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Understanding Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh

Kyla Kincaid, Kenyon MN

Many people feel that they are unable to change the world. They feel the world is much too large and too corrupt. Dorothy Day is an example of someone who gave her life to service and didn't regret a second of it. Some people might say, "Well she is a saint." I'm not. I couldn't do the feats she accomplished. Day didn't want to be considered a Saint just for that reason. She believes that what she did wasn't that hard, and she thinks anyone could and should do it. Thich Nhat Hanh is a great example of compassion and love. I think he would agree that you don't have to be known all throughout the land, but if you can show compassion to all you encounter, and love all God's children, then that will change the World. By comparing Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh and their understanding of service, compassion, and faith my understanding of these three qualities increases.

Dorothy Day always said she had an inner pull to the poor. She is known to say that she saw Jesus in the bread lines. Her personal narrative is different from other Roman Catholic leaders of her time. She wasn't raised a believer, although she always had this feeling that there was something more than life on earth, though she could never quite put her finger on what it might be. In her young adult life she surrounded herself with radical people who believed ideas that were not main stream. During her earlier years, she had a quest for an abundant life. She experienced failed relationships and had an abortion. From her early track record you wouldn't have been able to imagine all the people she would touch and lives she would change. When she became pregnant with her daughter Tamar, her faith grew much stronger. She decided she would have her baby baptized Roman Catholic. From then on there was no turning back for Day, not that she wanted to. She started to give more and more of her life and time to serving the poor. She served the poor because she wanted to help and she spoke out on violence because she knew that we could do better. The God that she worshiped didn't die so that we could continue in violence and our sinful ways. He died so that could be finished. She never believed war was the answer. She served to stop wars, violence and hate.

Thich Nhat Hanh is considered the father of engaged Buddhism. It's clear he serves not intending to gain anything. He said "We can nurture the unconditional love that does not expect anything in return and therefore does not lead to anxiety" (145). He serves to educate humanity on compassion, love, and peace. He doesn't believe in violence and he speaks out against many wars and violent acts. His upbringing in Buddhism in Vietnam shaped who he would become; a profound teacher, poet, and peace and human rights activist. He serves the people of this World to create peace and justice for all humanity.

Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh both serve out of compassion and love for humanity. They both are strong believers in peace making. Day and Nhat Hanh both have published many articles about what they believe in. By doing so, they have educated and informed people about key issues and problems in our society and how they believe they can be improved. They are different because they have different faiths, so some of their practices and beliefs are different but they both have the common belief in not giving up on humanity. They wanted to make a difference and change how people view the problems of the world. Day wanted to change how people see poverty. She said "I condemn poverty and I advocate it; poverty is simple and complex at once; it is a social phenomenon and a personal matter" (117). Nhat Hanh wants to aid in human understanding of

compassion. He said "If we want to understand a person we have to feel his feeling, suffer his sufferings, and enjoy his joy."

Dorothy Day is known for her work in serving the poor and poverty stricken. She is well known for saying that she saw the face of Jesus in the bread lines. She didn't just serve the poor, she served her savior Jesus Christ. Thich Nhat Hanh serves the victims of wars all over the world urging for a better, peaceful way to solve our problems. He offers words of wisdom to anyone who is willing to listen about many extremely moving lessons on peace, compassion, and how to make a difference. Both Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh are activists for peace and are always seeking to have and promote peace in the world.

In 1932 Dorothy Day met Peter Maurin, a French-born Catholic who had developed a program of social reconstruction which he originally called "the green revolution," based on communal farming and the establishment of houses of hospitality for the urban poor. They changed the name of the program into the Catholic Worker Movement. Its goal was to bring workers and intellectuals together in activities such as farming and educational discussions. In 1933 Day and Maurin founded the Catholic Worker, a monthly newspaper to carry the idea to a broader audience. Within three years, the paper's circulation had grown to 150,000, and the original St. Joseph's House of Hospitality in New York City had served as the blueprint for similar houses in a number of other cities.

Thich Nhat Hanh has written more than 100 books with 40 published in English. He travels internationally to give retreats. He founded the School of Youth for Social Services, a relief organization in Saigon that rebuilt bombed villages, schools, and medical centers, and resettled families during the Vietnam War. Both Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh have helped so many people and asked for nothing in return.

I serve because I feel it is my duty to leave my mark on the world and try to make it a better place. This is the world that I was born into and I can choose to ignore its faults and go on with my life or I can choose to try to change the injustice and cruelty going on today. I don't need to travel the world giving public speeches to do this. I can simply help my neighbor, love my neighbor as myself, and demonstrate kindness, which will in turn set an example for others. I believe if everyone loves thy neighbor as the bible says to, all our disputes would disappear.

The people I serve the most are the four year olds in the Sunday school class I teach. I love hearing the questions they have; at their age they have heard no other theories about the supernatural. Their faith is so strong they have no reason to doubt it for a second. I teach them all about this awesome God who will never leave them and always walk with them through the trials of their lives.

This Winter I plan to serve at the local nursing home in my town. I plan to go there and talk to residents and get to know them. My goal is that I can make their day a little bit more exciting. I have spent many hours in nursing homes. My grandma was in a nursing home for eight years and we visited her once a month. I have seen the lonely faces of residents who don't like to socialize and never get visitors. I know this is no large act of kindness by any means but it is one small way my High School Student Council and I can contribute to our community. I also plan to work at the local Food Shelf this fall with my FCCLA chapter. Even though I am from a small town, there are still plenty of people who have shortages of food. I hope to keep finding more and more ways to get involved in my community.

I have served other communities also besides my own when I have gone on mission trips and to the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. The most moving service experience I have ever had, happened in New Orleans. We were serving at a school that had gotten very run down. The principal referred to the school as the most dangerous school in America. He said that attending that school, you had a higher chance of getting shot everyday than a soldier in Afghanistan. Our job was to paint hallways and classrooms. Although this sounded like a small feat, the principal said it makes a big difference. He said students were already coming in and looking around excited to come back to school in this newer looking environment. It was quite humbling for me to hear him say that painting walls isn't something to take for granted. I take for granted every day the nice new school I go to. These students at this school in New Orleans have had to go to an old run down school with dull wall colors for many years. I'm so glad I got the chance to help make their days in school a little bit brighter and fresher.

I believe that one of the main reasons I am driven to serve others is because of my personal tradition. My church has always emphasized service. I have helped at a lot of soup suppers, too many to count, and have spent hours in my church basement washing dishes. I have learned about hard work and service from my church basement ladies. I have helped them with a few events and I was in awe of all the work they do. My family has also shown me how important it is to serve others. My parents both set good examples to me by volunteering on a regular basis for various events. They have shown me that time spent helping others is time well spent.

By comparing Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh my understanding of compassion, service, and faith has increased. I feel similar to Thich Nhat Hanh because I strongly agree with all of his ideas about compassion. I share the same belief as Dorothy Day when she said she sees Jesus in the bread lines. Her teachings teach me not to discriminate against the poor and destitute. The poor and poverty stricken are all children of God and they can't help the world they were born into. I agree with both of them that war isn't the only answer to a dispute. I pray for peace every night but it seems so far from reach. It seems unimaginable that this world will ever see peace. We live in a world that has been at war with itself since the dawn of time. I want to serve my fellow children of God and practice peacemaking so that someday this World will know peace. I pray that I will never give up and say I'm just one person; I will never make a change. Every change anyone has ever created started with a small group of people wanting to break the status quo.

The Meaning of Stories

Ben Vlasak, Stillwater MN

Stories are personal. They are the memories that stand apart from the rest of our history and remain in our minds as individual points in our lives. Everyone has stories, everyone is different and the connection between these points is intertwined. I believe stories are a foundation upon which our personalities, opinions and lives are built. Stories are a large part of who we are and what we believe because they shape us in a multitude of ways, both large and small.

Our lives as a whole are called master narratives. They are our identity and definition, encompassing all of who we are. Master narratives are immense and complex but are made up of the simplest forms of stories called micro-narratives. Micro-narratives can be very important or very small but what makes them a micro-narrative is that they are singular memories. Micro-narratives are finite points in our lives that are separate from the rest. Some micro-narratives influence our entire way of thinking, while others may only form our opinion on a small topic; but in either case both are a part of who we are.

Stories are personal to us in interesting ways. We all know that stories are social things to be shared with other people. The fact that stories are social is very much a part of why they are so important to us and how they influence our identity. What makes stories personal is how we understand them based on our own perspective. To two people of different generations the same story can mean two completely different things. No matter how similar we are, we all see things in a different light and so are shaped differently based on our own understanding.

Stories are meant to be shared by people. They allow us to interact and relate to one another by sharing a part of who we are, but they can also fascinate and inspire others. Stories that aren't our own still have the potential to shape our lives. I think that much of our identity is actually inspired by others because of our connection to each other. We draw upon other people for knowledge shared through stories; from this we can grow in our own personal knowledge and understanding. Abraham Joshua Heschel and Thich Nhat Hanh are both theologians whose stories are inspiring and influential. Abraham Joshua Heschel is both a Rabbi and Hasidic Jew who is one of the most widely-read Jewish theologians of the 20th century. Thich Nhat Hanh is a Buddhist monk who was born in Vietnam and started the movement of Engaged Buddhism. Both Heschel and Thich Nhat Hanh emphasize the importance of stories and the role they play in our lives.

Abraham Joshua Heschel was one of the most influential members of the Jewish faith in the 20th century. Born in Warsaw Poland, Heschel was raised as a Hasidic Jew in a family that had descended from a long line of rabbis. In suit, Heschel decided to become a rabbi and went to rabbinical school in Berlin. As the Nazis took power in Germany Heschel was deported back to Poland, and left to go to school in London only three weeks before the Nazi invasion. Heschel's entire family was killed in the invasion and his faith changed completely. Later Heschel said, "If I should go to Poland or Germany, every stone, every tree would remind me of contempt." (Abraham Joshua Heschel)

Abraham Joshua Heschel was ultra-orthodox and conservative, but after his family's death his opinions changed, and he formed a more liberal perspective. Heschel moved to New York to teach Jewish ethics and mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and started to form his own ideology. Heschel took a strong stance against racism and war and protested for civil rights

and against the Vietnam War. Heschel marched with Martin Luther King Jr. many times and was involved in campaigns for civil rights, declaring, "Racism is man's gravest threat to man - the maximum hatred for a minimum reason." (Heschel, *Man is not Alone*, pg. 85) While marching with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama (which would later be remembered as bloody Sunday) he said, "As I marched in Selma, my legs were praying." (Abraham Joshua Heschel)

Facets of faith that Heschel often referred to were gratitude, appreciation and compassion. Heschel believed that a simple outlook of appreciation and gratitude could shape your life. Appreciation for everything around us, for creation, is not only respect but a form of engagement in the world. By being thankful for the world we live in, we inherently seek out a connection to it. As our connection grows, so does our understanding of our environment and our gratitude of its presence. Heschel believed that appreciation is how our compassion is enacted in the world. "A religious man is a person who holds God and man in thought at all times, who suffers harm done to others and whose greatest passion is compassion." (Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, pg. 148)

Thich Nhat Hanh is the founder of Engaged Buddhism which is a form of Zen teaching focusing on practicing Buddhism outside of meditation. Thich Nhat Hanh was born in 1926 in Vietnam and began learning to be a monk when he was 16 under his teacher Thanh Quy Chan That at the monastery in Tu Hieu temple. Thich Nhat Hanh was ordained as a monk in 1949 and specialized in Zen meditation and Mahayana Buddhism.

Thich Nhat Hanh has protested for civil rights but most avidly fought the Vietnam War. At the start of the war Thich Nhat Hanh was in the United States, but went back home to join the peace effort being led by other monks. Once there, Thich Nhat Hanh started the School of Youth for Social Services (SYSS) which focused on helping rural areas most affected by the war by building health care clinics, rebuilding homes and starting schools. Thich Nhat Hanh played an important role in the Paris Peace Talks as a representative of the Buddhist Peace Delegation and helped to mediate during the talks. Unfortunately after the Paris Peace accords were signed, Thich Nhat Hanh was exiled to France and has remained there since, with only a short visit in 2005. Because of his leadership in the SYSS and his role as a peacemaker throughout the war, Thich Nhat Hanh was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967 by Martin Luther King Jr.

Thich Nhat Hanh went on to establish the Order of Inter-being and the Unified Buddhist Church which are now international foundations teaching the meaning of Zen meditation and Mahayana Buddhism. He has also created his own monastery in France known as Plum Village, where he leads retreats centered on Buddhist teachings and the meaning of peace and compassion.

