

**In the Room Where It Happens:
Cultural Humility, Curiosity, and Wonder in the Homiletics Classroom**
Sarah Travis
Adjunct Faculty, Knox College, University of Toronto

Abstract: *This essay explores the homiletics classroom as a space of cultural humility, curiosity and wonder. As students are prepared for the work of being public theologians, they must be equipped to preach to those beyond the walls of the church, particularly in a digital age. What is the significance of those who are ‘not in the room’ where the preaching happens? I argue that teachers of homiletics can assist students to learn and practice cultural humility, which is an aspect of intercultural communication that will encourage a decolonized perspective. Cultural humility can then initiate creative responses such as curiosity and wonderment about others. This essay describes a process by which cultural humility, curiosity, and wonder can be modelled in the classroom and fostered in the evaluation of student sermons.*

Introduction

When I was taught to preach, the audience of the sermon consisted of those who were ‘in the room’ where the preaching happened. We could see these individuals face to face and embrace them after the worship service. We could look into their eyes, confident that we knew something about them and their context. In a digital age, this audience has expanded to include those who are listening and watching, even if they are in different physical locations. These are our listeners, whom we seek to understand contextually in terms of cultural perspectives and backgrounds. To the best of our ability, we craft and form sermons that speak to this audience. We preachers are accountable to our listeners and we bear responsibility to represent our community and its faith as genuinely and accurately as possible. However, our audience goes beyond those we know, it goes beyond those who are ‘in the room’ where the preaching happens.

This essay argues that those who are not in the room where the preaching happens are an important consideration for the homiletic enterprise. This elusive audience forms part of the reality for which our pedagogies must prepare – that is, students must be taught an approach to thinking about this public audience. Cultural humility is an aspect of intercultural communication which will help to decolonize the ‘preacher’s gaze’ by encouraging cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. Cultural humility can then initiate creative responses such as curiosity and wonderment. I describe a process by which cultural humility, curiosity and wonder can be modelled in the classroom and fostered in the evaluation of student sermons.

The Audience for Preaching

In the era of Covid-19, our digital audiences are growing. Our sermons are encountering contexts for which they were not prepared. We stand to preach on a digital street corner, engaging with a virtual public space. As Cassandra Granados writes: “Preaching on social media is like standing on a digital street corner and proclaiming the Gospel amid memes, partisan political posts, and selfies. The audience that gathers may

include parishioners, social media followers and friends, and random visitors.”¹ The concept of ‘room’ means something different when it comes to the internet – it is possible for people to come and go from the space of the sermon without our knowledge.² It may be that people are scrolling past us on Facebook and decide to stop and listen for a few minutes. Or perhaps they come across us on YouTube and stay a bit longer. Or they have received a copy of a link to a sermon which they will share with their friends and neighbors. My congregation sends the weekly sermon across the world – to people that I, the preacher, will never meet nor fully understand.

As our audience grows and changes, so does our accountability. How can we be accountable not only to our own context but also to others – those who are not in the room? What are the limits of our responsibility toward those who are not in the sanctuary (real or virtual)? As Christians, we share the world with a multiplicity of others. It is an occupational hazard to talk about ‘the world’ – as it was, as it is, as it might become. How do we represent that ‘world’? To what extent might our preaching constitute an accountable public discourse? To what extent are we to hold ourselves accountable to the public who may never hear our sermons but constitute an important population for our preaching?

Our sermons must take into account an audience beyond what is traditionally understood to be the audience of preaching. Frequently in our sermons we represent others – we define them and describe them. Drawing an example from my own Canadian context, I am compelled to preach about the relationship among Indigenous peoples living in Canada and Settler Canadians. It is obviously impossible for me to preach about Indigenous peoples without also representing them in some way. Even when I borrow their own words, it is a representation – I choose which words, I choose how those words will come to speech, what will be emphasized or excised. Thus, I must develop the skills to represent diligently, as I have responsibility toward Indigenous peoples, and hold myself accountable to them for my representations and my attitudes. This emerges out of a conscious commitment to hold myself accountable to the wider public for the accuracy and empathy of my preaching.

We preach into almost unimaginable complexity. This public is magnificently diverse – multicultural, multiracial, multireligious. If this diverse public indeed forms an elusive part of our audience, as will be argued below, our interactions with the public constitute intercultural communication. Intercultural communication is simply the verbal and non-verbal interaction between cultures. When we engage the public, we are encountering a variety of contexts and cultures. We may not have been prepared for these encounters in our seminary training, as we tended to think of the context of our preaching as those who are nearest and dearest, with whose context we were intimately familiar. I believe that preaching, in some cases, is no longer an intimate exercise. Instead, it is communication among myriad cultures.

