

In Memoriam

Robert Schreiter

Just before this ISIT number went to press, the sad news reached us that we lost Robert Schreiter on the first of June 2021.

Robert, Bob, was a priest and member of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood and a systematic theologian. In 1974, at the age of twenty-seven he joined the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago and went on to write numerous books about the relation between faith and culture, the mission of the Church, and factors shaping World Christianity today. He became a towering figure in the field of intercultural theology and his book *Constructing Local Theologies* (1985) has been translated in 22 languages and continues to be studied across the world. It is one of the foundational texts in the field for anyone interested in understanding the theological implications of cultural pluralism. As the field continues to develop, Bob's insights remain thought provoking and original. In books such as *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (2015), Bob guides us in understanding the many aspects of globalization that challenge Christianity in the third millenium. In the same year, his *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* appeared, taking on difficult questions of forgiveness, liberation and the relationship between colonizers and victims.

Bob was the consummate peacemaker. For twelve years, he served as theological consultant to Caritas Internationalis, the umbrella organization for 162 relief and development agencies in the Roman Catholic Church, for its programs in reconciliation and peacebuilding. He continued to challenge us in works such as *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order* (1992), and *Reconciliation: Spirituality and Strategies* (1998) inviting us to reflect on the difficult work of peacemaking.

A large part of his career, Bob spent commuting between Chicago and the Catholic University in Nijmegen where he studied under the renowned theologian Edward Schillebeeckx, OP. After earning his doctoral degree in theology, Bob served the University for many years as a visiting professor.

Bob was deeply involved in developing the journals *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* (SID, 1990) and later *Interreligious Studies and Intercultural Theology* (ISIT, 2015). He fondly remembered the earliest cohort of SID board members meeting in train stations across the

Netherlands and deciding on the themes for the next issues. Even while battling illness, he continued to carve out time in his busy schedule to brainstorm about the contents of *ISIT* over lunch during annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion.

In 2019, *ISIT* honored Bob's contribution to the field with a double issue featuring articles from his former and current students (see <https://journals.equinoxpub.com/OLDISIT/issue/view/2799>). That same year, we organized a panel dedicated to his work during the bi-annual ESITIS conference in Sarajevo. When the journal came out, he wrote us: "Thank you so much for all you did to make this possible and to see it through production. It is very handsomely done and is something I will cherish for a long time into the future."

We will cherish Bob's memory for a long time; his dedication to his students and colleagues as well as to the field continue to inspire our own work as scholars, teachers and mentors.