range of disciplines and expertise.⁷⁷ An interviewee from RIETS explained the connection between

⁷⁷ For more on the benefits of university affiliation, see Phelan (2014) and Chinnici and Lyons (2014).

his seminary and Yeshiva University's Graduate School of Jewish Studies; his course on Christian-Jewish relations was open to students from both institutions. Speaking of the interreligious opportunities this cross-listed course offered to rabbinical students, he said it created "at least a level of awareness [for interreligious education]" for RIETS, but nonetheless interreligious education was "not on the agenda".

For all its benefits, interreligious encounter through university affiliation is not enough on its own to affect the ethos of a seminary. A non-Christian member of Princeton University expressed his impression of PTS:

[PTS] is not like the most interfaith engaging seminary. I think there are other seminaries in this country that are, that have a far greater appreciation for the multifaith world that their students are going to enter [...] At Princeton Theological Seminary there is an attempt to use resources, you know, but there isn't like a robust thinking through what multifaith engagement looks like.

University affiliation, I would argue, implicitly creates an assumption that seminaries are open to this type of learning, but it does not create a culture in which interreligious learning is valued and thought through in a "robust" way. A partnership in existence does not mean it is effective. Only a few students who were interviewed took advantage of the benefits provided by university affiliation, and many times they were unaware such a scheme existed.

An example of where this is done in an effective manner that actively promotes interreligious encounter and education – and where a partnership exists between theological institutions – is the relationship between JTS and UTS in New York and the Cambridge Theological Federation in England.

Jewish and Union Theological Seminaries

As cited earlier, Peace (2011) and Mumisa and Kessler (2008) both wrote on the benefit of seminaries from different faiths partnering together. In the data collected, a similar relationship was replicated by UTS and JTS. The relationship between the two started in the 1960s, and they have been developing an interreligious partnership since. It has resulted in

faculty sharing and a cross-listing of courses that enables students to take classes at the other seminary. The connection between the two seminaries came to life through faculty partnerships, with interviewees specifically noting the relationships between Abraham Heschel (who retired from JTS but had previously taught at UTS) and Reinhold Niebuhr (UTS), as well as Burt Visotzky (JTS) and Raymond Brown (UTS). Many faculty members taught (and continue to teach) classes in both seminaries, including Mary Boys, James Sanders, and Alan Cooper.

Numerous graduates expressed how they benefitted from this partnership – from a Jewish student taking Greek at UTS, a jointly taught class by faculty members from both seminaries on Jewish-Christian dialogue, to a UTS student taking Hebrew at JTS. A female UTS administrator said in an interview that “the more you can get people together in the same room, the better this [partnership] works”. UTS even hosts an initiative to encourage a group of female students from both seminaries to live together, with the explicit goal of exploring “new contexts for interfaith dialogue, [reflecting] in community on what conversations across religious traditions mean, and [cultivating] close relationships” (Union Theological Seminary 2017b). One interviewee and then-student of UTS lived in this Christian-Jewish community for a year, participating in what Moyaert would call the “dialogue of life” (2013, 202). It included visiting each other’s houses of worship, participating in festivals and holidays, and partaking in each other’s religious practices. The female interviewee claimed it was “probably the most helpful and informative, and like actual practical learning thing I’ve done in the interfaith world at Union”, thereby reiterating the impact this partnership has had on her understanding of the Jewish faith.

The crossover is not equal, nor is the relationship without difficulty. Jewish students tend to take more courses at UTS than the other way around, and tensions exist between the two student bodies, particularly on the issues of race and Black Lives Matter.⁷⁸ Despite this, the

⁷⁸ Over 20% of Union students are black (Union Theological Seminary 2017a), and many in the student body support the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Ahead of the 2016 election, BLM adopted a platform critical of the state of Israel, which has strained relationships with the Jewish community, and the relationship between JTS and UTS is no exception. Specifically, the platform called for national divestment from military expenditures

partnership between the two seminaries proves to be effective and resourceful, and the success is largely due to the geographic location of the two institutions. One of the most effective contributing factors to this institutional partnership is the fact that they are located across the street from each other in Manhattan, thereby making it extremely easy and quick for students and faculty to enter the other's doors. A male JTS faculty member, who has overseen the seminary's relationship with UTS and the developing one with PTS, said that "proximity and neighbourliness were, I think, an initial impetus" in the development of the partnership between JTS and UTS.

Cambridge Theological Federation

Geographical proximity is vital, and that is also exemplified by the Cambridge Theological Federation (CTF). CTF is an ecumenical body comprising of Christian seminaries and organisations, representing an array of theological traditions from open-evangelical to Anglo-Catholic. It is also home to The Woolf Institute, an organisation that "combines teaching, scholarship and outreach ... to encourage tolerance and foster understanding between people of all beliefs" (The Woolf Institute 2017). As a student at Cambridge University, I worked closely with the Cambridge Theological Federation outside of my data collection. This experience illuminated the collective benefits of geographic proximity for seminary education.

Ridley Hall and Westcott House, the Church of England seminaries in the Federation, both utilise the resources and expertise of the locally-based Woolf Institute to provide teaching on *Jewish-Christian Relations*, an intensive course that takes place between terms and is offered annually. A female Ridley administrator described the importance of having a champion for interreligious learning in the consortium, saying:

and in doing so was highly critical of Israel. They described Israel as "an apartheid state" that "practices systematic discrimination and has maintained a military occupation of Palestine for decades", calling the US "complicit in the genocide taking place against the Palestinian people" (Ndugga-Kabuye and Gilmer). Although the tension between the American Jewish community and BLM is important for contemporary interreligious relations, my limited data set and space constraints prohibit me from fully discussing the topic. More information can be found in Green (2016b), Cortellessa (2016), and Sidahmed (2016).

I think it's an absolutely huge benefit and plus. The expertise at Woolf is there, and the questions that Woolf ask of us as a federation are there. Which means that that question is in the room. Whether we ignore it is another question, but it is there, it is present, and it is there. And I think, for me, that is hugely important.

Geographic proximity is a logical and convenient way to foster an ethos that is supportive of interreligious education, yet few seminaries have the luxury of being nearby relevant institutions to partner with. Similar to UTS and JTS's relationship, geographic proximity by itself does not create an environment that embeds interreligious learning and encounter into the ethos of the seminary institution. It requires an active voice, whether that voice comes from a specialist organisation, administration, or faculty members.

Faculty

From the importance of a central authority to develop accreditation standards, to the strategic utilisation of institutional partnerships for interreligious learning, one must also look inside the walls of a seminary to assess the development of interreligious education. Within seminaries, this field is largely driven by a "champion" for the cause, typically a faculty member or senior level administrator who advocates for the development and implementation of interreligious learning. One faculty member at JTS, described by his colleagues as this "champion", expressed the importance of faculty in developing and maintaining an ethos that values interreligious education. The male faculty member said, "if there's going to be long term continuity, it's got to be faculty driven".

Just as the Woolf Institute provides an interreligious presence in CTF, individual faculty members can act as a similar voice within individual institutions. At PTS, one faculty member began to stress the importance of Christian-Jewish understanding. Over time, she began to teach courses on the topic, leading students on annual class visits to the Levant. Eventually, she successfully petitioned the seminary to create a certificate in Jewish-Christian relations. This certificate will shape the ethos of the seminary by communicating the importance of interreligious understanding at PTS.

Who the seminary hires also sends an implicit statement about the values and ethos of the seminary. Although many seminaries require a statement of faith for its faculty (like PTS), others do not. Union, as mentioned earlier, employs both a Buddhist and a Muslim on faculty, and both are practitioner-experts within their respective faiths. This is a much greater step beyond inviting speakers of those faiths into the classroom as a guest – it is a bold statement concerning the ethos of the seminary and challenges the assumption that, for example, only Christians can teach about other faiths. Rather, Union’s hiring practices showcase the value of interreligious courses being taught by practitioner-academics from that faith tradition.

Faculty members are given a significant amount of autonomy to design and carry out their courses, as seen in the case studies of Chapter One, resulting in a diversity of pedagogies. The agency a seminary principal or president have in shaping interreligious education is paramount (Tiffany 2015); it was described by Gilliat-Ray as a “key determinant” for pedagogical formation (2003, 11). Just as interreligious learning can be brought to life by a faculty member or administrator, it can also fade when that person leaves. Graduates of Leo Baeck expressed the availability of interreligious education depended on the principal serving at that time. “Principals have different priorities”, one female rabbi said, while a male colleague similarly remarked, “I was in a period of transition between principals and stuff as well, so some of those values get lost”. A female Leo Baeck faculty member also decried the problem of faculty turnover, saying, “people in other institutions move on and then we have to develop new relationships, and that's always a challenge”. A solution to this problem, as identified by Gaston and Brealey, is a transition from relying on a single faculty member to developing institutional partnerships that will outlast the tenure of a single person (2016, 50). Although it is easier said than done, the examples discussed in the preceding sections are a testament to the utility of institutional partnerships.

From the top level of administration – the accreditation bodies – to institutional partnerships and consortiums, and down to the principal and faculties, all variables have proven their effectiveness in the formation of interreligious education at the seminary. However, there is one last group worth mentioning: the consumers of theological education, students.

Students

Students, whether they realise it or not, are influential in the formation of curricula. They do this, my research has found, via their levels of preparedness upon entering seminary, their vocational expectations upon graduation, and through their agency on campus during the training programme.

Matriculation

Today, students are entering seminary less prepared than years past, a problem present in both Christian and Jewish seminaries. A female Westcott lecturer remarked, “every year students come knowing less and less, and we're starting from a lower and lower threshold all the time”. Westcott is not the only seminary with this problem. A male lecturer at JTS expressed a similar sentiment:

A generation or two ago, you could presume that many, I'd say most, students came in with stronger core backgrounds in Hebrew language and core religious texts than they do now [...] those skills that might have been taken for granted on the part of most students say, thirty years ago, can't be anymore.

Students enter seminary less educated in their religious tradition, and in some cases, with limited experience in that tradition having recently converted into the faith. Therefore, the seminary feels the need to place a greater emphasis on the traditional core subjects – text, theology, history, languages, and ethics – to fill in gaps that used to be taken for granted, making it more difficult to integrate interreligious curricula into the ordination requirements. To reiterate, the lack of religious literacy among entering students prompts the seminary to focus on the “core” teachings as opposed to social contexts. This happens despite the fact that, as will be seen in Chapter Three, social contexts are a powerful force in shaping the role of clergy.

Graduation

In addition to lower levels of preparedness, students are going into a broader set of professions after graduation, albeit more so in the US than in England (one faculty member

of a Jewish seminary in England said that “that kind of diversification hasn’t really happened here”). The reasoning behind her statement regarding Jewish seminaries is not clear, but it is an understandable reality when comparing American and English seminaries. In the US, students typically finance their own theological education, with bursaries available, but not expected, from sponsoring denominations. In England, students must undergo a rigorous selection process that often takes at least a year, according to the Church of England. This includes regular meetings concerning student formation, references, an application, recommendation from a panel, and a final decision from the student’s bishop (The Church of England 2019). The Church then pays a student’s tuition and living costs. This ultimately creates a structure of accountability whereby the student in return gives a career’s worth of service to the Church.

Students at American seminaries can independently choose to attend seminary, as opposed to going through a selection process as in the Church of England. Similarly, many American seminary students have not received substantial financial support from their denomination and have the ability to pursue a wider range of careers after graduation. A professor at Union remarked, “many are gonna work in non-profits or work doing organising or chaplaincy, and all of those things are somewhat inherently interreligious”. She went on to estimate that “over 50%” of Union’s students went into a non-church setting upon graduating.

While less than an estimated 50% of students from Union may go into church-based outside ministry, the national average says otherwise – but barely. In 2016, ATS found that only 51% of MDiv students planned to enter church-based ministry after graduating (Deasy 2016, 4).⁷⁹ It is common for students to enter non-profit charity positions or to work as counsellors, chaplains, or teachers. This was reflected in my data. When asked about their future plans, only 7 out of 18 student interviewees expected to go into congregational

⁷⁹ Wheeler (2014) found that students are more likely to expect a vocation in congregational ministry when they are about to graduate than when they are entering seminary, although that does not diminish the fact that many go into other professions.

ministry.⁸⁰ Students do not, however, see seminary as a waste of time. A student at HUC said that the role of the rabbi today is “anything that rabbi wants it to be, putting a Jewish lens [...] on any work”, including politics, non-profit work, or, she suggested, even museum management. She understood seminary training as constructing and adjusting her Jewish lens. The broadening career paths of students have prompted seminaries to incorporate more educational opportunities for management and financing, whether through institutional partnerships or classes. For example, Leo Baeck offers a *Leadership and Management Skills* course (Leo Baeck College 2017), and UTS developed a course, as explained by the lecturer, on administration, fundraising, innovation, and start-ups. While the under-preparedness of students requires greater focus on the core topics of seminary education, their future paths simultaneously put pressure on the institution to expand what is offered. Despite these conflicting pressures, students have been found to influence the curriculum and ethos of the institution by expressing their interests.

The In-Between: Life at the Seminary

The greater diversity in student interests and experiences have, as a male interviewee at JTS explained, given the seminary “much more diversity [in terms] of intellectual background and engagement”. Leaders of seminaries pride themselves on a horizontal style of administration that allows students to shape the institution in which they are training. A male Westcott administrator explained, “we've got a lot of ordinands bringing experience from the world of work, from the contexts in which they have lived. And that helps to feed into the learning environment”.

While enrolled at the seminary, students – according to administration – can affect the “learning environment”. What does this mean for interreligious education, and do students feel that it is necessary for their future roles?

⁸⁰ More US students were planning to go into work outside a traditional congregational setting, whereas all English students planned to enter a church or synagogue. Among Anglican students, this is certainly understandable as they must go through a selection process in order to begin ordination. Therefore, a student who did not want to enter into parish ministry would conceivably not be selected for ordination training. Not all student interviewees were asked about their plans after graduation.

Baird found that American students, many of whom grew up in the aftermath of 9/11, “are more advanced in their engagement with other religions than their seminary professors”, meaning that some students could find the ethos and curricula of seminaries “unsupportive or even hostile” (2013, 316). My interviews with students did not find a perception of hostility, and overall students find the institutions supportive. Students are, however, more aware of the need for interreligious education and the seminary’s lack of provision of it.

Broadly, students interviewed were aware that interreligious activism, or at least the presence of other religions, will shape their role as a Christian or Jewish faith leader. One female student at PTS remarked that “ministers [...] have a sort of authority, and people look to them for advice when it comes to different things, including interreligious dialogue”; another at UTS said that learning about other faiths “seems so logical. I can’t just be in my own Christian silo”. Another, more bluntly, stated, “yeah, I'd say that's probably important for any job [...] being able to not be an asshole is really nice”. A male rabbinical student at HUC said that “it is a professional necessity to be able to partner with people of other faiths in order to make change for the better”. In line with the realities of clergy serving in diverse areas, discussed in the next chapter, students are acutely aware of the necessity for clergy to engage with other religions. This, therefore, makes them more critical of what the seminary is (or is not) offering.

Ridley Hall requires a 1-3 day intensive interfaith course and implicitly practices threading, like discussing supersessionism in a New Testament class. Despite this, one male student expressed frustration that Ridley did not invest more time into interreligious thinking and encounter, explaining that “it's relatively rare that we get a sermon in chapel that's about something going on in society”. In the US, students at UTS recognise and value the interreligious learning taking place not only through curricular requirements but also through student and faculty diversity, both of which have non-Christians. The presence of non-Christian students, whether enrolled at UTS or from JTS across the street, will “stretch your mind”, according to one female student who saw the diversity in her classroom as a strength of her seminary experience. The best method to learn about other faiths, another student suggested, is through the personal relationships and friendships that stem from that diverse

classroom context. (A religiously diverse seminary environment does have drawbacks, however, as students desired the presence of faith-specific chaplains to offer formative care and support – a trait many UTS students and graduates said was missing from their education.) Students may not have a seat at the table when curriculum is restructured, during the admissions process, or when new faculty are hired, but that does not mean that they lack agency when it comes to the ethos of the seminary.

Down the road, PTS shows how students can mobilise and prompt discussion around the inclusion of interreligious education. Despite the seminary's extensive threading and number of electives on other faiths, students noticed the absence of explicit interreligious training. One male student stated that "there doesn't seem to be a kind of, an openness or intentionality about trying to include those things", explaining that interreligious education is generally limited to specialist classes on the topic and not part of the wider institutional ethos.

PTS students similarly recognised that interreligious education is necessary for their future careers, with one woman saying that it is "paramount [that interfaith] conversations are taking place within the church". Yet outside of one popular elective on Judaism, students felt that interreligious education did not "seem to be a major focus" for the seminary. In response, a group of students and a faculty member petitioned the administration to promote more interreligious discussions and opportunities on campus.

Following these meetings, the Dean used his convocation speech to discuss Christian antisemitism, affirming the seminary's initiative to "not consciously or unconsciously teach contempt for Jews or Judaism" (Kay 2017). Following these liminal moments, students at the beginning and end of their seminary careers expressed the ethos of PTS was "on the brink of change". The long-term effects have yet to be seen, and may not be for some time. Meanwhile, PTS is actively restarting an institutional partnership with JTS and, more than any other seminary, is consciously threading interreligious teaching throughout the curriculum. This example shows how students can, as active agents, change the ethos and curricula in a seminary context.

In her study of seminary students, Gilliat-Ray found that "students increasingly are learning

about other faiths from adherents of those traditions themselves, rather than from their Christian tutors or from books” (2003, 15). That reality is demonstrated by my research as well. Students and clergy currently serving are the ones leading the charge for seminaries to incorporate more interreligious education. This could be, as Baird suggested earlier, because students are simply more aware of the effects of religious diversity, or it could be that younger people are more open to difference and learning about other religions than previous generations (Putnam and Campbell 2010, 538). Social change – specifically the growth of religious diversity and wider social engagement – is a reality noticed by clergy *and* seminary students, but less so by seminary institutions. A reliance on contextual learning does not guarantee a robust understanding of interreligious engagement, nor does it provide a consistent mechanism for learning. If seminaries continue to neglect changing social contexts and the clerical need for interreligious education, students, as Gilliat-Ray suggests, will have to find the training elsewhere, primarily in local communities in the form of placements or on the job.

Conclusion

There is no perfect framework for interreligious pedagogies that can reasonably be applied to all seminaries, and no single variable discussed in this chapter can effectively create an ethos that takes interreligious learning seriously – instead, a cocktail of many variables must be employed if lasting change is to be made. Union and Leo Baeck are two seminaries that have interreligious components as part of their core curricula, and interreligious education forms part of the ethos for each one. Union, for example, explicitly requires all students to take a course that pairs classroom with contextual learning, affirming the importance of the topic in the educational enterprise and students’ futures. The seminary draws on nearby resources to enhance its teaching and opportunities for students through partnerships with Columbia University and JTS. It promotes interreligious encounter in the classroom through its religiously diverse faculty and its support of a Jewish-Christian student community.

Union has resources available that many seminaries do not, namely their affiliation with an Ivy League university, their proximity to the religious diversity of New York City, and a neighbour across the street in the leading Conservative Jewish seminary in the world, JTS. Therefore, the curricular structure and ethos of Union cannot simply be replicated – that

would be an unreasonable expectation, not least because Union's mainline Christian theological disposition and ethos differ from many seminaries. Put simply, Union is an exception.

The review of various pedagogical approaches in Chapter One gave an overview into the diversity of explicit curricula concerning interreligious training. Paired with the research described throughout this chapter, it is clear that interreligious education in seminaries is piecemeal, diverse, and often contracted to local communities or programmes outside the seminary's sphere of influence, such as CPE or IME Phase II (curacy). For the seminaries who teach on other faiths, different variables are utilised. This chapter has shown how the ethos and resources on hand within a seminary – a curriculum, use of contextual placements, institutional partners in close proximity, faculty, and students – shape what is taught and how the training is perceived in implicit and explicit ways. It also sheds light onto how the seminary constructs a contemporary religious worldview. How each variable is or is not utilised is indicative of the priorities of seminaries, as well as their views on the role of clergy in the twenty-first century.

As was mentioned earlier, seminaries are slow-moving institutions that are resistant to change, particularly when compared to the fluid nature of clerical life. More so, the limits of time and finances stifle serious investment into the development of new courses and teaching opportunities. While each seminary may approach the question of religious diversification and interreligious pedagogies differently, there is a common trend among the seminaries studied that spans denominations, faiths, and countries.⁸¹ That trend is the gradual shift towards the traditional subjects of seminary education, which sends an explicit message that the clerical role is focused on the core subjects of text, theology, history, languages, and ethics. In many ways it is, but as Chapter Three will show, clergy are becoming public leaders that are shaped by their religiously diverse social contexts, and that requires a broader range of learned skills. To address this, seminaries increasingly rely on contextual placements and assume interreligious skills can be taught and developed outside of the seminary classroom.

⁸¹ As mentioned, UTS, and to extent Leo Baeck, can be seen as exceptions to this trend, and they are certainly shaped by their more open and inclusive theologies towards other faiths.

This highlights the wedge in authority between seminaries and clergy, the latter of which are assuming greater responsibility for the training of ordinands. As clergy possess an increasingly prominent role in clerical training, I believe greater attention should be paid to the clerical experience – beliefs, practices, and engagements with their social context. This not only address a gap in literature and creates a more well-rounded research framework, but it also lends itself to the development of practical, well-informed pedagogical changes in seminaries, as will be seen in Chapter Four.

Religious diversification has enabled clergy to engage with a vibrant and diverse public body that focuses more on interreligious partnerships, social action, and political agency than commentaries on religious texts; seminaries, by and large, have not yet established pedagogical approaches to address this new clerical reality. It is vital, therefore, to study the experiences of clergy serving in diverse areas, not only to better understand the training they receive, but to gauge how they think about and engage with other religions – skills many had to learn on the job. This is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Three – Clergy: “The Last Great Generalists”

The previous chapter ended on the importance of interreligious education to seminary students. Despite a recognition of its importance, many seminary students do not feel they are receiving enough training on the religiously diverse contexts they will be entering. This problem is not alleviated by graduating and leaving seminary; it is one also felt by clergy.

The reality of the clerical profession in the twenty-first century is that no amount of training will cover all that is required. The role is increasingly broad, as captured by the following quotes. The interviewees were both women but from two different faith traditions and two different countries. Their quotes demonstrate a shared trend in the clerical profession, not limited by faith or nation:

The reality is that being a rabbi, I think, in the twenty-first century is to be a jack of all trades. And we've moved into, I think, a world in which being that kind of renaissance character isn't really possible. You can't know about everything, and people are not all going to be good at everything that the job demands of them.

You know, in America anyway, pastors are expected to be the last great generalist. Right, we have to know everything. We have to know how to run a business, we have to know how to do HR, we have to know, you know, strategic leadership, we have to know how to exegete a passage, like, who knows all that stuff, right? I didn't learn any of this.