We preachers can never predict where our words will go, how far they will travel, and on whose ears they will fall. We preach in public. We bear witness with our lives, in public. Our sermons are lived out, in public. The Spirit of God is at work in the public sphere, and God’s redemptive activity is directed toward all of creation. In the words of Luke Powery, “The Word is resurrecting not only in church seats but on society’s streets, whether we recognize it or not.”³

¹ Cassandra Granados, email message to author, May 21, 2021.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

What emerges is a complex conversation with the culture at large – those who are not in the room. In order to engage the culture as a whole with our words and with our lives, we will need to develop capacity for such engagements. Here we turn to an intercultural communication theory, cultural humility, as a means to explore the relationship among the church, the preacher, the listener, and the public.

Cultural Humility

Cultural humility has been defined as a lifelong process of self-reflection, self-critique, continual assessment of power imbalances, and the development of mutually respectful relationships and partnerships.⁴ Cultural humility is an ethical stance that assumes that although professionals must gain cultural knowledge about the other, the other always exceeds our capacity to know and master. When we understand ourselves, we increase the chance of understanding others, even as we come to realize how much we don't know about others. In addition, being culturally humble means accepting that it is possible to hold two or more perspectives simultaneously.⁵ Cultural humility has been distinguished from cultural competence.⁶ Cultural competence assumes that one can attain fluency in a culture other than one's own, while cultural humility makes a less grand claim for itself.

Cynthia Foronda's recent article performs a concept analysis of the term cultural humility, seeking out the antecedents, attributes, and consequences of the term, with the goal of achieving a definition.⁷ Following an extensive review of relevant literature, her team adopts the following definition: "In a multicultural world where power imbalances exist, cultural humility is a process of openness, self-awareness, being egoless, and incorporating self-reflection and critique after willingly interacting with diverse individuals."⁸ It is useful to explore some of the findings of Foronda's study, as it builds not only an understanding of cultural humility but also demonstrates a process by which it occurs. In this study, the antecedents of cultural humility, or the conditions in which cultural humility can arise, were diversity and power imbalance.

It is helpful to unpack the various attributes of cultural humility. Openness, one of the early stages in the process of cultural humility, refers to "possessing an attitude that is willing to explore new ideas."⁹ If an individual is to explore cultural diversity, they must first have an open mind that allows them to enter into a new experience. "Cultural humility involves entering a relationship with another person with the intention of honoring their beliefs, customs, and values."¹⁰ In order to benefit from cultural humility, individuals must be open to this kind of relationship.

⁴ Melanie Tervalon and Jann Murray-García. "Cultural Humility Versus Cultural Competence: A Critical Distinction in Defining Physician Training Outcomes in Multicultural Education," *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 9, no. 2 (1998): 117–25. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hpu.2010.0233>.

⁵ Alan Guskin, "Cultural Humility," ed. Janet M. Bennett, *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence*, July 20, 2015, pp. 163-164, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483346267.n61>, 162.

⁶ Tervalon and Murray- García, "Cultural Humility," 117.

⁷ Cynthia Foronda, Diana-Lyn Baptiste, Maren M. Reinholdt, and Kevin Ousman. "Cultural Humility: A Concept Analysis," *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 27, no. 3 (May 1, 2016): 210–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659615592677>.

⁸ Ibid, 213.

⁹ Ibid, 211.

¹⁰ Dorothy E. Stubbe, "Practicing Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility in the Care of Diverse Patients," *FOCUS* 18, no. 1 (January 24, 2020): pp. 49-51, <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.focus.20190041>, 50.

Self-awareness is defined “as being aware of one’s strengths, limitations, values, beliefs, behavior, and appearance to others.”¹¹ If individuals are to work with others, they must first develop an understanding of themselves.

According to Foronda, to be ‘egoless’ is defined as “being humble, viewing the worth of all individuals on a horizontal plane. The poignant descriptors illustrate a more grand concept than just humility; they illustrate one must enact a belief system of equal human rights and flatten any hierarchy or power differential.”¹² This will be especially difficult for Christians for whom the church is a naturally superior being to ‘the world’. Especially those who grew up in culturally homogenous setting may have developed a sense of superiority about their own way of life.

