

*1. What do you consider to be the most important contribution that your religion has made/ is making/ can make to the common good in a pluralist society?*

As a Protestant in the U.S., I am proud of the Church's role in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. the movement embraced those of all faiths--and no faith--but the leadership was drawn from African American Christian clergy, as well as those of Euro-descent. Its impact on both legal and cultural change cannot be underestimated. The Civil Rights Movement continues to serve as a template of social change as well as a moral benchmark in a society that continues to struggle with racism.



*2. What are your major fields of research that are connected to public theology / public religion?*

My research as both a sociologist and a theologian has focused on the intersection of race and religion. I am drawn to the Janus face of religion which can both promote or inhibit social change; it can encourage violence or stand stalwartly against it in the role of peace-builder; it can construct racial segregation or pluralistic inclusivity. How these vastly different meanings are constructed is at the core of my social research. But examining implications for the common good and knowledgeably critiquing those meanings and actions that work against it is the vocation of the public theologian.

*3. What aspects are important to you about the intersection between public theology / public religion and education?*

Education is lifelong, of course, involving all sorts of institutions. However, the most critical stage of education in the life cycle is that of children, from pre-kindergarten through elementary school (generally ages 4-12). The quality of education for children is determinative not only of individual life chances, but the vitality of a democratic society. Public theology needs to be engaged in decisions about the allocation of public resources for education. It is a matter of distributive justice involving the most vulnerable in our society.

*4. Which of your recent publications would you recommend as pre-conference reading for participants of the Nuremberg Forum?*

My most recent book, *Faith on the Avenue* (Oxford University Press, 2014) , particularly chapters 3 and 4, look at how communities of faith are involved in filling in the gaps in education among poor children.