Thich Nhat Hanh has centered most of his writing, study and teachings on compassion and peace. He believes compassion is at the core of the effort for peace because compassion is the only way towards true understanding. Compassion is a deep sense of connection to another person or thing, and Thich Nhat Hanh describes it as truly becoming one with another person, by going inside them to understand them in every way. This sense of oneness is linked to the Buddhist philosophy of Not Two, which is meant to teach people to view things from all perspectives and see at one angle rather than from opposing sides. Thich Nhat Hanh believes that with this mentality of understanding we can eliminate hate and bring peace to the world.

Thich Nhat Hanh and Abraham Joshua Heschel come from two completely different backgrounds of faith and life. Thich Nhat Hanh was born Buddhist and was influenced by the ideals of Zen and Mahayana Buddhism including the philosophy of Not Two. Heschel was born a Hasidic Jew and was

influenced by Judaism and Kabbalah. Heschel writes with elaborate and complex language that is exacting but not verbose, and conveys messages through words that express his conviction in writing. Thich Nhat Hanh writes profusely but uses metaphors and descriptions that are simplistic, clear and focused on the message which sometimes is only a few words long.

Despite the differences between the two they are very much one and the same on a variety of levels. Both Thich Nhat Hanh and Abraham Joshua Heschel believed in civil rights and protested war and (for different reasons) cannot return to their native countries. Both believe in action and the importance of our role in society to do what we believe in. Engaged Buddhism was built on the idea of action in the world and as Heschel often said, "A Jew is asked to take a leap of action rather than a leap of thought." (Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, 219)

Another thing that is similar between them is their connection to Christianity. Thich Nhat Hanh has written books including *Going Home: Jesus and Buddha as Brothers* and *Living Buddha, Living Christ* that talk about the similarities between the teachings of Jesus and Buddha, specifically on how to interact with and love the people around us and the importance of forgiveness and compassion. Heschel likewise relates Judaism to Christianity in that Judaism is the basis for Christianity and that modern Christianity and Judaism believe in the same message of universal acceptance and peace through understanding. Heschel served in the 2nd Vatican Council as a representative for Judaism and said, "No religion is an island, we are all connected to one another." (Heschel, *Man is Not Alone*, pg. 173)

Abraham Joshua Heschel and Thich Nhat Hanh have both inspired my ideas of gratitude and compassion through their stories. From their ideas I have come to believe that gratitude and appreciation are born of compassion and understanding. Hate, fear and bigotry are consequences of misunderstanding and lack of compassion, and progressively worsen as misconceptions go on. By being compassionate in a genuine way through studying the perspectives of people, understanding comes naturally, and from it we erase hate and fear. Through compassion we can appreciate many things in our lives because they are no longer foreign to us.

From compassion we appreciate and show gratitude for the things in our lives. My faith was shaped by Abraham Joshua Heschel and Thich Nhat Hanh, and continues to be shaped by them as the idea of appreciation through compassion grows in my faith. Gratitude for creation is ultimately reverence towards God. The idea of reverence being linked to gratitude will continue to grow as well and so will shape my faith in more ways than I would ever have imagined.

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Anne Lamott, Muhammad, and the Meaning of Service

Erik Nelson, Hopkins MN

Service is a universal action used to bring communities together, to heal damage due to war, natural disasters, or poverty, and to create social justice in our communities and throughout the planet. When a person who believes that the world needs to change does an act of service, whether large or small, he or she is creating change that spreads all around like a mighty wind. I have decided that the two people who have taught me the most about the connections between faith and service are the American born author Anne Lamott and Muhammad, a prophet of God and the founder of the Islamic faith. These two people have wisdom, compassion, and energy that we can all learn from. These traits are shown through their life stories and their work. I have learned from them through their life stories, and they have changed mine. This is how their stories and my story connect to the meaning of serving others.

Why do we as human beings serve others? Some want to serve because they believe that's the only way to get to paradise. Others serve because they want God or civilization to recognize them and to give those who serve eternal life. The prophet Muhammad served because he was God's messenger. This passage from the Koran was used by Umar Faruq Abd-Allah in his essay on Mercy in Islam from Hearing the Call Across Traditions. It states that "We did not send you but as a special mercy to all the worlds." (230) This means that Muhammad was on Earth not to harm it, but to bring peace and mercy when it was most needed, from a time of famine to a time of war. The prophet himself stated "In certainty, I was not sent down to bring curses; I was only sent as a special mercy." (230) This sounds very similar to the reason why Jesus was sent to the world.

Meanwhile, Anne Lamott's reason why she serves is different. She uses reason and logic to base her decisions. When a member of her congregation gives her a bag of dimes or food for her family, she gives something in return. She also wants to teach her son, Sam, why both of them serve: "But what's so dazzling to me, what's so painful and poignant, is that she [the woman from her church] doesn't bother with what I think she knows or doesn't know about my financial life. She just knows we need another bag of dimes, and that is why I make Sam go to church." (284). What Lamott means in this quote is that no matter what the situation, no matter who's giving and who's receiving, service is the right thing to do because it shows that if one receives care from a neighbor, one shows care back to that neighbor. She wants to give back to those who have helped her, especially after Sam's birth.

Muhammad was God's chosen prophet, but he didn't serve God, he mainly served strangers and the poor. "He visited the sick, inquired about the welfare of neighbors, friends, followers, and even those who disbelieved in him ... He was always ready to forgive, rarely chastising those who disobeyed him." (231) This is what the prophet did for his entire life. He gave up his life and served others so that he could set an example. If someone serves their fellow human beings, he or she will make the world a better place. Muhammad also took time out of his day to serve his family. In an article from *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam*, the article states that "Muhammad used to milk his goat, mend his clothes, repair his shoes, help with the household work..." (38) He served others with dignity, and now billions of Muslims follow his command to serve.

Whom Anne Lamott serves is not that different from the prophet. She was also taught that she had "a moral obligation to save the world." (5) Her mother was a role model in service: "My mother

used to take the Greyhound out to Marin City, which was a terrible ghetto then, and volunteer in an after-school program for boys and girls from impoverished families. She tutored kids in reading while other grown-ups worked with them in sports.” This is a powerful example of why Lamott is committed to her religion; because she believes in its fundamental doctrine of service. She’ll serve anyone, from members of her own congregation to the poor. An example of this is that she gives change given to her by members of her congregation to the poor.

How can someone practice service? This is the question that is the most interesting to all of us. Muhammad answered this question in a concrete and simple way. “The essence of his message, therefore, was not doctrinal but social and ethical. It was wrong to build up a private fortune, but good to share wealth and create a society where the weak and vulnerable were treated with respect.” (6221) Muhammad isn’t saying that a person shouldn’t own a business or make money to fulfill one’s needs or wants. In his opinion, and he himself had a business, building a fortune isn’t wrong, but a person will be perceived as greedy or inconsiderate if he or she makes too much money and doesn’t give it away or share it with people who are affected by poverty, hunger, or disease. So, Muhammad is really saying giving up financial resources is one way to serve one’s fellow human beings.

Meanwhile, Anne Lamott has a slightly different opinion. This quote is taken from her book **Operating Instructions: A Journal of My Son’s First Year**: “But he finally convinced me to tell him [a member of her church], and I said it would be to clean the bathroom...I sat on the couch while he worked, watching TV, feeling vaguely guilty and nursing Sam to sleep. But it made me feel sure of Christ again, of that kind of love. This, a man scrubbing a new mother’s bathtub, is what Jesus means to me.” (70) Even if one just completes a simple chore for someone who needs the work done but can’t do it themselves, that’s service. This is her example of how we should serve.

These brilliant human beings have answered the questions about service that we need answered the most. Now, here is my position on service. When I think about why, whom, and how do I serve, one example is my faith tradition. At my church, some of our service traditions include mission trips for junior high and high school students, serving meals at a local homeless shelter, and raising money to build a well in Ethiopia, which has terrible water quality. Another reason why I serve is not because I want God or my church to recognize me, but because it’s a habit. I learned the important values of service when my mom volunteers for meals on wheels, church coffee hour, and Vacation Bible School. Just like Anne Lamott, she is an important role model in the way I serve how I respect and serve my neighbors and how my faith is shaped. Jesus told the Pharisees in Matthew 22: 11 that “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (1,645) That is why I serve.

During the summer, it’s hot, humid, and boring; no teachers telling you to get to class on time, no parents reminding you to wash the dishes. This is a perfect time for me to do community service. Just a few weeks ago, I volunteered at Habitat for Humanity. My job was to cut, place, and screw on sheetrock in the basement of a house that the organization was finishing. This was a valuable experience for me because not only did I learn a new skill and the fundamentals of construction, but I learned that your hands are creating a positive environment. This little act of screwing in sheetrock will be the foundation of a basement of a home that will change one family’s life forever. If my church has a tradition for service, then I do as well as I am very connected to my faith community.

When it comes to whom I serve, it doesn’t matter to me because doing work outside of school or education is service. I will serve those who need my help, whether it’s a starving child in Sudan, or a

local family in Minneapolis, they can count on me to be a helping hand. Sometimes you may not think whom you serve makes a difference whatsoever, but I know that I have put a smile on their face when I finish the job. How do I serve? Well, I can serve in a matter of ways, whether putting books away at a Hennepin County Library, or packaging food at Feed My Starving Children. I have done many service projects, and they all require different skills, like manual labor, construction, or just being a kind, friendly person. The small tasks that I do can make a huge difference in the lives of others. I think I am more like Anne Lamott when it comes to service. I just do it for anyone when it's needed the most. I have a sense of pride, accomplishment, and pure generosity before, during, and after I serve others.

To conclude, I am not that different from the two figures highlighted earlier. The three of us are dedicated to serving the world. I don't intend to study religion, but it's a positive moral compass that assures us that God, no matter how we pray to him, or how we serve his planet, is looking out for creation. He loves each and every one of us. Service is a difficult process. Trust me, I know from experience. I was tired after completing just two days of work at Habitat for Humanity. There will be many more hours of dedication and hard work to come, but it's not impossible. It just takes time, effort, a positive attitude, and, occasionally, a bit of muscle.

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“Serve:” That’s what God said.

Hannah Brown, Chatfield MN

If one loves their God, they will serve. There is not a religion in the world that is not built on compassion and showing that compassion to others. Thus, service is the bond that unites all religions from every corner of the world. Two men from very different religions, Eboo Patel, an Indian Muslim and Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist Monk, are trying to share this message. The spark of inspiration and hope lit by Patel has spread like wildfire across college campuses in the US while the soft, gentle, and non-violent ways of the resilient Nhat Hanh has inspired others to not be bound to a particular religious text, but to coexist and accept other religions as mutual truths. The plea for peace and interfaith cooperation through service and dialogue in a world that often times seems to be deaf is universal.

Eboo Patel is perhaps one of the best leaders in America when it comes to interfaith cooperation amongst young adults. An Indian Muslim raised in Chicago, Patel was shaped by the lack of interfaith cooperation he experienced at a young age. According to usnews.com, whilst campaigning for a position on his seventh grade student council, a white classmate told him “Nobody would vote for people like you.” Taunting from his peers that included names like “curry maker” and worse scarred his adolescence. Patel recalls the components of his past that might have contributed to a path marked with religious violence as, “a gut-wrenching feeling of being excluded from mainstream society... a vague sense of being Muslim...” It wasn’t until he was studying at the University of Illinois that he encountered interfaith cooperation. He recognized that some of the people he looked up to the most- Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi-led by implementing common principles of faith, although they each adhered to a separate faith. These early encounters with failed interfaith cooperation coupled with valuable lessons learned from his heroes led Patel to question the reasons why religion sparks violence around the world.

A quote by Patel put into perspective a simple and effective way to live in harmony with those of opposing faiths: “Service is not only a bridge between the cosmic and the concrete, but also between Islam and Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism, secular humanism and Hinduism.” (Hearing the Call Across Tradition page xi) Think about it. If one were to ask a Christian why they serve they would answer, “Because it is what my Lord tells me to do.” and mention John 12:26(NRSV) which reads, “Whoever serves me must follow me, where I am, there will by servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.” Similarly, if one were to ask a Muslim why they serve, they might answer, “For Allah, through the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, has instructed me to do so.” and quote the verse in the Quarn that so completely covers the aspect of service, Chapter 3, verse 110, which reads, “You are the best of Peoples ever, evolved from (Mankind and) for Mankind enjoining what is right, preventing what is wrong, and believing in Allah...” Despite these religions being so drastically different, when one looks only at the reason why they serve, the answer is the same for both: because their God told them to. In a world so obsessed with division by differences, it’s surprising to see this common ground. Patel suggests that we don’t have to live in a divided world. That perhaps all we have to do is a build a bridge, one small cable of service at a time.