Foronda next describes the phenomenon of ‘supportive interaction’ which she defines as intersections of existence among individuals that result in positive human exchanges. This might involve becoming active and engaged with others or taking responsibility for interactions with others. These are really opportunities to be with others and to practice the skills of cultural humility. The final attribute is self-reflection and critique. This is a continual and critical process of reflection on actions, thoughts, and feelings.¹³

Foronda and the other authors of the study note the discovery of a number of terms that are *not* cultural humility, thus contributing further to its definition: “prejudice, oppression, intolerance, discrimination, stereotyping, exclusion, stigma, inequity, marginalization, misconceptions, labeling, mistrust, hostility, misunderstandings, cultural imposition, judgmental, undermining, and bullying.”¹⁴ Thus, the opposite of cultural humility is cultural encapsulation – the inability to see outside of one’s own cultural lens, an inability to enter the lived experience of another.¹⁵

Cultural humility is a transformative process that potentially leads to greater social equality. “In our attempts at working toward cultural humility, we must not stop at simply being “sensitive” and “aware” but must remain diligent in seeking to remediate those injustices that we have come to understand around us.”¹⁶ There are real, material consequences to communication skills such as cultural humility. While cultural humility is a beneficial practice for preachers, engagement with others must not stop with the words that we preach. Mature cultural humility goes beyond words to actions and advocacy.

Cultural Humility in the Homiletics Classroom

This section applies the process of cultural humility as outlined by Foronda to teaching preaching. Cultural humility can be modelled by the teacher at all times. Although the actual practice of cultural humility is a life-long and self-reflective process, the process itself can be taught as part of the curriculum. It is important to note that “cultural humility cannot be learned merely in the classroom with traditional teaching methods. Reflection on experiences over time

¹¹ Foronda et al., “Cultural Humility”, 211.

¹² Ibid, 212.

¹³ Foronda et al., “Cultural Humility”, 212.

¹⁴ Ibid, 213.

¹⁵ Kelley Haynes-Mendez & Jill Engelsmeier, “Cultivating Cultural Humility in Education,” *Childhood Education*, 96:3, (2020) 22-29, DOI: 10.1080/00094056.2020.1766656

¹⁶ Miguel E. Gallardo and Miguel E. Gallardo, in *Developing Cultural Humility: Embracing Race, Privilege and Power*, ed. Miguel E. Gallardo (Los Angeles, CA: Cognella, 2014), pp. 239-264, 246.

leads to the development of cultural humility.”¹⁷ For this reason, some practitioners have recommended journaling as a practice that can encourage the development of cultural humility.¹⁸ Journaling would be an excellent addition to the pedagogical toolbox. A teacher might invite students to journal specifically about their daily interactions with those who are not in the room where the preaching happens. These glimpses into the lives of others help to expand the preacher’s pastoral vision.

As mentioned above, the preconditions for cultural humility are diversity and power imbalance. Both of these are evident in my homiletics classroom. My students represent many cultures – Korean, Taiwanese, Indian, Syrian, Ghanaian, Nigerian, and various white European backgrounds. Diversity is not limited by race but is extended to socio-economic status, sexual orientation, denomination, etc. I am frequently a minority in terms of race and gender yet I have a position of power. There are various hierarchies at play – racial hierarchies, professional hierarchies, and ecclesial hierarchies, to name just a few. Not only are there power imbalances between teacher and student due to positional power and race, but also among the students. Some, for example, are more fluent in English than others. White students hold more power than students of colour- one reason being that white students are often more proficient in English. Some students have more knowledge and experience than others. These power imbalances result in an unequal dynamic.

In this diverse classroom it is essential to ensure that all voices are given opportunity to be heard. Teachers can model cultural humility by being self-aware about their own social location and context. They can model respect and genuine curiosity about other cultural groups. We might approach our students with an air of curiosity, wondering: “how they have come to understand themselves as cultural beings, the challenges and rewards in their process of understanding themselves culturally, how they have integrated their identities in their personal and professional lives, and what challenges they continue to face as they move forward.”¹⁹ Teachers must be continually aware of the potential for miscommunication and misunderstanding, and respect the possibility that these will arise within the classroom.²⁰

The process of developing cultural humility begins with openness. Students are invited into a diverse classroom and are expected to engage with others. They are encouraged to be open to seeking new ideas and connections. Obviously, the degree of openness will vary – some students will be more open than others. Those who have already developed a degree of cultural humility will come to the classroom eager to interrogate difference, and to be curious about others.

