



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?

Buddhism has been showing us how to access Buddha nature (*Bodhicitta* or awakened heart-mind) that is common to all human beings (and shared by other beings). Buddha nature manifests in human beings as lovingkindness or friendliness, empathy with suffering others as well as rejoicing others, and non-reactive spaciousness of consciousness that lies (often dormant) beyond the usual egoic structures. Showing how to access this post-egoic structure of consciousness through meditation (“technology of consciousness”) and contemplative ways of life that can be adaptive to any specific religious worldviews and practices is Buddhism’s most important contribution to a pluralist society. Philosophically speaking, pluralism has many faces, such as multiculturalism, interculturalism, and transculturalism. Buddhism’s contribution with respect to these many faces of pluralism is by supplying ways of *both* differentiating *and* unifying or integrating that can result in seeing the universe, including humanity, as a non-dual whole manifesting always as an interdependent and interpenetrating phenomenon.

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

My work has been primarily focused in educating people through philosophical, social-moral, aesthetic, and psychological discourses. In particular, I have been

writing and teaching about intrinsic (in distinction to 'instrumental') valuing (of human and other beings) as quintessentially moral consciousness and how this latter is attained through contemplative ways of being/doing. More recently, through psychotherapeutic studies and training, I have also added a deepening layer to my research and practice by working with the psychological barriers to intrinsic valuing. I have explicated how these barriers are systemic and are built into socio-economic structures of the current global civilization that is a quagmire of acquisitive and addictive ways of being.

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

Education broadly conceived spans the whole of human life and growth and reaches incisively and decisively into the formation of personhood at all levels of development. As such, formal and informal institutions of education, from family, schooling, workplaces, religious centres, private and public organizations, governmental jurisdictions, etc., to contemporary media culture, all play powerful roles. The important and mostly overlooked role that education can play in reshaping the contemporary civic/public culture that is playing out the positivistic and materialistic ontology of modernity, by reintroducing a culture of sacredness and a vision of an animated and meaningful universe. Secularization has meant largely abandoning the sacred in all aspect of our lives, and especially in public life. Public theology/religion can, through its passionate presence and thoughtful and creative engagement of the public, set in motion an alteration of the ethos of our times and *modus vivendi* towards embodying more sacredness, respect, compassion, and love/care.

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

a) Eppert, C., Vokey, D., Nguyen, T. & Bai, H. (2015). Intercultural philosophy and the nondual wisdom of 'basic goodness': Implications for contemplative and transformative education, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 49 (2), pp. 274-293.

b) Bai, H., Morgan, P. Scott, C. & Cohen, A. (in press). Prolegomena to spiritual research paradigm: Importance of attending to the embodied and the subtle. In J. Lin, O. Qargha, R. Oxford & T. Culham. (Eds.), *Developing a spiritual research paradigm: Incorporating spirituality in research in the social sciences and education*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

c) Walsh, S. & Bai, H. (forthcoming). Writing the cauldron as intersubjective practice. In O. Gunnlaugson, E. Sarath, C. Scott & H. Bai (Eds.). *The intersubjective turn in contemplative education: Shared approaches for contemplative learning and inquiry across disciplines*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.