Based on the seminary training provided, one would expect clergy to spend the vast majority of their time reading theologians, speaking in ancient Hebrew, and writing exegesis papers on a passage of scripture. Only occasionally would clergy need to employ other skills, such as developing interreligious partnerships, managing limited resources, and engaging with partners of another faith. In reality, being a clergy person in the twenty-first century requires one to flip those expectations, exposing the cleavage between seminaries and clergy.

The differentiation between seminaries and clergy as a form religious authority comes in their responses to social change. As discussed, seminaries exist within social contexts and create a context of their own. However, the lived reality in local communities greatly differs to that within an educational institution. This is where clerical and seminary authority differ. Clergy are more able to respond and adjust to changing social contexts, personifying a dialectical relationship between religious belief and a social context. Seminaries, alternatively, are sluggish in response to social change and religiously diverse contexts, choosing to focus on the core subjects of seminary education.

Certainly, theological study is imperative for religious leaders – clergy are tasked with understanding and articulating a foundation of faith for the masses and making it relevant to today. Exegesis and language skills inform better sermons. These skills, without a doubt, remain vitally essential to the clerical profession. However, for all that is expected within the walls of a church or synagogue, the wider community cannot be neglected. The public facing role of clergy is incredibly important. They act as representatives of their gathered community and faith to the wider world, providing leadership in social action initiatives and a moral voice in contemporary politics. As governments retreat from social services, clergy are expected to oversee and carry out programmes that provide food to the hungry and shelter to the homeless. They do all of this by forging alliances with other faith leaders, liaising with local authorities, speaking at schools, and responding to divisive politics.

All of this is shifting the perception of what it means to be a clergy person, at least in London and New York, from a cultic role to one that centres on justice and advocacy issues. Clergy legitimise their role in wider society by forging partnerships with other faiths, speaking a common language of justice but doing so in a dialect that is appropriate for their tradition.

It is this reality that encourages a sociotheological analysis. Religious beliefs about other religions and what it means to be a religious leader in a religiously diverse area are not fixed, despite what slowly evolving seminary curricula may suggest. Religious diversification and the subsequent broadening of expectations have coincided with a shift in the ways clergy theologically and practically think about the presence of other religions. Put differently, religious diversification shapes belief *and* practice. This leads clergy to view other faiths with

more nuance and inclusivity, increasingly understanding their role as public figures and advocates for justice. For example, this chapter discusses how intermarriage and the diversification of congregations shapes the practice of clergy as the leaders of a gathered community, but it also addresses the impact this has on their theology of other faiths. Outside of a gathered community, a diversifying locality leads to more partnerships and opportunities for joint action. However, underlying these actions are theological motivations, manifested in *the common good* and *tikkun olam*. A sociotheological framework shows that these theological adjustments and practical responses are not a complete abandonment of cultic practices of clergy. Rather, clergy are practically *and* theologically responding to their social contexts in a way that is congruent with their religious worldviews.

This chapter discusses how clergy have been shaped by their religiously diverse social contexts. It begins by explaining how clerical authority is constructed through historical understandings of religious leadership, ordination via seminary education, and the development and utilisation of social capital. The chapter then transitions into a data-based analysis, categorising interviewee responses about the central tenets of the clerical role today and highlighting a shift from sacramentally-focused orientations towards ones of advocacy and justice.

Across the field sites, clergy interpret their roles in different ways but they share similar challenges. I move on to explain these contemporary challenges, including the diversification of congregations, existing as a religious minority, and intermarriage. In addressing these challenges, clergy see other faiths as a resource, not a threat. In turn, this has a marked impact on the spiritual development of clergy, their theologies of other faiths, and interreligious engagement (this is particularly true, as will be pointed out, among evangelical Christians). Beyond religious challenges, clergy face very practical ones as well. With fewer bodies and fewer resources, clergy must fulfil more non-traditional roles to sustain their faith community, namely in the areas of fundraising and project management.

When gathered communities are healthy organisationally, they can create change in their local contexts. Clergy, who increasingly see themselves as advocates for justice, do this by utilising interreligious social action and political engagement. This is discussed by drawing on

the examples of faith-based community organising and recent political developments. In conclusion, a case study of an east London priest will be presented that serves as a summarising example of the dynamic role of clergy in a changing social context.

The Shaping of Clergy

As described in the Introduction, clergy possess religious authority. It is not inherently bestowed upon them due to their “exceptional sanctity”, as is the case with Weber’s charismatic authority (1922, 216), but rather is the culmination of scriptural and historical understandings of religious leaders, denominational endorsements, and seminary education. While clergy are a product of these understandings and institutions, this thesis has reiterated that they differ from seminaries in their response to social change.

Before this differentiation can be explored further, a discussion is required on the historical shaping of clergy – how has religious leadership been broadly understood in Judaism and Christianity, and how is religious leadership transmitted and practiced today? Asked differently, what are the origins of religious leadership in both traditions, how is it shaped by seminaries and gathered communities, and what forms of social capital are needed for clerical practice in areas of religious diversity?

Understanding Clergy: A Historical Perspective

Historically, the lineage of Jewish religious leadership was determined through the Tribe of Levi, who was responsible for the cultic duties of sacrifice, interpretation, purification rituals, discernment and judgement in legal matters, and various political functions (Levine 1987, 535). This style of leadership largely remained intact through the time of Jesus of Nazareth, as early Christians recognised the authority of the Levites. Following the Romans’ destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, the cultic function of Jewish leaders changed. This roughly coincided with the opening of the Christian faith to non-Jews, as chronicled by Peter’s vision in Acts 10. At this point, the two faiths had clearly diverged, with each developing their own sources of authority and leadership.

After the destruction of the Temple, the most important religious authorities in Judaism became the rabbis, who traditionally behaved as judges and scholars of religious texts (Ludwig 1987, 102). Historically, a rabbi's life would have consisted of personal study, similar to a *paideia* style of learning. However, in the latter half of the seventeenth and early half of the eighteenth centuries, a shift occurred, largely spurred by Moses Mendelssohn. He prompted rabbis, many of whom "had not even the most elementary knowledge of the things essential to a common education", to engage with and become learned in civic life; other individuals such as Abraham Geiger and Leopold Zunz pushed the Judaism of their time to be reconciled with "the modern scientific spirit" (Landsberg 1905, 296). In time, communities tended to expect rabbis to be *more* than just Jewish scholars. This, coupled with degree requirements for rabbinical students in Austria, France, and German states, led to the professionalisation of the rabbinate. This transition was largely influenced by community expectations for religious leaders, but also to match that of Christian clergy, particularly regarding pastoral elements (Kohler 1905, 297). This was furthermore formalised with the introduction of seminaries in Europe and the US in the nineteenth century. Writing for the Jewish Encyclopaedia, Kohler explains that these changes "produced [a] new type of rabbi, possibly less ascetic and not so well versed in Hebrew lore, but more broad-minded, and more efficient in the direction of manifold activities in a larger field of usefulness" (Ibid.).

In Christian text and tradition, Jesus Christ, believed to be the Son of God, is the "great high priest" of the tradition (The Bible, Hebrews 4:14), but his followers were sent out to minister to different communities with the Great Commission (Ibid., Matthew 18:16-20). How localised Christian leadership was practised in the first and second centuries outside of the biblical text remains a debate (Hughes 1987, 537), but the priestly role became more defined when the tradition was given legal status in the Roman Empire under Constantine in 313 CE. The priest then became the central figure of cultic practice for gathered communities.

Raising Clergy: Ordination

In addition to the historical and scriptural legitimacy of clergy, seminaries are often (but not always, as evidenced in the discussion on megachurches) seen as vital to the training of clergy. This occurs through the process of ordination. Ordination refers to the "publicly designating and setting apart [of] certain persons for special religious service and leadership, granting

them religious authority and power to be exercised for the welfare of the community” (Ludwig, 1987, 97). By completing the necessary requirements at seminary, students receive formal qualifications to become clergy in conjunction with their denominational body. Christian ordination was originally defined by the practice of laying hands on the candidate, as chronicled in Acts 6:6, 1 Timothy 4:12, and 2 Timothy 1:6 (Ibid., 103). In Judaism, this qualification is called *semikhah*, which similarly translates to “leaning [of the hands]” found in the story of Moses granting authority to Joshua (see Numbers 11:16-25 and Deuteronomy 34:9).⁸² Originally *semikhah* was required for entrance into the Sanhedrin, the Jewish courts, which is indicative of the role rabbis had as interpreters of Jewish law. Although there are many similarities between and within Christianity and Judaism about the importance, origins, and practice of ordination, denominational bodies often approach ordination differently.

In the Church of England, individuals become ordained priests after the selection process described earlier and periods of time in study and as a curate (IME Phases I and II). Given the relatively close ties of the Anglican church and its training structures, this process is much more straight forward than American Christian denominations. In the US, denominations do not select and send individuals to train, and therefore not all seminary students become ordained (as implied by the earlier discussion on the broadening career paths of seminary students). However, many denominations require a seminary degree in order to become ordained.

In the Presbyterian Church (USA), for example, students who attend seminary must also take five denominational exams on Bible content, exegesis, church polity, theological competence, and worship and sacraments (Presbyterian Church (USA) 2018, 3). In the Episcopal tradition, if one does not attend a denominational seminary, extra denominational courses are required, and an exam must similarly be sat. In more congregationally-based churches, like

⁸² For the purpose of this thesis, *semikhah* specifically refers to rabbinical ordination (*semikhah lerabbanut*), and not cantorial ordination.

Baptist and other evangelical denominations, individual churches retain the agency to ordain ministers.⁸³

In Judaism, the process is more straightforward. In the three Jewish traditions studied in this thesis – Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox – a student becomes a rabbi after completing his or her rabbinical education at a seminary.⁸⁴ Yet over time, the meaning of semikhah has changed. Originally, as was said, this process was necessary for one to sit on the Sanhedrin. Here, a rabbi could provide legal advice and rulings, with some able to judge on criminal cases and capital punishment (Rothkoff 1972a, 1140-2). Later, understandings of semikhah grew to include the role of teacher, acquired through a formal diploma following the professionalisation of the rabbinate (Levitats 1972, 1143). In nineteenth century Germany, Reform Judaism grew and so did the expectations for the rabbinate, incorporating a more comprehensive rabbinical education that went beyond Talmudic studies. This marks a difference within Judaism today. Orthodox seminaries, like RIETS, still adhere to the Talmudic legal code of *yoreh yoreh yaddin yaddin*,⁸⁵ whereas Conservative and Reform seminaries place less emphasis on the Talmud and legal codes (Rothkoff 1972b, 1147), making room for topics like synagogue administration and preaching.

The authority of clergy does not come from seminary training alone – indeed, this is what makes clergy more than an arm of a seminary embedded in a local community. The role, responsibilities, and religious authority of clergy are also derived from the denominational body, gathered community, and, vitally, their ability to respond to social changes.

⁸³ There is historical precedence for this in Judaism, as well. Rothkoff wrote that by the end of the sixteenth century, a Jewish leader, then referred to as *Morenu*, was “only able to exercise his authority with the consent of the community that elected him” (1972b, 1146). This can also be found today in strict Orthodox communities where semikhah is achieved through *yeshivot*, or traditional schools, as opposed to students going away to seminary (Ludwig 1987, 102). These types of yeshivas are not included in my study.

⁸⁴ Although not included in my study, some strict Orthodox leaders can fill a rabbinical post due to their extensive knowledge of Jewish legal matters, often seen as the main role of a rabbi in these communities.

⁸⁵ Jewish ordination traditionally culminated in the reciting of the *Yoreh Yoreh. Yaddin Yaddin. Yattir Yattir*. This translates as “may he decide? He may decide. May he judge? He may judge. May he permit? He may permit”, exemplifying the legal duties of the time.

Practicing Leadership: Gathered Communities

The levels of autonomy gathered communities have in relation to the larger denominational structures affect how clergy can obtain and practice their leadership, particularly as they respond to social changes. Wood studied religious authority (or as he describes it, “formally legitimated power”) across American denominations and churches during a period of great social change – the Civil Rights Movement (1970, 1057). He explains that in the more hierarchal forms of Christianity, such as the Anglican or Episcopal Churches, authority is bestowed in a top-down manner.⁸⁶ This denominational structure provides the clergy person more insulated power, as there is a sense of job security and protection guaranteed by the denomination. Therefore, clergy in these denominations have the agency to address more sensitive issues. In Wood’s example, these clergy could take a more controversial stance on the issue of racial integration and civil rights, as laity who disagree with their stance “are thus subjected to the social pressure of members who, however intensely they may oppose a particular policy, believe deeply in the system of church government which they have been taught to respect since childhood” (Ibid., 1066).

Should disputes between the priest and congregation arise, the priest, under the protection of a hierarchal system, could be transferred to a different parish by their acting bishop, whereas in a congregational “low church”, such as a non-denominational or Baptist church whereby individual gathered communities retain large amounts of autonomy, that minister could simply be fired and left unemployed. This is because in congregational-based denominations (such as evangelical churches and Reform synagogues), gathered faith communities are more, or totally, autonomous and have their own hiring practices for clergy. Drawing on Wood’s research, clergy in these communities are less likely to take controversial stances, as their job security wholly relies on the laity. Taking a stance on a divisive issue like the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s – and as will be discussed later in this chapter, the election of Donald Trump – could cause a “disturbance of apathy” among the congregation, making the clergy person “most vulnerable” (Wood 1970, 1065).

⁸⁶ For more on church structure and its effect on authority, see RH Williams (2012, 319-20).

These structural approaches undoubtedly shape how clergy perceive their roles within a gathered community and a wider social context. Take, for example, Reform Judaism, where the gathered community decides who will serve as their rabbi. A female Reform rabbi-turned-seminary lecturer explains:

There's a very interesting dynamic that exists between a rabbi and their employer, which is you are both the leader and an employee. So your community or your employer organisation will, to some extent, define what your role is. If they want you to be focusing on outreach and creating new communities, then you will do that.

Another female rabbi explained that the priority of a rabbi must always be their community, saying, "the priority is the community and the Jewish community there. They pay their sums", and subsequently, her salary. This is similarly reflected in evangelical Christianity, where the congregation hires the pastor. One male Baptist minister, who asked for this portion of his interview to remain entirely anonymous, explained that the congregants who held the most sway in his congregation were politically liberal, despite the church being, by his estimates, 90% conservative. Because of this power and political balancing, he avoided anything that could be seen as politically divisive on Sunday mornings. Contrast this with more mainline and liberal clergy in hierarchal denominations who, given their denominational structure, pair their service to a gathered community with a remit to work outside of the walls of their church. This wider remit is a defining feature of the Church of England's parish system. A female Ridley lecturer explained that beyond the gathered community, a priest "has a remit and an engagement broader than that [...] you're in a community and you're there to serve the whole community, not just the people who gather into your church on a Sunday. And that's part of the Anglican identity, that's really important". A hierarchal denominational structure also allows a clergy person to dedicate time to the well-being of their wider community, time that could otherwise be used to serve the gathered community exclusively.

In summary, the role of clergy is shaped by historical understandings of their role, seminaries and denominations through an educational process often culminating in ordination, and gathered communities. All of these shape, to an extent, clerical social engagement. This

engagement, however, is only possible through the recognition, development, and utilisation of different forms of capital.

Differing Forms of Capital

As reiterated throughout this thesis, clergy differ from seminaries in their more fluid and proactive response to changing social contexts. This requires different forms of capital. Putnam's explanation of social capital is appropriate and useful for framing this discussion. He describes social capital as the "networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1995, 67). Clergy, as religious *and* civic leaders, use social capital to maintain their gathered community but also to effectively engage with those outside of a gathered community.

In the Church of England, this wider engagement is often articulated as a parochial mind-set or expectation. One interviewee served at an English cathedral; cathedrals are, by their very nature, the centre of religious and civic life. The male interviewee said the Church of England (and the cathedral specifically) has a unique mission to "ensure that we are able to reach out to all in sundry [sic], that we can be a place of obviously prayer and worship, but also we can be a place where the civic community can gather when it needs to". This view is not exclusive to Anglican clergy. Indeed, it is found among many Christian and Jewish clergy. Yet it must be pointed out that a clergy person's task is not only to serve their civic community – they have a duty and obligation to serve their gathered community, which is the originating source of their social capital.

Social Capital – Bonding, Bridging, Religious, Spiritual, and Political

Social capital, broadly, is the social influence of a clergy person both inside and outside his or her community. For clergy, it is important to break down the different parts of social capital: bonding, bridging, religious, spiritual, and political.

Putnam (2000) identifies two subsections of social capital: bonding and bridging. *Bonding* social capital is created within a group of people with a common background, in this case a gathered religious community. Clergy are primarily responsible to these communities,

whether for job security and/or to provide leadership. Bonding capital is a verification of authority and trust for the clergyperson to represent and act on behalf of the community. When he or she partakes in this representative, public-facing role, the clergyperson is practicing *bridging* social capital. When done in an interreligious setting, this is reflective of Moyaert's (2013) diplomatic dialogue. A leader develops bridging social capital by acting as an agent for change in the local community, connecting groups of different backgrounds and "acting together in the pursuit of the common good" (Chrislip and O'Malley 2013, 11). Bridging and bonding go hand in hand, as the leader must balance "the immediately practical with a transcendent purpose or vision", weighing the demands of their congregation with the needs of the wider community (ibid, 6). When used together, the two are a mediation between a gathered community's needs and interests and their social context, and it often results in interreligious engagement. Pearce et al (2016), in a discussion about the changing roles of clergy, explained the importance of developing partnerships outside of one's gathered community: "it is no longer enough to engage only with your congregants". The authors emphasise the importance of clergy working alongside other organisations and faith groups, acting as "a responsible member of the civic community" that is also "a credible community stakeholder" (Ibid.).

Yet clergy are more than social workers or elected officials – they carry with them religious obligations and worldviews. Thus, it is correct to ask if *religious* social capital is unique. I would argue yes, as would Baker and Skinner (2006). The descriptions of religious and spiritual capital are helpful tools in analysing not only the public actions of religious communities but also the underlying religious beliefs and theological identity for doing so.

Religious capital, as defined by Baker and Skinner, is "the practical contribution to local and national life made by faith groups" (2006, 9). This is the *what* when examining religious social engagement. *What* are religious communities doing, be it feeding the homeless or running asylum drop-in centres? *Spiritual* capital is described as a synergistic pair with religious capital, providing "a theological identity and worshipping tradition, but also a value system, moral vision and a basis for faith" (Ibid.). This is the *why*, or the religious and theological motivations behind the contributions faith groups make to their wider community. The descriptions of religious and spiritual capital are helpful tools in analysing not only the actions

of religious communities but also the underlying religious beliefs and theological reasons for doing so. Their inclusion in this study is vital for a sociotheological framework.

Regarding interreligious engagement, I would argue spiritual capital is not limited merely to exclusive or inclusive theologies of salvation, but it also includes socially-oriented theologies about engaging with the world, such as *tikkun olam* and *the common good* (these will be discussed later). Spiritual capital is the religious conviction one has in order to partake in a certain action. For example, when feeding the homeless (an example of religious capital), an individual might quote Matthew 25:35, “for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (an example of spiritual capital) (The Bible). It is not merely the action that is noteworthy but also the motivation for doing so.

Actions such as feeding the homeless can be, at times, inherently political. The authority of clergy to act and/or speak on political matters is tied to their *political* capital, or the “networks, norms, and social trust” applied to public life; it is the application of bridging social capital around specific issues, often marked by the establishment of networks between faith groups and other civic organisations. Despite differences in theology and religious tradition, leaders come together to address certain social and political issues. They do this by using their political capital.

Baker provides examples of this political capital, including long-term projects like welfare services or the promotion of ethical living. This could be done through promoting Fair Trade products, for example. Baker also identifies “emerging spaces of post-secular rapprochement” and “spaces of outrage” (2014), clearly seen in New York City by faith leaders following the election of Donald Trump (see Malone 2017). Here, faith communities created partnerships and alliances to offer protection to vulnerable communities such as religious minorities, refugees, and, in some cases, the LGBT community. It was mirrored again in the US following the racial tensions and riots in Charlottesville, Virginia when religious leaders joined arms and confronted the white supremacists and “Unite the Right” march (Kennel-Shank 2017). This form of capital, political but not necessarily partisan, has direct implications for the ways clergy react and coalesce in response to marginalising political developments,

such as rising hate crimes, discussed near the end of this chapter. These different forms of social capital – bridging, bonding, religious, spiritual, and political – all form part of the networks and norms for clergy today.

The rest of this chapter draws from the experiences of clergy serving in diverse areas, capturing the dialectical relationship between religious leaders and their social context. It does so particularly through the lens of religious diversification and interreligious engagement. The presence of religious diversity, and subsequent engagement with it, is changing the way clergy see their role. Specifically, this reveals the differing expectations between clergy and seminaries. Clergy are increasingly articulating a justice-oriented role, which stands in contrast with that which is portrayed by seminaries, where the curriculum continues to be based on the traditionally core subjects of law, ethics, theology, text, and languages. Of course, all clergy view their role in slightly different ways, with some drawing more heavily from social contexts and others from the legal and cultic obligations of a leader. The next section categorises clerical understandings of their role into four different interpretations.

Different Types of Religious Leadership

Although a seminary may educate its students with the same curriculum and similar experiences, no two students are identical. This was found in many interviews where clergy from the same seminaries had different beliefs about their role. These differences are only amplified when other seminaries, denominations, and faith groups are taken into account. It is clear, then, that clergy define and understand their role in different ways. With this in mind, from the gathered data four different interpretations of the clerical role have been identified. They are: cultic/legal, preservation, representative, and justice/advocacy.

Cultic/Legal

Traditionally, the cultic duties of ritual and ceremony, whether at a bar mitzvah or baptism, have been an assumed part of the clerical role. For rabbis, interpreting and administering Jewish law is also considered a vital cultic practice. When looking at seminaries, this is largely what curricula suggest is the role of clergy. The cultic obligations are, by nature, focused

inward on the religious teachings and practices that are valued and necessary for a functioning religious community, and these are the skills that the core curricula of seminaries typically address. A leading Orthodox rabbi articulated this understanding, saying that rabbis should be “a conduit from the religion and the scholarship to the laymen”. For more conservative, typically Orthodox rabbis, the rabbi’s role is to interpret Jewish law for the community. Another English Orthodox rabbi explains it “doesn’t have a pastoral role, or at least no significant pastoral role”.

In the more liturgical Anglican tradition, administering the sacraments is similarly vital to the priestly role. “I think the one thing, certainly in a more [Anglo-]Catholic tradition, [...] that sets us apart are the sacraments”, a male London priest remarked. Yet social change and religious diversification have called for clergy to be more than just sacramental officiants or legal scholars. The first rabbi quoted at the start of this paragraph later said:

For a long time the prominence of religion did not require that those leading religion and religious life had to respond to the changes of the outside world [...] and I think that what is happening is that the world is, the world is always changing, but there’s a tremendous rapidity that is happening now. And we’re just not keeping up.