The process of teaching preaching is already steeped in self-awareness. We ask students to consider their social locations – where they situate themselves in terms of race, class, sexual identity, geographic location, age, ability, education – every situation of life and lifestyle. In my experience, many students struggled to talk about their own social location, as if it were the first time they had been asked to describe the impact of their race and ethnicity. Ancis states: “In terms of challenges in the classroom, I have found that White students are often not cognizant that they have an ethnic identity. I believe that this lack of knowledge and lost identity

¹⁷ Jenny B. Schuessler, Barbara Wilder, and Linda W Byrd. “Reflective Journaling and Development of Cultural Humility in Students,” *Nursing Education Perspectives* 33, no. 2 (2012): 96–99.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Miguel E. Gallardo and Miguel E. Gallardo, in *Developing Cultural Humility: Embracing Race, Privilege and Power*, ed. Miguel E. Gallardo (Los Angeles, CA: Cognella, 2014), pp. 1-26, 1.

²⁰ Gushkin, “Cultural Humility,” 163.

contributes to a resistance to fully recognize and appreciate the cultures of others and hinders the development of sensitivity to others.”²¹ Gallardo writes in *Developing Cultural Humility*, “I am deeply concerned when I hear my ‘White’ students each year in both my doctoral and master's level courses tell me they have no culture, or provide me with a response that they are ‘American,’ or ‘I don't know, I have not thought about that before.’”²² It is not only white students who might have trouble articulating their cultural identity in a mixed classroom. I had a class that was entirely composed of Korean males. I asked them to describe what it is like to be a Korean male in this time and place. They were unable to answer – whether because they were uncomfortable articulating cultural self-understanding in the classroom, or they genuinely didn't know how to express their self-understanding. In a world that is increasingly diverse and unknowable, it becomes more important for students to be able to name their own location. This is obviously a challenge that goes beyond the homiletics classroom and reveals a need for the development of self-awareness to be part of the larger curriculum of theological education.

Foronda's analysis discovered that an important part of the process toward cultural humility is to be humble, or ‘egoless.’ This is a much more difficult process to teach but it can be modelled, especially when it comes to flattening hierarchy within the classroom. It may be particularly helpful for teachers in multicultural classrooms to develop new pathways for communication that do not rely only on norms from the teacher's own culture. “When communicators are inventive, they surpass the idea that they must accommodate to the style of one of the cultures involved. Instead, they work on establishing, often tacitly, new patterns that work for both.”²³ A recent example arises from a lecture in which I referred to ‘the lectionary’ in a multi-denominational setting. A student reminded me that there are, in fact, multiple lectionaries. I was able to apologize for my misleading statement, and we were able to have a constructive conversation about various lectionaries. I showed humility by recognizing the limited nature of my insight, and together we were able to forge a new path. Together, we honoured the diversity that was present not only in the classroom, but in the churches that we serve.

Foronda's next stage in the process is “supportive interaction.” This part of the process lends itself especially well to student sermon evaluation. If cultural humility is to be taken seriously as an aspect of intercultural communication, then it must find its way into the evaluation of preaching. It would not be beneficial to evaluate students based on their degree of cultural humility as this is an ongoing process and impossible to measure. However, the evaluation of student sermons can model and practice curiosity and wonder as a means to explore the identity of the other.

There is a moment in the “Children in Worship” or “Godly Play” liturgies in which children are invited into a time of wondering. The storyteller/leader has told the biblical story beautifully and gently using familiar and delicate physical objects. She then invites the children to wonder aloud about what they have heard. I wonder what Jesus was feeling? I wonder what the temple smelled like? I wonder what it felt like to be the Samaritan?

²¹ Ancis, J. R., & Szymanski, D. M. (2001). “Awareness of White privilege among White counseling trainees.” *The Counseling Psychologist*, 29, 548–569. In *Developing Cultural Humility*, 251.

²² Gallardo, op.cit., ch 1.

²³ Kathy Domenici and Stephen W. Littlejohn. *Facework: Bridging Theory and Practice*. (SAGE Publications, 2006,) 160.