In other words, Patel’s main objective is to create a world in which religious pluralism is paramount. Religious pluralism, according to davinterfaith.wordpress.com, “describes a community where different individuals or groups respect each other’s distinct religious and philosophical identities and perspectives, seek mutually enriching relationships across lines of difference based

on their shared values, and establish active partnerships orientated toward common action for the common good of all.” In other words, religious pluralism respects other’s belief systems and celebrates the differences and identities of a wide variety of persons. It’s a blueprint of a way of thinking that could eliminate violence in our world. Religious pluralism doesn’t necessarily mean that one must abandon one’s religious beliefs in order to create a utopian society; rather it is quite the opposite. After all, the root of the word pluralism boils down to two separate entities existing at once. Patel challenges us to find a way to coexist with our brothers and sisters in faith to bridge the superficial gap existing between religions, in this case the answer comes in the form of a bride of service.

Patel concludes that the only way to achieve this true interfaith cooperation and build the connecting bridges between religions is to create communities where human connection surpasses the stereotypes placed by society around race, religion, and culture. Recent studies have shown that positive personal contact with people of different faiths dramatically affects their perception of that religion and community. Knowledge about different faiths seems to have a similar effect on one’s perception. For this reason, Patel chose to focus his efforts on promoting interfaith cooperation and dialogue amongst young people by giving talks at places like the TED conference and the Nobel Peace Prize Forum, in addition to speaking at several colleges and universities. In 1998, Patel founded the Interfaith Youth Core, a group designed to promote and equip college students with the tools they need to build understanding amongst differing faiths. In Patel’s words, “college campuses should be models of interfaith cooperation.” IFYC has skyrocketed since its launch and can now be found at 140 different universities.

However, Patel’s focus is not solely on youth. He frequently writes for publications such as *The Washington Post*, *USA Today* and *The Huffington Post*. His boundless success caught the eye of President Obama, who appointed Patel to the White House Office of Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. While Patel is optimistic about the promise future generations hold regarding the success of interfaith communication and his goal is to accomplish complete interfaith cooperation in a generation, he recognizes that it is no small task to change America into complete religious tolerance. However, Patel has gained insight into religious pluralism and remains undeterred. “I recognize that believing in pluralism means having the courage to act on it,” he says. “Action is what separates belief from merely an opinion.” (usnews.com) He adds, “Only the smallest part of humanity wishes and acts upon the destruction of others. The pluralists are far larger. Those of us who believe in a world where we live together, we’re far larger. The problem is we haven’t made our case compelling across the world yet.”

It’s often said that there are two things one should never discuss at the dinner table: religion and politics. However, I beg to differ. I think that the value of discussing beliefs is worth so much more than a minor disagreement at the table. In fact, it’s one of the only ways we can accomplish Eboo Patel’s idea of interfaith cooperation: through dialogue. And I’m not the only one who believes this.

Thich Nhat Hanh, born Nguyen Xuan Bao, is, at his simplest, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk. Known worldwide as a respected writer, scholar, and leader, Nhat Hanh is leading a movement called “engaged Buddhism,” which is defined by seaox.com as “intertwined traditional meditative practices with active nonviolent civil disobedience.” Unlike Patel whose faith was impacted by events in his youth, Nhat Hanh joined a Zen monastery at the age of 16, which was customary at the time, and in 1949, was installed as a Buddhist Monk. In the early 1960’s he created the School of Youth for Social Services in Saigon, which rebuilt homes and villages to resettle families left homeless during the Vietnam War. After studying at Princeton, he served as the professor of Buddhism at Cornell University and Columbia University.

Similar to Patel, Nhat Hanh learned, through personal experience, the prejudices and violence that come with sticking up for what one believes in. Few battles in military history were ever as bloody and complicated as the ones fought in Vietnam and Nhat Hanh found himself drawn into them. He believed that war could not be won by killing your opponent; war was not truly won until the emotions fueling it were destroyed. In 1963, he returned to Vietnam to lead nonviolent peace efforts. For the first few years things went well for Nhat Hanh and his fellow monks; however, at a *Call for Peace* in April of 1965, he made the following statement that angered the Vietnamese, "It is time for North and South Vietnam to find a way to stop the war and help all Vietnamese people live peacefully and with mutual respect." (Wikipedia.com) Nhat Hanh left for America shortly after, and was exiled from his homeland by both the Communist and Non-Communist groups.

While in the US, he strongly encouraged the US government to withdraw from Vietnam. In 1965, he wrote a letter to Martin Luther King Jr. that read, "...Their enemies are not man. They are intolerance, fanaticism, dictatorship, cupidity, hatred, and discrimination, which lie within the heart of man." (time.com) After receiving the letter, King was so moved that he publically nominated Nhat Hanh for the Noble Peace Prize.

In 1966, he created the Order of Inter-Being and in 1969, the Unified Buddhist Church was established. In addition, he has established two monasteries in Vietnam, as well as several in the United States. These monasteries are open to the public and offer retreats for lay people. Nhat Hanh also conducted peace walks in 2005 and 2007 in Los Angeles. During that time, he was finally allowed to return to his homeland for visits, where he took the opportunity to teach and spread his message of peace.

Despite the setbacks implemented by his home country, Nhat Hanh has perhaps had the most influence on Western Buddhism in recent times. His message of interfaith dialogue and cooperation appeals to members of different religions and political parties, making his lessons universal. He currently resides in Plum Village, a monastery and community of practitioners in the south of France. Nhat Hanh is the author of over a hundred books, which center on his idea of mindful living.

Mindfulness is the energy of awareness. To be mindful is to be in touch with our felt experience in the present moment and enjoy the beauty of life. When we become aware of this mindfulness, we become aware of similarities we share with people very different than us. We gain the insight that it is possible to coexist and that interfaith cooperation, as mentioned by Patel, is close at hand. In other words, Nhat Hanh challenges us to seek faith not in dogma and the mind alone, but through action: by living as God inspires us to live. We look for bridges instead of barriers and connections instead of insurmountable gaps. Nhat Hanh stresses the importance of interfaith dialogue as a way in which to build these bridges across religions and to realize that we are all one.

While political leaders of Iran and America boldly ask people to choose sides on theological arguments, we would all be wise to learn a little from an old Buddhist monk. As said by Martin Luther King Jr., "His ideas for peace, if applied, would build a monument to ecumenism, to world brotherhood, to humanity."

Inspired by the two great men mentioned earlier in this paper, I began to ponder what I personally believe and why I believe it. If one was raised within a religious family, one identifies oneself with what such religion prescribes and thinks because one has been spoon-fed the theology since kindergarten Sunday school. In other words, majority of persons' religions are determined solely on their birth. For example, I was born to a Methodist dad and a Lutheran mom and was baptized in a Methodist Church. I then attended a private Catholic elementary school. Once we moved to

Chatfield, my family joined the ELCA Lutheran Church before transferring to Bethel Lutheran Church in Rochester. With as much moving around and religious diversity I encountered, I never really gave much thought to what I believed or why I believed it. It wasn't until I became best friends with a girl who was agnostic that I really began to consider things. She would ask me questions about Jesus's life as we watched Jesus Christ's Superstar. The conversation then turned more serious as she asked me why I believed what I did and if I really believed ALL that was in the Bible. After much thought and reflection, I came up with a better idea of what I believe.

I believe there is a God, but beyond that I believe God is a universal God. The God I worship is the same God Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims pray to, we just all have different ways of going about it. I believe that God is not male or female, nor black, white, red, yellow, or any other race. God appears to a person in whatever form is most comfortable to them. I recently served as junior counselor at confirmation camp and I was fascinated with the number of students who, when asked to draw a picture of what God looks like, drew an 80 year old Caucasian man with a long flowing beard and a cane. Granted that's the image most of us receive in Sunday school, anyone who has studied the Bible knows that God probably isn't a Caucasian man considering majority of the Biblical stories take place in the Middle East. Not a single girl in the circle drew a picture of what I thought God looked like: a warm, flickering light.

We, as humans, desire the truth throughout our entire lives; however, no matter how many "truths" we attain, we are never really satisfied. We seek justice but no matter how much justice we attain in the world, we are never really satisfied. So, we look beyond this world for answers to our questions and for a source of universal justice. It's the way we go about discovering these answers and the ways in which we celebrate these different truths that divide religions.

Each religion is based on the belief that it alone knows all aspects of the divine. By studying the evolution of religious practices, one finds a large gap between their historical roots and the ways in which they are practiced today. I believe that if one were to look only at their foundations, it would reveal a fertile source in which we could plant the seed of understanding and tolerance. Regardless of whether one adheres to a particular religion or not, we have to learn to respect one another's beliefs because it is not possible to prove or disprove the truth of a particular religious belief system. To me, I find it very strange and hard to believe in a God that would determine religion only on the basis of birth or that a loving God would put so many conflicting truths and religious texts next to one another. To me, my God says that he wrote different texts all pointing to him because the people of this world needed a way to understand the divine that would be the most comfortable to them.

I'm the kind of girl who can't say no. If someone asks me to join a group or to do something, I'll do it without even thinking why. For this reason, my life is usually jam packed with service opportunities, whether serving as a youth representative on my church's Social Missions Team, being a junior counselor at confirmation camp, participating in worship services as a worship assistant, or leading the annual Souper Bowl of Caring each Super Bowl Sunday. For a while, I never gave much thought to being so involved in church. I thought it was what every willing and able person did but the more I thought about it, the more I needed to know why. Thus, I realized I serve because my God tells me to. I read in Galatians 5:13(NRSV), "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another." I read in the Quran in Chapter 4, verse 36, "Serve Allah, and do not join any partners with Him; And do good- To parents, (relatives) kinfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near to you in kin, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the way-farer (you meet), and what your right hand possess..." Finally, I read from Buddha,

"Teach this triple truth of all: A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity." (thinkexist.com) This gave me faith that the universal God I praise speaks across all faiths and is calling me to serve, as well as all members of other faiths. It gives me hope that I'm not alone in my quest to mend the world of its brokenness and to heal it with love, the same love that is taught by every religion known to man.

In the words of Mother Teresa, "The fruit of silence is prayer, the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service, the fruit of service is peace." Whether these words are spoken by an old Catholic nun serving in India, a young Indian Muslim in front of the next generation full of promise, or an old Buddhist monk in France, the message rings loud and true: peace and interfaith cooperation can be obtained through service and dialogue.

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In order to serve with greatness, you must do it without violence, do it for others, and be humble. Two well-known figures who have succeeded in doing so are Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh. This essay will compare and contrast on whom, how and why Mr. King Jr. and Mr. Nhat Hanh served. It will also include whom, how and why I serve and what I have learned from these two figures.

Who Do They Serve?

Everybody has a certain kind of person they want to serve. Some people serve the homeless, others serve starving people in Africa. Either way, we always serve others. In this section are examples of the kinds of people that Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh have served.

Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh always served others. They were both able to serve others in similar ways. Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh both helped those who faced terrors in their everyday lives. They both worked for those who had lost their rights. They both worked for people who faced political problems.

However, Mr. King and Mr. Nhat Hanh also served different people. Martin Luther King Jr. worked specifically for the colored people. He worked for those who had no political rights and for those who faced racism. Thich Nhat Hanh worked for those who suffered losses from the Vietnam War. He helped refugees from Asia. He helped to repair villages bombed by war. Martin Luther King Jr. served an extra person due to his religion; God. He became a minister specifically to help others.

Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh both served others. They served similar and different people. Both served those who had political difficulties. Mr. King served colored people. Mr. Nhat Hanh served Vietnamese people. Either way, they both served many people.

How Do They Serve?

Sometimes, it's quite difficult to find out how to serve others. You may not know if what you're doing is helping. One way Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh made their serving effective is they made sure they stood up for others without violence. Also, they made themselves humble. Those were the two effective keys they both used to serve others.

Mr. King and Mr. Nhat Hanh served others in similar ways. Both of them supported their cause without violence and helped others humbly. Both of them protested for peace by walking down the streets of the U.S. capitol. Both of them became politically involved with the U.S. government. Martin Luther King Jr. did so for equal rights of colored people. Thich Nhat Hanh did so for a struggling Vietnam. They also made many public speeches for their cause.

Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh served others in different ways, too. Thich Nhat Hanh fasted for five days in order for others to support Vietnam's struggles. He also founded Plum Village in France, a place to end the suffering of others. Mr. King Jr. made boycotts and sit-ins in order to end segregation in the South.

In order to help others, you must support without violence and stand up being humble. These two men have done just that. They have helped others in magnificent ways and have accomplished many things. They have done many things to serve others.

Why Do They Serve?

If someone asks you why you're doing something, you should have a good reason. It is a good question to ask yourself why you serve. Maybe you didn't think about it and just did it or maybe it's because your parents told you to help others no matter what. Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh both have a reason as to why they serve.

The main reason why they both serve is their experiences. Martin Luther King Jr. experienced segregation his entire life. In the late 1950s, Mr. King Jr. started fighting against segregation and fought for equal rights. Thich Nhat Hanh experienced terrors during the Vietnam War. He sought to end the suffering of the people around him.