How clergy keep up varies. A change in the role of clergy does not deny the cultic obligations of a religious leader. Rather, more resources are set aside to negotiate and understand the world around them. As a male Christian minister in New Jersey said, “a theologian, a pastor, a leader, a shepherd to your people, I mean that’s your first calling I would say. That trumps other things”. Here the minister uses slightly different language to emphasise the importance of providing for one’s gathered community. Yet he does not stop there and recognises that there is much more to leadership, saying his community:

is in a context and it’s in a place and it’s in a time [...] there] is a responsibility to play a role in the spiritual leadership of the community, to be aware of what’s going on, and be able to [...] identify the issues and help to address them. So there is what I’ll call congregational responsibility, and there is a community responsibility.

What exactly is “community responsibility”? For the minister from New Jersey, the responsibility of his church to the wider community is to “invite people to come to know Christ”. This is a typical feature of the next type of clergy person, one that I label *preservation*.

Preservation

Some priests and rabbis understand their role as one that inwardly preserves and sustains a faith community and tradition – a heavy focus on bonding social capital. This does not suggest their attention is exclusively inward, but rather the interaction between clergy and their wider context is done with the intention of growing, sustaining, or protecting the gathered community. This differs from the inward focus of the cultic and legal obligations discussed above.

Preservation can be done in exclusive or inclusive ways, to draw from Race’s three-fold typology. An exclusive form of preservation is an understanding that there is only one true religion and it has supremacy over all others; this often comes with a mission to evangelise. An east London priest said that since he became the vicar, his church’s community engagement has placed more of an emphasis on evangelism. He explains, “there’s the kind of, more sort of evangelistic side [of the church] that actually engages with the community and saying we want to have a conversation about Jesus here”. This thinking was also found in New York, as evidenced by this brief but pointed conversation below with an evangelical pastor:

Me: What is the role of a pastor, a minister, in a religiously diverse context?

Interviewee: I would say to point people to Jesus [...] I feel like my role is not to have all the answers, but I want to point them to Jesus.

A male seminary professor in Texas, albeit situated in a more strongly Christian context than New York, said that, “in a diverse culture, [a minister’s] primary role is to make disciples. It means of all cultures”. When prodded further about how such a pastor would view other religions, the professor explained that it should not be done in an argumentative manner, but rather “our focus is to win the heart” of non-Christians. In exclusive preservation, external

forces prompt an emphasis on sustaining the gathered community. This is not entirely unheard of in Judaism, framed by the context of intermarriage instead of evangelism.

With the threats of intermarriage and Jewish vitality lingering in the forefront of rabbis' minds, interviewees expressed a desire to build the community from within. More than bringing non-Jews in, the focus was on preventing people from leaving the faith, or welcoming back those who once left. One male rabbi who held a prominent synagogue post in Manhattan said, "the goal, ultimately, is [...] to bring life back in, bring life, liveliness, encourage and re-orient our priorities and [...] a bit of survival, but it's not about that. It's bringing meaning and bringing life into our institutions and to our lives". A female rabbi, this one in London, explained that a synagogue must work with other faiths, but for the purpose of dispelling myths about Judaism – a sign of strengthening the community in the face of growing antisemitism. She said, "I think it's terribly important that the outside world should know we don't have horns. That we're ordinary people. That we can be religious, spiritual people, that we can be kind and loving people". Amidst a spike in antisemitic activity, there is a tendency for rabbis to focus inward on one's own community. For instance, a London rabbi described that, after a rise in hate crimes, his job is "clearly to support your community pastorally, so there's always a pastoral relationship".

It is important to point out, though, that preservation is nuanced. Evangelism is not entirely black and white nor good versus bad. Evangelicals have a genuine interest in other faiths, with serious implications for interreligious relations. This will be discussed shortly. Among rabbis, hate crimes or rising intermarriage rates may, for a time, focus their energies inward, but that does not stop interreligious engagement. Following his description of the need for pastoral care after a period of antisemitism, the rabbi previously quoted went on to say, "I also think there's an importance of giving hope; I think hope through solidarity across religions". This type of preservation has a more inclusive nature.

This inclusive preservation view of the clerical role is one that actively seeks to engage other religions. Similar to the role above, this draws on Race's three-fold typology. It seeks to maintain the gathered community but wishes to cooperate mutually with others. This is seen in the parochial mentality of the Church of England, but it can be found elsewhere too. A New

York rabbi said that the rabbinical role is “not only for your constituents but for everyone out there [...] you still want to be there for the people in a broad sense”. Another male rabbi, when discussing the roles rabbis face today, explained that his colleagues should have a “basic familiarity” with other faiths and be “leaders in interfaith collaboration, cooperation, and communication”. Doing so will allow them to be better community leaders, both in a religious *and* civic sense. The latter implies a representative role, exercising the capital built from within their gathered community and applying it outside the walls of the church or synagogue.

Representative

Many clergy view themselves as a representative of not only a gathered community but of their faith more broadly. By harnessing religious and bonding capital, the clergy person acts as a representative to their wider community, ultimately forming bridging capital in the process.

One interviewee said, “I would understand the rabbi’s role in a multifaith context, is to represent Judaism and Jewish values and the Jewish community to the wider world, and to try to build bridges between the Jewish community and other faith communities”. Another rabbi explained that he acts as “an ambassador for the community to the outside world [...] to ensure that the interests of the Jewish community are known”. A priest of a prominent Manhattan church said he is the one who “represents the church in larger circles of Protestantism [and] interfaith relations [...] which puts me out there and making comments about public events and interfacing with others who are religious leaders in the city”. A PTS administrator echoed this, saying, “it’s important for a pastor in a multifaith setting to be officially representing his or her congregation in official meetings, to engage in friendship [...] it may [also] be to find joint projects that can be undertaken with integrity”. Across the Atlantic, an Anglican Church official said the Church “understands its ordained ministers to be kind of public and representative figures on behalf of the church”.

In this understanding, clergy view themselves as a visible representative of the faith community. As the latter quotations suggested, that often leads them into a public space to engage with different partners and projects. A representative figure who has substantial bridging capital possesses the means to bring a diverse set of bodies together for a common

cause. Joint action for a common cause points to the fourth, and final, role most frequently articulated by interviewees, and it is one that centres itself on social justice and advocacy.

Justice/Advocacy

The final role is one that seeks to be a proactive voice in the community. These clergy expose injustices and advocate on behalf of their gathered community *and* those in their wider community – possessing what one interviewee called a “moral voice”. It calls to mind the social activism of clergy in the Civil Rights Movement, whereby clergy of different faiths publicly engaged with one another concerning issues of common concern.

When prompted to talk about the activist tendencies of the clerical role, a male priest in Manhattan explained that it is the norm, saying, “it’s sort of like, standard. That’s what you sign up for, because you become a voice and you become a respected voice with the collar, so your congregation almost expects you to be in the [wider] community for them”. Reminiscent of a representative role, this interviewee believed that he must advocate on behalf of his community concerning issues of justice and equality. A PTS professor reiterated his point, saying that “there is a significant role for the minister to play [...] to issues of injustice”.

This type of social activism around justice issues is a frequent setting for interreligious engagement and action, which will be discussed later in the chapter. A female Westcott lecturer who formerly served in a parish position stated that “leading in cooperation for the benefit of society is really important”, and she went on to highlight the importance of doing so in an interreligious nature. As mentioned, cooperating for the benefit of society is often articulated in a language that promotes justice. This was explained by the previous interviewee’s colleague, who said, “there’s always been for me a strong component of social justice that’s gone with my concept of priesthood. So the priest is a prophet, the priest is a person who challenges”. In Judaism, a female rabbi expressed the impact of antisemitism on the rabbinical role, saying, “the rabbi’s job is to provide leadership about the full range of issues that impact their community. Clearly in Jewish communities, issues around antisemitism have real impact”. That facet of the role, for many, prompts not only the preservation and pastoral care necessary for a religious community facing discrimination but

also activism. Another male London rabbi explained that “part of the role of a religious leader is to be able to, at least, provide some moral voice to the fact that [antisemitism is] happening”.

Clergy advocating for social justice initiatives is clearly a form of religious capital, but it relies on other forms of capital as well. It implies, more often than not, that the gathered community supports or is sympathetic to the cause being advocated for (bonding capital). A clergy person’s actions are often derived from a deeply held theological view of justice and righteousness (spiritual capital), and confronting political systems and injustices (political capital) often leads them to form partnerships with like-minded partners (bridging capital).

Reiterated throughout this thesis, the role of clergy is broad, and clergy are not just activists. Often, clergy encompass two or three, if not all, of the roles described above. When I asked about the role of clergy in a diverse context, a London priest identified many of them in one answer. She said a priest should “disciple the people who are part of that community and encourage them to grow in their faith [...] through looking at scripture” (preservation), “[be] a voice in the community, and being a person who is able to represent and speak up” (representative), and “serve those who are most marginalised” (justice). Even though each one of these roles are legitimate for clergy, the justice and advocacy role was articulated the most by interviewees. This could be due to a variety of factors that this thesis has addressed, such as a growing acceptance of religious involvement in public life and the growing frequency of different faith groups working together for a common cause. It is also the result of developments to be discussed, namely an increase of faith-based social action projects and divisive political developments.

This has been found at a time when seminaries are still preparing students for the cultic/legal and preservation roles, i.e. how to lead a community through cultic practices and, at times, grow them by evangelism or stemming the tide of intermarriage. One male JTS interviewee remarked that “the primary emphasis is always going to be on Torah learning, on instruction and core religious texts” (particularly as students come in less prepared). He continues, “so we have some ground to make up in that respect so students feel confident and competent in basics such as interpreting Bible in the original language, having the facility to be able to

work through a Talmudic passage”. This is true for Christians as well, as a Manhattan priest explained, “there's a certain core curriculum that [students] have to have. They've got to have Bible. They've got to have theology. They've got to have church history. I mean, there is a core curriculum there that's necessary”. Yet focusing on the core curriculum comes at a cost. A female graduate from JTS described the impasse between theological curriculum and the role of a rabbi today:

You can't go to rabbinical school and do just one thing anymore [...] You have to have a multifaceted rabbinate, regardless of which direction you choose, whether it's pulpit or pastoral care, education or innovation sector. Whatever it is that you do, you need to have a collage of different skills in order to be effective.

The different skills described in the quote above are challenging for seminaries and clergy alike. Clergy are expected to embody various roles whilst managing a growing list of expectations. This was seen with the opening quotations in this chapter. On top of a broadening list of expectations, how important is interreligious engagement to the “last great generalists”?

Interreligious engagement is becoming an ever-visible facet of the clerical role in London and New York City. This is particularly, but not exclusively, true for clergy who identify with the justice and advocacy role.⁸⁷ An Anglican interviewee said, “I think that sense of the need to engage across difference is absolutely paramount, I think, in ministry”. Similarly, when asked how necessary interreligious work was for her role, a female English rabbi responded succinctly: “I think it's vital”. A male priest in New York passionately responded to the same question, saying, “I do, I do [...] a lot of times the reason has been to, to be in fellowship, in

⁸⁷ Not all interviewees affirm the necessity of interreligious engagement, even though a majority did. For example, an Orthodox rabbi in New York gave a very nuanced approach to it, explaining that in social action projects and “moments where absolutely, morality calls for teaming up with other members of the clergy”, interreligious engagement is necessary; other times, like around religious practices and festivals, it is only “desirable”. This is largely in line with Soloveitchik's approach to interreligious engagement discussed in Chapter One.

community with people and other faiths. But I think now we have to do it because we have to protect one another”.

Similar to seminaries, where faculty and administrators identified the need for interreligious pedagogies, clergy recognise the need for interreligious activism just the same. The difference lies in the response. Whereas seminaries are confined by the limits of time, resources, and, at times, apathy, clergy respond to diversification in a more immediate way. It is simply the nature of their job to respond, shape, and be shaped by social contexts. For those who view interreligious engagement as an important part of their role, other faiths are seen as a resource, not a threat. Viewing diversification and the changing religious landscape in this way has had a profound impact on clerical self-understandings concerning their role and theologies of other religions. A former high-ranking Anglican, in an interview, summed up the necessity of interreligious engagement for clergy, and the impact it can have:

I think it's absolutely vital. The reality of our society is highly diverse, especially in the urban setting. If you're actually going to engage effectively with that society, you need to be literate in the diversity that exists, which includes religious diversity. Also I think for the spiritual growth of clergy, it's really important to understand some of the depth, some of the what I call the three dimensionality of other peoples' religious convictions, so that your own can be enriched or challenged or deepened.

How one engages with this religious diversity varies. However, of the numerous challenges that clergy today face, many of them are or can be addressed in an interreligious manner. Interreligious work is not simply about organising tea; it is learning how to live with diversity and see that as an asset, not a threat. In the face of many challenges, clergy are doing just that.

Modern Challenges of Religious Leadership

As suggested throughout this thesis, clergy are more than leaders of cultic practice – they are also public figures. The fluid nature of the clerical role creates a more dynamic relationship between a clergy person and their social context. The role of clergy is becoming broader, and

this is defined by a number of modern challenges, notably religious diversification, intermarriage in Jewish and Christian communities, and financial constraints that correlate with declining membership. These issues are only exacerbated by the rising presence of those without a religion, both in terms of falling attendance and resources, as well as intermarriage. I argue, though, that each of these challenges provide unique opportunities for interreligious understanding and encounter. These challenges have not only shaped the practice of clergy as leaders, but they have also shaped their theological beliefs about a religiously diversifying society.

This section discusses the external challenges for religious leadership – religious diversification, minorities, and intermarriage – and the impact they have on grassroots understandings of faith in a diverse context. These challenges, particularly when addressed in an interreligious manner, have shown to deepen one’s own religious commitment. This, combined with an evolution of clerical theologies of other faiths, has challenged the presuppositions and suspicions about evangelicals engaged in interreligious work.

Diversification

In the earlier section on sociotheology, the dialectical relationship between society and religion was discussed. Although this was described in the context of a theoretical framework, this back-and-forth continual shaping and re-shaping of one another is evidenced by clergy’s relationship with their social context. Just as Berger says that religion can contribute to “concrete changes ... in the social structure”, social contexts can, in turn, affect clergy as well (1967, 128). A seemingly blunt acknowledgement of social change, I found, can have acute impacts on the roles of clergy and their experiences with other faiths.

The Introduction outlined changes to the religious demographics of the US and England, highlighting the growth of non-Christian religions. It is this demographic change that inspired this thesis. More than a motivator for a doctorate, this reality is also a motive for clergy to engage with other faiths. On one hand, it is a simple recognition of the diversity that defines many cities and neighbourhoods, but on the other hand it has much deeper implications for religious life, shaping clerical beliefs about other faiths. It is a realisation and an internalisation of a diversifying social context, and it has implications for clerical belief and practice.

Living with Difference

In London, 46.8% of the population identifies as Christian, 14.4% as Muslim, 5.1% as Hindu, 2.2% as Jewish, and 1.5% as Sikh (Office of National Statistics 2016). London has the lowest percentage of Christians in England and Wales (Office of National Statistics 2012, 4) but continues to be one of the most religious cities in the country, largely due to the increase of Muslims (Ibid., 5). Contrast this data with New York City, where 59% identify as Christian, 8% as Jewish, 3% as Muslim, and 3% as Hindu (Lipka 2015). The proportion of non-Christian religions, as a whole, exceeds all other metropolitan areas in the US.

But is this diversity felt by clergy? Although my history in interreligious community organising would suggest yes, it is clear that many religious leaders are not privy to diverse workplace settings. Their vocation concerns the needs of their employer – a gathered community made up of people adhering to a particular religious tradition. The office of a religious leader will most likely be religiously monochromatic – often clergy in their second or third career explain they encountered more religious diversity in their previous jobs in banks, non-profits, or businesses than in the roles they now possess. One London interviewee compared his previous job in a Canary Wharf bank with his current role as a priest:

I had been working for years with people of other faiths, nobody's kind of like, 'oh isn't that strange, there's some Muslims in the office.' You know, that's just life, isn't it [...] I guess the temptation if you're a Christian, full-time Christian worker in any context really [...] you're by default surrounded by Christians. And so it is an interesting question to think, well hang on a minute, no, I don't talk to anyone else actually, now that I think about it. So you have to consciously do it.

Despite the single-faith workplaces of many clergy, most that I interviewed are keenly aware of the religious diversity present more widely, and it is shaping how they view other religions. Embedded in the diversity of Manhattan, one male rabbi said, “we live in a world that is not just Jews. We need to get to know the other, we need to partner, collaborate with the other. That’s what the world is, and I think that’s what God’s will is”. More than just a reactive response to changes around them, clergy interpret these changes as part of a larger, divinely

inspired, narrative. Also in Manhattan, a male priest described the growth of religious diversity as the world “God is leading us to”. He continued, “[so] we better learn the language, learn the mores and customs, learn the holy spaces and places of each other’s faith, or else we are going to miss, really, what I think God is doing in our midst”.

For many, diversity is engrained in their faith but also their national psyche. In England, an acceptance of this diversity is most clearly seen in the establishment of the Church of England. A male priest in east London explained, “actually there’s something deep within our culture where the Church, as in the Church of England, sits in a very prominent sort of civic role, so I think just as a Church of England minister, there is a way in which you engage with the community through that role”. In the US, interviewees discussed interreligious engagement using American-specific language. A rabbi just outside New York City described interreligious engagement as “part of an American tradition”; a female Manhattan priest said that “part of what it means to be an American is that we, we’re a religious country [...] one of our core values as Americans is that religious liberty and religious freedom and the expression of religion. It’s a fundamental value for us”. Clergy with these civic understandings readily accept a changing religious landscape by viewing other religions as a resource. Beyond Christians, minority faiths also see religious diversification as a resource, as is the case with the Jewish section of my study.

Doing Faith as a Minority: A Chorus of Voices

Djupe and Gilbert (2002) found that being a minority can promote civic and political engagement among clergy. Put differently, clergy of minority faiths “will more likely speak out on public problems, influencing opinions directly and perhaps motivating members to act themselves” (Ibid., 604). Public engagement, unsurprisingly, was commonplace among the Jewish communities in my study, and this was clear to a non-Jewish, outside researcher.⁸⁸ This was verbally expressed by a female Reform rabbi in London, who said, “you can’t say we

⁸⁸ Clearly, not all religious minorities seek to engage with the wider public. The earlier discussion on segregation makes clear that some – like the strict Orthodox Jewish community – do not or only do so in a very limited manner. A Montefiore graduate and Orthodox rabbi from London said his community is “still happy to live our own separate existence”. It should be noted that the rabbi is personally very active in interreligious work.

want to be accepted and included as part of the British establishment as a Jewish community, but then refuse to engage with that society and with the diversity that has come in since we have come in”; another London rabbi, this one Orthodox, affirmed this stance, saying, “being involved in civic life is a way of sharing Jewish values with civic life”.

As a voice that could potentially get overlooked in civil society and public discourse, a minority clergy person thrusts his or her voice into public discourse, where, consequently, they encounter a chorus of other religious voices in the same situation. Minority status not only increases political involvement by clergy, as suggested by Djupe and Gilbert and reiterated by the later data on interreligious alliances, but it also creates a sense of interreligious comradery between faiths.

Spanning denominations, rabbis in both countries expressed how their status as a minority religion motivates them to reach out not only to Christians but also to other minority religions. A male Conservative rabbi in New York explained that “we have to have relations with our Christian neighbours [...] but also we have relations with our Muslim neighbours and our other non-Christian religious neighbours, because as minorities, we have common interests”. There are a number of reasons for this. Down the road, a Reform rabbi mentioned that interreligious engagement came out of a feeling of vulnerability as a minority faith group (he called it “the least noble” of reasons he engages with other faiths). As Judaism is a widely accepted religious minority, many Jews have a desire to help other religious minority groups, such as Muslims, navigate their way around the “immigrant experience”, as a male Conservative New York rabbi said.⁸⁹ He continued, “when you speak to Muslims in New York, one sort of feels like one’s visiting the Jewish community circa 1935”. Similarly, a male Reform rabbi reiterated, “when American Reform Jews look at the Muslim community today, they see them treated in a similar way to how Jews were treated 50 or 100 years ago”; another rabbi, this one Orthodox, said, “certainly on issues of, you know, of discrimination, I think [Jews] have a lot of common challenges [with the] Muslim community”. There is a clear bond among minority faith communities that prompts action and/or responsibility for one another. This, perhaps

⁸⁹ The widespread acceptance of Judaism in American religious life is evidenced by the overall economic, cultural, and political influence Jews have in the country.

more than most issues, bonds the breadth of the Jewish community together. Minority faith groups often share similar challenges of integration and discrimination, and these realities are natural conduits for inter- (and intra-) religious engagement. Additionally, a minority group publicly partnering with others elevates their voice, making them more capable to address issues such as poverty, hate crimes, or in some cases intermarriage. The impact of intermarriage on Jewish communities was discussed in Chapter One, but now I wish to explain intermarriage as a motive for interreligious engagement among Christians.

Intermarriage

What happens when a priest looks out onto a congregation, and he or she sees a portion of the audience to be non-Christian? If the priest is evangelical, he or she may rejoice at the opportunity to share his or her faith in the hope this portion of people convert. But what happens when those non-Christians have no desire to convert?

This is a growing issue in England but more so in America. Intermarriage across religious lines has become increasingly common, and it has led to the diversification of congregations. Religious diversity has made its way into the halls of worship, and it presents clergy with a challenge of how to lead a community that is not religiously monochromatic. A female New York City priest explained it in this way:

The truth is, the people who fill your pews are no longer exclusively Christian. We have interfaith families here. One partner is Christian, one partner is Jewish. One partner is Christian, one partner is Muslim [...] and so actually it does affect the day-to-day [of clergy] because this is not a Christian culture anymore.

Intermarriage, as understood here, is the marriage of two individuals coming from different religious backgrounds. Overall, three-in-ten Americans are intermarried, but trends suggest this is becoming more common; when limiting the data to those who have married since 2010, that number jumps to almost 40% (Pew 2015a).⁹⁰ Despite less national data on

⁹⁰ Breaking it down by religious affiliation (using the categories identified and measured by Pew), the percentage of individuals married to or cohabitating in a romantic relationship with a person of a different faith are as

intermarriage in England, one UK-based study found that 22% of Jews are intermarried (Graham 2016).⁹¹ One can assume, based on the depth of research and intermarriage rates among Jews, that intermarriage is more common in the US, which explains why the issues came up more frequently in American interviews than English ones.

Intermarriage, more than any other factor, led Christian clergy to adjust the way they liturgically lead their communities.⁹² When interviewing a male evangelical pastor in NYC, he discussed how on any given Sunday 5% of his church's attendees would be Jewish and 15% would be agnostic, and that reality led him to avoid evangelical terms. Facing a similar situation on Sunday mornings, a mainline priest from Manhattan explained the impact of intermarriage on his congregation:

When I look out at the congregation on a Sunday morning, I can pick out half a dozen or a dozen spouses of members who are there, who are not members of the church, who are Jewish or Hindu. And it affects liturgy and preaching in this way [...] The worship is constructed, the liturgy is built in such a way that it never, ever diminishes or denigrates other religious traditions. In order to be thoroughly articulate as a Christian, I don't have to dump on my Jewish neighbours.

