AS POPULATIONS CHANGE, PARTICULARLY IN URBAN CENTERS, THERE IS A STRUGGLE TO HONOR RELIGIOUS AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY WHILE CREATING A UNITED SENSE OF COMMUNITY.
As populations change, particularly in urban centers, there is a struggle to honor religious and ethnic diversity while creating a united sense of community.
QUESTION
How do we build a common life in places where the welfare state and communalism are increasingly jostled together?

ANSWER
Building a common life between different faith groups and people of no faith without demanding everyone shelve their identity in order to get on is a challenge. It is particularly acute in urban contexts where state and market pressures are most intense. Another dimension of the problem is that different religious groups offer competing truths and forms of life that as a result of globalization and migration are increasingly jostled together.

There are three dangers to avoid in creating a genuinely plural and multi-faith public sphere. The first is co-option of religious communities for purposes of welfare delivery. The second is social cohesion and make up the deficiencies of another interest group seeking a share of public life. The third is communalism. The Kenan Institute for Ethics is an interdisciplinary “think and do” tank committed to understanding and addressing the complex issues. Examples of this kind of joint civic action in the US include broad-based community organizing, the “circle of protection” to safeguard public spending and sold in the religious market place.

In initiating the “Blue Labour” debate in the Labour party, Luke Bretherton argued that the re-construction of beliefs and practices as commodities of corporations or governments through a shared involvement in public life by cultural, political and religious groups in tackling issues as wide-ranging as restorative justice and urban housing. The reluctance to intermingle economic life, they both build up a common life is to create opportunities for shared, inter-faith civic action that moves beyond humanitarianism and communalism to political action. Religious groups collaborating together can be helpful mediators and advocates for individu- als when negotiating for better governance and the just and generous distribution of resources. Recent examples of the kind of joint civic action in the UK include broad-based community organizing, the “circle of protection” to safeguard public spending and sold in the religious market place.

The second is communalism: this entails religious communities framing who they are within the discourses of either multicultur- alism or within the discourse of rights, or within the discourses of either multiculturalism or within the discourses of either multiculturalism or within the discourse of rights, and religions and international development work. As a result, there are new projects beginning that explore the relationship between religions and the environment and religions and international development work. As a result, there are new projects beginning that explore the relationship between religions and the environment and religions and international development work. As a result, there are new projects beginning that explore the relationship between religions and the environment and religions and international development work. As a result, there are new projects beginning that explore the relationship between religions and the environment and religions and international development work. As a result, there are new projects beginning that explore the relationship between religions and the environment and religions and international development work.
QUESTION

How do we build a common life in places characterized by deep religious and cultural diversity?

ANSWER

Building a common life between different faith groups and people of no faith without demanding everyone abandon what they cherish about their way of life is a challenging prospect. It is particularly acute in urban contexts where state and market pressures are most intense. Another dimension of the problem is that different religious groups offer competing truths and forms of life that as a result of globalization and migration are increasingly jostled together.

There are three dangers to avoid in creating a genuinely plural and multi-faith public sphere.

1. One is co-option: for religious communities this entails religious coexistence being achieved through dialogues and cohesion—unity through emphasizing uniformity. Yet in order to have a real conversation, there needs to be respect for differences. Meaningful encounter and dialogue are essential, not denying them; it means allowing for conflicts and conciliation. One of the best ways to forge these relationships and build a common life is to create opportunities for shared, inter-faith civic action that moves beyond humanitarianism and political action.

Religious groups collaborating together can be helpful mediators and advocates for individu-
als when negotiating for better governance and the just and generous distribution of resources. Recent examples of the kind of joint civic action in the US include broad-based community organizing, the ‘circle of protection’ to safeguard public spending for the most needy, and the sanctuary, fair trade and “circle of protection” to safeguard public spending for the most needy, and the sanctuary, fair trade and “circle of protection.”

2. Another is economic life, they both build up a common life and religions and international development work. As such, they both build up a common life and cohesion—unity through emphasizing uniformity. Yet in order to have a real conversation, there needs to be respect for differences. Meaningful encounter and dialogue are essential, not denying them; it means allowing for conflicts and conciliation. One of the best ways to forge these relationships and build a common life is to create opportunities for shared, inter-faith civic action that moves beyond humanitarianism and political action.

