


*Founded in 1924 in the belief that there
is more that binds us together
than separates us in the worship of God*

*The Community Church
of Vero Beach*



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Embracing God's Gift of Differences

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But Now, What Do We Do?



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Embracing God's Gift of Differences; Who are we?

Each person who is a part of
Community Church has a **story**


Embracing God's Gift of Differences; Who are we?

We . . .

- Come from more than 50 denominational backgrounds / faith traditions
 - Differing worship styles
 - Quite different Christian educational experiences – or none



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Embracing God's Gift of Differences; Who are we?

We bring . . .

- Differing perspectives on how to read the Bible
- Variety of understandings of Theology
- (or may not even know what Theology is . . .)

Embracing God's Gift of Differences; Who are we?

We bring . . .

- Differing experiences with organized religion
 - Many of us have found it a center of our lives
 - Some may find it raising more questions than offering answers
 - Some, sadly, have been badly hurt by previous experiences with the church



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Embracing God's Gift of Differences; Who are we?

We come from . . .

- All parts of the country . . . And beyond
- Variety of Socio-economic backgrounds
- Political perspectives



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Embracing God's Gift of Differences; Who are we?

We have a . . .

- Variety of Personalities and interests
 - Whether described by our Myers Briggs type or other descriptions



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Embracing God's Gift of Differences; Who are we?

We bring . . .