In recognising this reality, clergy, driven by their own interests and demands of the job, consult Jewish communities and rabbinical colleagues to learn more about the faiths occupying their pews, prompting interreligious engagement and education. For Christians, the presence of other faiths (particularly Jews) in their pews have led clergy to think more

follows: Jewish – 35%; mainline Protestant – 41%; evangelical – 25% (Pew 2015a). It should be noted that Pew counts inter-denominational marriage (mainline to evangelical) as intermarriage. Disregarding inter-denominational marriages, 9% of evangelicals and 17% of mainline Protestants are married to a non-Christian partner.

⁹¹ Among Jews cohabitating, this number jumps to 68%. For further explanation on this and its implications, see Graham (2016).

⁹² Intermarriage is a concern among rabbis as well, although it manifests itself less as a prompt for interreligious education and more so for Jewish continuity through education and community building, as discussed in Chapter One.

seriously about the issue of supersessionism and how it pervades Christian liturgy and preaching. Aware of the anti-Jewish nature of Christian history, a female Christian priest who herself was intermarried explained that part of her priestly role was “to help my congregation be aware of different interpretations of the Bible, or sort of the role of anti-Judaism in our Christian tradition and trying to make sure that I preach in ways that don’t encourage the continuation of that”. Furthermore, one interviewee replaced the usage of “The Jews” in gospel text readings with “The Judeans” – a less confrontational approach. Likewise, clergy mentioned the importance of discussing supersessionism from the pulpit, tackling texts which have been traditionally interpreted as supersessionist, such as Romans 2:28-9 and 9:6-8, Philippians 3:3, and Galatians 6:16.

The diversification of congregations not only shapes how one preaches from behind the pulpit, but it also changes the way other faiths are viewed. An evangelical interviewee grew up in an intermarried house and now pastors the religiously diverse megachurch mentioned above. He explained how this exposure to religious diversity served as a recognition:

that people who have a different religious background, they’re not the enemy. So I don’t view it as an adversarial sort of thing. I view it as friends I haven’t met yet who I want to introduce [...] to Jesus. Cause that’s what they need, but it’s not because they are the enemy to be defeated in some sense.

This interviewee has explained that his religiously diverse congregation has not only changed the way he preaches, it has led him to be more “sympathetic” to other faiths.⁹³

⁹³ Sympathy and empathy are two related but different terms. Using Switankowsky’s (2000) definitions, sympathy is a pre-reflective feeling that leads to an “emotional identification”. As used by the pastor, seeing other faiths through the bonds and emotions of friendship marks his sympathy. Empathy, according to Switankowsky, is an “understanding of another person’s situation, which presupposes reflexivity ... [it is a] conscious experience” (Ibid., 86). What I will argue in due course is that evangelical Christianity seeks a more genuine and empathetic encounter with other faiths in which both parties actively see each other for who they are, and affirm their faith identities. Sympathy, then, is the initial confrontation with other faiths that, just as the pastor did, does not view them with animosity or as the enemy.

As many gathered communities seek to grow their numbers, clergy would rather have intermarried couples in their congregation than exclude them entirely. A female Conservative rabbi in New York deals with issues of conversion and intermarriage, exposing her to intermarried couples more than the average rabbi. She explained that Judaism as a whole needs to do a better job of engaging intermarried couples, which involves recognising that “people were intermarrying not out of rejection of their Judaism, but because they fell in love with people who weren’t Jewish”. Some go further to affirm intermarriages and welcome them into the life of the church or synagogue, like the female priest of a church a few avenues over. In an interview, she said, “we have a lot of people in our pews who practice different faith traditions. And we always make a point to be very clear that, like when we celebrate communion, that our table is open to anyone who wants to come”.

Beyond preaching, interviewees remarked that interfaith families have led them to re-think different clerical duties. Clergy have to decide if they will conduct interfaith marriages, for example. As the leaders of a community, they are responsible for counselling any intermarried couples that are members, and they must create sensitive liturgies to be used at the funerals of interfaith families. All of these examples show how intermarriage is shaping the way clergy view and engage with other faiths. Yet these changes go deeper than the liturgy of the gathered community and clerical practice on Sunday mornings – they can also be deeply formational, shaping the theological worldview of clergy.

Personal Spiritual Development: Interreligious Reflexivity

Clergy, as religious leaders, are expected to cultivate and maintain their own spiritual lives, as well as inspire something similar in their congregations. Spiritual formation is vital not only to their profession but also to their training. It is, as discussed in Chapter Two, a quality that makes seminaries unique as educational institutions. As places concerned with the spiritual well-being and growth of their students, pedagogies are employed to help support this aspect of theological education, whether by ensuring students find a worshipping community, providing religious services for students, or facilitating small groups.

There is a growing understanding that, contrary to the single-faith nature of many seminaries, interreligious education and encounter, when paired with a space for reflection, can also

develop one's spiritual formation. The positive impact of interreligious engagement on spiritual development has been identified by a number of studies and publications. It has been found among university students (Mayhew et al 2016), civic and religious leaders (Kartupelis 2017), and, notable for this thesis, seminary students.

Baird, in his study on multifaith education in American seminaries, found that it "tends to deepen, rather than dilute, religious commitment" for students (2013, 315). Roozen, reflecting on a student group at the 2009 Parliament of World Religions, found many reasons for seminaries and clergy to engage with other religions, but "ironically, the most compelling reason may well be the deepening of one's own faith" (2011, 2). In 2010, ATS set out to explore the impact of multifaith contexts on theological education. Their report found that "despite fears that engaging multifaith issues might dilute faith commitments, those commitments in fact became stronger and deeper for many students" (Graham 2012, 3).

This is also shared by clergy. Many see interreligious engagement as a resource that informs their personal faith. Encounters and conversations with a practitioner of another faith broadens their understanding of that faith tradition, but it also sharpens and deepens an understanding of their own. This spans religious affiliation and country and is reminiscent of Moyaert's theological dialogue mentioned in Chapter One. A male rabbi in New York remarked that interreligious "conversations sharpen our understanding of ourselves". He went on to say that through interreligious conversations, "I best understand what I believe and what I know and who I am". A female Manhattan priest explained that the authentic exchange of faith traditions "increases both understanding of one's self and one's religious convictions". In England, a female rabbi who is very involved in interreligious work said, "I learn a huge amount about myself as a Jew, and as a human, when my Judaism is challenged and engaged with from a space that's not Jewish". Also in England, a female Christian interviewee explained, "discussions with other faiths can often open up different ways of seeing your own faith". Encountering difference can present questions not typically asked in faith-specific groups, such as "why is the Trinity needed anyway?". It poses new perspectives for the clergy person to consider, leading to a time of reflection and study that have been shown to strengthen – not endanger – one's faith commitment.

Being receptive to changing social contexts, whether through the diversification of congregations, intermarriage, or the increasing prevalence of neighbours that worship on a different day, is not only reinforcing the individual faith of a clergy person, but it is also changing their theologies about other religions. The next section marks the shift of clerical beliefs, at least for clergy serving in diverse areas, towards a more inclusive theology, to borrow Race's (1983) three-fold typology discussed in Chapter One. This can be seen through a closer look at the relationship between evangelical Christians and interreligious engagement. As the proselytising arm of Christianity, the missionary zeal of evangelicals has often been interpreted as an antithesis to interreligious discussion and engagement. However, based on literature and data, I argue that evangelicals' theologies of other religions are more nuanced than the binary lens of salvation so often presumed.

Clerical Beliefs about Other Religions

Chapter One gave a snapshot of traditional religious beliefs concerning other religions, drawing on the doctrines of salvation and Noachide Laws, as well as other prominent Jewish and Christian theologians. However, these doctrines and theologians were rarely mentioned by clergy, nor, surprisingly, were they commonly mentioned in seminary curricula (Soloveitchik was the only exception). From the seminaries studied, little evidence was found to suggest that students are told how to form theologies about other religions – the pedagogies that were employed focused more on exposure to different traditions and, at times, guided reflection on that encounter. This, paired with experience in the field upon ordination, has led clergy to articulate their own theologies of other religions in a way that differs from the traditional theologies presented in Chapter One.

In interviews, I would ask clergy how they balance their own faith identity with a desire to engage with the religious diversity around them. Ideally, this would lead them to unpack their theology of other religions. However, it quickly became clear that clergy were confused by the question, so I posed a hypothetical situation – based on their involvement with other faiths, how would they respond to a member of the laity who says, “[Priest/Rabbi], we are [Christian/Jewish], why should we engage with other religions?” A reality-grounded question revealed more practical articulations of this theology, but potentially at the expense of

explicit references to the works of theologians or scholars. Nonetheless, there is a stark contrast between the theologies in Chapter One and interviewees' responses to this question.

Within Judaism, interviewees often evoked the doctrine of creation, equalising all of humanity as created beings. One Conservative male rabbi said, "the world is made up of people who are different and that's how the Creator created us [...] created us so that we might reach out, understand the other". An Orthodox rabbi stated, "I feel like we're all equally created in the image of God, and so that there needs to be [...] much more of a posture of inclusivity". Evoking the three types from Chapter One, the doctrine of creation implies inclusive and pluralist theologies of other religions – God would not create someone for the sole purpose of being evil or damned. Another New York rabbi evoked a Jewish phrase – *gam zu l'tovah* – which means "this is also for the good". Creation, humanity, and the diversity it encompasses, they would argue, is for the good. Many Orthodox rabbis cited Soloveitchik when discussing the limits of engagement with other religions, but most interviewees found "wisdom", "admiration", or "truths" in other traditions. In a different context, such as Saturday morning synagogue services (or not in front of a researcher), these rabbis may be more exclusive and less affirming of other religions, or they may choose to emphasise the unique chosenness of Judaism in stronger terms. That, however, is outside the remit of this data.

Whereas rabbis referenced the unifying theology of creation, Christians focused more on God's love; as one female theological educator put it, "the love of God is for everyone". Christians draw on John 3:16, which says "God so loved the world that he gave his only son", and 1 John 4:8, which reads "God is love" (The Bible). In the gospels, Jesus himself commands Christians to "love your neighbour as yourself" (Ibid., Mark 12:31). By extension of this commandment Christian clergy have a duty to love those around them, whether in terms of their locality (as in a parish) or the world. A female priest and Westcott tutor said that "the love of neighbour is about actually learning to listen to other faiths and cooperate, not just cooperate in tolerating but actually engaging and supporting [your neighbour]".

Using the typology above, most of the interviewees expressed quintessentially inclusive views, with a few exclusivist exceptions. A male mainline priest in New York City said, "God

[...] is never fully contained or exhausted in our knowledge of him. And that doesn't eliminate the possibility that God might work through ways, in people who are not Christians". This calls to mind Rahner's (1986) "anonymous Christian". A male evangelical minister in the same city said that "God uses these religions to bring people to an encounter of his own kingdom" but went on to say that other religions are "not a full revelation". This captures the importance of maintaining a distinct religious identity that affirms that, in this case, Christianity is the ultimate source of truth, but that God can work in other religions as well. However, many emphasised that eternal judgement lies in the hands of God, not humans.

Interviewees – and certainly the Christian community more widely – expressed exclusive or pluralist beliefs. However, these beliefs had a very small presence in the collected data. A point worth addressing, however, is the question of evangelism and the proselytising nature of the Christian faith. A religion that seeks converts ultimately must maintain that their religion is *the* truth, but how does that work in an interreligious context? An evangelism that suggests all other religions are wrong does not contribute to positive interreligious relations or joint action – their motives would be met with hesitation and suspicion. However, while discomfort with this type of proselytisation was certainly present in interviews, that form of evangelism was not. Based on the data collected, I argue that the binary black-and-white, good-and-evil understandings of the relationship between evangelising Christians and non-Christians are not an accurate understanding for today. A contemporary view of evangelism, I have found, not only affirms one's faith identity but can also lead to more honest encounters between faiths.

Evangelism

As defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the definition of *evangelism* is the "winning or revival of personal commitments to Christ" (2018). An impetus for evangelism is the Great Commission found in the Gospel of Matthew. Within that word, commission, is a vital piece of vocabulary for the Christian faith – mission. This term is broad and widely used, spanning

from days of empire where mission implied colonialism to social justice work today.⁹⁴ Many Christians have understood mission in the context of Matthew 28 – to go and make Christian disciples of all nations. Just like the term mission, evangelism is complex. It is used in different ways by different people, but many Christians view it as part of their mission. This section describes the perception of evangelism by non-Christians and the relationship between evangelism and interreligious engagement.

First, how was Christian evangelism perceived by non-Christian interviewees? When discussing the balance of Christian evangelism and interreligious work from a Jewish perspective, a male London rabbi remarked that “clearly you want a dampening down of the evangelical instinct, or the understanding of what the evangelical instinct might mean for Jewish people, and what it means for interfaith dialogue”. To many non-Christians, an evangelism that seeks to convert interreligious partners is seen as a “nuisance” at best, or a “suspicion” or “fear” at worst, according to non-Christian interviewees. A male Orthodox rabbi in New York explained that with Christians there is “a 2,000-year old stigma or resonance, negative resonance, and that still exists in interfaith”. If the goal of interreligious dialogue and engagement is conversion, then interreligious work is destabilised and an air of suspicion and distrust arises. This perception of evangelism – where the primary goal is conversion – is one that may have been the dominant interpretation in colonial churches of centuries past. Yet a more nuanced evangelism exists today that does not define its mission by conversion, but rather by living in a way that is genuine to one’s faith.

While one definition of evangelism may be to “win” people to the faith, the root of the word literally translates as “good news”. When viewing evangelism from this definition, its relationship with interreligious engagement changes dramatically. This builds on the earlier quote, namely that there needs to be a better understanding of what “the evangelical instinct might mean” for today’s world. Based on the understanding of evangelism as “good news”, a

⁹⁴ See Stroope (2017) for further discussion on the problem with the term “mission” and the shift in Christian vocabulary to the term “missional”. For further explanation of Christian mission in light of Judaism, see Morrow (2011).

male faculty member at an evangelical seminary described what this means for a religiously diverse context:

Talking about [evangelism] is not necessarily from the point of view of looking to change other people's minds or be manipulative – certainly not – but it is a fundamental obligation to just bear witness to what we know to be good news [...] that's, I think, the most helpful way of seeing it.

Here, evangelism is an overflow of one's life and convictions. It is not a prerequisite for the faith but rather a result of it. An evangelical minister in New York described this in a slightly different way but within the same vein, saying that Christians in a diverse society should "bear witness to the resurrection life and Jesus, but be civil, embrace difference, and [...] don't over estimate your ability to change people's beliefs". In this understanding of evangelism, living truthfully as a Christian means sharing the joys a life of faith brings. It does not necessarily mean actively converting people to the faith, even though there may be a desire for others to become Christians. A male north London Anglican bishop explained that "I pray for conversion. I pray that more people would go to church. I pray that more people would be Christians". However, in an interreligious context with clergy from another faith, he said, "rather than try to convert that person, actually I want to hear their story. I then hope that they might want to hear something of my story [...] ultimately who is converted is a matter of the Holy Spirit. It's not a matter for me". In these exchanges, three qualities about interreligious engagement and evangelicals emerged – humility, respect, and authenticity.

In an interview, a male faculty member at an evangelical seminary in Texas explained that the balance between evangelism and interreligious engagement requires *humility*: "we are trusting the [Holy] Spirit in that exchange and we're also trusting that our faith is not whole – the way I see God, the way I see the church, the way I see life – and that I have much to learn". This humility is borne out of a sense of mutual *respect*. The bishop quoted above explained the key to balancing Christian evangelism and engagement with other faiths is "around integrity [...] the integrity of the other with whom I am in relationship with". An evangelical minister outside of New York said there must be space to "respectfully disagree [with one another ...] I want to learn from you, I want you to learn from me. And yes, I believe I found

the answer, and I'm gonna tell you that, but I'm not going to hit you over the head with it". *Authenticity* is also key to understanding evangelical engagement with other faiths. If evangelism is expressing the "good news" of evangelicals' faith, and if it is understood as an overflow of their life and convictions, then being authentic in all settings is vitally important. Based on the data collected, the goal of evangelicals is not to have an interreligious group accept Christianity as the only true religion at the end of the meeting. Instead, it is the opportunity to approach one another with respect and humility in a space that allows every person to be authentic. Speaking about this place of authenticity, a faculty member at Ridley Hall explained that in interreligious engagement, "I am sharing something that I think is true for me with something that I think is true for you. And let's talk about that". Speaking truthfully about his faith was important to this lecturer from an evangelical seminary. To do otherwise, he continued, would imply that "my faith commitments didn't really mean anything to me".

This thesis is not the first to discover this reality. Baird (2013) also poses the question, asking "what does respectful evangelism look like?" in an interreligious context. McConnell calls it "convicted civility", meaning one simultaneously holds "deep convictions related to [his or her] own faith" while approaching "people of other faiths in a manner that both understands and respects their religious traditions" (2013, 329; see also McConnell 2010). For evangelicals, interreligious encounter is built on being genuine with one another, not a quota of converts.

Interreligious engagement rooted out of a space of humility, respect, and authenticity is not monopolised by evangelicals but rather a framework for successful interreligious dialogue more broadly. England's Commission on Religion and Belief explained interreligious dialogue in this way:

[Dialogue] needs ... to be based on mutual respect and not ... an attempt to seek converts. Participants should be able to speak for themselves out of their own experiences and to feel free to express their disagreements and uncertainties on certain issues. They should be ready to make and to receive criticism, and to point to areas where they themselves as well as others might be mistaken or misguided (The Woolf Institute 2015, 50).

The interreligious dialogue presented in this definition captures the qualities of humility (“should be ready to make and receive criticism”), “mutual respect”, and authenticity (“should be able to speak for themselves out of their own experiences”).

Despite the hesitations over proselytism and conversion from non-Christians, the evangelicals represented in my data are actively participating in dialogue in a way that is not threatening or unhealthy but rather humble, respectful, authentic, and appropriate, both in the US and England.⁹⁵ Interviewees exhibited respect for the boundaries of difference but still chose to cooperate with difference in a genuine manner. An accurate understanding of evangelical motivations to engage across lines of faith is not one borne out of confrontation and conversion, but rather from a place of genuine concern and curiosity – it is a clear and apparent manifestation of spiritual capital in an interreligious setting. Beyond being open to interreligious work, evangelicals also put it into practice, most clearly evidenced by Jewish-evangelical support for Israel.

Evangelicals and Israel

Regarding activism, evangelicals have a well-documented and highly debated history of supporting Israel. They take God’s promise to bless the people of Abraham in Genesis 12:3 seriously, as they do the chosenness of Jews as God’s people but also an instrument in dispensationalist theology (Spector 2009).⁹⁶ In turn, evangelicals are largely supportive of the Israeli state and people. Support for Israel acts as a conduit for engagement between Jews and Christians, specifically those who identify as evangelical. While mainline Protestant groups tend to be critical of Israel and sympathetic towards Palestinian grievances, “evangelicals are among Israel’s strongest Christian supporters” for many reasons as

⁹⁵ Of course, evangelicals in other parts of the US may approach evangelism in a more conversion-focused, theologically exclusive way. The little data collected in Waco, Texas did not reflect this, but that should not be generalised for the Bible Belt or US as a whole.

⁹⁶ For more on the textual, spiritual, political, and eschatological support evangelical Christians have for Jews and the state of Israel, see Spector’s chapter titled “Promise and Prophecy, Love and Remorse” (2009).

explained in Chapter One (Rudin 2005, 149).⁹⁷ This is largely propagated by Christian Zionism.⁹⁸ Whereas the earlier discussion on Christian Zionism explained and recognised the political, theological, eschatological, and ecclesial influences of Christian Zionism, this section explains the very practical interreligious interactions that have come out of evangelicals' support for the state of Israel as found in the data. As described earlier, there is a large and contested body of literature on Christian Zionism that this thesis does not have the time or space to cover. However, the interactions that came from the research are largely amicable, and there is no doubt that they are genuine. However, this thesis recognises it is only one side of a complex and dynamic debate.

This shared concern for the state of Israel was found more in the US than England.⁹⁹ An Orthodox rabbi in New York reflected on his time at the Christians United For Israel Conference, a conference that describes itself as “the only Christian organization devoted to transforming millions of pro-Israel Christians into an educated, empowered, and effective force for Israel” (Christians United for Israel 2018). The rabbi said, “it’s amazing, so you have all these Christians dancing the Horah!¹⁰⁰ So there you’re really inspired. Actually there are real right wing Orthodox people that work with Christians, that love it!”. These Christians and their support, in turn, are warmly welcomed by the Jewish community. The rabbi continued, “all these right wing, ultra-Orthodox, basically, Jews, are at this [CUFI] conference, and they love it. And there’s kosher food that’s served to them. And there’s no fear that they are gonna be proselytised”. The conference not only facilitates an annual gathering but also creates study materials for Christians to foster support for Israel, highlights areas of “Christian persecution”, and allows Christians to donate money directly to the Israeli Defence Forces.

⁹⁷ An example of mainline Protestantism’s support for Palestine would be the American Presbyterian Church, who divested from three companies deemed to be profiting from Israel’s occupation of the West Bank.

⁹⁸ Christian Zionism was defined earlier as “Christians whose faith, often in concert with other convictions, emotions, and experiences, leads them to support the modern state of Israel as the Jewish homeland” (Spector 2009, 3).

⁹⁹ In the data, English discussions around Israel tend to manifest themselves in conversations around antisemitism. Antisemitism as a concept was described earlier, and clerical responses to it will be described later in this chapter.

¹⁰⁰ This is a traditional Jewish dance.

This Jewish-evangelical bond is also manifest in local communities. A male rabbi based over the river in New Jersey spoke of a dialogue programme between his Jewish community and evangelicals: “I would say one of the guiding motivations [for the programme] was to understand the evangelical Christians’ great support for Israel and great love for the Jewish people”. As part of their programming, the rabbi explained that buses of evangelicals from his area would travel across the river to “demonstrate on behalf of Israel in New York City”. Despite the desire of evangelicals for others to convert to Christianity, evangelicals tend to place Jews in a separate category for non-Christians. When discussing how Judaism should be portrayed in Christian theological education, an Anglican bishop suggested, “I would say Judaism is in a slightly different category [to other faiths], because obviously we share an Old Testament and Hebrew Scriptures, so there’s a fair degree of overlap there”.

Evangelical support for Judaism serves not only as a means to learn about the Jewish faith and people, but also for Biblical and eschatological reasons. Supporting Israel, therefore, serves as a conduit for building interreligious relationships among evangelicals. While in some instances the evangelical predisposition may be one of eschatological instrumentalization to usher in the “end times”, amicable evangelical-Jewish engagement also takes place, further challenging the binary views of Christian evangelism as it regards other faiths. Whilst social change affects belief (see the preceding section), it is also made clear that belief can inspire action, as seen through this example.