These questions follow a natural progression that helps children ease into the wondering (we all know what we like best) to larger issues (what is really important?) to making the story about ourselves (where am I in this story?) to the great existential questions of limits (what can we leave out?). It is not unusual for a child to respond to these questions with deep thoughts about the meaning of life, the nature of our call as Christians, and even the mystery of death. A storyteller does not correct or offer easy answers; instead he holds space for the children to wonder by wondering himself. Other children may add to the wonderings of others. This sacred time is Spirit-filled and conveys the deep work of Christian life.²⁴

Here we have an incredible model for thinking respectfully, awe-fully, about those who are not in the room. This is a stance and a practice that will complement conversations around student sermon evaluation. Wondering questions would provide a means to ponder the existence of another. For example, “I wonder how this sermon will be heard in an indigenous community?”

Curiosity is an attitude that enhances the practices of cultural humility – both in terms of curiosity about the self (intrapersonal) and curiosity about the other (interpersonal). Intercultural curiosity is “the desire or inclination to know or learn about people who are culturally different and their cultures.”²⁵ Curiosity is found to be a predictor of positive outcomes when it comes to the effectiveness of intercultural communication.²⁶ Cultural humility calls on us

to remain curious and self-aware, to avoid assumptions, keep biases in check, and make necessary changes. This practice requires us to closely examine our views, decisions, and actions, as well as our contributions to the systems that perpetuate inequities. Curiosity and respectful dialogue are the cornerstones of cultural humility. Curiosity about one’s self is necessary to examine and challenge our beliefs. Curiosity also means learning about others with openness, including learning about the ongoing legacies of their historical and present-day realities.²⁷

Curiosity can enhance the preaching process and the teaching of preaching. We can become curious about our own motives and attitudes. We can become curious about our students, about how they experience the world, what their experiences have been. We can become curious about other faiths and traditions that occupy the public space.

The concepts of ‘wonder’ and ‘curiosity’ are fruitful in the evaluative process. I theorize that the evaluation of student sermons is an ideal time to ask wondering and curious questions about those who are represented in the sermon, as well as those who might hear the sermon or be impacted by it in some way. In essence, students are invited to wonder about those who are not in the room. For example, students are invited to become curious about the public square and wonder how this sermon would be heard by particular groups. To return to the example of a sermon that addresses Indigenous-Settler relations in Canada, in an evaluative process, students are asked to wonder aloud: I wonder how this sermon might be heard by a Settler Canadian? I

²⁴ Jerome W. Berryman, “Godly Play and the Language of Christian Faith,” *Christian Century*, March 27, 2019. <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/features/godly-play-and-language-christian-faith>

This article provides an excellent introduction to the practices of Godly Play.

²⁵ Mark Earl Mendenhall, “Curiosity.” In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence*, 215–216 (215). Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483346267>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Zahra Jimale and Jennifer Smith, “Making a Case for Cultural Humility.” *Bar Talk*, Dec 2020. <https://www.cbabc.org/BarTalk/Articles/2020/December/Columns/Making-the-Case-for-Cultural-Humility>

wonder how this sermon might be heard by an Indigenous person? I wonder about the history of Indigenous-Settler relations. I wonder about Canada's history and contemporary situation. I wonder whether this sermon will heal or hurt? To wrestle with these questions out loud and together is to open a space in which cultural humility might be encouraged. In discussion, students will find that they have varying levels of knowledge about various groups. They are able to pool their knowledge and their questions, while becoming aware of the various perspectives and identities that are presented by classmates. These kind of "wondering" questions lend themselves not only to the evaluation of sermons but to the study of scripture. "I wonder" is an open, curious and humble statement.

Finally, according to Foronda, we come to the part of the process that is about self-reflection and critique. This is an ongoing practice that continually asks the individual to evaluate their attitudes and behaviour. The goal is to continue learning and reflecting about different cultures in a way that provides a continual feedback loop of positive engagement and ongoing change. In the homiletics classroom, this is perhaps most adequately fulfilled by a self-evaluative exercise.²⁸ Students can be asked to wonder about their own growth through the term. Many preachers engage in a week to week process of sermon preparation. They imagine the faces of the people sitting in the pews, thinking about their needs and their sorrows, their joys and their struggles. This imagined, yet real audience offers insight for the preacher. What if the imaginative gaze was levelled further afield? What if imaginary audiences included those who are not in the room when the preaching happens? What if our imaginary audience was filled with characters we encounter in our daily lives who might never hear our sermons but to whom we are accountable in terms of our representation of our shared reality? What might the gospel mean for the women in the line at the bakery? What might it mean for the food delivery driver? What might it mean for the man at the dog park? Including this "public" in our sermon preparations on an ongoing basis will result in sermons that are more connected and relevant.