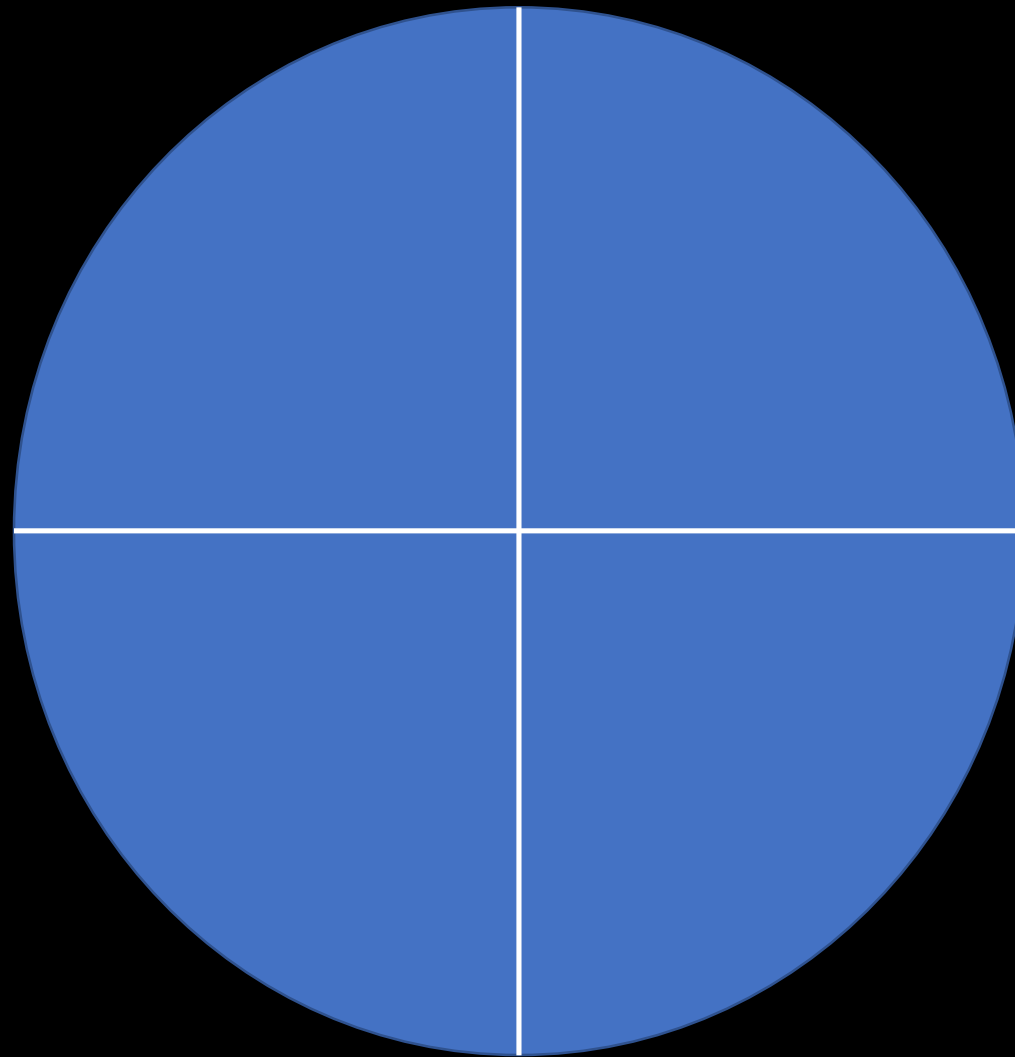
- Our differing Spiritual Types

Spiritual Types

Intellectual

Mystery
(God as Spirit)

Imaging
(God as Revealed)



Heartfelt



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What would I give if I could live out of these waters?
What would I give to spend a day warm on the beach?
Before we can fully understand
But they don't realize their daughters
Bright young women lack of swimming
They'll stand

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C2 WORSHIP



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90th Anniversary The Community Church of Vero Beach

**"Founded in 1924 in the belief that there is more that binds us together
than separates us in the worship of God."**



February 23, 2014

8:00 a.m. Chapel Service, Page 1

9:30 a.m. and 11:05 a.m. Sanctuary Services, Page 8

C₂ Service, Page 15

**Community Church of Vero Beach
1901 23rd Street ♦ Vero Beach, Florida
www.ccovb.org ♦ info@ccovb.org**



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“We welcome into fellowship with us all of whatever name or creed who are trying to know and to do the will of God the Heavenly Father and his son Our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ, and who seek the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.”

Bylaws - March 27, 1924

“Since 1924, a pilgrim people
who accept that though we
may not all think alike,
we may love alike.”



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“Recognizing the wide welcome offered to all through Jesus Christ, Community Church opens its arms to all. We strive to offer Christ's wide welcome to all people, regardless of creed, age, race, or sexual identity. We invite you to join our congregation in worship and in membership, as we allow our lives to be shared by the loving outreach of Christ.”

Welcome in Sunday Bulletin



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Purpose Statement

2019

To be a community of God's people,
who follow Christ's way,
worship in Christ's name,
welcome and love all,
serve widely and joyfully,
to transform our lives and world
by reflecting God's living spirit.

Vision 2020 – Strategic Plan


Communicate our warm welcome and acceptance of all

‘ . . . In keeping with that perspective, and with our denomination's traditional assertion that testimonies to faith are preferred to tests of faith,

- we prayerfully consider and thoughtfully and respectfully engage with one another in addressing issues of great significance.



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Vision 2020 – Strategic Plan