This chapter has, so far, discussed the impact of religious diversification and interreligious engagement on the self-understandings of clergy. It has shown the impact interreligious engagement can have on one’s spiritual development and how it challenges traditional theologies of other religions. Another challenge highlighted by religious diversification is the management of limited resources. This problem is exacerbated by declining levels of affiliation, and therefore income, which creates new opportunities for strategic partnerships that are taking place across lines of faith. The effects of diversification, therefore, not only concern the spiritual or theological beliefs of clergy, but it has very practical implications as well.

Adjusting to Practical Pressures: Constraints, Re-Training, and Partnerships

To fulfil the ministries of faith communities, whether that concerns employing a priest or rabbi, keeping the lights on for services, or facilitating social action projects and providing goods to the less fortunate, resources must be managed. This section explains how practical pressures – such as limited funds – can serve as an impetus for interreligious engagement. As many clergy learn management skills on this job, this raises an important question: is continuing professional development (CPD) an appropriate and useful conduit for interreligious education and engagement?

As this chapter has reiterated, clergy must balance their sacred duties of religious leadership with very practical obligations of running an organisation. Not only must they keep the doors open and lights on, but they also lead the community into projects and partnerships that are motivated by their faith commitments. Chaves describes this clerical focus on “practical knowledge” over “theology” as “internal secularization” (1994, 767). However, this research suggests the agency of clergy goes beyond the strictly religious realm and into the practical realm as well. Responding to practical pressures and managing limited resources not only ensure the security of a gathered worshipping community, it often leads faith communities into partnerships. Before these partnerships can be explained, it is worth mentioning a notable pressure facing faith communities – money.

Relying heavily on donations, faith communities were not exempt from the financial constraints resulting from the 2008 economic crisis. The *Church Times* reports that between 2007 and 2014, giving to Church of England parishes decreased every year (Wyatt 2017). Similarly, the total parish income (inclusive of tithes, fundraising, grants, building rentals, and other sources of income) fell 9% over the same period (Ibid.). At the same time, the declining membership of the Church of England has compounded the problem, with fewer individuals giving any amount at all.¹⁰¹ Although synagogues require households to be *paying* members (a major source of income for the community), they are experiencing a similar crunch.

¹⁰¹ The Church of England reports that over this time period, attendance has fallen between 10 and 15% (The Church of England 2017, 3).

According to JPR, Central Orthodox, Sephardi, Reform, and Liberal synagogues have all seen a decrease in membership since 2005 at 11%, 24%, 8%, and 3% respectively (Mashiah and Boyd 2017, 12).¹⁰² As synagogues often rely on membership dues, declining membership implies less income.¹⁰³ Gallup, in a survey of charitable giving, found that religious charitable donations as a whole had fallen by 12% between 2005 and 2017 (Reinhart 2017). Although one cannot assume this exclusively went to churches and synagogues, the report noted that it was in line with the 11% decrease of Christian and Jewish affiliation over the same time period (Ibid.), and it is conceivable that this drop has been felt by priests and rabbis managing the budgets of their gathered communities. An Orthodox rabbi in Manhattan similarly emphasised the importance of budgeting in his role, saying, “at the end of the day, it’s on my head to make sure that things balance out and that we’re making budget”. Interviewees understood the vital importance of these skills in being a successful religious leader.

For many clergy, financial responsibilities fall on them. Consequently, they develop the financial skills to fundraise and manage money, whether through utilising the talents of individuals in their community or by enrolling in CPD. The latter is described by Leo Baeck as “a vital ingredient of any profession as individuals reflect on experience at work and develop their career and personal capabilities” (Leo Baeck 2019). CPD, or training for clergy who are currently serving a gathered community, is a natural place to learn about balancing budgets and resource management. However, for the purpose of this thesis one must examine if it is an effective method for teaching interreligious engagement.

¹⁰² Masorti Judaism, a small denomination in England, saw a relatively large jump in membership, increasing by 33% (Mashiah and Boyd 2017, 12).

¹⁰³ The fragmented nature of religion in America, along with greater number of denominations, makes gathering similar numbers difficult and, if discussed here, tediously long. Determining the number of American Jews who actually practise and pay membership dues, as opposed to those who simply claim they are Jewish, would similarly be difficult and require a tediously long explanation. Pew, in their ground breaking 2013 study of American Judaism, found that Jewish religious affiliation had decreased; they also found that only 1/3 of American Jews have a synagogue membership (Pew 2013). Likewise, Pew (2015c) also found a drop in Christian affiliation between 2007 and 2014 among both evangelical and mainline Protestants.

On the Job Training: CPD

A Christian, female interviewee in New York explained that clergy, like other professions, must always be learning – “I don’t know a profession [...] that doesn’t require some kind of accreditation, re-learning. Physicians, lawyers, you know, all these people have to have reaccreditation at different points in their career”. Seminaries are increasingly providing this training. One woman, a recent graduate of JTS, said, “the seminary is trying to [...] support rabbis [by providing] professional development opportunities after we’re ordained”.

The actions of clergy are not static, and therefore there is an expectation that they become “lifelong learners”, as the Christian interviewee quoted above said. Seminaries understand this, and many provide ongoing training to their former students. The Church of England requires clergy to “seek support, help and appropriate training and, on occasion, to refer to specialist agencies” (The Convocations of Canterbury and York 2015, 2.3), and dioceses provide “continuing ministerial development” to help clergy “deepen their faith through study” (Diocese of London 2019). JTS, RIETS, PTS, and Leo Baeck all advertise CPD programmes on their websites, and interviews revealed courses offered by UTS as well.

While these programmes are undoubtedly useful, they have their limitations. No matter the topic, CPD programmes are easily accessible only to clergy living close to the seminary.¹⁰⁴ One female rabbi explained it is a lot easier to access those courses when one is “in the orbit of the seminary”. For example, a Conservative rabbi serving in Ohio would not be able to access the CPD courses put on by JTS. While CPD may be effective for learning management skills, as explained by one New York rabbi, it has not yet developed into an effective tool for the topic of this thesis – interreligious engagement.

There are limited examples of interreligious CPD. Of the two examples found in the data, one focused on antisemitism in Christian Holy Week, and the other was a CPD programme run by Auburn on “faith rooted justice work”, as explained by a male interviewee. Most CPD courses

¹⁰⁴ This raises the question of online theological education and learning. While some seminaries are starting to incorporate this type of learning (CTF’s Eastern Region Ministry Course is one example), e-learning in seminary education is outside the scope of this thesis.

concerned other topics, such as financial management, sexuality, clerical burnout, weddings, divorce issues, and end of life care. When pressed, one female rabbi explained there is “very little” interreligious CPD but “so much need” for it.

CPD provides clergy an avenue after ordination to develop and sharpen their management skills, as well as others. However, it is not clear that the same can be said of interreligious cooperation and social engagement. As this section and the ones following will show, interreligious work and managerial tasks are interconnected. For many clergy, tight budgets have prompted collaboration with other faith groups and the formation of partnerships. This is most clearly seen in the provision of social goods and services. With the limited resources of time, personnel, and finances, clergy seek out partners with a similar vision for shared goals, and they often do this across lines of faith. For example, management skills are required for the provision of services commonly associated with interreligious social action projects – how to raise money or goods (such as food), and how to develop a means to distribute those goods (food bank).

As expectations for churches and synagogues to provide food to the hungry and housing to the homeless increase, clergy have found that an effective way to do so is by partnering with other faith groups with similar goals. As the next section will suggest, these partnerships are made more visible by practical pressures; as resources have become limited, need has increased (as will be shown later by the Church of England’s response to austerity measures). Therefore, it makes practical – and as the next section explains, theological – sense to develop and manage a partnership with other faith communities. As a male Reform rabbi in New York said, “if you're gonna mend the world, you're only gonna succeed in partnership with other faith communities”.

Interreligious Social Action and Political Engagement

In a study about interreligious engagement in London (as well as Doha and Delhi), Fahy and Bock wrote about the growing importance of interreligious social action: “once a field of dialogue-centred practice rooted in theological concerns, the interfaith movement has evolved into a concerted, if not always coherent, effort to mobilise religious resources to

respond to pressing social *and* political issues” (2018, 5; emphasis added). It is no secret that interreligious initiatives, once centred on conversation in the middle of the twentieth century, have evolved into something more tangible. Moyaert (2013) calls it the dialogue of action, but this shift from discussion-only dialogue to action has also been evidenced by Baker (2014, 2017), Cohen (2015), Greenwood (2017), and Stone (2017).

Similar to issues discussed throughout this chapter, interreligious engagement around social and political issues is a growing part of clerical responsibilities in London and New York.¹⁰⁵ This responsibility to act in a socially engaged, interreligious manner is a result of clergy seeing themselves as advocates for justice. Furthermore, clergy are not simply shaped *by* their social context, but they also utilise their social capital to actively shape the context around them. And, as to be expected by this thesis, there are deeper theological motivations driving them to act in this way.

Drawing on the religiously diverse resources around them, this section evaluates the social and political actions of clergy today. Often, particularly in the US but also in England, clergy address systemic injustices in society, evoking their bridging and political capital. This often occurs through faith-based community organising and political action, where clerical activism is used as a response to divisive political developments. Clerical responses to divisive political developments became a noteworthy talking point throughout my field work, due to the election of Donald Trump in the US and rising hate crimes in England.

Social Action: The Sharing of Resources for Shared Goals

The provision of goods and resources has, as discussed in Chapter One, fallen to faith communities in both countries. Whether by the White House emphasising the duty of Americans to volunteer and be “points of light”, or the assumption that faith communities

¹⁰⁵ This is not to say that some clergy do not assume this as part of their role – in fact, some actively speak out against it. One interviewee in Texas implied that social justice keeps people from true evangelism, saying, “the more and more we concern ourselves with social justice, the more and more we use that as an excuse not to preach the gospel”. His view of the role would be to “come alongside” individuals in an evangelistic way rather than “make things better for them” structurally. This view, however, was rarely voiced.

will pick up the slack in provision following austerity measures, clergy have shouldered the burden of care in their communities. As one male Anglican interviewee said, “it’s in government’s great interest to keep societies stable, so we are doing government’s work for it, really, in many ways”, not least through social provision. He continues, “but [...] we do it with very diluted resources, so that can be a big challenge”.

The Church Urban Fund conducted a study on social action initiatives among Church of England churches, ranging from toddler groups to food banks, hosting after-school groups to helping asylum seekers. Among the churches who address what the report calls “the most needs” (meaning addressing seven or more social needs through social action projects), financial and human resources are a serious issue. The Church Urban Fund found that 69% of those churches are prevented from doing more because of limited finances, and 61% cannot achieve more due to a lack of volunteers (Church Urban Fund 2012, 25). This calls to mind the earlier discussion on the practical management of resources. As suggested, churches address these shortages through partnerships, many of which are interreligious. In their study, the Church Urban Fund also found that two-thirds of churches partner with outside organisations, confirming “that churches can do more when partnering with others than they can do alone” (Ibid., 20).

The female pastor of the large church with an annual \$16 million budget, quoted earlier, recognises that social action initiatives must increasingly be done through partnerships. She explains:

We also have at this church a barber training school, a food pantry, a clothing closet, a shower ministry, a homeless shelter, you know all of that direct service sort of paradigm that has been the work of the church, certainly in the twentieth century. I'm of the mind that that's changing, but it's going to be a painful change [...] Churches are not financially equipped to thrive and reach out [like they were] fifty years ago. And so we're having to come up with different ways to do the ministry we are called to do [...] So I think the future is going to look like more partnerships.

These partnerships, she goes on to explain, are more than just with other faith communities – they are also with civic organisations and elected officials, exemplifying the representative role of clergy and the necessity of bridging and political capital.

Across the river in New Jersey, a rabbi reflected on how hard it was to find the human resources to provide shelter to the homeless: “it is very hard for us to fill all those volunteer slots on our own for seven consecutive nights, so that has become a real opportunity for interfaith social action cooperation”. Another male rabbi, this one in London, also spoke of the homeless shelter his synagogue runs with a neighbouring church. He explains, “they host it, the actual sleeping happens at the church because they’re better set up for it, but the staffing of it is all volunteers from both [congregations ...] I don’t think we celebrate [the partnership] because it just doesn’t feel anything other than obvious, right?”. In this example, the sharing of facilities makes sense – why use financial resources to renovate part of your own building when the church down the road has a suitable space for a shared goal? Again, recalling the challenge of managing limited resources, this example shows how physical constraints can be addressed interreligiously. The rabbi continues, saying, “even somewhere as Jewishly strong as northwest London, those interactions don’t feel anything but natural and obvious in the context of our religious life”.

Interreligious engagement taking place through social action is increasingly becoming more popular and normalised. In 2015, Near Neighbours, the Church Urban Fund’s grassroots interreligious grant body, found that social action projects have grown “substantially” over the course of the programme, reporting that 35% of the interreligious projects focused explicitly on social action (Near Neighbours 2015). That number grew to a self-reported 82% by 2017, with a third of those projects focused on refugees and asylum seekers (Near Neighbours 2017).

English social action often revolves around what is called as the “bread and butter” activism of addressing immediate needs, such as hunger, homelessness, and legal advice for asylum seekers. This can be correlated to the establishment position of the Church of England. Considering the Church is an arm of the state, the Church is unlikely to consistently and forcefully protest against the state and its policies, focusing on direct provision rather than

structural change.¹⁰⁶ For example, in the wake of Prime Minister David Cameron's Big Society and austerity measures, the Church of England reported that the number of Anglican-administered food banks doubled (Church Urban Fund, 2012). The wide presence and intimate local relationships of faith communities were used by the government to administer the provision of goods and services, often without the financial support needed for undertaking such a task (Beckford 2015). These pressures, along with social changes including dwindling resources and increased plurality, have led faith groups to work together, "ensuring that freedom of religion and belief coincides with access to material and social services" such as foodbanks and migrant centres (Cohen 2015, 25).

On the other side of the Atlantic, American social action is more organised and aggressive in targeting structural issues, and it likewise happens in an interreligious manner. A male priest in New York explained that his church fed the homeless, "but if you don't ever address why they are hungry, you never get anywhere [...] If you don't address those things at a systemic level, you're not wasting your time but you're just never going to get to the root of the problem". To employ a national stereotype in comparison with the English, American social action is more *revolutionary*. An American rabbi described it as such:

We have social justice work which is defined as advocacy work. It's trying to change system, it's not just addressing the consequences of a broken system – homelessness, hunger, and so on. But it's trying to change the system through changing the laws or changing the structures and so on and so forth, addressing structural inequalities.

The "bread and butter" actions certainly take place in New York. However, interviewees often preferred to speak about their participation in broader social movements (such as Occupy Wall Street, Black Lives Matter, and criminal justice reform) and what their gathered

¹⁰⁶ There are notable examples of the Church of England speaking out against government policy, however. Reactions to the Thatcher Government's welfare cuts discussed earlier are one, as is the more recent rebuke of then-PM David Cameron's handling of the refugee crisis by Anglican bishops. In a letter, bishops decried the situation as a "moral crisis" and the government's response as "increasingly inadequate". Instead of relying on the state, the letter proclaimed that the Church – congregations and individuals – would act "alongside others from across civil society" (Sherwood and Helm 2015).

communities were doing to confront systemic issues of injustice. Only after then, or when pressed further, would they discuss their soup kitchens.

The social action projects of the New Jersey rabbi, mentioned earlier, are a great example of interreligious cooperation. Yet there is a deeper motive to engage in this type of work – although he may see it as part of his role as a rabbi and leader of a community to support social action initiatives, there is a theological motivation for doing so. He said that “we feel like we follow in the footsteps of the prophets by working to make the world a better place”.

Motivations for such social action are rooted in more than just a Mr Rogers concern for one’s neighbour. There are deeply held theological beliefs concerning the religious duty of social action in Judaism and Christianity – two of which are *tikkun olam* and *the common good*. In the sociotheological framework employed for this thesis, it is vital to recognise the impact religious belief has on clerical practice and social engagement.

Tikkun Olam

“Look at the world. If we're not gonna be part of the solution, then who is?”

– Interviewee, anonymous

In the quotation above, a rabbi in New York passionately claimed that Jews must be a part of the solution to global problems. Among Jews, that religious duty is often referred to as *tikkun olam*, which commonly translates to “repair the world”.

According to Jill Jacobs, the Executive Director for The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, *tikkun olam* “can refer to anything from a direct service project such as working in a soup kitchen or shelter, to political action, to philanthropy” (2007). Put differently, it can refer to “political involvement, striving for social justice, and grassroots activism” (Cooper 2013, 15). Its interpretations are broad, both in the present day and throughout history.

Although an extensive historical and etymological study of *tikkun olam* is not appropriate here, it is worth noting the journey that this phrase has taken in interpretation. Translated literally, *tikkun* means “to fix” or “establish”, and *olam* usually means “the world”. As

identified by Jacobs (2007) and Cooper (2013), it originally appeared in the *Aleynu* prayer in an exclusive form, describing the sovereignty of the Jewish God. God would be the one to repair the world of its idolatry because God is sovereign. Later in time, both authors cite the term reappearing in Jewish legal literature, where it provided a framework for legislation to address legal loopholes.¹⁰⁷ For example, the phrase was evoked to provide clarity for when a woman could legally be divorced from her husband. In the sixteenth century, mystic uses of the phrase emphasised the role of the individual “to repair the fragmented world with the goal of restoring it to its original, divine design” (Cooper 2013, 14). Humankind, in this interpretation, can affect the world. This suggests that Adam failed to redeem the world and establish “the divine light to its proper place” in Eden, so that responsibility has fallen to all humankind (Jacobs 2007). This repair is done primarily through religious commandments, such as prayer.

This journey of interpretation clearly leads us to the purpose of the phrase today, i.e. one that is commonly evoked by Jews and non-Jews alike for the purpose of social justice and social action initiatives – a much more universalistic approach when compared to the *Aleynu* interpretation. *Tikkun olam* as a Jewish call for universal social justice first emerged in the 1950s by Shlomo Bardin, and again in the 1970s by Conservative Judaism’s United Synagogue Youth organisation. In 1999, American Reform Judaism incorporated the term into their Pittsburgh Platform. Today the phrase is commonly associated with non-Orthodox strands of Judaism, particularly in America.

The remit of this phrase is broad – both in terms of its interpretation for social justice and those who use it. *Tikkun olam* means a synagogue making environmentally-friendly decisions, running a soup kitchen, or giving shelter to the homeless, but it also tackles bigger issues as well. It can be used to challenge political and legal structures that exclude or discriminate, creating fairer economic systems, or advocating on behalf of the marginalised. Yet the term is used by more than just Jews; in many ways it has been incorporated into the religious-

¹⁰⁷ Jacobs (2007) suggests the term also appears in fifth century Midrash text B’reshit Rabbah discussing creation, where the separation of sky and sea on the second day was not considered good but rather a divisive schism. Using the phrase, the problem was “fixed” with the creation of rain.

political language of American civil religion. President Obama used the phrase frequently as a candidate and president, saying in 2012 that “the concept of tikkun olam ... has enriched and guided my life” (Obama 2012). It is not just Obama, though. Cooper cites usage of the phrase by then-UN Secretary Susan Rice, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, and Presidential Advisor Valerie Jarrett (2013, footnote 69). Christian theologian and philosopher Cornel West has also evoked the phrase, and some suggest Madonna has incorporated the concept into her work too (Merkin 2008).

Yet what makes this motivation distinctly Jewish? Both Cooper and Jacobs fear the widespread adoption of the term has diminished its meaning. Jacobs provides a uniquely Jewish answer to this question, drawing on each of the interpretations above. She explains the *Aleynu* interpretation reminds Jews about the presence of evil and the need for a “perfected divine state”; the Talmudic use is a call for just legal, social, and religious systems in society today; and the mystic interpretation emphasises the power individuals’ actions can have to promote justice (Jacobs 2007).

In this sense, *tikkun olam* is a religious motivation for rabbis – and increasingly others – to engage in social action. As a theological concept rooted in creation and justice, it greatly appeals to the rabbis who identify with the justice and advocacy roles of the rabbinate, as well as those who are more theologically pluralist in nature. Functionally, *tikkun olam* “helps people rally around an ideal” – a form of bonding and spiritual capital (Cooper 2013, 28). Thus, it can be used as a way to gather community support for a specific cause, and it can be used by clergy to legitimise partnerships with other faiths around a similar goal. Despite the phrase being increasingly used by non-Jews, Christians still have their own term to describe this theologically innate motive to help others. It is called *the common good*.

The Common Good

“Faith communities have a distinctive and active role in building up a society which fosters the flourishing of all. They are one of the main pillars of support for *the common good*”

– Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales (2010, 17); emphasis added

The common good is often associated with Catholic Social Teaching, as evidenced by the Catholic document quoted above. It is, according to the Catholic Church, “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily” (Vatican 1993, 1906). Although the term is traditionally Catholic in origin, Protestants have frequently evoked it as well. For example, there are extensive theological writings on *the common good* in Lutheranism (Smit 2017) and Anglicanism (Amos 2009; Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns 2008; and Williams 2008). It is also used more widely. In the report of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, *the common good* was mentioned in the subtitle; the report described it as “a responsibility of all citizens, regardless of their religious or non-religious worldview” to contribute to a sense of “shared responsibility and accountability” that seeks “the good of the whole” (The Woolf Institute 2015, 24-5).

Yet, similar to *tikkun olam*, what makes *the common good* distinctively Christian? Theologies of creation (that all are created by God equally) certainly play a part, as do doctrines of love for one’s neighbour. Scheid (2016) outlines five different theologies of creation to form the basis of *the common good*, drawing on the respected theological works of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.¹⁰⁸ One interviewee, a public theologian and expert on interreligious relations, similarly used a theology of creation as a motive for engaging with other religions. He said if God is in Jesus, then “Jesus coming into the world, sharing our humanity, changes the nature of what humanity means. That sanctifies all humanity. So it must mean that God is in relationship to the whole of humanity”. There is also justification for *the common good* in one of Jesus’s “greatest commandments”, which is to “love your neighbour as yourself” (The Bible, Matthew 22:39); this was exemplified by an evangelical minister in New York, who said, “we want to be neighbourly, we want to love our neighbours, and we can work with people we disagree with for common purposes. That’s very Christian”. Rowan Williams wrote this love for neighbour is particular “to the Christian approach to peace and peace-making:

¹⁰⁸ They are “(1) the ultimate good of creation to glorify God; (2) the good of individual creatures pursuing their own perfections; (3) the good of creatures for other creatures; (4) the good of a diversity of creatures; and (5) the good of the order of creatures” (Scheid 2016, 46).

the moment of unconditioned positive response, the risk of offering something to one whom you have no absolute secure reason to trust" (2008, 13).

In many ways, *the common good's* innate respect for all humanity and love for neighbour is similar to the underlying principles of the parish system in the Church of England. They both imply a duty to see the fulfilment and flourishing of all people. An Anglican bishop explained the Christian (in his case, specifically Anglican) duty to work for the betterment of all:

"I think I probably do want to draw the distinction especially around Anglican clergy, because we do have a particular calling in terms of what our role is in this world city. I think primarily the key task [...] is about human flourishing [...] There is something around existing on behalf of [the Church's] non-members, for the wider society."