Who Do I Serve?

I serve as many people as I can. I try not to pick out a specific person to serve. Everyone deserves to be helped. It doesn't matter what they have done or who they are. I want to help them. I have served a small variety of people. I have helped my family, friends and a decent amount of strangers. I will continue to help who I can, when I can.

How do I serve?

I serve in any way I can. It can be something as little as a smile or as big as repairing their deck. I help out with my church a lot. I show up to their events, and I went on my first Mission Trip to Buffalo, New York to help repair a woman's house. I try my best to treat others with respect. That's one way I serve. I try to incorporate my religion into the way I act. I try to love everyone and treat everyone equally.

Why Do I Serve?

There is only one reason why I serve. I want to. I think that everyone deserves to be served. To know that you've helped people and possibly changed their lives gives you a good feeling.

What Have I Learned?

I learned only a little bit from these two men, but it's enough to change how I live. They taught me that if I need to say something, I should say it with kindness. I need to be humble. If I need to take a stand for something, I can't be violent about it.

Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh are two influential figures. They have changed many lives and have influenced nations. They have served many people greatly, they have been humble, and they have not been violent. They have served others in different and similar ways, and have been successful. They have served others greatly, humbly and non-violently.

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Interfaith Service

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Lack of interfaith cooperation has always been a major problem for society. The conflicting religious beliefs among people of various world religions such as Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity have led to people arguing, fighting, and even killing one another. One might think, "Is there anything that differing religious communities can agree upon?" Well, one thing that all of the religions of the world have in common is the belief in service.

One great devout leader, Tenzin Gyatso, was able to assist in the lives of those who were suffering. He was born on July 6, 1935 in northeastern Tibet in a small village located in Taktser, Amdo. At age two, he was believed to be the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama (A Brief Biography 1). Since being discovered as the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso has had a responsibility to serve others.

The Dalai Lama was raised in Lhasa away from his parents in nearly total seclusion and with strict living conditions (Gyatso). He was brought up in a position of high authority and was taught in the Buddhist tradition. He began his education at age six. The Dalai Lama learned about subjects such as logic, Tibetan art and culture, medicine, and Sanskrit. He was also taught five areas of Buddhist philosophy: the perfection of wisdom, the philosophy of the middle way, the canon of monastic discipline, metaphysics, and logic and epistemology (A Brief Biography 1).

The Dalai Lama has spent most of his life as the leader of Tibet. He found himself in the position of leadership at the young age of fifteen. In 1950, the Dalai Lama acquired complete political power over Tibet after China's invasion of the country. Four years later, in 1954, the Dalai Lama traveled to Beijing to address the issue of peace with Mao Zedong and other leaders of China (A Brief Biography 2). The Dalai Lama had to use his leadership capabilities despite his young age in order to serve the people of Tibet.

In 1959, Chinese troops suppressed the political uprising of Tibet in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama was forced into exile. He escaped to a Himalayan small town called Dharamsala with more than 100,000 impoverished emigrants. While in exile, he spent his time rebuilding the broken lives of the refugees and advocating universal peace through pacifism. Since that incident, he has lived in northern India in Dharamsala (A Brief Biography 2; Gyatso).

The Dalai Lama used the knowledge gained from his education in order to better serve others. At age twenty-three, his Holiness received the highest degree in Buddhist philosophy – the Geshe Lharampa (A Brief Biography 1). The Dalai Lama was, in fact, a very learned individual. He had a great amount of experience in serving others and used his knowledge wisely in order to aid in the service of others.

His Holiness says that he believes the meaning of life is happiness. Every soul desires this contentment. It is, therefore, crucial to discern what it is that affects the highest degree of happiness. Through experience, the Dalai Lama has concluded that obtaining this mental peace stems from developing a sense of love and compassion (Compassion and the Individual 1). The practice of compassion also leads to an overall improvement in communities and a more successful world (Compassion and the Individual 7). In Buddhism, the ultimate liberation is to acquire complete release from all suffering: selfishness, animosity, and misconception, which are obviously

the foundational causes of social immorality (Jones 3). A person is happier and more content when he is compassionate.

The Dalai Lama as the leader of Tibet had the power to greatly influence others through his service. He served through the opportunities and responsibilities he had as the Dalai Lama. He served and still serves by promoting peace and tolerance. He served those who were suffering with a sense of love and compassion which subsequently helped him and those he served live happier and healthier lives.

Another great religious figure, Eboo Patel, was able to create a worldwide religious movement. Eboo Patel was born on November 9 1975, in Mumbai India (America's Best Leaders). He was, however, raised as an American Muslim in the suburbs of Chicago (Brachear 2). His youth consisted of a clash in the different aspects of his backgrounds. The story of his struggle in discerning his various traditions is a mutually enriching account of a generation of youth residing at the intersection of heritage and ascertainment (Excerpt: Acts of Faith 5).

When in college, Patel came to the realization that those he admired were not only people who had a deep sense of spirituality, but also that were of different faith traditions. He also realized that spiritual collaboration had been predominant in the service of all of these spiritual leaders (Excerpt: Acts of Faith 5). All of his heroes were of a different religion, and yet they strived to work together with people of other religions.

At age twenty-one, Patel attended an interfaith convention and realized that everyone there was at least thirty years his senior. Patel discovered that the religious fanatics were young and those of interfaith cooperation were old. Something needed to be done. (Excerpt: Acts of Faith 5). Patel made it his goal to make cooperation among various religions the same kind of social standard as that of interracial harmony. With this concept in mind, Patel gathered together a half dozen of his contemporaries who shared his enthusiasm. They journeyed together in delivering a sequence of interfaith youth conferences in hopes of ending "fighting, killing, and dying to the soundtrack of prayer (Brachear 3)."

Finally, in 2002, Patel and a Jewish friend started the Interfaith Youth Core –an organization that promotes interfaith cooperation among youth while utilizing service as the crossroad (About the Movement 1). Patel says that a person should understand the common values between differing religions. How various religions view mercy, compassion, and service is what he calls interfaith proficiency (Better Together 3).

If a person taught their child to only be a Muslim in a Muslim environment or only a Christian in a Christian environment then they would be instilling in them a spiritual identity that only pertains to a small part of their life. In the twenty first century, a tremendous part of one's life is spent interacting with people of various faith traditions (Religion and Ethics 3). There is, however, a substantial relation between discovering an inner coherence and developing an obligation to pluralism. This obligation to pluralism is why others are willing to meet you at the bridge of service. (Excerpt: Acts of Faith 5).

Pluralism, Patel says, means producing a civilization where people from various backgrounds abide in the same dignity and collective devotion. It consists of respecting each other's identities, building positive relationships among differing communities, and committing oneself to the common good. If a person has a concrete understanding about various religions and how one's own religion

bridges with others, and if one has useful encounters with persons from differing religions, then one can greatly improve his own outlook towards other faith traditions (Better Together 3-4).

America depends on its citizens to promote the bridges of pluralism when others attempt to tear them down. Islam says that Muslims should be brave and merciful when confronting injustice. (Excerpt: Acts of Faith 6). One of Patel's favorite verses from the Holy Qur'an says, "God made us different nations and tribes that we may come to know one another." All religions are concerned with the qualities of compassion, hospitality, and stewardship of the environment (Religion and Ethics 1). Differing religious views should not tear people apart, but rather bind them together.

Eboo Patel has spent a great part of his life serving people in various faith traditions. Through the interfaith youth core, he has been able to reach thousands of young people with the message of interfaith cooperation that he so boldly proclaims. Through his experiences, he has learned to correlate the different aspects of his heritage and is helping others to do the same.

Both the Dalai Lama and Eboo Patel are great religious leaders, with different reasons for why, whom, and how they serve. The Dalai Lama was born into the very heart of his tradition. He served others with the power that was brought upon him, he served through the teachings of Buddhism, and he served humanity. He believes that serving with compassion leads to inner happiness, more thriving communities, and a better world. Eboo Patel however, was born with differing backgrounds in the heritage of Islam, India, and America. He boldly came forth with his ideas about service, and he has served humanity by promoting interfaith cooperation. He has served and continues to serve through his own experiences of differing traditions, through his Islamic faith, and through the realization that this interfaith cooperation is desperately needed. One thing that both of these great heroes have in common is that they are passionate about serving others.

My story greatly differs from the stories of these two great heroes. I grew up in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. I have believed in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior for as long as I can remember. The hardships I have gone through in my life have brought me to where I am today. I believe that I am called to serve others by teaching them and helping them through their faith journey through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I serve because I love God, and I want to live my life for Him. I serve God and by doing this, I serve all of humanity. Matthew 25: 40 says, "...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me (NIV)."

I serve with the gifts and talents God has given me. Romans 12:4-8 says, "For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully (NIV)."

My thoughts about serving are different than the views of the Dalai Lama and Eboo Patel. I base my beliefs on the Christian doctrine and serve a different God than them. However, I have learned through these two great leaders that there are many ways to serve others and that all religions believe in serving. They have opened my mind to new concepts, and I now have a greater understanding of the beliefs of those who have different faith traditions. One thing I do have in

common with these two great leaders is the fact that I believe in serving others and that the world would be a better place if humanity was willing to work together to serve.

Service brings people from different religions together. It is the bridge that can bind together the differences among people of various faiths. The Dalai Lama and Eboo Patel have been of great service to mankind. They have served wholeheartedly and continue to serve to this day. Each individual can help make this world a better place by utilizing their unique opportunities to serve.

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Kindness in Harmony
Lucie Krivanek, Fergus Falls MN

“Kindness in words creates confidence. Kindness in thinking creates profoundness.
Kindness in giving creates love.”
~ A quote by Lao Tzu

Kindness. Dictionary.com refers to it as “the state or quality of being kind” with kind being described as “indulgent, considerate, or helpful; humane.” Now, think about the world we are living in today. Think about the many people: types, colors, religions. Do we as people, as humanity, who can “smother people with kindness”, give the entire world’s people that level of kindness? To be honest, I believe we don’t. When we see someone of a different color or religion we immediately judge them, often ignoring and rejecting them. But I believe there is hope for the kindness in humanity. Two very great but different people rise to the surface of my mind. Eboo Patel and Thich Nhat Hanh show that yes, we are of different religions but we can still show respect and kindness through service. These two gentlemen have shown that through religion we can show togetherness, compassion, and kindness to one another.

Through their expressions of different religions, I will show the Who, Why, and How they serve to establish togetherness, compassion, and kindness. First, I will talk about Why they serve.

Before going to the Theology Institute this summer, we were given a book titled *Hearing the Call across Traditions: Readings on Faith and Service*. That was our guide book to many wonderful people who used their various religions in many different ways to help serve others.

Eboo Patel’s preface jumped out at me. He really connected with me when he talked about why he serves. “Service is not only a bridge between the cosmic and the concrete, but also between Islam and Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism, secular humanism and Hinduism. The diverse community that is humanity is not fated to be divided by the clash of civilizations. We can just as easily be united on the common ground of service. All we have to do is cross the bridge” (xi). This is very powerful to me because he is saying that we should all serve to better ourselves and to connect with all people of all religions. He serves because he wants all of humanity and all religions to be able to cross that bridge, to be connected through their religions and not be divided by them.

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist, has said, “Through my love for you, I want to express my love for the whole cosmos, the whole of humanity, and all beings. By living with you, I want to learn to love everyone and all species. If I succeed in loving you, I will be able to love everyone and all species on Earth.” In the Buddhist faith, love and compassion are thought of very highly. This is why Thich Nhat Hanh serves. He wants to love and show compassion for everyone and everything. That is his goal and the goal of many people who share in the Buddhist religion. He serves so that everyone will know of love and compassion.

Next, we will look at Whom these two men serve in their religions.

Eboo Patel, in his interview on NPR’s *Morning Edition*, told his story of being brought up in Chicago as a Muslim. He said, “I attended high school in the western suburbs of Chicago. The group I ate lunch with included a Jew, a Mormon, a Hindu, a Catholic, and a Lutheran.” He went on to talk about how his Jewish friend would get picked on because of his religion and that Patel and the rest of the lunchroom gang did not stand up for him. On hearing his Jewish friend tell him this he said that it

was “the single most humiliating experience of my life.” He continued saying, “I cannot go back in time and take away the suffering of my Jewish friend, but through action I can prevent it from happening to others.” Patel, through this experience, lives through a new word, *pluralism*, which is defined on Dictionary.com as “a theory that there is more than one basic substance or principle.” Patel uses this meaning to show people that there are many other religions. He is serving all people and all other people’s religions through his pluralism movement.