Communicate our warm welcome and acceptance of all

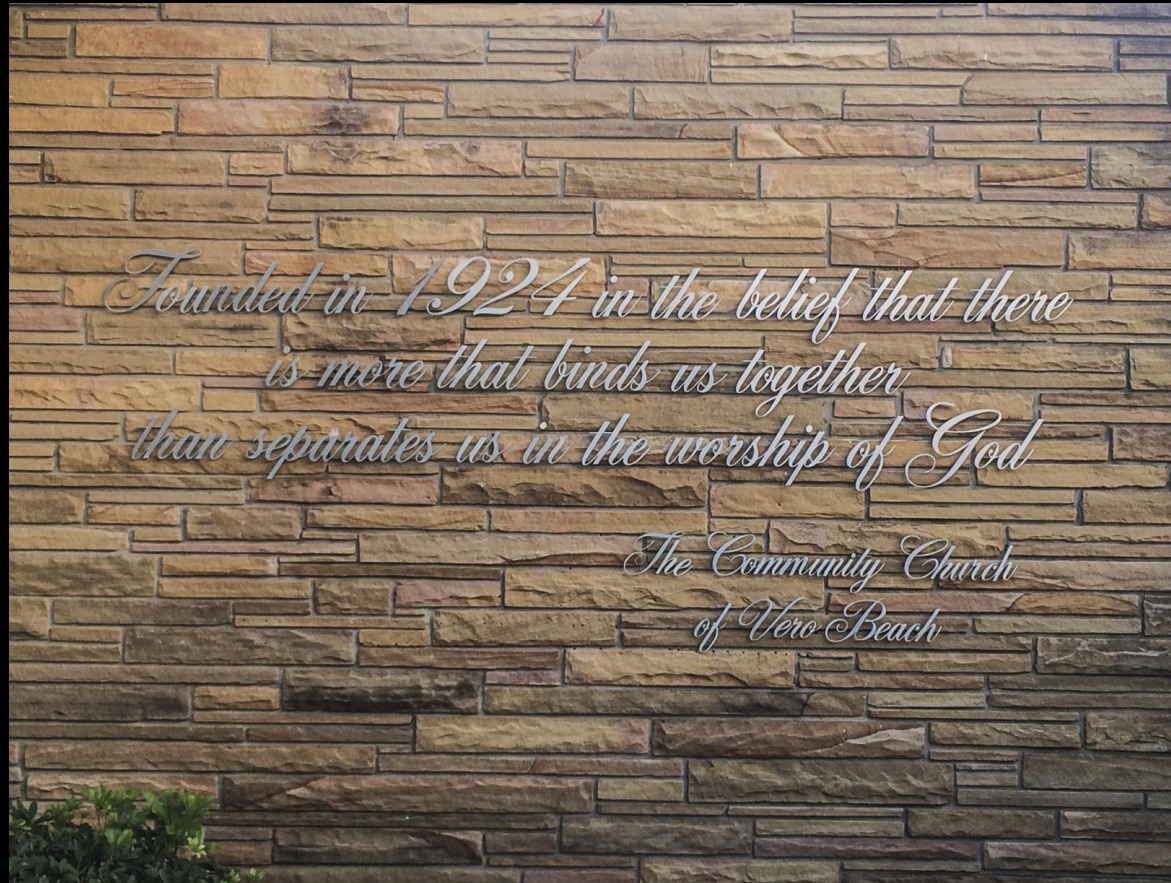
- We watch together to witness more light and truth break forth among us, as we endeavor to share the unconditional love of Christ with all.
- In efforts to grow membership and participation, be mindful to respect all viewpoints while encouraging love for ourselves, our family and the greater community.



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How Would You Describe the “MORE That Binds Us Together”?



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Ten Challenges:
9 “Belonging Before
Believing”



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Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

Future Faith

Ten Challenges
Reshaping Christianity
in the 21st Century

Foreword by
Soong-Chan Rah

WORD & WORLD
BOOKS

THEOLOGY FOR CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

“Belonging Before Believing”