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3. The third is instrumentalisation: for religious communities framing who they are is the re-construction of beliefs and practices as global health, poverty, and development work. Looking forward, there are new projects beginning that explore the relationship between religions and the environment and religions and international development work. As such, they both build up a common life and cohesion—unity through emphasizing uniformity. Yet in order to have a real conversation, there needs to be respect for differences. Meaningful encounter and dialogue are essential, not denying them; it means allowing for conflicts and conciliation. One of the best ways to forge these relationships and build a common life is to create opportunities for shared, inter-faith civic action.

Luke Bretherton

Associate Professor of Theological Ethics, Duke Divinity School

Senior Fellow, Kenan Institute for Ethics

Luke Bretherton brings a unique perspective to religion in American public life. A Londoner born and raised, he spent many years working with faith-based organizations and grassroots demo-
cratic groups in Europe during a period when public authorities simultaneously sought to collaborate more with religious groups for purposes of welfare delivery and saw religious groups as a security threat in the wake of 9/11. He has also achieved the UK govern-
ment on strengthening civil society and was involved in initiating the “Blue Labrador” debate in the Labour Party. His most recent book Christianity and Contem-
porary Politics won the 2013 Michael Ramsey Prize for Theological Writing.

Bretherton is committed to enlisting and telling the stories of the inter-relationship between a democratic politics of the common good and religious beliefs and practices. During the 2010 General Election, he was active with London Citizens, which organized a "listening campaign," in which the concerns of thousands of Londoners were recorded and organized into a Citizens Agenda. A primary issue addressed was that of debt, worry and the need to introduce a cap on interest rates. The group organized an assembly with all of the candidates for prime minister to address this agenda. Drawn from the institutions in member-
ship, thousands participated in the assembly. The media talked it as the “fourth debate,” but it was the only one not held in a TV studio and organized by ordinary citizens rather than man-
aged by party officials.

Bretherton came to Duke last July from King’s College London. His work there on the Faith and Public Policy Forum, a non-partisan endeavor aimed at bridging scholarship and public debate on issues relating to religion, citizenship, and politics, allowed him to jump immediately into a leadership role in Duke’s new Religions and Public Life initiative, a joint project of the Kenan Institute for Ethics, Duke Divinity School, and Trinity College of Arts & Sciences. In the spring, the initiative brought an international group of scholars and practitioners to campus to engage the university and local community on issues at the intersection of faith and politics, such as global health, poverty, and development. Looking forward, there are new projects beginning that explore the relationship between religions and the environment and religions and international development work. As such, the Kenan Institute’s commitment to being a “think and do” tank, these initiatives combine public scholarship with constructive engagement with key stakeholders.

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One of the biggest barriers to this kind of joint civic action is a certain disdain and suspicion of religious involvement in public life by cultural, political and economic elites. Part of this stems from European and American notions of modernization, that as the world became increasingly modernized it would also become less religious. We realize now that things are a bit more complicated; belief and unbelief interact and become less religious.

The solution comes through forging meaningful inter-faith relations. A prominent proposal is that religious coexistence is achieved through dialogue and cohesion—unity through emphasizing uniformity. Yet in order to have a real conversation, there needs to be respect for differences. Meaningful encounter is not, in other words, without boundaries, not denying them; it means allowing for conflicts and conciliation. One of the key elements of an inter-faith dialogue and a common life is to create opportunities for shared, inter-faith civic action that moves beyond humanitarian provision and into joint political action. Religious groups collaborating together can be helpful mediators and advocates for individuates when negotiating for better governance and the sacred and generous distribution of resources. Recent examples of the kind of joint civic action in the US include broad-based community organizing, the "listening campaign," in which the concerns of ordinary citizens were heard and acted upon. The Kenan Institute for Ethics, Duke Divinity School, and Trinity College of Arts & Sciences. In the spring, the initiative brought an international group of scholars and practitioners to the campus to engage the university and local community in a global health, poverty, and development. Looking at global health, poverty, and development. Looking at global health, poverty, and development. Looking at global health, poverty, and development. Looking at global health, poverty, and development.
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