The common good is a collectivist outlook that not only turns a faith's attention outward and towards the flourishing of all, but it serves as a legitimate theological justification to work with other faiths in social action projects. The bishops' conference quoted at the beginning of the section used *the common good* to speak into issues concerning the environment, fair economic structures, care of the elderly, and immigration policies. It states that "no government can solve every problem, nor make us more generous or responsive to need" (Bishops' Conference of England and Wales 2010, 5). As discussed earlier, faith communities fill governmental gaps in provision. Yet faith communities do not fill that gap simply because there is a need – the theological concept of *the common good* shows that the social activism and provision of faith communities is deeply theological as it is practical.

The notion of *the common good* has captured the attention of not only public theologians, local clergy, and national reports, but also that of sociologists. Preeminent sociologist of religion José Casanova describes *the common good* as the "collective construction and reconstruction, contestation, and affirmation of common normative structures" (1994, 230). Casanova continues that it challenges "individualist modern liberal theories which would reduce the common good to the aggregated sum of individual choices" by asserting a "moral dimension" based on interpersonal norms and behaviours (Ibid., 229). In this sense, *the common good* is used by clergy for collective social engagement, inclusive of economic,

welfare, and political issues in society. Yet *the common good* is more than just a theological challenge of the status quo. On religious terms, it is a duty to bring about justice, which often requires action. As Ammerman wrote, “[faith communities] not only provide services, but they also mobilize advocacy and model what it means to take care of one another for the common good” (2014, 32).

Clerical Action

As this chapter has shown, the unique feature of clergy is their ability to adapt to their changing social contexts. The effects of religious diversification on clerical belief and practice have been discussed, but that is only one side of the coin. Whilst being shaped *by* their social context, clergy also actively shape the contexts they are in. A religiously diverse context means clerical actions in public often occur in partnership with other faith communities. RH Williams (2012) wrote on the value of religious communities in social movements. Religious groups, he said, can supply the belief and conviction to motivate people to address an injustice in society while also supplying a safety net of support when their agenda is set back or resisted (Ibid., 317-8). Thus, clergy are not only actively partaking in social action, they are using their social capital to coalesce a network of support for it.

To mobilise a group around a certain issue, a leader must evoke their bonding capital to lead from behind, using “their ideological claims and rhetoric to try to create such unity – they are not merely expressing the existing preferences of their constituents” (RH Williams 2012, 328). Thus, it requires a more active role that goes beyond mere representation. Martin Luther King, Jr, both a clergy person and leader of a social movement, famously said, “a genuine leader is not a searcher for consensus but a molder of consensus” (King 1968). Clergy have a unique and challenging task. While more become involved in social action projects and faith-based community organising, they must also serve their congregants. Clergy have one foot in their gathered community and another in their wider social context. They are asked to spark consensus and solidarity in their communities using religious language, but outside those walls they must use a language that is more accommodating and appropriate, one that is sensitive to and addresses changing social contexts.

Yet for many clergy, particularly those who identify with the justice and advocacy model of religious leadership, social action does not stop at the soup kitchen or food bank. Rather, there is a desire to go beyond provision. A faculty member at PTS explained it as such:

I don't want to disparage this, but [churches] still largely see their role as running the soup kitchen, having a pantry, local operations that need to be done and play an important role [...] The problem is you don't necessarily address the structural conditions that give rise to the need to have the food and soup kitchen, for the need to have these special services. And yet the church ends up feeling good about itself because it's got its members going on the line and handing out soup and bread.

To echo this interviewee, religious communities go beyond the soup and bread lines and confront political structures. A single faith community taking on the systemic issues of poverty or homelessness may seem like a David and Goliath scenario. Seen through the discussion of minority religious groups working together and the revolutionary nature of American social action, issues can be better tackled through collective partnership and action. In the world of interreligious engagement, as evidenced by personal experience, this often takes place through faith-based community organising. However the impact of FCBO goes well beyond my prior and personal experience – scores of interviewees referenced it, many times unprompted. Although addressing systemic injustices is more associated with my US data, the utilisation of FBCO to achieve structural change, large or small, is a trend found in both countries.

Faith-Based Community Organising

In a space of public interaction and social engagement, faith communities (often, but not always) mobilise through community organising initiatives. Beyond personal experience with this field, it is clear that FBCO is becoming a more popular arena for interreligious engagement. It entails the organisation and pooling of “resources, expertise, and personnel” that deliberately utilises the status and structures of religious communities to “mobilise participation and to try and persuade established officials” to address economic and social issues (RH Williams 2012, 319). Put differently, in FBCO “religious communities seek to empower their members to pursue political goals in the public sphere” (Wood 2002, 7). As

opposed to the Civil Rights Movement which was largely (although not entirely) rooted in one faith, FBCO utilises an area's religious diversity, serving as a neutral space whereby different faith communities can join together for a common cause. It is not typically led by a person with religious authority – such as a prominent rabbi or bishop – but rather is facilitated by a third party, such as organisations like Citizens UK or Faith in New York.

Religious groups act as a resource for FBCO, not independent agents; agency lies in the administration of the third-party organisation to bring together these faith groups, although the individual communities can shape what is on the agenda. When addressing social and economic issues, FBCO acts as a central body that leads to more efficient decision making, organisation, and communication. A clergy person would take part in FBCO with the understanding that doing so would increase the effectiveness of his or her public activism. Beyond the increased public profile, this type of work is valuable for time-poor clergy, and it exemplifies a desire to turn away from the conversation based interreligious dialogue and towards an encounter rooted in action alongside a chorus of voices advocating for similar things. A priest in Muslim-majority east London explained that organising alongside his neighbours from the mosque is “not necessarily about sitting down with scripture and figuring out where there are commonalities” but rather finding “very practical [projects ...] which our faiths speak to and tell us to do something about”.

FBCO was mentioned by many interviewees as an important part of their clerical duty, in line with the justice and advocacy role discussed earlier. A priest in Manhattan explained that “it is only possible for us to make this world a better place, to bring justice, by working together across whatever lines of difference might exist”. This is not in contradiction to his role as a clergy person, nor does partnership seem to lessen his religious or spiritual capital; he concluded his statement saying, “this is right at the heart of the gospel for me”. This reflects an important part of FBCO. FBCO is not merely about religious communities being used as tools to achieve a social good, but rather it is the result of a deep religious conviction to serve a wider community. Whether to address the systemic problem of hunger, create safe spaces for children, or secure a living wage for parliamentary workers, community organising gives religious communities the strength in numbers and appropriate platform to advocate on

behalf of the less fortunate. They do so by drawing on their theologies of *tikkun olam* and *the common good* and joining with others in organised partnership.

FBCO in England and the US is not equal, however. Several important differences exist. Using analyses of FBCO conducted by Wood (2003) in the US and Warren (2009) in England, the structural and political differences that affect the actions of FBCO begin to surface.

Models of organising in the US revolve around local issues and engagement with local politicians. FBCO federations establish offices in an urban area, amass faith and voluntary groups to listen to local needs, and negotiate with relevant local political and economic authorities. These issues range from housing to youth programmes to medical treatment. It functions with a bottom-up approach, mobilising grassroots civil society and using FBCO as a bridge that connects it with the American political arena. Due to the sheer size of the US and the difficulty in getting groups to the nation's capital, this occurs most often with local governments (Wood 2003).¹⁰⁹

In England, a country with a much smaller geographical area, the ease with which a person can travel to Westminster plays but one role in the centralised nature of community organising. It is simply much easier to get from Manchester to London to stage an "action" than it is to travel from Chicago to DC.¹¹⁰ Beyond geography, the centralised nature of government in England leads to more FBCO activity liaising with Westminster ministers and officials as opposed to local and regional authorities.¹¹¹ Citizens UK, the main FBCO organisation in the country, is also located in London, easily allowing a greater degree of national impact. This was clearly evident by the success FBCO had on guaranteeing a living

¹⁰⁹ For example, The Industrial Areas Foundation – the main FBCO organisation in the US – was originally founded and is currently headquartered in Chicago, not Washington, DC.

¹¹⁰ Although not explicitly faith-based community organising projects, events such as the Women's March and Never Again's "March for Our Lives" (a gun control movement started after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida), both staged actions in DC. Local involvement and protest, however, is much more common and economical.

¹¹¹ The impact of devolution to regional and local government and its impact on FBCO has yet to be researched at the time of writing.

wage for the Canary Wharf financial development and securing affordable housing in Stratford following the London 2012 Olympics. The focus on influencing national discourse and placing pressure on central government has resulted in English FBCO having a much weaker grounding in local initiatives outside of London (Warren 2009). Given London was the location for data collection and the centrality of London in FBCO, this means interviewees may have been more sympathetic to and involved with FBCO projects compared to clergy outside the capital.

What is common between the two countries is FBCO's reliance on faith communities to provide the human resources to achieve their goals. More so, those resources span across lines of faith. Although liberal Christian groups are most likely to be involved, Jewish and other non-Christian groups have a history of involvement as well. In 2011, Jewish community groups made up 5% of FBCO member organisations (an increase of 3% from 1999), and evangelical Christians made up 4% (an increase of 1.5% from 1999) (Wood et al, 2012, 10). In England, little data examines the nationwide membership of FBCO organisations, but among faith groups, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian communities are represented in each London chapter (Citizens UK 2018).

FBCO serves a purpose beyond interreligious action. It is also used as a mechanism to prompt faith communities to look outwardly. Wood found this when studying FBCO in the US, saying, "when done well faith-based organizing gives back to those congregations leaders with better-developed skills and a deeper understanding of the public dimensions of religious faith" (2003, 395). Similarly, in England, an Anglican bishop explained that the principles of organising have been healthy for clergy:

[Community organising helps clergy look] at the ways in which our churches may have a distinctly outward looking focus. To understand in more confidence, what is it I bring to this place and how can I enable others to flourish? Which is about drawing together, it's not about building walls.

Thus, for church leadership, FBCO is a mechanism that not only addresses injustice and achieves a social good, but it also encourages faith groups to, using the words of the bishop,

look outward and draw together. The bishop continues to suggest that partaking in community organising initiatives creates a “degree of political agitation” and “political theatre [...] for the sake of the wider common good”.

Community organising, inherently, is political. A male rabbi who formerly led a large Manhattan synagogue recalled an interaction with a member of his community:

I had just given a sermon, I guess on Israel and the Middle East or something. And [one of my members] said, ‘your business should be religion, not politics.’ And I remember saying to him, at that moment I said, ‘so let me understand what you're saying. You're saying if anything is important enough to be in the public square that I shouldn't be there? That we shouldn't be talking about it, is that what you're saying?’

Often social engagement becomes political, and interreligious engagement is not excluded from this. Political involvement is not a new facet of the clerical role, but it is shaping what it means to be a clergy person today, and it is the focus of the next section.

Political Involvement

Aristotle said that “man is by nature a political animal” (1235a). As it regards one’s social context, clergy are no exception.

Djupe and Gilbert (2002), as mentioned earlier, wrote about the “political voice” of clergy.¹¹² They found that “the inspiration of clergy to act politically when their congregation is a minority locally is a pattern that has been observed historically”, a finding similar to that of Moore’s (1986) study of “marginal” religious groups (by which he meant non-Protestant) (Djupe and Gilbert 2002, 607). My research found that while minority faith communities are *especially* politically involved, majority Christian groups are joining in as well.

¹¹² Although the authors’ study only examined churches from two Christian denominations, they claim their findings can “extend to other faith traditions” as well (Djupe and Gilbert 2002, 597).

During fieldwork in New York, Donald Trump was controversially elected president of the US after running a campaign that consistently evoked a language of hatred and fear of non-Christian religions.¹¹³ In England, fieldwork was conducted in the wake of the EU Referendum, the multiple terror attacks of 2017, and high profile cases of antisemitism in the Labour Party, all of which were identified as contributing factors to an unprecedented spike in hate crimes (Community Security Trust 2016). Based on these contemporary events, the following sections provide data on the ways clergy responded to the rise of hate crimes in England and Donald Trump's rise to the presidency through interreligious partnerships.

Fostering a Politic of Acceptance: Past and Present

Politics and religion are often topics to be avoided at family gatherings, but the two are formidable partners. RH Williams says that "religion is a great provider of the rhetoric and symbols that a social movement needs both to attract members and to persuade the public" (2012, 326). Clergy not only address public issues, but they do so in a religious language that appeals to the convictions of their followers.¹¹⁴ They wield influence over their own communities, but they are also recognised more broadly as a "moral voice" in political discourse, as described by one interviewee. As this thesis has stated many times, the small-p political activism of clergy is nothing new and it is powerful. There is precedence for clergy taking a political stand on a myriad of issues, two of which were the Civil Rights Movement and the recent confrontation between English rabbis and the Labour Party.

Martin Luther King, Jr used his clerical status to appeal not only to the African American church, where the Civil Rights Movement drew much of its strength and vitality, but also to white Americans, broadening the base of the Movement's support (Allitt 2003, 49).¹¹⁵ Clergy around the country and across races began to see the sit-ins and marches as "religiously significant events" and began promoting a theological and social message of civil rights to their own communities (Ibid., 51). Another example occurred in England in the wake of rising

¹¹³ This is explained in greater detail in Chapter One.

¹¹⁴ See Djupe and Sokhey (2003), Smidt (2003), and RH Williams (2012) for examples.

¹¹⁵ King was also from a wealthy family and well educated, having received a PhD from Boston University. These qualities almost certainly enhanced his social capital among non-African American communities.

antisemitism in British society and specifically within ranks of the Labour party. In 2018, a joint letter was signed by over 60 rabbis accusing the Labour party of ignoring the Jewish community (The Guardian 2018). This political statement was signed by rabbis representing the communities reflected in this study – Orthodox, Conservative (Masorti), and Reform/Liberal – and included several interviewees. In the letter, the rabbis wrote, “it is with regret that we find it necessary to write, yet antisemitism within sections of the Labour party has become so severe and widespread that we must speak out with one Jewish voice” (Ibid.). The intra-religious significance of this joint letter is paramount following the intra-religious tensions discussed in Chapter One, yet the power of antisemitism and hate crimes to create alliances in the public and political realm is similarly documented later in this chapter. In both examples, clergy drew on the concerns of particular communities, using their capital as clergy to achieve political change.

Political actions by clergy are commonplace today. Even if the goals of community organising and social action initiatives are not partisan, they are addressing social affairs in the public realm and are therefore inherently political. A male priest explained why clergy behave in this way:

I can't see how the scriptures can avoid addressing the issues of the world, of society, of injustices of every sort [...] People brazenly say, 'oh we mustn't speak politics.' Well, you know, Desmond Tutu, the great Archbishop of Cape Town, said, 'and if you say we mustn't preach politics, then what Bible are you reading?'

As a black priest originally from South Africa, this interviewee spoke at length about the need to address race issues and the role of the church in doing so. Based on the quote above, it is clear that his commitment to preach politics is influenced by his understanding of the Bible. Religious texts and beliefs are vital components in religious political action, not only as a source of inspiration but also of sustenance, a form of spiritual capital.

This thesis provides three examples of interreligious responses to marginalising politics, one past and two present. The first is 9/11, which served as a catalyst for interreligious work in New York City. The next two are the events mentioned earlier – clerical responses to the rising

level of hate crimes in England and the marginalising policies and practices of President Trump.

9/11

Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, Allitt (2003) recalls the moral, theological, and conciliatory role clergy played at Ground Zero by guiding the country through a period of national mourning. Away from lower Manhattan, 9/11 served as a conduit for interreligious symbolism, seen at an interfaith service at NYC's Yankee Stadium two weeks after the attacks (Ibid., 255). 9/11 also strengthened notions of American solidarity among many religious groups. Synagogues subsequently displayed patriotic regalia for the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur holidays, and the remarkable survival of St Paul's Chapel a block away from Ground Zero (where George Washington prayed on the day of his first inauguration) strengthened the narrative of American exceptionalism cloaked in religious language – the very definition of American civil religion.

The aftermath of 9/11 was quite different for those religious groups who are not included in the Protestant-Catholic-Jew triad of America's "common religion", to use a phrase from earlier, notably Muslim communities. Despite the outcry of Muslims following the attacks, their public condemnations of terrorism, and a visit by President George W Bush (2001) to a mosque where he declared "the face of terror is not the true face of Islam ... Islam is peace", hate crime attacks against Muslims peaked after 9/11. The FBI recorded 481 incidents in 2001, up from a meagre 28 in 2000 (Federal Bureau of Investigation 2018). However, 9/11 acted as an opportunity for minority faith communities to partner with Christians and Jews – one interviewee who has been involved with grassroots interreligious work in New York for a long time described 9/11 as a "catalyst" whereby these communities got "really engaged in civic life on a level they hadn't been". It continues today, with many faith communities using the anniversary of the attacks to hold interreligious services, the most notable being Pope Francis's high-profile interreligious event held at Ground Zero in 2015.

Although the terror attacks of 11 September were not politically divisive – quite the opposite – it was a time of heightened concern regarding the growing presence of Islam in America

and, arguably, a moment of reckoning for interreligious engagement.¹¹⁶ A female rabbi who graduated from and currently teaches at HUC, not too far from Ground Zero, explained how 9/11 prompted her to think about religious diversification and the importance of building interreligious partnerships:

In a post 9/11 world we have to have greater understanding and [look] at the changing face of this nation, [and the] far greater diversity of people coming from different religious backgrounds; to have more understanding, and to build more of those partnerships in the communities in which we live.

Hate Crimes in England

Just as 9/11 led to more interreligious action in New York, a spike in hate crimes in England has led to a similar response. Responding to a question about appropriate clerical responses to hate crimes, an Anglican interviewee said:

If the mosque is attacked, then the vicar and the rabbi will be there and say, ‘if you touch them, you touch us.’ I think that’s one of the most significant messages you can give [...] That’s a key moment in religious coexistence, not just making nice noises to each other, but actually being there in support when things are difficult.

Made clear by his quote, clerical responses to hate crimes often occur in an interreligious manner.

London Metropolitan Police define hate crime as a crime committed against somebody because of their “disability, gender identity, race, sexual orientation, religion, or any other perceived difference” (Metropolitan Police 2018). Following the EU Referendum in the

¹¹⁶ Interestingly, the 7/7 bombing attacks in London were rarely mentioned by interviewees and never mentioned as a catalyst for interreligious engagement. This could be due to the frequency of attacks in 2017, conceivably overshadowing the 2007 bombings at the time, or because interreligious structures were already in place throughout the country before 2007.

summer of 2016, the *Independent* reported that hate crimes rose by 41% between June and July (Forster 2016).

Clergy feel an obligation to respond to all forms of hate crime, not just those that are religious in nature. One clear example of this was an interviewee from Manchester, who formed the unique “Challenging Hate Forum” that brings together different religions to reflect “on issues of diversity” in the local community.¹¹⁷ He explained that the remit of the group is broad, saying, “it’s not just kind of a race thing, or homophobia, or islamophobia. It’s prejudice across a whole raft of things”. My data evidenced multiple clerical responses to race and LGBT related hate crimes, in addition to those that were religious in nature.

The ongoing prevalence of hate crimes in English society has led to a routinisation of interreligious responses – “there’s a whole kind of process that’s now in place in terms of how do faith communities respond to [an] attack when it happens”, one male Anglican bishop said. The interreligious structures discussed in Chapter One are well-suited to respond to such events. Before her post in north London, one female interviewee served as a curate in east London. She recalled, following the EU Referendum and subsequent rise in hate crimes, drawing on her church’s pre-established connections with the local mosque to hold a peace vigil in the local market; further, using her local connections through Citizens UK, a coalition of faith communities stood outside their neighbourhood DLR station passing out stickers that said, “Love London, no place for hate”.

Antisemitism in England

Given the communities involved in my research, a specific type of hate crime is worthy of discussion – antisemitism. As defined by the UK Government, antisemitism, in short, “is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews ... directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities” (Pickles 2016).¹¹⁸ This working definition was adopted in 2016, but

¹¹⁷ This interview was conducted on 4 April, about a month and a half before the Manchester bombings, which took place down the road from his community.

¹¹⁸ For the full definition, see Pickles (2016). Different types of antisemitism exist. Dencik and Marosi identify

antisemitism has existed for much longer. Traditionally cloaked in religious and ecclesial language (at least in Christian Europe), antisemitism took on an ethnic focus in the twentieth century with Jews seen as an inferior race, culminating in Hitler's "Final Solution" (Himmelfarb 1997). Today, despite Christian denominations' systematic addressing and removal of antisemitic "overtones" from "church teaching manuals and popular materials", as well as "classic doctrines of Christ, election, covenant, and church" (Davies 1987, 328), antisemitism pervades society in different forms. Contemporary England is no exception.

Antisemitism in England is a growing problem, clearly manifested in a 2014 spike of 1,182 reported antisemitic incidents, an increase of 121% from the previous year (Community Security Trust 2016, 4). A spike occurred again two years later, registering the highest number of antisemitic incidents ever (Ibid.). Whereas the 2014 spike correlated with the escalated conflict between Israel and Gaza, 2016's extraordinary spike was not a result of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but rather a combination of factors that included a number of terror attacks in Western Europe, allegations of antisemitism at the top levels of the Labour Party, and a general feeling of xenophobia following the EU Referendum vote that year (Ibid.). It is clear, then, that antisemitism remains an important issue in the Anglo-Jewish community.

Antisemitism has, as one female English rabbi said, a "real impact in our communities", but it serves as a meaningful way for faith groups to work together. Her colleague in the Reform community remarked that "it's so much more powerful when a Jew stands up against islamophobia and when a Muslim stands up against antisemitism than always shouting for ourselves".

Antisemitism and hate crimes are not unique, by any stretch of the imagination, to England. In the US, crimes against perceived difference have had a long history, recently in the forefront of public discourse following the 2016 presidential election. The election was a very loud and apparent issue during my fieldwork in New York City. Clergy have responded to the election – the winner and behaviours he is seen to normalise – in interreligious ways. They

three types: classic, which includes "public remarks and acts of social discrimination"; Israel-derived, which originates from feelings of hostility towards the Israeli state; and *Aufklärungsantisemitismus* or customs-based discrimination that critiques core Jewish practices, such as circumcision (2017, 31).

use their political capital to reassert religious and moral authority in public life, confronting Trump's divisive rhetoric and voicing a different religious narrative to his unfettering evangelical support.¹¹⁹

The 2016 Election in America: Creating Alliances

In the US, hate crimes jumped following the election of Donald Trump as President. Ten days after the 8 November election, there were 867 incidents of reported harassment, many of which were targeted at Jews and Muslims, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2016). USA Today reported that this spike was worse than the one that followed the attacks of 11 September 2001 (Eversley 2016). Similar to English clergy addressing hate crimes on their own soil, American clergy responded across lines of faith. An Orthodox Manhattan rabbi said, "if there's a registry for Muslims, then Jews will sign up as well". This calls to mind when Jonathan Greenblatt, the president of the Anti-Defamation League, a high-profile group combating antisemitism, said days after the election in front of a crowded conference venue, "if one day Muslim Americans will be forced to register their identities, then that is the day that this proud Jew will register as a Muslim".¹²⁰ In New York City a few days following that statement, a Jewish university chaplain spoke to me about his friendship with a Muslim colleague and the work they had done together in the past. He recalled the then-recent story of one of his Jewish students who came home from class to find a swastika on her door with the words "Trump" and "white pride". In response, the students affiliated with the Muslim chaplaincy posted dozens of notes of support on her door.