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How can we stand

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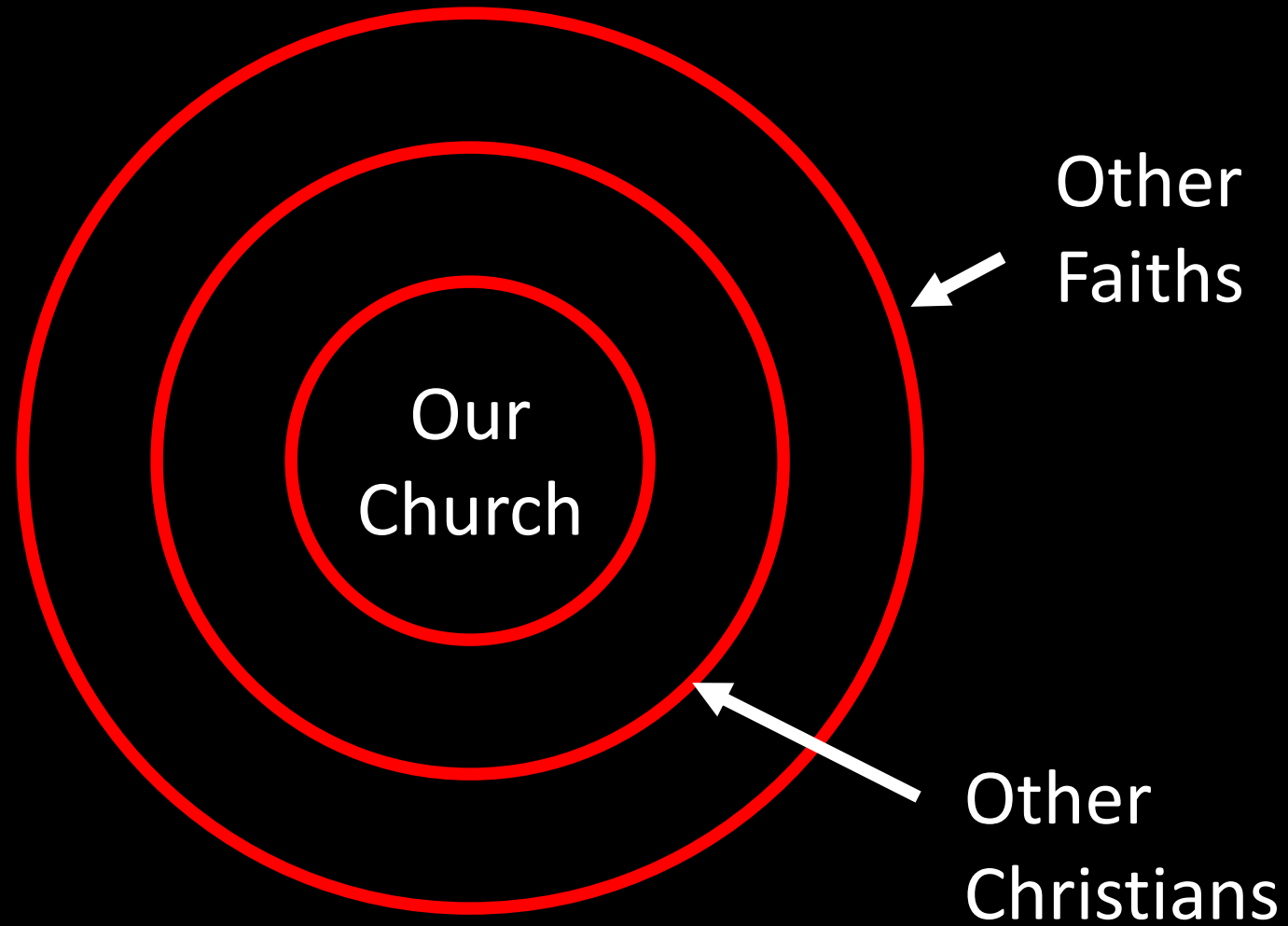


