

## [Theological Formation for the Peace of the City: A Working Consultation](#)

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What would a Master's program that seeks the *Peace of the City* while building on diverse perspectives, global resources, and interdisciplinary methods look like? This question brought together scholars and practitioners from three institutions last month for a three-day working consultation. Representatives from [INFEMIT](#) (International Fellowship of Mission as Transformation), [CETI](#) (Centro de Estudios Teológicos Interdisciplinarios), and [CSNY](#) (City Seminary of New York) met at City Seminary's campus in Harlem, NYC to discuss experiences and new possibilities in theological education.

Our discussion was bracketed by trees. Participants in the consultation shared a powerful moment when we gazed at an art piece created for City Seminary's *Who is my Neighbor?* exhibition.



Naomi Lawrence  
*Blossom Sakura Tree*  
(photograph of installation by Wendalina Do)  
Harlem, 2015  
Mixed Media, 10'x10'

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Through the images of ecosystem, soil, roots, trunk, branches, and fruit, we began to discuss the goals and ingredients of our desired Master's program. Some themes that emerged were:

- Ecosystem: the ultimate purpose is the building of the church.
- Soil: this education is planted in specific contexts, histories, and lived experiences.
- Trunk: essential that our learning process mirrors our goals by being reflective, ongoing, non-hierarchical, interdisciplinary, participative, and communal.
- Branches: our curriculum should draw from global resources, frame subjects through life/action, and aim for discipleship.
- Fruit: equip people who will engage, collaborate, challenge, learn continually, seek peace and justice, reimagine, and love God and one another.

As the consultation concluded, we shared our ideas for next steps toward such a program. One idea proposed was a peripatetic model with itinerant faculty working in partnership with local facilitators to bring this program to various contexts while fostering action and reflection in community. Added was the idea that a common pot of funds could help subsidize expenses for students from the developing world so that they could benefit from cross-context exposure as well. We began to discuss curricular ideas and how traditional categories (like hermeneutics) can be woven, grid-like, into categories of life (like church, family, work, and society). We also discussed other networks, organizations, and institutions who might help in the formation, promotion, and execution of such a project.

A continuation committee was discussed and nominated in order to facilitate further conversation. However, we do proceed with the caution not to move too hastily, so that we may solidify our goals and fully define the outcomes we desire and the students we seek to serve.

We were extremely grateful to have this opportunity to meet and discuss a project which emanates from the dreams and initiatives of theological educators in the developing and developed worlds over the past few generations. The seeds that were once planted have grown into trees. Today, we hope to draw from their diverse beauty and their various adaptations to create a program that brings together Christian learning and practices from all over our world... for the *Peace of the City*.