Thich Nhat Hanh was also another religious figure that contributed to service by writing *Hearing the Call across Traditions: Readings on Faith and Service*. He wrote about how to show love and compassion to all people, even those who may have wronged us in the past. He starts off his portion very strong by saying, “Love is a mind that brings peace, joy, and happiness to another person. Compassion is a mind that removes the suffering that is present in the other. We all have the seeds of love and compassion in our minds... We can nurture the unconditional love that does not expect anything in return and therefore does not lead to anxiety and sorrow” (145). Thich Nhat Hanh serves because he wants people to know what love and compassion are. He serves so that there could be peace among religions and the love and compassion that each individual faith deserves.

Finally, we will look at How they serve through religion.

While at the Theology Institute, we studied both Eboo Patel and Thich Nhat Hanh. First, we discussed Eboo Patel. We looked into his life as a Muslim who believes strongly in pluralism. Patel serves by going around to colleges, being a spokesperson for IFYC (Interfaith Youth Core), and teaching others how to come together and show respect for different religions.

When we researched Thich Nhat Hanh’s life, we found out that he was exiled from Vietnam, and now lives in France. Every two years, Hanh journeys to the United States and speaks to Congress about how we, as humans, need to start showing compassion for one another rather than violence. In a video we watched from *Religion & Ethics: Newsweekly* titled *Thich Nhat Hanh*, during one of these speeches he stated, “I think we have the Statue of Liberty on the East Coast. But in the name of freedom, people have done a lot of damage. I think we have to build a Statue of Responsibility on the West Coast in order to counterbalance. Because liberty without responsibility is no true liberty. We are not free to destroy.”

Learning about these two marvelous men connecting with others through their faith and service, made me think about my own faith and service. Why do I serve? Whom do I serve? How do I serve?

I am a Christian. Not any particular type of Christian, just a believer in The Lord Our God and in Jesus Christ, His Son. From the very beginning I was raised to believe in God. I went to church, studied the Bible, memorized verses, and sang many of the songs. But when people ask me the question “why do you serve?” I was taken aback. After some reflection, I am now able to answer, “Because of my love for people.” The word love has always been a favorite word of mine; it was one of the first words I learned to write. I love to love and to be loved. Starting at a very young age, I expressed my love by always being willing to help and serve others. Whether it was helping my father with some outside project or comforting my 5 year old brother, who was distressed at learning that when he grew up he would have to leave his parents. This leads right into Who do I serve. I serve everyone, whether you want me to or not! I love helping people and if you don’t want my help, I will try to find someone who you do want help from. Finally, how do I channel my great need to show everyone my love for them? How do I serve? I love to show my service to my entire community: I sing for my church, work in the church nursery, package food for the hungry, donate

clothing, and volunteer for groups such as S.O.D.A. (Students Opposing Drugs & Alcohol) and National Honors Society. On a more personal level, my love and passion for others leads me to stand up for and speak up for those who I think are being mistreated or ignored. I love to be a voice for those who cannot speak.

So, I may not be making grand speeches in front of hundreds of people or cameras. I have not written books that millions of people will read. However, I am doing my part and making a difference one person at a time. I am showing the world that service to everyone and faith can go together. My hope is that when you are hearing in the news that religions will always have conflicts and they will never work together, you think about Eboo Patel and Thich Nhat Hanh and then think of yourself and those around you. Think about expressing your faith through kindness, togetherness, love, and compassion and then cross the bridge service and join us.

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Religion and Service Meet

Sophie Breen, Minneapolis MN

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others” (Mahatma Gandhi). Service has always been very important to me because I care greatly for people in need. I am not alone in my passion for service, Eboo Patel and Dorothy Day were both strong characters whose faith guided them on a journey of service towards people in need.

Eboo Patel is an Indian Muslim American. He moved to America from India at a very young age and found himself pushing aside the fact that he was Indian and Muslim in order to be only American. He knew these parts of him shouldn't be mutually exclusive. He knew he should be able to be who he was, but as a kid he found this very difficult. This became blatantly obvious when Patel found himself at the gym as a college student. Three games of basketball were going on; one black, one white, and one Asian. He wondered where he belonged. This is exactly the reason he began his efforts with interfaith relations. When looking on the news you may find that there are fights between people about their beliefs on gay rights, politics, or economics, but the most destructive arguments are in religion. Religious arguments are what is killing this planet. Patel believes that if we have personal connections with people of other religions it can help prevent these destructive actions and hurtful stereotypes. Learning about other religions does not endanger your faith. On the contrary, it can strengthen your own faith.

Patel works predominantly with college students in America. He works with this group of young people because he believes that they are the people who are shaping society. They are the new generation at an age in which they can really make an impact on the world. He works specifically in America because it has religious diversity that can be addressed and can be a leader in this fight for a new attitude toward other religions.

Patel made the Interfaith Youth Core into what it is today. This is an organization that connects youth with volunteer opportunities. It was started by Patel's friend, Jeff, after he came back from a trip to India in which youth of all different religions worked together at Habitat for Humanity (Patel, 156). The organization puts youth into religiously diverse groups that creates conversations about religion and why they serve. This is a great way to get youth of different religions together and discuss their faiths in an open environment.

Dorothy Day lived to serve people in need. If someone came to her door hungry she would feed them. If someone needed shelter she would give it to them. She was never judgmental of the people who needed help. This made her approachable to people in need. She believed that she wasn't there to make people change their lifestyle; she was there to care for them. Her personality was strong and she was willing to stand up for what she believed in.

Day was involved in many protests throughout her life. “When it comes to the church she goes as far to the right as she can and when it comes to politics she goes as far as she can to the left” (John J. O’Keefe). This is what made her so radical and such a prominent religious figure of the twentieth century. She felt a spiritual calling throughout her entire life. She found Catholicism when she was pregnant with her son, Tamar (Day, 139). Day felt a powerful need to help those who needed it, but wasn't sure how to fulfill this need until she met Maurin. Maurin showed up on her doorstep when she was looking for a way to help people in need. He gave her an idea and she made the vision come

true. This vision began *The Catholic Worker*, a radical newspaper that gave a new perspective on Catholicism and how it relates to service.

The Catholic Worker was a vision that grew with Day. It started as just a newspaper with a radical pacifist perspective that was new to the public and turned into a way of life. Day believed that everybody should have a "Christ Room." This is a room that is available for people who need a place to stay. While *The Catholic Worker* started as just a newspaper, when winter came around and the homeless were in desperate need of a place to stay Dorothy Day housed many people. She created many Catholic Worker Communities that housed people in need. These houses can still be found all over the country today.

Service has always been a part of my life. Most of the service I have done is through my church. I never thought much of this until I went the Augsburg Youth Theology Institute. I had always just found the most volunteer opportunities through my church. I had never thought to connect my religion with my service. I love being around people and being helpful. These are two things that I wanted to be a part of my occupation when I am an adult. I have always had an instinct that made me want to help people in need; deep down I think everybody has this instinct. I have found that volunteer works help me feel like I am making an impact on somebody's life.

I enjoy the feeling that I have helped someone, so I especially enjoy service opportunities that allow me to meet the people that I am helping. Most of the service that I do is working with children, though I do some work with adults as well. My favorite service opportunity is through a program called Families Moving Forward. This is an organization that helps families that are homeless get back on their feet. The families move to different hosting churches and the parents discuss job skills and financial aid opportunities with a professional while the church takes care of the kids, cooks a meal, and takes care of the family. My church, Edina Community Lutheran Church, is very involved in this program and hosts families at least twice a year. I love watching the kids while the parents rest or talk to someone about their situation. I enjoy this work because I feel like what I am doing is directly affecting the family. Homelessness is not permanent and this program recognizes that and helps the families' transition. I love working with the kids because I have found that, regardless to the situation they are in, they always find a way to stay positive and put on a smile. Kids always have the best smiles and this is what makes me feel like I am actually making an impact. If I can make a child who hasn't had a home in years smile, then anything is possible.

I have found many ways to serve in my community. I am in the National Honors Society at my school and we have many service opportunities there. For example, we held our own food drive. My friends and I walked around the neighbor collecting food from our neighbors, and then we drove cars filled with food down to Sabathani to donate them. Though we didn't get to see who the food directly affected, the employees of Sabathani expressed to us how much they were grateful for our help. We also had a recycling team that collected the recycling from the school once a week. I am very eco-friendly so I really liked helping out with the recycling. This made me feel hopeful about our school's consciousness of the Earth. I found this such an important team that this year I will be a president of the team. Another opportunity that I found through the National Honor's Society is the blood drive. The society holds one every two months. Though I couldn't directly see who this affected I know that my blood helped at least two people. I enjoyed the service opportunities through the National Honor's Society so much that this year I will be serving as the service chair.

This summer I went on a mission trip with my church to New York City. This was my favorite mission trip because we did quite a bit of volunteer work. We worked through a program called

Youth Service Opportunities Project. This organization connected us with different service opportunities every day. I enjoyed this because I got to see a new side of New York City and got to do a lot of service. My favorite organization that we went to was a soup kitchen at a church. I worked the shift called “bread” by the regulars. I handed out extra bread to people who wanted it as they left. Though this sounds like a mundane task it was actually the most meaningful day for me because I got to meet so many new people. I know I was only a in their life for a snapshot, but it meant a lot to be there at all.

Dorothy Day and Eboo Patel are both people who have influenced my life. Patel taught me that learning about other faiths can strengthen your own and that personal connections with people of other faiths can change the world. Day taught me to be confident in myself and that everybody’s faith journey is different. Be confident enough to learn about other religions and serve people in need.

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Serving is for Everyone
Taylor Hjermstad, Kenyon MN

Serve: to be of use. Serving is where you lend a hand to people who need it and sometimes even when they don't. Serving is done every day and in every way. There are many people whose serving has made them very well-known including Eboo Patel, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Abraham Joshua Heschel. These people have come from all different backgrounds and religions but their main goal was to serve. Two people who have done large things with serving and really stuck out to me are Dorothy Day, a catholic, and Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist. Both of them have done great things and their deeds can be summed up into three questions. Why do I serve? Whom do I serve? How do I serve? I will attempt to answer these questions for them and give my answers on each question as well.

Why?

Dorothy Day did not have it easy when she was trying to figure who she served. Day grew up in a Protestant home. Later on in her life, she found the Catholic Church and her faith ran deep in it. She knew she found someone and something to serve. Day described the Catholic Church as "the church of the immigrants, the church of the poor," Day devoted her life to the poor so she knew she had found somewhere to belong. Day's conversion experience was "sudden and gradual where religious impulses and energies became central to one's life," Dorothy Day liked the Catholic Church so much that when she had her daughter Tamar in 1927, she baptized her into the Catholic faith. According to the catholicworker.org, Day defended the baptizing by saying, "I did not want my child to flounder as I had often floundered. I wanted to believe, and I wanted my child to believe, and if belonging to a Church would give her so inestimable a grace as faith in God, and the companionable love of the Saints, then the thing to do was to have her baptized a Catholic," Dorothy Day serves so she knows where she belongs and has something to believe in.

Thich Nhat Hanh serves because he sees all the suffering and hurt in the world. He knows that something should be done to help end the pain. According to goodreads.com he often says "When another person makes you suffer, it is because he suffers deeply within himself, and his suffering is spilling over. He does not need punishment; he needs help. That's the message he is sending." Thich Nhat Hanh does not want other people to punish others but to know that they need to help try and change things. He serves because he knows that pain will never go away and that people will always need compassion to be with them. Thich Nhat Hanh serves to help.

Both Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh serve to make a difference, to make a change, and to do some good. They don't want to sit and watch people in pain to go solo.

Who?

Dorothy Day served the Catholic Church and whoever comes with it. Day liked serving the whole church and not just one single person. Day served in order to help people and by helping people, she started the Catholic Worker Movement. According to catholicworker.org, the movement was a "firm belief in the God-given dignity of every human person," Day wanted non-violence for everyone no matter where they came from or how they were at the time. She served the church so that every homeless, hungry, or rejected person had somewhere to go to, be safe and to be treated like a human being. Dorothy Day served the Catholic Church this way in the 1960s; she turned its

focus to peace and justice. Day served the Catholic Church but while doing that, she served so many other people as well.

Thich Nhat Hanh serves everyone. In the book, Hearing the Call across Traditions, Thich Nhat Hanh gives a story about how he looks at a picture of a child and becomes one with it, then writes an application from the child's point of view. He does these things through meditation and compassion. He begins with meditation by focusing on the person who is suffering. He looks deep and really recognizes what that person is going through. Last he says mediation keeps happening until compassion shows up and basically lights the way. Thich Nhat Hanh also says you have to comprehend the person to serve. He says to comprehend means to pick it up and be one with it. Thich Nhat Hanh does not just serve one person but he serves numerous. He doesn't focus one just one person that is suffering, but everyone who is suffering.

Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh both serve as many people as they can. They want to be able to help everyone, but Day chose one big thing to focus around while Thich Nhat Hanh chose everyone to focus on.

How?

Dorothy Day threw herself into whatever she believed in order to serve. To help people in poverty, she lived with them. She ate, slept, and breathed so she could serve fully. There is no denying that she was a very hands on person when she served. Day did many things to serve; one was speaking out against McCarthyism, which Webster's Dictionary defines as defamation of character or reputation. Other deeds were marching with Cesar Chavez for the rights of farm workers, doing Civil Rights Freedom Rides, and protesting the Vietnam War. Standing up for what she believed in came with consequences. Day went to jail many times. The first time was in the front of the White House during WWI and the very last time was when she was in her 70s for protesting with the farm workers. None of that bothered her because she truly and full-heartedly believed in her cause. Day did whatever she had to do to serve and that is how she served.

Thich Nhat Hanh believes in engaged Buddhism, which means that he does the practice of social action based upon Buddhist principles. Thich Nhat Hanh serves through different ways. One way is debate vs. dialogue. What he means is that you see the opposing perspective and you talk about it through disagreements and agreements. You don't have to see eye to eye but at least recognize others' thoughts. Thich Nhat Hanh wants people to transform during this process. Another way that Thich Nhat Hanh serves is by interbeing. Interbeing is going beyond the person to fully understand them and becoming mutual. Like Thich Nhat Hanh says, "I am, therefore you are. You are therefore, I am...We inter-are," He wants to become one with others to deeply understand other's emotions. He wants to recognize the sufferings and joys and grasp the concept of it. Thich Nhat Hanh always uses the yin and yang symbol of Chinese Philosophy. According to Webster's Dictionary, yin and yang means "to create a unity of opposites." That is what Thich Nhat Hanh wants to do to help serve others. This is how Thich Naht Hanh serves.

Dorothy Day and Thich Naht Hanh both believe in serving people to make the world a better place, they just have different ways of doing it. Dorothy Day is a much louder and more aggressive person who will do anything at any cost to make a point. Thich Naht Hanh is a quieter, more relaxed kind of person who takes a softer approach. No matter how they serve, they have both left and continue to leave huge impacts by their serving.

Me

I serve because in my mind, that is how I can get closer to God and try to show to him that I am thankful. I don't pray as much as I should or go to church as often as I need to. Serving and getting out there to help out others that aren't as fortunate is my way of getting closer to God. Some people may not agree with me, because they believe you need to pray all the time and go to church every Sunday, but that isn't how I show my appreciation. Like Dorothy Day, I like to experience and witness what needs to be done. I may not do it in the same way as Day, by living with the poor, but I still get a taste and a glimpse of what service is. I want to see the difference and see it make a change for the better. Thich Naht Hahn also likes to experience the same things that people are going through in order to get closer to them and that is what I like. I like getting a background story and see how an event impacts a person. I like to see how my work helps them feel better. I serve because I want to make a difference like Dorothy Day and Thich Naht Hahn. I want to leave footprints behind.

I serve God. One major reason I serve God, the creator of everything is because I was born into it. My family is Lutheran and that is what I have grown up knowing. To me, God is the only person I should be serving. There are brave people in the world that venture out on their own to make their own decisions about whom or what they should put their beliefs into, but I just go with the flow. To me, it makes sense to serve one person of a greater power and basically look up to him. I believe that I don't have a reason to not believe in God. God has and always will be there no matter what is going on. God is who I serve because his love is unconditional and always forgiving. God is where I belong.

Why and how I serve go hand in hand. I like getting out in the open and working with my hands. I like doing service work such as painting buildings or things, cleaning up someone's yard, or helping serve meals to those who don't get much food throughout their day. Even little things like playing cards with the elderly or picking up their groceries. I don't like to serve by sitting and thinking about doing something instead of actually doing it. Another way I serve is by trying to make myself a better person. By that, I mean trying to see other points of view and understanding more. An example of doing this is attending the Augsburg College Youth Theology Institute and getting into great conversations with others. Another is getting together with 35,000 other Lutherans for the National Youth Gathering to listen to others stories, their beliefs, and their amazing background stores. I serve by making an impact and bettering myself.

Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh have both left but are still leaving big impacts on everyone with their jobs of serving. Dorothy Day devoted her entire life to help by actually living with people that needed help. Thich Nhat Hanh became one with everyone person he helped because he believed you had to be inter-are. The poem Call Me by My True Names says that he is everything because you have to be connected. I learned from both of these brilliant people that you can't let the suffering go on, that you actually have to get up and do something. I learned you can make a difference no matter how big or small it is. Womenshistory.about.com gives a quote that sums up everything, "the happiest people I have known have been those who gave themselves no concern about their own souls, but did their uttermost to mitigate the miseries of others." Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

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Shaping My Faith

Peter Howitz, Shoreview MN

How do we learn from other peoples' faith stories? The experiences of insightful people like Eboo Patel and Dorothy Day offer lots of inspiration to those seeking meaning in faith. Patel is a visionary with a great idea, pluralism, and an organization for young adults to learn and live with people of different faiths, traditions, and cultures. Day was a radical socialist anarchist who shifted in and out of religious dedication, and finally helped those in need in the name of God. In this paper, the faith stories of Eboo Patel and Dorothy Day will be described and will be used to illustrate how they have shaped my own. In particular, my faith story has been shaped by these two individuals' faith stories through their battle with answering questions about why, whom, and how they serve.

The first person who has had a hand in shaping my faith story, is Eboo Patel. Why does Eboo Patel serve? I believe he serves so that his idea of pluralism, the idea that all religions and cultures can come together and live amongst each other without war or conflict, can come to fruition. "[My] core belief is that religion is a bridge of cooperation rather than a barrier of division. [I'm] inspired to build this bridge by [my] faith as a Muslim, [my] Indian heritage, and [my] American citizenship" ("Eboo Patel, Ashoka"). This illustrates that Patel's multicultural identity enables him to identify with and support pluralism.

Patel's faith story is not only about pluralism, but also his upbringing as a Muslim and how it affected his answer to the question, whom do I serve? Patel explains, "Muhammad was selected by God to be a prophet precisely because he removed himself from the world to focus on worship. That felt difficult for me... And while I felt a longing for God throughout my adolescence, if connecting to the Divine meant removing myself from real life, I wasn't quite ready to make that commitment. I chose the world" (Adam Davis, page ix). This is indicative of Patel's dilemma in trying to figure out whom he serves. In his early life he decided to serve himself instead of his God. He did not feel ready to commit to a life of worship detached from the world that he loved. As Patel grew up, he realized he was missing the fulfillment that religion would provide him. This led him to study Islam more intensely. He recalls, "In my reading one night I discovered a story that I was not taught in my Muslim Sunday school. *'After receiving revelation, Muhammad never returned up the mountain.'* Once he was touched by the Heavens of Faith, Muhammad lived the rest of his years in the [normal world]. He loved the world, and he lived his life in it, and he did it on the command of God" (Adam Davis, page x). The story helped Patel understand that he did not have to remove himself from the world to serve God. He realized that once he received enlightenment, he could live in the normal world just as Muhammad did. This reversed his answer to whom does he serve, from himself, to his God.

There is one more part to Patel's faith story; how does he serve? Patel founded Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) to bring young people from different faiths and culture communities together to work in social action projects, fostering cooperation instead of conflict among youth of diverse religious beliefs. IFYC involves thousands of people working together on social action projects addressing problems from homelessness and hunger to education. IFYC also encourages youth to identify values they share with one another and then to articulate how their religious traditions speak to those shared values. It's a way for him to introduce his idea of pluralism and have it take a tangible form.

Another important figure in the development of my faith story is Dorothy Day. Why did Dorothy Day serve? I believe Day served because she wanted to make a difference and change how the world worked. She stated, "There was a great question in my mind. Why was so much done in remedying social evils instead of avoiding them in the first place? . . . Where were the saints to try to change the social order, not just to minister to the slaves but to do away with slavery?" (Dorothy Day, page 45). This exemplifies Day's attitude toward social injustice. She felt it would be easier and better if these things were prevented.

Whom did Dorothy Day serve? Day, although not very religious throughout her life, served various others. As a child, she and her family were nominally Protestant. They rarely attended church until a rector from an Episcopal church convinced Day's mother to enroll her two eldest sons in the church choir. As a result, Day began to attend church almost every Sunday, but not for God. She just simply enjoyed the music. At this point in her life she was more focused on serving her own interests than anything else. In her college years, she was imprisoned for participating in a strike and she rejected organized religion because she felt it did nothing to help those in need. She became involved in a strike at the White House regarding how suffragists were treated in jail. She was imprisoned for participating in the strike. While she was in jail, she asked for a Bible and took great comfort in the psalms that expressed her sorrow and hope, but when she was released from jail, she once again abandoned religion. As one can see, Day went in and out of religious activity throughout her life. Many years later, Day was in a common law marriage and became pregnant. Day decided that she wanted her daughter to grow up with religion so that she might have the stability which Day did not. The choice of baptizing her daughter to give her stability shows Day's commitment to making sure her child would not go through what she did. Day herself was finally confirmed in the Catholic Church. Later in her life, she met Peter Maurin with whom she helped create the Catholic Worker newspaper which expressed ideas for the workers and poor. She began to help the homeless and the hungry by giving them food donated by the newspaper's supporters. She set up houses of hospitality, which were places where the homeless could stay. Doing all of this work to help those who needed it brought Day closer to God. It was during this time of her life that she answered the question of who she serves. She realized that she serves God by helping those in need.

How did Dorothy Day serve? She only really started to serve when she and Peter Maurin created the Catholic Worker newspaper. The newspaper itself was a service to the workers and the poor by telling the stories of how awful their working conditions were. The newspaper also helped to get recognition for worker and labor movements. In addition, she also donated food that was given to the newspaper, to the poor and the hungry. She and Maurin helped to set up many houses of hospitality so that those who needed a place to stay could have one. Besides that, she would attend protests at the German Consulate and many businesses with poor working conditions and/or extremely low wages, provide food to the protestors and arrange places for the protestors to stay.

So, why do I serve? I do not have a straight answer for that question. When I choose to volunteer or help someone in need, I am not quite sure if I do it to make myself feel better and needed or if I do it to actually help others. I like to volunteer but I only volunteer if I like what it is I am going to be doing. Unlike Dorothy Day, who helped the homeless, poor, and desperate in the hopes of making a difference, I help only when and where I want to help. Eboo Patel helps others so that the idea of pluralism may come to fruition. Patel and Day both help for the sake of others, not themselves. I do not want or need to make a difference and I do not have this grand idea of an idealistic society but I believe that God is helping me in my service in the hopes that I might begin to serve for others, not for myself.

Whom do I serve? In Eboo Patel's and Dorothy Day's faith stories, they both had to experience serving themselves before they realized that serving God was more important. At this point in my life, I believe I am still in the phase of serving myself instead of my God. I believe that as I go through my life I will reach a point where I will come to realize that I need to serve my God and not myself. I want to experience serving myself for a while before I feel the need to serve God.

How do I serve? I have volunteered at the Valentine Hills Elementary School Library during summer school every week for four hours a day for four years. I started to volunteer at the library because my brother, Will, had done it previously and because my mother pushed me to do something for the community. I have also volunteered as a Sunday school teacher for kindergarten and first grade kids. It was my decision to do this service because I like to work with young kids and to help them learn about God and all of his works. I plan to do more volunteer work and service as I grow up which will help me transition from serving myself to serving my God.

In this paper, I hope I have shown how we can learn from other peoples' faith stories and how they can shape our own through the example of my own faith story and how it was shaped by these two individuals. Eboo Patel and Dorothy Day, as one can see, have very different faith stories that can influence one's perception of religion. Patel's faith story could shape one's faith story so that that person could become a visionary or an idealist. Day's faith story could shape one's faith story so that that person could become a radical who finds ways to help others while still having their choice in how they approach their service. There are many faith stories in the world that are shaped by reason, tradition, scripture, and experience that are all different from the next. Those examples can help shape the stories of those who are not sure why they serve, whom they serve, or how to serve.

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Service Through the Stories of Eboo Patel and Thich Naht Hanh

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The first way that any servant would start to work for the good of others is answer the short but complex question, “Why do I serve?” Almost every world religion asks the believer to help others, but reasons to serve are as varied as the traditions they belong to. Helping all of mankind is an overwhelming task. What would compel someone of faith to try to help a mankind that is shattered beyond repair? Faith, commitment, and a sense of calling flow through the undercurrent of both Islam and Buddhism, leading believers from both traditions to face the damaged world. Besides the tradition behind them, servants of the world are often asked to interpret their own beliefs. Both Eboo Patel and Thich Nhat Hanh have lead a life of service to others, combining both tradition and interpretation to lead revolutions and change throughout the world.

