

Meet Lucina Mosher

Dr. Mosher:

I have given this a lot of thought. I have concluded that several factors led me to this work.

One is that I grew up in a military family; each move to a new duty station taught me something about understanding differences. I was raised as a Methodist. However, at a fairly young age, I became aware of and interested in subtle differences between groups of Christians. My own extended family included Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and at least one Roman Catholic uncle. (His practice fascinated me.) I wanted to understand the differences in beliefs and practices that distinguished one group of Christians from another. Many years later, as a musician, I would do a lot of ecumenical research from the organ bench.

A second factor—a hugely important one—is that, 56 years ago, right after receiving my bachelor's degree, I married a man who was not Christian. When, after the arrival of our third child, he chose to be baptized, we had already endured a dozen years of wrestling with what it meant to be an interfaith couple.

A third factor: six years later, now the mother of four children, I became an Episcopalian—an expression of a stream of Christianity whose charism is holding difference together.

A fourth factor was that, while I loved being a professional musician, I had, for my entire adult life, perceived an intense call to study religion deeply. Eventually, my incredible hunger for theological education landed me at Hartford Seminary. A few months into my studies there, Hartford Seminary became the first such school in the United States to hire a Muslim as a fulltime member of its faculty. He became my mentor; he urged me to earn a doctorate, to lecture abroad, to publish. Because of him, I am now known internationally as a scholar-activist in the arena of Christian-Muslim understanding.

The fifth factor was that, while I was a student at Hartford Seminary, I was on the faculty of a preparatory school—a boarding school in northeast Connecticut. Soon after I earned my MA in religion, my headmaster decided that the school should reestablish its religion department. I was one of five instructors whom he asked to add teaching religion courses to my portfolio. I remained the choral director and chapel organist. Eventually, I also became the religion department chair. But on the

way to that point, the headmaster requested that someone teach a world religions survey course. My colleagues refused on the basis that doing so was not compatible with their commitment to Christian belief and practice.

To the contrary, I was able to see God's expansiveness in a way that made teaching about religious manyness as an act of faithfulness. So, I agreed to do it. And that took me all the deeper into the work I had begun during my master's study at Hartford Seminary. Eventually, I did earn a Doctor of Theology degree from the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church. There, my focus was on moral theology and on Ecumenism broadly defined to include interreligious relations.