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C2 WORSHIP

The Challenges That Differences Bring



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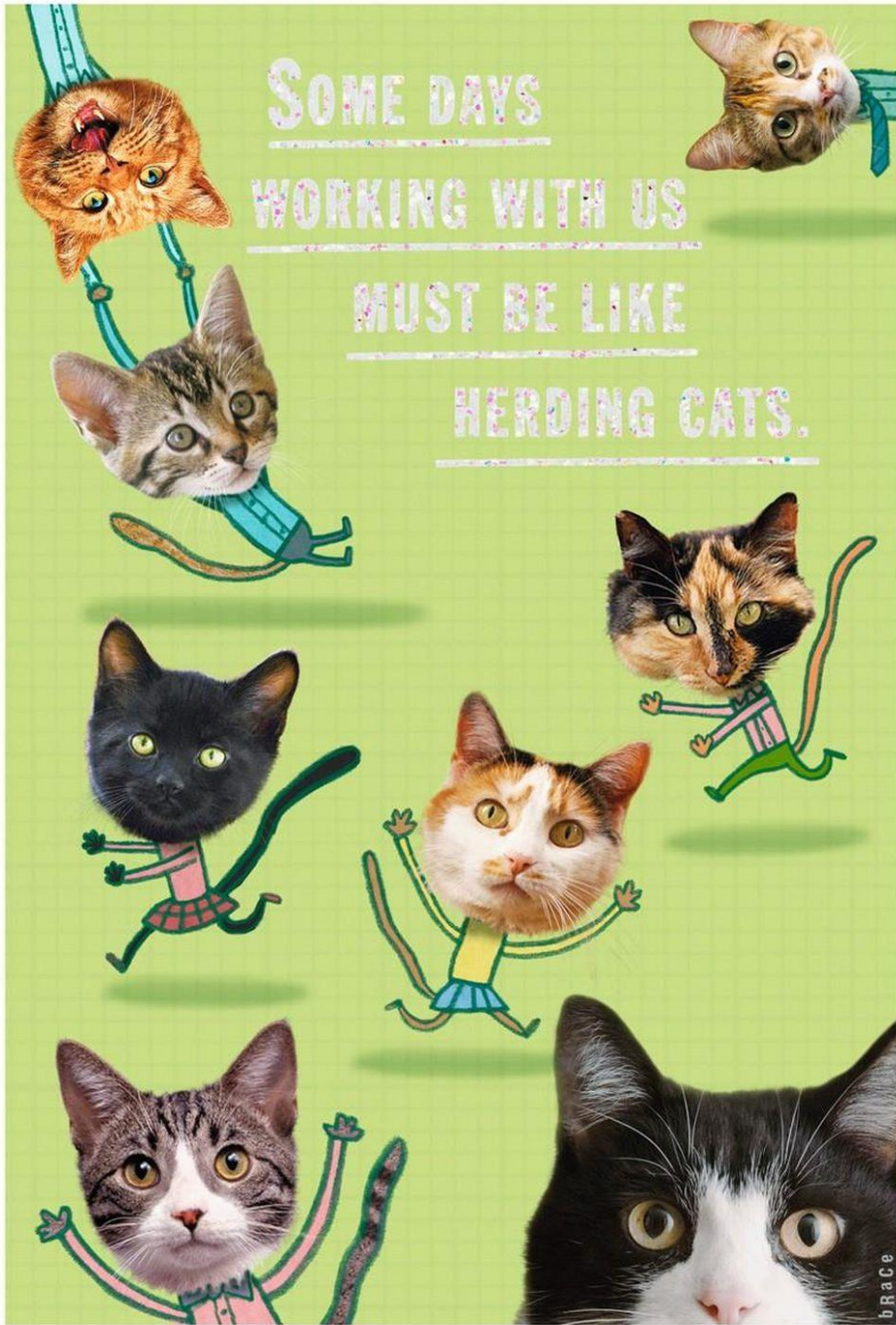
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SOME DAYS

WORKING WITH US

MUST BE LIKE

HERDING CATS.



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bRaCe

Acknowledge that we ARE different – but that is OK!

- That can be our strength
- And if we work hard at embracing, celebrating, and leveraging our differences in a loving, impactful ministry – we can be a powerful witness to a world that is so rife with tribalistic bickering – of a better, loving way.

The small screen in the bottom corner of the TV.

Programming Considerations:

Differing Spiritual Types

- Varieties of Worship Experiences
- Variety of Ways of Participation
- Personal Example . . .