Beyond hate crimes, the election represents a fundamental shift in society that is not simply manifested in discrimination – it is an ideological struggle for clergy from all faiths and denominational affiliations to maintain their moral stature and public influence. The overwhelming evangelical support for the Trump presidency, both in terms of votes across the country and political resources in Washington, D.C., prompts faith leaders to speak out

¹¹⁹ In the 2016 election, Trump received a higher proportion of evangelicals' votes than Romney in 2012, McCain in 2008, and Bush in 2004 (Smith and Martínez 2016).

¹²⁰ I attended Greenblatt's speech in Manhattan. The exact wording was confirmed by The Guardian (Khomami and Sidahmed 2016).

on the political situation gripping the country.¹²¹ These clerical expressions of religious authority and capital starkly contrast with the President himself, a man caught up in infidelities, multiple accusations of sexual assault, sexual comments about his daughter, and foul language, who, despite this, received 81% of the evangelical Christian vote for president (Smith and Martínez 2016).¹²² Trump maintains this evangelical support by appealing to their political wishes, such as moving the US embassy to Jerusalem (Smith 2018), proclaiming “we can start saying Merry Christmas again” (Kamisar 2017), and painting evangelicals as “besieged”, saying, “as long as I am your president, no one is ever going to stop you from practicing your faith” (Time Staff 2017). The bond between Trump and the evangelical voting bloc that gained political prominence through public morality (such as Falwell’s Moral Majority in the 1980s) and traditional family values (as seen through the continued efforts of *Focus on the Family*) is now, in a way, ironic. This was made apparent by a *CNBC* headline in May 2018: “Trump leads National Day of Prayer event after saying he repaid lawyer Michael Cohen for hush money to porn star Stormy Daniels” (Breuninger and Wilkie 2018). As evangelical Christians are the largest religious group in America (Pew 2015a), this bond could conceivably diminish the moral stature of not only evangelicals in American life but of religious leaders more broadly.¹²³ One male interviewee remarked that “the whole mini-industry of evangelical political power has been undermined” by their support for Trump. Although quantitative research has yet to be done on the trust in and authority of religious leaders during the Trump era, my data shows a clerical body unwilling to fade into public irrelevancy.

¹²¹ Of course, some evangelical leaders have joined the chorus of those speaking out against President Trump’s behaviours and actions. For example, prominent evangelical personalities Russell Moore and Rachel Held Evans have frequently voiced criticism. In my data, some evangelicals critiqued the President, some did not wish to voice support or rebuke for the President, and others did not address the issue.

¹²² For more on evangelicals’ support of Trump and the history of the evangelical-GOP political alliance, see Gerson’s (2018) substantial and informative piece in *The Atlantic*.

¹²³ In a *National Public Radio* interview, religious historian Stephen Mansfield explained that the bond between evangelicals and Trump means the evangelical church is “especially going to lose influence amongst millennials, who are strongly social justice-oriented, and the surveys indicate that the vast majority of them are very suspicious of Donald Trump” (Taylor 2017).

Clergy, in turn, are engaging with their wider social contexts in outspoken and active ways to reclaim the moral stature of religious life in America. In protest of Trump’s travel ban, twenty rabbis took to the streets outside a Trump hotel and were arrested (Moynihan 2017, see below). One interviewee predicted this, saying after the election, “religious leaders [...] will have to protest. Get arrested, block Fifth Avenue”.

About 20 Rabbis Arrested During Protest Over Trump Travel Ban

By COLIN MOYNIHAN FEB. 6, 2017



Rabbis affiliated with T'ruah, a liberal Jewish group, were arrested during a demonstration in front of Trump International Hotel and Tower on Monday. Alex Wroblewski for The New York Times

This screenshot was taken from Moynihan’s 2017 article, cited above.

Another male interviewee said that, in response to the election, “there needs to be a prophetic voice and it has to come from clergy”, adding that remaining silent “is to be complicit”. The day after the election, a faculty member at a seminary remarked, “when Christianity is identified with our president-elect, apparently, what a loss. What a tragedy. But we have our work really cut out for us, don’t we?”. Many clergy counter the fear-mongering of the Trump presidency with visible examples of hope and acceptance. Also the day after the election, a male evangelical minister said that “I’m a little hesitant to use the word evangelical right now after everything that has happened politically”, referring to the 81% of evangelicals that voted for Trump. He said that “we don’t want to be subject to any kind of politic of fear [...] we want to be marked by a politic or politics of grace, of welcome and acceptance”.

Over and over again, interviewees explained that this “politic of welcome and acceptance” should occur by direct social engagement, defined by the forging of “alliances” with other

faith communities. “One of the things that has come out of [the election ...] is the alliance between Muslims and Jews has gotten strengthened”, one male rabbi said. A female Muslim scholar affiliated with UTS described to me the “bonds of solidarity” between Jewish and Muslim communities following the election, which were subsequently manifested in the establishment of the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council shortly after the election. Across the street at JTS, a rabbi reaffirmed the importance of partnership between minority faiths, saying, “we often find ourselves in alliances in the face of the larger Christian environment”. Perceptions of strong ties between white Christians and the Trump presidency has similarly ostracised other minorities and faith groups, including African-American Christians. One male African-American priest stressed the importance of interreligious partnership, saying after the election, “I think now we have to do [interreligious work] because we have to protect one another”. Whether motivated by protection, alliances, or promoting a politic of welcome, the election, according to this evidence, serves as an impetus for interreligious engagement. However, it is not without a critique of Christians.

There was concern among religious minorities about the response of Christians to the election. The Muslim scholar quoted above again said, “there’s a lot of Christian responsibility that needs to be talked about”. While many Christian leaders speak out against the toxic political environment, whether through acting at Charlottesville or from the pulpit, there is an understanding that American Christianity struggles to find a political language that is not partisan. This has been made difficult by a decades-old coalition between the GOP and Christian right. One male seminary professor summed it up well: “Christians need to be asking themselves, ‘can we recognise this as a political crisis moment, and do we have a language that is politically engaging as well as stemming from the core of our faith for this crisis moment?’”. While alliances among minorities have been strengthened by Trump’s rise to the presidency, Christian involvement in interreligious work has been stunted by it. Direct support (or complacency) for the Trump administration is seen as a failure to recognise the impact the election had on minority communities, thereby hindering Christian involvement in interreligious political action. One rabbi, at the end of an interview, remarked, “if I were a Christian minister I would be very concerned [...] I think that what we’re gonna see is churches needing to reassert themselves [...] in new ways”. More forceful and colourful language towards the complacency of Christians was used off the record.

The effectiveness of clergy to recapture a moral voice in America will be made known over time. However, it is clear that political activity can serve as a prompt for interreligious engagement, especially among minority communities. From responding to national disasters, such as 9/11, to marginalising politics at a local or national level, clergy respond to their changing social contexts, using their capital and clerical position to promote “human flourishing”. In a diversified society and under the pressures of limited resources and time, clergy have found that fulfilling these obligations happens best in an interreligious way.

Summarising Clerical Practice

Clergy are not politicians, nor are they social workers. Yet their job has broadened to include a variety of tasks, turning them into a twenty-first century renaissance character that spans organisational leadership, financial acumen, project management, political organising, and, at times, protesting. This is the reality of what it means to be a clergy person in London and New York today. Going into the research period, the breadth of the clerical role was evident; however, the extent of these varying roles was vividly illuminated by the findings above. Their ability to fulfil these tasks in an interreligious manner despite little relevant seminary training is the result of a myriad of factors discussed throughout this chapter. As figures of religious authority, clergy have differentiated themselves from the religious authority of seminaries by simultaneously being shaped by and actively shaping their social context. In this process, clergy translate bonding social capital into bridging social capital, acquiring and using their religious *and* spiritual capital to forge partnerships and mobilise people. The arrival of new faiths into local neighbourhoods have transformed the self-understandings of clergy, whether by deepening their own spiritual development through encounters with difference or by shifting their theological disposition of others towards a more inclusive, justice-oriented perspective. Limited resources have prompted clergy to acquire management and financial skills. In doing so they are viewing other faiths as an asset, not just in spiritual terms but through practical partnerships as well. This is on top of the very practical – yet theologically significant – social action initiatives and alliances formed through political engagement. All of these factors, taken into account, help explain how the clerical role has responded to changing social contexts.

The purpose of this chapter was to showcase the breadth of responsibilities for the “last great generalist” – clergy. To do so, it has covered a variety of topics which, at times, may seem too crowded to describe one profession. To summarise this chapter, I would like to conclude with a lived example of the diverse challenges facing clergy today, and the opportunities interreligious engagement and partnership provide. The story of Ms Smallbone, a priest in northeast London, is fitting.¹²⁴ Her story of Christian ministry in a diverse area of London provides a real-life vignette of the topics discussed throughout this chapter.

Case Study: Ms Smallbone

Smallbone is the parish priest of a large church in west Hackney. On a sunny day, one can walk through the nearby park and witness the diversity of the area first hand. The area has sizable populations of Christians, Muslims, and those who do not identify with a religion. Its close proximity to Stamford Hill provides the area with a strong Jewish presence as well. Her parish is also a place of social need and disparity. Close proximity to the City of London has driven property prices up for those who can afford it, while roughly a third of the parish lives in social housing and 18% of parochial children live in poverty, according to Smallbone. This diversity and disparity shape Smallbone’s role, but, naturally so does her gathered community.

Role

When discussing her various roles as a priest, Smallbone says there are some that she is “expected to fulfil” by her congregants but admits “there are very different expectations” for how she fills her time. Some see her essentially as a pastor and chaplain to the gathered community, with any commitment to the wider community being of secondary importance. She admits, however, that this pastoral element makes up a small part of her job. The majority of her duties are spent as “that of a manager”, organising volunteers to enable the smooth running of the church, training a curate, managing her staff, and engaging with the church’s various projects that run throughout the week. She also has a hand in directing the mission and vision of the church.

¹²⁴ This interviewee has been anonymised, therefore this is not her real name.

Smallbone explains that the mission of the church is to “walk humbly with your God”, “love tenderly”, and “do justly”, taken from Micah 6:8. Throughout every initiative the church runs, Smallbone appeals to these three commandments – how is it strengthening one’s relationship with God, is it promoting and teaching love to one another, and can it “change unjust structures so that God’s world is a beautiful place for everyone”? This reflects the types of clergy discussed earlier. Walking humbly is a focus on the community and the practices that sustain it; loving tenderly can be read as a form of inclusive preservation that draws on the resources of the neighbourhood’s religious diversity; and justice is a form of faith-based advocacy and social provision.

Managing Space

As the priest of the church, Smallbone is involved with the budget, and, more pertinent to this thesis, fundraising. Across the street from the church stands an older building that was recently converted into a community art space. The church was spending large sums of money keeping it from falling into disrepair, so the church wanted to “offer it back to the community in a meaningful way”. To accomplish this, they raised money to renovate the space, turning it into an arts centre open to all.

Behind the building used for weekly services stands a church hall where foot traffic is heavy. A migrant centre operates there once a week, and the space is also used to help the homeless, whether as a kitchen, shelter, or a community fridge, where those who are hungry can access food donated by local shops. Furthermore, the space is used by a local Jewish community every other week for their synagogue services and Hebrew classes. Beyond welcoming these visitors, Smallbone is overseeing and fundraising for an extensive project to construct a new community centre that will be better equipped to serve the increasing number of users. As a part of this, she has become well versed with the Anglican and Hackney Borough processes for new builds, while also liaising directly with architects and project managers.

Fundraising has fallen to her specifically. The day after the interview, she planned to spend the day filling out a grant application for £60,000. Yet, fundraising also requires a public appeal, and to be effective that appeal needs to be advertised and noticed. Playing on the theme of the Oscar-nominated film *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*, a film in which the mother of a murdered daughter hires three billboards as a plea for local law enforcement to take action, the church put up three similar billboards, decrying and drawing attention to the plight of homelessness in Hackney, seen below.



Two women walk in front of church's three billboards, which say "6167 Homeless in Hackney; Shelter and Foodbank Hosted Here; and Be Informed. Get Involved. Donate.".

Smallbone explained, "we worked with local media, national media, and social media to get that up and running so that we can a) raise awareness of the massive problem of homelessness in this borough and b) get more money in order to put that first brick down". As a part of the public reveal of the billboards, representatives of the synagogue that use the church hall unveiled one of the three, a visible example of the power of partnership, similar motives, and shared resources across lines of faith.

Partnerships

As an Anglican priest, some partnerships are part of the job, like the one Smallbone has with the parish school. She is responsible for taking "the values of the school and linking them

more distinctively with spirituality". One term she had a prayer tent that taught children about pilgrimage across the world's faith traditions. Local Muslim and Jewish leaders spoke at assemblies, courtesy of Smallbone's personal invitation. However, unlike responsibilities for the parish school, other partnerships are the initiative of the clergy person.

Actively forging partnerships is a key feature of Smallbone's ministry. The church initiated an interfaith group that, together with a local mosque, is working with the local council to resettle a Syrian refugee family through the Home Office; they also run a homeless night shelter with other members of the community. Smallbone explains that partners "can be of any faith or no faith, just people who are concerned about the plight of homelessness", showing how common concern and a pooling of resources can have an immediate and lasting impact. The night shelter, Smallbone explained, has been running for twenty-five years. Partnerships for Smallbone are *more* than just functional, they are part of her Christian belief. She explains:

I think it's a Christian, a gospel response to want to create partnerships in that sense [...] the [Holy] Spirit is out there in the world, and we are called to join in, and that means we're joining hands with all sorts of people who share the same commitments, working for a better society, giving dignity to all.

Being active "in the world" has led to the development of political capital as a member of the clergy. For the past two general elections, Smallbone has hosted hustings for her local parliamentary candidates. As the convener of the event, Smallbone invited each candidate on the ballot and moderated the hustings, giving her a very visible, public, and political role in west Hackney.

This case study shows how Smallbone, and clergy more broadly, can expand their reach into the community, hosting and organising projects with like-minded partners that serve those inside and outside a gathered community. The projects at Smallbone's church are an example of religious capital and a living embodiment of the contributions of faith communities in partnership. More than providing services, she does not shy away from explaining her deeply held religious motivations for undertaking this work, an example of her spiritual capital.

Smallbone's story also proves the necessity of a sociotheological analysis, showing how action and belief must be taken hand-in-hand when studying clerical practice and beliefs.

As Smallbone suggests, partnerships are more than just practical means to an end; rather, there are theological motivations to engage with other faiths. These can be manifested in the Divine's role as a creator of religious diversity, the value of interreligious engagement informing one's own faith identity, or the deeply theological concepts of *the common good* and *tikkun olam* that encourage social action initiatives. This chapter has repeatedly shown that interreligious engagement and activity, at least in the urban environments of London and New York, have become a necessary and visible part of the clerical role. It shapes the way clergy view their own role and faith, while also providing new opportunities for partnership as they navigate the challenges of the modern world.

A question remains as to how the clerical experience can inform theological pedagogies of interreligious relations and engagement in seminaries. The next – and final – chapter of this thesis seeks to explore the ways seminary pedagogies can learn from the grassroots experiences of clergy.

Chapter Four – Clerical Reflection and Moving Forward

“And at the end of the [Sanhedrin] tractate, it asks a question, who’s more valuable as a rabbi? Somebody who has broad, breadth of knowledge, or somebody who is able to delve deep into a particular subject? And the answer, unequivocally, [is] the breadth of knowledge”

– Interviewee, anonymous

Discussed in Chapter Two, students are required to delve deep into the seminary subjects of law, ethics, theology, text, and languages – a core curriculum explicitly required for ordination. “The breadth of knowledge” expected of clergy is largely dictated by their social context, which, as discussed, rarely feeds into theological education. In the same interview as the quotation above, the Orthodox rabbi said, “I just don’t think [rabbis] are properly trained for modern life [...] they’re still focusing on an age-old curriculum [...] so they have had essentially, absolutely no expertise to be able to deal with any modern Jewish life”. Of course, Jewish Orthodox education, and its heavy reliance on the Talmudic legal code of *yoreh yoreh yaddin yaddin*, is exceptional when compared to the other seminaries included in my study, who, as described in Chapter Two, incorporate teaching on management and interreligious work. However, just as Smallbone explained at the end of the previous chapter, little of her job is providing pastoral care and religious wisdom when compared to developing strategic partnerships and social action. It should come as no surprise, then, that many clergy feel their seminary education did not adequately prepare them for the challenges of religious diversification. By constructing a religious worldview based on rational and traditional authorities, seminaries struggle to accommodate any teaching on contemporary social contexts.

This finding spans denomination, faith, and country, with similar issues manifest in each religious community studied. Expectations of the clerical role are growing, and it requires a skillset that not only serves a gathered religious community, but one that is increasingly defined by visibility in public and the forging of partnerships with other faiths.

Based on the findings in Chapters Two and Three, this chapter identifies how the social context – specifically concerning religious diversification and interreligious engagement – can be incorporated into seminary curricula. It does so in a way that is rooted in the clerical experiences described throughout Chapter Three, but also in a way that allows seminaries to maintain their religious ethos. As the researcher, a goal of mine was to find ways this research and analysis could be practically applied to the benefit of clergy and seminaries, as stated in the Introduction. This chapter acts not only as a summary and springboard for further research, but it also provides practical ways for these findings to be implemented. This discussion will not be biased towards a particular religious denomination or ethos, but rather in a way that is reflective of the breadth of data explained in the pages above. The thesis will then conclude with closing remarks on religious diversification and how it has exposed the differentiation between seminaries and clergy.

Recognising the Social Context: The Need for Interreligious Pedagogies

The influence of a wider social context is the clear marker between seminary education and clerical practice, differentiating the religious authority of seminaries from that of clergy. Throughout this thesis, I argue that religiously diversifying contexts make interreligious engagement vital for clergy today (at least for those in urban contexts like London and New York), and it is something that must be taken seriously by seminaries.

This lack of interreligious training could be reasonably expected for clergy who are near the end of the career and attended seminary decades ago, before 9/11 and during a time when religion was not as visible in the public eye. There is a clear recognition among many of these older interviewees that seminary training has improved and broadened. A female rabbi who attended JTS remarked, “I think the seminary, particularly over the past 10 years, has taken really dramatic steps to increase the breadth of preparation that we get”. Many (but not all) of these clergy understandably felt that their training did not prepare them for service in a religiously diverse context, nor for the challenges related to interreligious understanding, engagement, and organisation. Although many older interviewees feel that their seminaries have improved over time, Chapter Two proves this lack of training still exists.

A male rabbi in the middle of his career was asked if his seminary prepared him for interreligious work in New York. His response was, “not at all, not at all”. A recent graduate of PTS said his training could have provided “broader and deeper access to other religions, other faith traditions, and made learning about respecting [and] engaging those other traditions”. Preparing to enter Christian ministry, a student from Ridley explained that his training gave him “the basic mental furniture” to be a priest. When pressed further about his preparation for diverse contexts at seminary, he responded with, “I think there are all sorts of issues about how do you work in an urban context, in a multi-cultural context, never mind an interfaith context, which we’re not necessarily very well prepared for”. Of course, as discussed in Chapter Two, limited time and resources hinder seminaries from providing this type of training. However, the gap between the training offered and clerical practice is clear.

One male PTS administrator spoke to me about his training and how that reflects onto the responsibility of theological education today:

And I regret, I think one of the great gaps in my own education – I had one course in world religions in college – is my frankly [...] relative ignorance of other religious traditions. And that is no longer, in my view, appropriate or acceptable for ministerial preparation. The world has changed, and we must become much more aware.

Often, clergy are not as privileged as this interviewee, who, given his position at PTS, is able to feed his experiences from behind the pulpit into course structures. As actors on the front line engaging with diversity in new and innovative ways, clerical voices should be the ones informing the development of interreligious pedagogies.

Taking Action: How Clerical Practice Can Shape Seminary Pedagogies

It would be unwise for a thesis that focuses on theological education and clerical experience to avoid the ways that pedagogies can be improved based on the data collected. And, as stated in Chapter Two, there is no magic formula that would work at every seminary – each one has its own ethos and different variables at its disposal, whether they be placement opportunities, accreditation requirements, geographic proximity, faculty, or students. It is

clear that seminaries cannot train students for every reality, and they cannot be reasonably asked to abandon their ethos. What every seminary can do is provide students with a tool box of skills to respond to varying scenarios by drawing on the resources and variables at hand. As a female Westcott lecturer said, reflecting on her conversations with students in the classroom, “I can’t look at everything with you, but I can give you the tools which mean that you can come back and look at things”. So what does this tool box look like? Is it rooted in experience and contextual learning, more in line with the *paideia* model of personal study under a placement supervisor or mentor, or is it found in classrooms and textbooks, more in line with the *wissenschaft* model? More than the nature of the teaching, *how* can other faiths be presented in a way that gives clergy the confidence to work in a religiously diverse context?

Based on the findings in Chapters Two and Three, notably the contracting out of interreligious experience to placements and the importance of interreligious partnerships to clergy, the pieces of the puzzle seem to fall in place. Seminary curricula are crowded, so this training should happen elsewhere (placements), and clergy are actively involved in this type of work. Contextual learning, it seems, is the sole answer. The research presented in this thesis found that many faculty expect interreligious training to happen on the job or in contextual placements. However, CPD echoes the problem of assumption found in contextual learning and placements. Despite faculty assuming CPD programmes on interreligious engagement exist, there is little evidence to suggest they are done or are widely available. Furthermore, no clerical interviewee, when reflecting on his or her career and training, suggested contextual learning would be the best way to teach about interreligious engagement. Most clergy prefer that this training take place in the seminary.

Chapter Two outlined the limitations of placements and the problem of assumption between the Church of England’s two phases of training. Little interreligious training actually takes place in a placement context, whether at term time or during curacy (as in the Church of England). Similarly, CPD on the topic of interreligious engagement does not seem to be developed or utilised. The training structures of seminaries, then, are the most recommended and compelling setting for the development of interreligious pedagogies. Yet this begs the question – is the application and imposition of interreligious pedagogies done best through

accreditation and requirements? Or is it most effective at the seminary level through implicit and explicit curricula? Furthermore, how should these courses be structured?

Accreditation and Requirements

When examining the requirements for interreligious engagement implemented by central authorities, Chapter Two focused on those put forth by the Church of England (in Phases I and II) and ATS. These two bodies had multiple seminaries included in my study and provide springboards for addressing larger structural issues as it pertains to interreligious education.