Decolonizing the Curious Preacher's Gaze

In critical theory, the "gaze" is the way that an individual perceives or defines another. The colonial gaze refers to the way that colonizers define and characterize the colonized – often in negative and demeaning ways. Representation is a dangerous enterprise. The way that colonial agents have represented the colonized has tended to be deeply flawed and inaccurate, often to the benefit of the colonizer. In order to maintain superiority and justify colonial projects, it has been necessary to build a strict boundary between colonized and colonizer. In addition, the colonizer must construct the colonized other in a particular way. This social construction functions to maintain difference and distance between colonized and colonizer. This kind of discourse aims to concretize the status quo in relationships of unequal power. When we teach or preach, we are in a position of power. The gaze of the teacher/preacher has the power to represent, to define, to label.

In the classroom, it may be necessary to decolonize the preacher's gaze, especially as our curious gaze falls upon the lived experience of the other. This involves, at the very least, inquiring whether our representations and theologies are adequate and accurate. Catherine and Justo González write: "In a Thanksgiving service, for instance, we must be ready to repeat in the presence of our Native American sisters and brothers whatever is said about the ownership of the

²⁸ According to Gushkin, no metric yet exists to measure cultural humility.

land.”²⁹ Teachers must ask whether their words can be reasonably spoken in the presence of a diverse body of students. In addition, whether their words will hold up in another context - Can we say that....to an Indigenous Person living on treaty lands in Canada? Can we say that....to a recent refugee? Can we say that....to someone who has experienced deep trauma? Can we say that....in a situation where someone has not received healing from illness? This intentional pause gives us an opportunity to become curious about the other and to measure our words against the lived experiences of other groups. We can only become familiar with the lived experiences of others if we listen carefully to what a group says about itself.

The act of teaching preaching is a contact zone where we encounter other cultures and perspectives as well as different situations vis a vis colonial power. It is important to pay attention, to be co-present, at these intersections. In these contact zones, we may gain insight into those who are not in the room by maintaining a gentle, respectful, and mutual gaze.

Cultural Humility in the Process of Preaching

It is hoped that this practice of cultural humility will continue outside of the classroom. It is very much a practice to be cultivated in the preacher’s life - to seek accuracy, to seek empathy with others, to seek to be humble and curious. I am theorizing this as a deeply imaginative process, although it could be a much more concrete and practical process if preachers were to engage in the lives of others outside of the preaching space – in conversation, through social media, by asking questions and listening carefully to answers. It is hoped that this wondering will lead to more robust engagement through research or personal contact. I, for example, have found Twitter to be a useful tool for monitoring my own assumptions and biases about other cultures. By engaging with a wide variety of individuals, I am practicing opening my mind, being curious and other-oriented.

The process of developing cultural humility could easily become part of a preacher’s self-critical practice. What are the benefits of developing cultural humility in the pulpit and classroom? In the process of preaching? According to Foronda, “The results of achieving cultural humility are mutual empowerment, respect, partnerships, optimal care, and lifelong learning.”³⁰ It is easy to see how each of these could enhance pastoral ministry. Becoming curious about those who are not in the room is a pathway toward empowerment for both the preacher and the group about whom they preach. This is a means to form partnerships and increase respect for others. In healthcare settings, cultural humility has led to optimized care. We can imagine that the same might be true in pastoral settings. As we practice cultural humility, we are opening a space in which we might optimize our pastoral care by listening and wondering. Finally, setting preachers on a path of lifelong learning means that they will continually be prepared and challenged to consider those who are not in the room.

Alicia Elliot, a Haudenosaunee writer, explains what it means to write from another perspective with authenticity. It takes empathy, but it also takes love. She writes:

If you can’t write about us with a love for who we are as a people, what we’ve survived, what we’ve accomplished despite all attempts to keep us from doing so; if you can’t look

²⁹ Catherine and Justo Gonzalez “The Larger Context” in Art Van Seters, *Preaching as a Social Act: Theology & Practice*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988,) 31.

³⁰ Foronda, *Cultural Humility*, 213.

at us as we are and feel your pupils go wide, rendering all stereotypes a sham, a poor copy, a disgrace – then why are you writing about us at all?³¹

Preaching from another perspective with authenticity also requires love and humility. This is especially true if we are to represent others as fairly and realistically as possible. The goal is to engage the public square with curiosity and humility, and to be accountable for the manner in which we represent the world beyond our listeners

³¹ Alicia Elliot, “On Seeing and Being Seen,” in *A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*, (Toronto, Doubleday, 2019), 30.