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CHRISTENA CLEVELAND

Disunity



in Christ

*Uncovering the Hidden
Forces That Keep Us Apart*

Associate Professor
of the Practice of
Organizational
Studies at Duke
University's Divinity
School



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Understand our basic, deep-wired human nature

- Tribalism – we want band up with “our own” to protect us from “the unknown other”
- Response to Insecurity - retreat to “our own”, categorize, look for all the ways in which we are really better



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Human “Need for Cognitive Closure”

- desire for firm answers as opposed to confusion or ambiguity.
- Need level varies among individuals - higher need → attracted to “tidy answers” even if they are incomplete

- When we encounter differences
 - Active Listening
 - “Seek First to Understand – and then Be Understood” – Steven Covey, *7 Habits*
 - Using “I Phrases” rather than “You ought. . .”
 - Look for common interests

If we are a community of belonging - how can we make sure that people have a chance to connect?

“Participation in communities nurturing future faith will be driven by relational connections rather than defined by doctrinal divides. The church that will learn to survive and thrive in this future will be one that includes rather than excludes, that welcomes rather than warns, and that relates rather than regulates.”

Future Faith – Ten Challenges Reshaping Christianity



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Getting to know those beyond our circle:

If we want to cultivate a deeper understanding
and build closer relationships –
share activities together on a peer basis

INTERFAITH

LOVE YOUR

Neighbor

MISSION FAIR



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“He drew a circle that shut me out—
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!”

Charles Edwin Anson Markham (1852 – 1940), American poet

Community @ Community
February 6 and 13, 2019
Don Stoner and Bob Inhoff

“Founded in 1924 in the belief that there is more that binds us together than separates us in the worship of God.”

Inspired by the founding statement of Community Church, we will explore the following topics:

February 6 – The Paradox of Religious Liberty - A look at the historical and continuing lessons of the paradoxical nature of religious liberty: “I can only have religious liberty for myself when I embrace religious liberty for others, whose beliefs may be far different from my own.”

Community @ Community
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February 13 – Embracing and Sustaining Community - The yin and yang of community and diversity. How the focus on individualism has presented a challenge to achieving and belonging in communities that consist of diverse cultures and beliefs. What are some approaches to overcoming these challenges to more fully embrace our founding vision?



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Perspectives from Scriptures

“For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.”



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Romans 12:3-8 NRSV

Grotto of
Our Lady of Lourdes
located at the University
of Notre Dame



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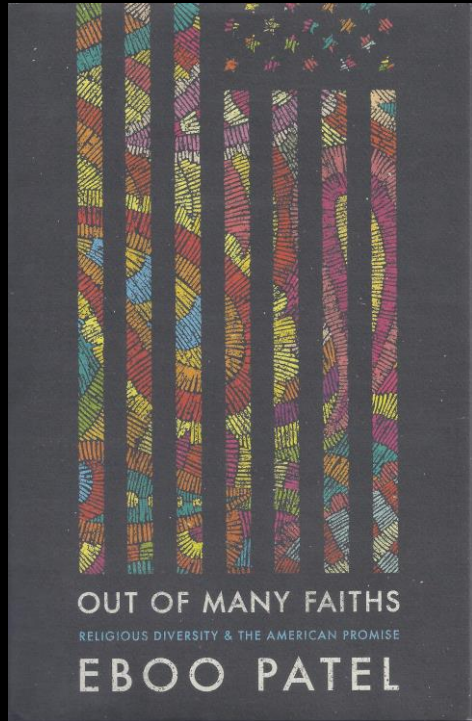
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“You have a choice whenever you encounter something from another tradition, Eboo. You can look for the differences, or you can find the resonances.

I advise you to look for the resonances”

Eboo Patel, quoting his father

Out of Many Faiths – Religious Diversity & The American Promise



The Qur'an provides a wise word that celebrates our diversity even as it guides us on the journey of faith, in which our vision and understanding of ultimate truth remain limited:

Charles Kimball, Professor of Comparative Religions

"If God had so willed, He would have created you one community, but [He has not done so] that He may test you in what He has given you; so compete with one another in good works. To God you shall all return and He will tell you the truth about that which you have been disputing"

(Qur'an 5:48).



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