Regarding Phase II of Church of England training, also known as curacy, Chapter Two explained the problem of assumption between the dioceses and seminary institutions. Many seminaries expected interreligious training to take place during curacy, but the data showed that many curates do not receive such training – even in religiously diverse dioceses such as London. As many dioceses employ interfaith advisors, diocese could use these posts to effectively provide interreligious training to curates during their regular training sessions with minimal financial investment. This could be further promoted by a Church of England-wide requirement for dioceses to facilitate interreligious training. However, this counters the current trend in the Church described in Chapter Two, whereby more autonomy in the training process is being granted to dioceses. This makes a Phase II Church-wide requirement unlikely. A more probable solution would be intentionally diversifying the curacy experience by facilitating various placements in Phase II, as recommended by interviewees in Chapter Two. Diversified Phase II placements could expose curates to more diverse contexts with churches actively engaged in interreligious work.

Regarding the Church of England, Phase I requirements were easily sidestepped and entirely avoided. Even among seminaries that provided the appropriate modules to fulfil the interreligious module, their value was “largely dependent on confident and effective delivery” by the seminaries (Gaston and Brealey 2016, 2). Among faith groups with stronger central bodies, such as some of the Jewish seminaries and the Church of England, a more robust requirement could positively affect the implementation of interreligious education in seminaries. For example, a training category such as the currently-employed “Ministry and Mission” could be refined to explicitly consist of modules focused on interreligious

engagement. In line with this, Mumisa and Kessler recommended “a common curriculum on what should be taught about other religions” (2008, 5).

In the US, ATS has implemented an explicit recommendation for seminaries to guide students’ “attention to the wide diversity of religious traditions present in potential ministry settings” (2015, A.2.3.2). However, the de-centralised nature of ATS, as discussed in Chapter Two, allowed seminaries to incorporate this requirement in a way that is “congruent with the institution’s mission and purpose” (Ibid.). Ultimately, this requirement is fulfilled in different ways by different seminaries. At best, it requires seminaries to consider how they are preparing students for religiously diverse contexts. However, in an effort to recognise each seminary’s unique ethos, the institutions are given the agency to decide how this requirement is fulfilled, resulting in a wide array of interreligious pedagogies – ranging from term-long courses on interreligious engagement to ones focused on proselytisation.

Given the de-centralised nature of American theological education, requirements must remain adaptable to a theologically diverse body of seminaries. A more robust requirement that, for example, explicitly requires a course on interreligious engagement would be inconceivable.

Accreditation requirements effectively put interreligious education on the radar, thus avoiding the issue of null curricula, but no central accreditation bodies have implemented a requirement that prompts consistent interreligious education. Therefore, a more pointed approach must be considered at the seminary level that can appeal to the unique ethos of each institution and utilise the resources around each seminary.

In these final pages, I wish to provide an interreligious pedagogy that goes beyond the ambiguous accreditation requirements set forth by ATS and the Church of England described above. I do this by proposing a pedagogy of interreligious engagement that is informed by clerical experiences. This proposal requires the constraints of time and resources to be loosened, but it nonetheless provides an applicable pedagogy informed by practice. This interreligious pedagogy is a combination of *wissenschaft* (classroom), *paideia* (supervised

contextual training), and reflection. Before this is unpacked further, it is worth revisiting the individual benefits of *paideia* and *wissenschaft* for interreligious education.

Explicit and Implicit Learning in the Classroom

For some, an explicit classroom requirement is desired, reflective of a *wissenschaft* model of learning. A female rabbi from Manhattan explained what interreligious education would have been helpful for her job: “an intro to religious beliefs of mainstream American Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants, you know, would have been helpful in terms of language”. This introductory knowledge critically develops a vocabulary for interreligious engagement, but it must also go beyond learned facts. Knitter explains that teaching other religions in the classroom must be done “in a conversational, rather than in a purely informational mode, and in an attempt to mediate between the religions and contemporary culture” (1992, 435). However, time is limited, and many seminaries do not want to sacrifice space in their curriculum to create an explicit requirement for interreligious engagement or an introduction to world religions.

Time is precious in a crowded curriculum, and seminaries cannot be expected to abandon the core subjects that have come to define theological education. This is why threading, discussed in Chapter Two, can be an effective way to teach about other faiths. In an interview, a female London priest said, “I think the best way to learn would have been to have some speakers from other faiths. It would have been really interesting to have, say, an Old Testament class where we had a Muslim speaker and a rabbi giving some input”. Building on the conversational approach of Knitter, Clooney wrote that it is important to go “deep into both religious traditions together” through the process of threading, as it “creates the possibility of deep and clear interreligious learning” (2013, 323). To channel the priest’s and rabbi’s suggestions quoted above, threading information on other faiths throughout another course could provide useful, introductory knowledge without sacrificing other seminary requirements. It would, as Clooney suggests, hold multiple religious traditions together in a “deep and clear” learning environment. While the benefits of an explicit requirement are obvious – students recognise the worth of the topic and it is presented as a necessity for the

clerical role – the implicit message of threading shows that religions do not exist in a monochromatic environment.¹²⁵

For years, seminary students exist in a context that is mostly, if not entirely, Jewish or Christian. Yet the threading of other religions implicitly affirms that religious diversity is woven into the fabric of one’s social context. Threading introduces a new conversation into a pre-existing course, like using a New Testament class to discuss supersessionism, a political theology lecture to speak about King and Heschel’s relationship during the Civil Rights Movement, or a session on community engagement to talk about multifaith FBCO. This can be done by inviting guest lecturers into the classroom, which allows different faiths to be presented on their own terms – a method frequently suggested by clergy. As a male priest in New York said, “I would say it’s invaluable to actually be in a setting where you encounter the other on his or her own terms”. A Muslim speaking about the rise of Islam in a church history course, for example, would allow the threaded religion (in this case, Islam) to be presented through the lens of a practitioner, not a faculty member of a different faith.

Coursework is not the end-all for interreligious pedagogies, however. Just as theological education tries to straddle the two pedagogical camps of *wissenschaft* and *paideia*, so does the topic of interreligious engagement. As important as the classroom is for introductory knowledge and threading, guided encounter outside of the classroom walls also benefits interreligious education.

Paideia Learning: Context and Formation

In Chapter One, Yuskaev and Mikoski’s context-based interreligious pedagogies were discussed. In both case studies, students were expected to *experience* other faiths, whether that be one’s local community or a foreign country. This is a very limited form of *paideia*, whereby students are “mentored” by a leader of another faith for a matter of days, or maybe just hours. Whether a Christian placement in a synagogue, as told earlier, or a Jewish class

¹²⁵ This is more of a problem for Christianity. As the majority religion in both countries studied, it can be more difficult to find a non-Christian than it is for a Jew to find a non-Jew, for example. With that said, there is no doubting that religious communities of every type can, and do, exist in isolation.

visiting a parish church in London, supervised learning in a specific context takes place. Given the impact of geographic proximity discussed in Chapter Two, Yuskav's utilisation of the local community as a teaching context is a more appealing and effective method than Mikoski's international trips.

Local contexts are an effective mechanism to encounter other faiths outside of the classroom, whether through guided visits to places of worship, like Leo Baeck's course on world religions, or through placements, like CPE. (Of course, both rely on religious diversity brought present in a geographical area.) A female Union graduate said encounter helps her understand the breadth of religious traditions, saying, "you need more than [encounter] as well, but I think it is important to meet people who practise and the diversity of practices". This is at the heart of CPE, which provides a supervisor to guide students through their experiences of ministry. Additionally, it gives students the frequent opportunity to meet co-seminarians from an array of religious affiliations while also leading them to encounter patients of many faiths. CPE, while not perfect in content or structure for reasons explained earlier, helpfully exposes students to a diversity of religious practices and affiliations.

The Union interviewee above also hinted at an important aspect of interreligious education: "the diversity of practices" within a faith tradition. She also said, later in the interview, that the goal of interreligious education should not be making students "feel like [they're] experts" on other religions. A reliance on academic, classroom-based preparation runs the risk of providing a decontextualised snapshot of reality. When utilised frequently, context-based learning exposes students to the inherent diversity and nuance of a lived tradition that cannot be fully captured by a textbook.

Even in courses that utilise context-based learning, this diversity and nuance cannot be fully appreciated in one, two, or three lectures. Off the record, one interviewee told me that seminary lecturers should try to teach their own faith in one week. Then, the impossibility of accurately capturing another faith in such a short period of time would be made clear. I asked interviewees a related question – how would a Jew like to see his or her faith presented in a Christian seminary, and vice versa. Jewish interviewees, reiterating the importance of teaching intra-religious diversity, wanted "the grey that exists within the community" to be

communicated, alongside Judaism's core beliefs and the importance of the law in Jewish life. Christians responded with the importance of conveying "generosity", "openness", and "curiosity", in a way addresses the "tricky historical relationships between the two faiths".

Encountering a faith on its own terms may not capture every nuance or shade of grey. However, it does challenge the assumption that a religion in the twenty-first century is practised the exact way a textbook says it is. Understanding the diversity of a faith tradition is important, but students must move beyond factual information and beliefs and towards practical application. Once there is a basic understanding of another faith tradition and its inherent diversity, seminaries must pose the question of *how* and *why* one engages interreligiously. Although the benefits of threading and CPE have been well documented throughout this thesis, the rest of this chapter envisions how *explicit* interreligious pedagogies can be developed by utilising the classroom, a context, and the practice of reflection.

Moving Towards an Interreligious Pedagogy

A variety of methods address *how* seminaries teach interreligious engagement. Text-based techniques have been popularised by Scriptural Reasoning. As scholars of faith traditions, this comparison of religious scriptures could understandably prod interest among seminary students. Moyaert's theological dialogue could be another method, where a multifaith student group discusses the theologies of salvation or creation. However, I would argue that the importance of interreligious organising, partnerships, and action discussed throughout the previous chapter must not be neglected. Quite simply, encountering other religions is vitally important.

It is imperative to understand a religiously diversifying landscape and the implications it has for a future religious leader. To do this, other faiths should be taught and encountered through a language of civics and an understanding of social engagement (rather than through strictly-theological discourse). Interreligious pedagogies, in this way, can speak about the role of the modern establishment of the Church of England in serving all faiths within a parish; or frame America's founding principles of religious plurality and religious freedom as a conduit for interreligious engagement. The importance of a civics-based interreligious curriculum was strongly recommended. Two male rabbis, both of whom had considerable experience of

publicly working with other faiths, suggested seminaries help students understand the “civic impact” of interreligious work:

Now the question is to the extent of looking at other religions in a theological way, I don't know. Probably wouldn't work. But maybe when you are looking at, let's say going into a church or not, thinking about the civic impact of it rather than the purely Halachic ramifications.

Another rabbi similarly suggested focusing on real-world issues:

I'd like [seminaries] to have a clear idea of what people in other faith communities are thinking about, what sort of framework other people have. Try to list beliefs, it doesn't work. It's [important to establish] a framework with which to relate to the world and to society.

Rooting an educational experience in a social context echoes Yuskaev, who was quoted in Chapter One as saying local trips and encounters have helped train students for the clerical roles of “teacher, organizers, and activists ... in diverse local settings” (2013, 369). It also echoes McConnell's (2013) use of case studies to approach other faiths with “convicted civility”. A course can do this through the example of faith-based community organising, for example. This not only applies to students wishing to enter into social work or other non-ministerial professions. As Chapter Three has shown, these traits are also important for clerical roles as well.

Taught in this way, students can better understand the expectations of clergy in a diverse context but also the importance of social capital and the different motivations to engage across lines of faith. Understanding the importance of bonding *and* bridging capital is helpful for sustaining interreligious work; additionally, and seen through my sociotheological framework, recognising the value of religious and spiritual capital is also important.

Framing another religion on its own terms, both inside and outside the classroom, helps students understand a religious tradition from a different perspective. However, students

cannot *only* theologically understand another faith. They must understand the social *and* theological contexts of other religions. What are the contemporary issues and concerns for Jews in London? For Jews, how has the 2016 election divided the American church and what does that mean for Jewish-Christian relations? How and why do faith groups work together in social provision? This wholistic view of another faith is called an *empathetic understanding* of another religion. One male interviewee explained how an empathetic approach should be taught at seminary:

I think my empathetic approach is teaching people how to think about other people. What I would hope for is that theological education is not so much teaching, here's the doctrine, or here's the facts about history, but here is how we are to [empathetically] think about the world as we step into the world. And yeah, because throughout their whole career, [clergy] need to be thinking and struggling with issues and knowing how to do that.

An empathetic approach towards other faiths is similar to the sociotheological framework of this thesis. Juergensmeyer and Sheikh describe sociotheology as an “empathetic immersion” into the social study of religion and “an insider-oriented attempt to understand the reality of a particular worldview” (2013, 8, 4). In the development of an interreligious course that is a) sensitive to the social and theological contexts of another faith and b) allows different faiths to be presented on their own terms, sociotheology is a logical and appropriate framework for not only this thesis, but also for the development of interreligious pedagogies at seminaries.¹²⁶ Yet what makes seminaries unique, and where a social-scientific approach to interreligious education falls short, is the value of spiritual formation and theological reflection throughout the learning process.

A Third Component: Reflection

Throughout this thesis, and despite its flaws outlined in Chapter Two, the value of contextual learning has been stressed. Indeed, as the interviewee’s quote above suggests, an empathetic

¹²⁶ Teaching sociology in seminaries is nothing new – UTS had a sociologist of religion on faculty, as does Leo Baeck. HUC employs a sociologist in Los Angeles, but not for their New York campus.

understanding requires students to “step into the world” and encounter difference on its own terms. However, this does not mean that the classroom is unwarranted. It plays a vital pedagogical role for interreligious engagement. A male faculty member at Ridley said: “the best learning happens in encounter, but there’s an informational aspect which I think is really important”. Based on his suggestion, a combination of context and classroom learning is necessary. Yet he continues, saying, “then there’s the kind of ‘what does proclamation, dialogue, evangelism, apologetics look like in that kind of context?’”. To put it differently, what does this mean for one’s religious worldview? How can students reflect on their experiences inside and outside of the classroom? More so, are they given the space to reflect on those experiences? This is called theological reflection.

Although supervised contextual placements have been identified as a *paideia* form of learning, one must also recognise the importance of formation to *paideia*. Whereas Plato wrote of the cultivation of the soul (discussed in Chapter One), seminaries speak of the formation of student – mind *and* soul. This formative aspect of reflection often happens with a mentor or lecturer and, vitally, oneself.

In Chapter Three, interreligious reflexivity was discussed. Specifically, clergy explained the benefits interreligious engagement had on the development of their spiritual lives. This finding is directly applicable to seminary education. When developing interreligious pedagogies, classroom learning and contextual experience must also include a reflective component. This not only helps seminaries achieve their goals of student formation, but it can also strengthen the religious identity of the students (as cited in Chapter Three). One female interviewee explained the importance of reflection in the theological enterprise, saying, “I think we still work on this old thing where you stuff your head with things in the classroom, then you go to do a practice, and somehow there is some magic connected to you that’s gonna connect the two”. The combination of classroom and context learning is effective, but given the religiously formative nature of seminaries, interreligious pedagogies are best constructed when the space for guided reflection and personal formation is made available for students.

Thus, based on the data collected from clergy, there are three important components for the interreligious pedagogy proposed here. First, classroom learning cultivates a foundation of knowledge concerning other faiths. For example, it can teach students the Five Pillars of Islam and about the religious fast of Ramadan. It can also be used to sociotheologically analyse religious contexts, such as the functions and beliefs undergirding the established church in England, or to understand the authority and social capital of clergy. Second, encountering other faiths through site visits or placements demonstrates, as a male seminary professor at Union said, that “what’s in a book is not the same as [how] people really live”. Continuing our example, this can show students the theological and social diversity within Islam, namely how the customs and beliefs of Bengali Muslims differ to those of Persian Muslims. It can also practically explain how and why mosques work with local churches and synagogues on issues of safety and hunger, as is the case in Stamford Hill in east London.¹²⁷ A reliance on classroom learning or encounter is not enough, nor are they wholly sufficient together. Third, personal and group reflection is a key aspect of interreligious learning that not only connects the classroom and context, but it can deepen one’s own faith commitment as well. Doing so allows students, separately or together, to reflect on their own faith in light of encountering another religious tradition. For example, what makes Judaism or Christianity unique from Islam? What shared concerns are there among the faiths? What does this mean for evangelism? How does the Israeli-Palestinian conflict affect Jewish-Muslim relations in America or England? As institutions charged with the development of students’ spiritual and academic growth, personal spiritual development is a natural motivation for seminaries to incorporate teachings on interreligious engagement. When used together, these three components – classroom, context, and reflection – provide a practical pedagogical approach for seminaries to teach about other faiths.

¹²⁷ In 2013, the relationship between the strict Orthodox Jewish community and the local Muslim community garnered media attention when the local Jews helped guard Mosques after a string of threats (Hooper 2013). Additionally, the same mosque and a local church partner together to feed and house homeless through the Hackney Winter Night Shelter (Inside Hackney).

Conclusion

As shown in Chapter Two, seminaries are sluggish to respond to changing social contexts and implement useful pedagogies on interreligious engagement. Nor do many seminaries recognise the value of personal spiritual development in fostering interreligious education. This research shows that there is a demand for seminaries to recognise the positive value diverse social contexts have on clerical training and practice. Seminaries can do so by incorporating interreligious education in explicit and implicit ways inside and outside the classroom, through threading or CPE placements, for example. Ultimately, they develop a pedagogy that is aligned with their ethos by utilising the resources and variables around them, including geographic proximity, university affiliation, faculty, or the students that attend. This chapter has sought to respect these distinctive qualities and provide a practical contribution that could be adopted by very different seminaries. As suggested by the pedagogical approach envisioned in this chapter, the focus of interreligious curricula should be on the civic impact of interreligious relations, particularly on the formation of partnerships and organising, both of which are vital when addressing social needs and divisive political developments. This can serve as a basis for further research, or it can be practically implemented in seminaries. A concluding suggestion such as this does not suggest theology should cease to play a part in interreligious pedagogies. The very sociotheological nature of this thesis affirms the importance of it. Whereas theologies of exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism can build the foundation of a student as he or she enters into a diverse context, theologies of creation, *tikkun olam*, and *the common good* are more reflective of the clerical experience. However, limiting interreligious education to theological studies, devoid of any practical experiences or civic understandings, would be ill-suited and only deepen the cleavage between theological education and clerical practice. In order to harmonise the clerical experience with pedagogical practice, a broader understanding of social contexts (i.e. civics) must be considered.

The framework of sociotheology demonstrates the impact of religious diversification on the role of clergy, whether Jewish or Christian, American or English. This manifests itself in not only the practices of clergy, whether by seeing other faiths as financial partners for a social action project or allies in toxic political environments, but also in terms of religious belief. The presence of other religions also shapes the religious worldviews of clergy; this is marked by a

theological shift towards inclusivity that coincides with clergy understanding their role as one of advocacy and justice. It demonstrates that clergy, as figures of religious authority more acutely influenced by social changes, use these beliefs, understandings of the role, and clerical authority to engage with other faiths and actively shape their social context. The presence of other faiths is not seen as a threat or impediment to the goals of a gathered community but rather as a resource to be utilised in partnership. The data has continually shown that clergy, defined by their fluidity and sensitivity to dynamic social contexts, are simultaneously shaped by and actively shape their immediate surroundings: a living embodiment of the dialectical relationship between religion and society.

No longer are clergy only expected to preside over Shabbat, administer the Eucharist, give legal advice, or conduct Baptisms, as might be implied when studying seminary curriculum. Clergy are “the last great generalists”; their role is increasingly broad. These modern expectations of clergy stand in contrast to the sluggish response of seminaries to pedagogically address these realities. The ability of clergy to adjust to social change has differentiated their religious authority from that of seminaries, as they are the ones forming theological and practical articulations of interreligious engagement. Meanwhile, seminary institutions struggle to add (or thread) yet another topic into an already crowded curriculum.

Seminaries still have an important function to play in the life of religious communities. They are legitimate mechanisms by which religious texts and histories are interpreted and imparted onto tomorrow’s leaders – leaders who will have an increasingly visible profile and diverse network of partners. When it comes to religious diversity and interreligious engagement, it is apparent that clergy are learning more from their experiences at the grassroots than they are from seminaries. Broadly, the pedagogical approaches used by seminaries to teach interreligious engagement are not plausible. Seminaries should not therefore abandon this field to clergy; an over-reliance and utilisation of context-based learning does not address the issue. Rather, clergy provide a resource of experiences to aid the development of interreligious pedagogies in seminary education, as identified by the discussion above.

In an interview, a male seminary lecturer shared a quote attributed to his late-colleague – “poor old church that has to learn from the world how to be the church”. A dialectical relationship between religion and society means religious institutions and leaders must learn from their social contexts. Being attentive to “the world” (and its religiously diverse social contexts), as this thesis argues, marks the difference of religious authority between clergy and seminaries as it pertains to interreligious engagement.

As the rabbi’s interpretation of the Myth of Sisyphus in the Introduction suggested, clergy continually push the rock of interreligious engagement up the hill – forging partnerships across lines of faith and engaging with difference despite numerous obstacles. Clergy do not do this as a result of their seminary training or because they have an abundance of time and resources. Rather, clergy see this as part of their role and a conviction of their faith – a finding firmly found in this data and through the countless hours I have spent with priests and rabbis. For many, the presence of other religions is not perceived as a threat but rather an opportunity to make substantial contributions to religious and civic life. By acting in interreligious partnerships, clergy actively shape their localities, whether through social action initiatives or promoting a “moral voice”. They do this by promoting a politic of welcome and partnership, showcasing to seminaries (and society more broadly) how a religiously diverse landscape can live – and thrive – with difference.

Appendix A – Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interview questions were slightly altered depending on the background of the interviewee. For example, questions to non-ordained faculty of seminaries focused more heavily on the latter half of these questions.

- i. What was your motivation to become a priest/rabbi?
- ii. What is the role of clergy in a religiously diverse context?
- iii. Do you feel it is necessary for your church/synagogue to engage with other religions? If so, why and how?
 - a. What are your motivations for this type of engagement?
- iv. How do you respond to a member of your congregation coming up to you and saying, “Priest/Rabbi, we are Christian/Jewish, why should we be engaging with other faiths?”?
- v. What is the role of clergy in responding to a rise in hate crimes/the 2016 political environment?
- vi. Where did you attend seminary and when?
- vii. Did you feel that your seminary prepared you to serve in diverse areas? If not, why?
- viii. Did the seminary train you for the social roles of a religious leader?
- ix. Did any of your seminary training (formal or informal) concern interfaith dialogue or courses about other religions?
 - a. If so, please explain.
 - b. If not, why do you think it was not covered?
- x. Would more interfaith education have been helpful for the position you are currently in?
- xi. Do faculty, administration, and students at your seminary support interreligious education?
- xii. What are the best methods to teach about other religions?
- xiii. Where do you see seminaries headed in the next 10 to 15 years?

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