Eboo Patel is an American Muslim who is the leader of a youth movement that focuses on interfaith. Even though he is still young, many people consider him to be a key leader in the interfaith conversation of today. Being such an active leader today, he has a lot to say and a lot to act upon. But how would he answer the question, “Why Do I Serve?” After combing through his life experiences, Eboo Patel stated that he serves through a sense of calling and a need for change. The start of the Inter Youth Core was almost given to him. He states, “And suddenly, an idea hit me: ‘What if we created a project where religiously diverse young people came together for one year... where they would live together and take part in community service projects (73)?’” He took hold of this idea and created a world-wide project around faith. His organization is centered on faith from countless traditions throughout the world. Helping people to grow in their own faith through the traditions of others is his goal for both the Inter Youth Core and also for the world’s faith traditions in general. Faith is centered in all of it. Words from the Dalai Lama concerning his youth movement struck Eboo Patel as wise and applicable, “(Religion) must come together to serve others. Service is the most important.” (96) Eboo Patel firmly believes in the power of this quote. It is what centers him in his youth movement and what leads him to serve others to the fullest of his abilities. His faith in a God that calls for believers to serve others above all is what lead Eboo Patel to begin the immense task of serving the world through his leadership and advocacy.

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese monk who strives to bring peace to the world. He has written numerous books that advocate for peaceful thinking about the world and humankind to strengthen peace and contentment. As one of the most outspoken writers of Buddhist faith today, he also has a lot to say about service to a broken world. His books first advocate a peaceful, “one-ness” view of the world that leads to a connected understanding of everything in the universe. Gratitude follows in this connected view. Thich Nhat Hanh states, “Every time I touch food, whenever I see a flower, when I breathe fresh air, I always feel grateful.” (“Peace is Every Step”, 26) Thich Nhat Hanh calls this deep sense of gratefulness and understanding of food and nature as mindfulness. This mindfulness propels him to serve others. He repeatedly states that we are all one body. We are made of the same elements and we are obligated to help each other achieve happiness. He holds a unique and very opposite view to more “Western” world religions. His view on one-ness contrasts heavily with Eboo Patel’s views on service. Thich Nhat Hanh serves because of a shared community of elements and materials that people share. Eboo Patel is called to serve by God.

Looking around, the world is suffering. While people are starving, there are also people struggling silently in the restaurants, schools, and churches. Where does a servant begin to serve? Both Eboo Patel and Thich Naht Hanh have different methods to serve others and even whom they try to serve.

Once again, faith plays a major role in both of these leaders' decisions and actions to serve the world.

Eboo Patel took Muslim traditions to bring followers of many religions together. Eboo was inspired by the storytelling tradition that Islam is centered around. He stated his inspiration came when, "I learned that Islam is best understood not as a set of rigid rules and a list of required rituals but as a story... and continues through us..." (111) Eboo realized that stories from other traditions are equally as important, leading him further to start the Inter-Youth Core. Eboo Patel serves the followers of many religions and built "a home with the windows open so that the winds of other traditions can blow through and bring their unique oxygen." (70) Those words from Gandhi inspired Eboo to build a faith center for every believer that was willing to gather and experience other traditions. Other traditions bring stories; gathering and telling stories worth living is the way that Eboo Patel serves the world. Stories are more than words to pass the time by, to Muslims and faiths of the world, stories are shared to be taught and carried out- stories truly worth living. Uplifting, comforting, and inspirational, Eboo's story serves other people of all traditions to better serve the world through faith.

Thich Naht Hanh serves the world through completely different ways than Eboo Patel, but they are equally as powerful. The Buddhist tradition is a very peaceful, but thoughtful tradition. Thich Naht Hanh definitely serves through this peaceful, almost neutral mindset. He teaches others how to see and serve through revelations and wisdom. "Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world... By such means, awaken yourself and others to the reality of suffering in the world." ("Peace is Every Step", 128) Thich Naht Hanh serves through understanding; he also believes that understanding can relieve suffering of others. He advocates a strong community for comfort as well as support to those who suffer. He states, "A religious community should, however, take a clear stand against oppression and injustice." ("Peace is Every Step", 129) This community brings more than just comfort; it helps complete the sense of one-ness that Buddhism teaches. Thich Naht Hanh has a more indirect method of serving others, but instilling a peaceful mindset is certainly something that is needed in hostile environments throughout the world. His peaceful force even inspired Martin Luther King Jr. during the Civil Rights Movement, and even lead Martin Luther King to nominate Thich Naht Hanh to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. (Plum Village) His efforts are strong yet quiet and peaceful.

Christianity and many of the faiths of the world feel they are called to serve humankind. Once believers know that they should serve others, how should they go about serving? Both Eboo Patel and Thich Naht Hanh have answers to the question, "How Do We Serve?" It is not simply a task one does once in a while; it is a huge undertaking that requires different thinking as well as a constant striving to serve fellow mankind. Eboo Patel and Thich Naht Hanh have found different ways to serve others, but service still shines through both of their lives as a cornerstone to live by. They have truly lead a life where service is central and they both illustrate what a life of service looks like, a life that every believer can mimic and try to carry out.

With the start of his Interfaith Youth Core, Eboo Patel had a program that had begun with the cooperation of his ideas and various other people. His Muslim faith lead him to this interfaith dialogue. He states the main Quran quote that inspired him was S. 21:107 where Muhammad being "a special mercy upon all the worlds." Eboo Patel copies that verse into his own life, believing that all Muslims are called to be mercies upon the world. Eboo Patel chose to serve others by helping them build faith and community. The faith of Islam is very centered on a sense of faith and

community coming together in a person and in a town setting. Eboo clearly agreed that serving a sense of community to those whose own community fails them helps people in countless ways. In his book, Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation. Eboo states, "I loved the spirituality and social justice in Christianity, Hinduism etc." (105) Fusing two things that complement each other and improve the world, Eboo Patel has certainly served followers of many faiths throughout the world.

Thich Naht Hanh serves in very different but equally powerful ways. Eboo Patel builds community surrounding dialogue across faiths while Thich Naht Hanh serves others by providing an inner peace and giving a voice to the voiceless. His personal inner peace truly permeates across his writing and through his voice, a powerful force indeed. This peace is serving others because "mindfulness relieves suffering because it is filled with understanding and compassion." ("Living Buddha, Living Christ", 20) This understanding is service because it takes the burden away from the individual. Thich Naht Hanh comments that he is often inspired by Christian theology throughout his book, "Living Buddha, Living Christ". He also stated that "(when you show mindfulness, you are) showing your loving-kindness and understanding, the energy of the Holy Spirit is in you." ("Living Buddha, Living Christ", 20) With statements similar to this, Thich Naht Hanh often echoes Jesus' words of peace. It is hard to truly serve others without first understanding another's suffering and pain. Christianity often refers to the church as One Body; Buddhism has this sense of oneness in the universe as well. If one part of the body suffers, the other parts suffer with it as well, pushing Thich Naht Hanh to relieve the suffering of people throughout the world.

My story is definitely more subdued and low key compared to either Eboo Patel or Thich Naht Hanh. I come from a Lutheran tradition in a small town, which leads me to have a more quiet way of serving. I serve because I feel the desire to serve people who are suffering or who just need help. I also feel that God calls all of his believers to serve the world because it is not demanded, but faith brings action. I simply see a problem, and if I have the resources, I will try to solve the problem and help others. Delivering meals, serving on the church council, or simply handing a customer an ice cream cone, I try to serve another person every day. I learned the most from Thich Naht Hanh because his peaceful thinking helps me to see that we as humans are all connected. A person can't serve others properly if they are angry, so a calm mind is needed every moment of serving others. I serve everybody that needs serving. I prefer social interactions, so I mainly serve children and customers at Dairy Queen. If someone needs company or help with any problems in their life, I am always ready to lend an ear and my words. Eboo Patel taught me how to listen to others stories, take them in, and learn from them to increase faith. It's a new idea to me; I enjoy stories so much that I find this new insight very useful.

I have learned a lot from reading about Eboo Patel and Thich Naht Hanh, but also from serving others throughout the years. Patience is the most important element to help others and serve them well, as well as an infinite amount of other life lessons that service can teach. Service is a two way interaction, the server often gets just as much in return for the time and effort. In the Christian church, the benediction is often just merely repeated. With service in mind, it reaches a new revelation and encouragement to all who hear it. "Go in peace and serve the world. Thanks be to God!"

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“Figuring Things Out”
Elizabeth Anderson, Eagan MN

Though I do not have a hard time serving others, I have a hard time defining service. I don't usually find myself in formal situations where I need to serve others, so any time someone asks me when I've served someone, I often draw a blank. I know there have been times where I've helped other people through everyday conversation, whether it is a person I attend school with or a virtual friend across the globe with whom I'm chatting online. I know I think service is important, but I can never think of specific examples of service when I'm asked. Perhaps that means that it's something I just do naturally, without thinking about it. The exercise of writing this paper has helped me realize that that is what I think service should be. Something you just do without putting a lot of thought into it. Something you do because it's the natural thing to do. That's part of the reason I chose Friedrich Nietzsche and Dorothy Day for my comparative analysis paper. Nietzsche and Day come from massively different perspectives, but I think they both share one key idea; that you shouldn't serve because you feel you have to. You should serve because you want to and because it's the right thing to do.

Friedrich Nietzsche was born in the Saxon province of Röcken in 1844. Throughout his education he excelled in academics, particularly in philosophy and religion. He studied at the University of Bonn upon graduation from preparatory school. After a brief stint in the military, he became chair of classical philosophy at the University of Basel. In 1872 Nietzsche published his first book, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik* (*The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*). He went on to write nine other books, including *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*) in 1892 and *The Will to Power*, which was published by his sister in 1901. In 1889, Nietzsche suffered a mental breakdown when he saw a coachman whipping his horse. After this, his mental health continued to deteriorate until his death in 1900. After his death, Nietzsche's sister gained all the rights to his unpublished literary works and continued editing and publishing them. Unfortunately, she was married to an anti-Semite and she ended up changing many of her brother's ideas to better suit her husband's beliefs, giving Nietzsche a reputation for racism and German nationalism, two things he actively despised in life.

Dorothy Day was born in Brooklyn, New York in the year 1897, though she was raised in Chicago. She studied to become a journalist at the University of Illinois in 1914. While she was there, Day joined the American Socialist Party. In 1916 Day became a journalist and found work with the *New York Call* but resigned a year later to start work at another newspaper, called *The Masses*. A few months later, Day left journalism to start a nurses training program.

Around this time she joined the Catholic Church. This decision came partly out of Day's vocation to service, as she considered the Catholic Church to be the "church of the poor". Another reason for her decision came from psychological problems caused by a recent abortion. The Catholic Church helped her deal with these problems. At the time of her conversion, Day was in a relationship with anarchist Forster Batterhaven, with whom she'd had a daughter with. When Day had their daughter Tamar baptized, she and Forster had their final falling out and their relationship ended.

In 1933, Day established her newspaper, *The Catholic Worker* with the help of Peter Maurin. The newspaper often criticized the economic system, and supported unions and pacifism, even through WWII when pacifism was a rather unpopular stance. Twelve years later, Day established a magazine called *Direct Action* with the help of David Dillinger and Abraham Muste. In the 1950s,

Day campaigned against nuclear weaponry, and in later years against the Vietnam War and in support of civil rights. She'd go on to write over 1,000 articles for *The Catholic Worker* and several books, including *Houses of Hospitality* in 1939, *The Long Loneliness* in 1952, and *On Pilgrimage: The Sixties* in 1972. Dorothy Day died November 29, 1980.

The "why" of service is the key to the difference between Dorothy Day and Friedrich Nietzsche. In Nietzsche's philosophy, he doesn't explicitly focus a lot on serving. However, I really enjoy his philosophy. According to Nietzsche, you should not do something because an authority figure tells you to do it, but because the "something" is part of your Will to Power. The Will to Power is basically a person's will to succeed and rise above others in life. Admittedly, one way to interpret this concept of Will to Power is as more of a focus on the "self" as opposed to "others", but I have found a way to work around this.

A lot of Nietzsche's philosophy deals with the empowerment of the individual versus the crowd. "Do whatever you will" he says. If someone wants to serve, then all the power to them. And by all the power, I mean all the power. Serve like the server you are! Put all your effort into serving! Go for the serving gold! Another part of the Will to Power is serving you. This isn't usually what people think of when talking about serving, but you can't ignore it either. If you spend your whole life helping others and ignoring yourself, then you're in for a bad time.

Day's idea of service is quite different though. She's genuinely concerned for people and wants to do all she can. If someone needed a place to stay, she would invite him or her to her house. If someone needed food, she would make them a meal. She's not looking to propel herself forward in life; she just wants to help out. Being a servant was part of her identity; service was who she was. Even if it was just little things. After all, "we must lay one brick at a time".

Who to serve is probably a bit trickier to figure out. Nietzsche doesn't really have a "who" here. As far as he's concerned, serve whoever you want. It's all on you. You decide and you go for it. Dorothy Day on the other hand, gets a little bit more specific. In her newspaper *The Catholic Worker*, she urges people to help those who need it. The poor, the exploited, all of them. This is great, because it doesn't make a whole lot of sense to help someone who doesn't actually need to be helped.

How to serve is by far the hardest here. Again, Nietzsche doesn't get into specifics and it's all up to you. You have to decide for yourself, and that's okay. He can't tell us how to do everything, something that actually fits into his philosophy. A lot of it is doing things not because someone tells you to do it, but because you genuinely want to.

Dorothy Day gets a bit more specific, but not much. She doesn't actually go out and say how you should help people, but you can deduce how based on her who. Day wants us to help the poor and disadvantaged. How do you do that? Lots of ways; you can donate to charities, work in a soup kitchen, and even get politically active.

But enough about those two, let's talk about me. I actually don't agree with either of them, at least not fully. I just honestly think there's no good reason why we as a species can't get along. Sure, we all think different things, but that's what makes life interesting. Plus, it's a lot more beneficial to us as a species to help each other out.

I do agree with Dorothy Day about who to serve. It just doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me why you wouldn't help people who need help. I said that earlier, but honestly, it just doesn't.

I'll serve people however I can. Actually, I do. I'm not the best at doing things, but I try my hardest. I have my causes and I support them fully. I don't donate money that often because I don't have much to give. But I try to spread the word and rally support. If I'm really passionate about something, I tend to talk about it. A lot. I spend a lot of time on a certain blog website, and often I find hurting people that are on the edge of despair because of the awful actions of other people who send anonymous hate messages. Or even just people who are depressed and need someone to talk to. Whenever I encounter those people, whether in person or online, I do whatever I can to help. I send messages telling them how wonderful they are, even if I don't know them. I lost a dear friend of mine to suicide, and I will do anything I can to prevent another person from taking that final act.

After all of this, I still have a hard time seeing myself as a servant. I probably always will. That's okay, because at least I have a general idea of what to do to serve others.. And awareness is the first thing you need to get something done. After you have a general idea, next you need a belief in yourself. A belief that says, "Okay, I can do this" and gives you the courage to go for it. After that you can worry about the details, but those are what you need in order to get started. So find an idea, gather some self-confidence, and you're on your way.

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The lives and faiths of Abraham Joshua Heschel, Eboo Patel, and Myself

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Abraham Joshua Heschel and Eboo Patel are two very unique men from very different generations, walks of life, and faith traditions; yet they share something in common. They have answered the call: the call of Service, the calling from God. Abraham Heschel's and Eboo Patel's unique stories are both similar and different in many ways, their contributions to interfaith relations and works against injustice have had a profound impact on our society and has greatly helped myself understand my own faith and call to service.

Abraham Joshua Heschel's personal experiences and relationship with God led him to dedicate his life to service. Heschel's service stems from his Jewish faith. Genesis 1:27 says "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them.", Heschel argued that we were not only made in God's image but "We are called to be an image of God... the task of a human being is to represent the divine, to be a reminder of the presence of God." (*Heschel, Brainy Quote*) This "calling" is what drove Heschel to be more than just a Jewish scholar but to be a leader in interfaith relations and fight for justice. Heschel fundamentally believed that every human regardless of race, religion, or creed was made in God's image and deserved the love and compassion that God has shown us. In order to fully love and serve God one must fully love and serve his fellow man. (*Heschel, Brainy Quote*) To him, by being of God's image all humans were connected and that "to be" human means "to be *with*" ones fellow humans in coexistence (*Heschel, Hearing the Call, page 33*). This connection of humanity through coexistence means that in order to achieve fullness in being and life one must be in service to one's fellow man by bearing his burden (*Heschel, Hearing the Call, page 33 & Heschel, Brainy Quote*). While his calling came from his faith, it was his identity as a Polish Hasidic Jew who narrowly escaped the Holocaust which allowed this "calling" to take root. When speaking about his place in history, Heschel stated "My destination was New York, it would have been Auschwitz or Treblinka. I am a brand plucked from the fire, in which my people were burned to death. I am a brand plucked from the fire of an altar of Satan on which millions of human lives were exterminated to evil's greater glory." (*Kaplan*) The horrific evils of the Holocaust, which was a result of the lack of positive interfaith dialogue and relations, along with his faith compelled Heschel to stand up against all injustice and promote coexistence.

Eboo Patel is an American Muslim and interfaith leader who has been working across the United States for over the last decade. If Patel were asked why he served he would say for three reasons: his faith, his love of this country, and because he sees the need for service. Patel frequently cites the Quran and his Muslim Faith, he says that God says "I created you into diverse nations and tribes that you may come to know one another." and that God tells Muhammad that "You were sent to be nothing but a special mercy upon all worlds." For Patel a key part of his faith is service and accepting humanity's diversity. As an Muslim-American Patel has been alarmed by growing Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim sentiment in the US and sees it as a threat to American unity, diversity, and harmony (*Weber*). Patel has stated that a key issue of our time is addressing religious identity issues in young people (*Weber*), many of whom are struggling with their own faith or don't know how to talk with people of other faiths. In his youth Patel had questions about his faith and other religions but lacked the ability to have quality interfaith discussions. His faith along with his own experiences and observations has resulted in Patel's service.

Despite being generations apart Heschel and Patel's reason for serving is very similar. Both men's service comes from their faith and belief in God. Heschel's experience with the horrors of Anti-

Semitism, his deep theological convictions, and belief in God led him to serve in the name of justice and coexistence. Like Heschel, Patel has witnessed negative attitudes and sentiments directed at his own faith, but far less serious than Heschel's experience. This and seeing the need in young people for quality faith dialogue led him to serve in the name of pluralism and cooperation. While Heschel was a Polish Hasidic Jew and Patel an American Muslim they have both answered the same call.

"A religious man is a person who holds God and man in one thought at one time, at all times, who suffers harm done to others, whose greatest passion is compassion, whose greatest strength is love and defiance of despair." (*Heschel, BrainyQuote*) This quote of Heschel shows his view of who he served; it was his faith and service to God which lead Heschel to serve and devote himself to all of humanity. While Heschel has served many people, much of his service was to the oppressed racial minorities and to Christian-Jewish communities in the US. The greatest threat to humanity in Heschel's opinion was racism, which he described as "Maximum Hate for Minimum Reason" (*Heschel, BrainyQuote*). The oppressive policies and hateful prejudices against Blacks and other minorities in the United States, especially in the American South, shared a painful similarity to the Anti-Semitism in Pre-WWII Europe. Heschel's religious beliefs already made him a natural opponent of the injustices going on in the South but this connection added to his passionate support for the Civil Rights Movement. Heschel saw the potential for a "spiritual crisis" as rationalism and doubt began to replace astonishment and faith (*Seltzer*). Not only did Heschel work to rekindle the faiths of Jews and Christians but he wanted to create a positive interfaith dialogue and positive relations between the two communities, something that failed to take place in Europe, and could have helped prevent the Holocaust.

For much of Patel's adult life he has been serving all across the nation. If asked who he serves he would respond that the Quran says that "we were made to be his servant and representative on Earth" and in order to serve and represent God I serve his people, regardless of their faith, race, or background (*Patel, Heavens of Faith, page X*) Patel himself has served many groups including college students, diverse faith communities, and the very poor. As a young adult and former student Patel saw the need for young people to learn about interfaith dialogue and explore their own faith (*Wood*). Promoting interfaith dialogue has helped minority religious groups the greatest as they are the most disadvantaged and have much to gain. His identity as a Muslim, which is a minority religion in the US, has helped him understand how pressures, prejudices, and misconceptions can lead to conflict and division. His early work with the Catholic Workers movement has inspired Patel to include compassion, helping the poor, and a focus on the individual a major part of his service (*LaMonica*).

While being two very different people who have lived very different lives, Heschel and Patel do have similarities in whom they served. Both men saw themselves as servants of God and considered it their duty to serve humanity. Both men helped people struggling with their own faiths. Patel has helped young adults of all faiths and Heschel helped many people of the Christian and Jewish faiths. Heschel served discriminated minority groups in seek of justice, and Patel has served religious communities which have been targeted for their differences.

Abraham Joshua Heschel's service was not his job, it was his life. If asked how he served, Heschel would say by constantly showing love and compassion and by always standing up for justice where he saw injustice. Heschel's most notable service was his contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, he constantly advocated for justice and equality, and marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma where he famously said "I felt as if my legs were praying" (*Heschel, Brainy Quote & Heschel, Solidarity Reciprocity, and Sanctity*). His many books, lectures, and discussions with interfaith

audiences helped address the spiritual crisis that he feared. He intentionally avoided divisive topics, such as the New Testament, when working with Christians and Jews and instead focused on their similarities such as the struggles with Sin and the Old Testament (*Erlewine*). By having positive dialogue with Christians on theological issues he not only was able to help people strengthen their faith, but to better Christian-Jewish relations, and gain the respect of many people. This led to him being invited to the Second Vatican Council, frequently being referenced by Ministers, and being well known in faith circles. All of which allowed him to have even more influence when advocating for justice and coexistence. He used his fame to boldly and constantly speak out against the war in Vietnam. Heschel's diverse service ranged from the famous Civil Rights march in Alabama, to helping people deepen their faith, to helping foster positive Christian-Jewish relations in America, and to being kind and friendly to strangers.

Patel describes his service as helping promote interfaith dialogue, cooperation, and pluralism. In 2002 he founded the Interfaith Youth Core. The Core focuses on providing young adults the tools, support, and training to become leaders of interfaith dialogue (*Weber*). Patel's Organization sets up a respectful environment where people of all faiths can comfortably talk about faith and share personal stories. Patel hopes for his core to become the heart of a larger movement, one that brings people of all faiths together through dialogue, and creates cooperation in service and pluralism (*LaMonica*.) Patel frequently works with other organizations that are related to Islamic studies and Muslim communities in America, including President Obama's Council on Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships. Eboo Patel's service is centered on respect for diverse groups, helping and empowering young people of faith, and working together for the common good. Today, his Interfaith Youth Core has grown from a small organization involving a few dozen people to one that is active on over 150 college campuses across the US and works with tens of thousands of youth (*Weber*).

Positive interfaith dialogue, cooperation, and coexistence were promoted by both Heschel and Patel. Both men stood against injustice; Patel by standing against prejudices facing faith groups and Heschel by promoting civil rights and speaking out against the Vietnam War. Heschel's service was constant whether he was protesting, leading dialogue, or demonstrating human fellowship. Patel's service has been more organized, he started a movement that has significantly grown and he has been promoting pluralism and helping young adults to lead interfaith dialogue. While Patel has focused on pluralism and sharing personal faith stories and differences, Heschel focused on what united people in order to deepen faiths and create positive interfaith relationships. Both Heschel and Patel have centered their lives on service and activism.

Until recently I never really thought about why I serve. To me service was just something I did every once in a while. My family taught me of the importance of charity, and at church and youth group I was encouraged to volunteer. It was simple Sunday School 101 "treat others how you wanted to be treated"; you do it because you're supposed to, right? After studying Heschel and Patel and reflecting on my own faith I've come to a greater understanding of why I serve. Heschel's and Patel's service was rooted in their faith, as mine has been, but I learned from Heschel that being human is more than our physical existence. Being a human is being *with* humanity and living in coexistence. What makes us more than just animals is our deep connections, our emotions, our compassion, our love, and our coexistence. I remember three years ago a teammate of mine named Thomas, who is from West Africa, lost his father to a two month struggle with cancer. Thomas' family not only suffered a great emotional loss but they lost half their income and before they could apply for government assistance Thomas found himself unable to afford lunch. I remember seeing Thomas sitting at the table without anything to eat; it was my human instinct to split my lunch with

him, something I continued to do until he got reduced lunch. I did it because I knew it was the right thing to do and it was my natural instinct. Thomas and I grew close, he told me about his life in Africa, he taught me some phrases from his native language, we became very good friends, and I was able to help comfort him through this very difficult time. By showing Thomas kindness and compassion and listening to his personal story I not only served, I made a connection. I felt more complete, more connected, and more fulfilled. I realize Thomas was not the only person who was hungry that day, I was too; my soul was hungry for connection and for meaning. I serve because it's what my faith teaches, it's how I've been raised, I feel sympathy and compassion, but also because it is a fundamental part of being human and is what we're called to do.

Like Eboo Patel and Abraham Joshua Heschel I serve God. I am just a small part of the creation and God is my master and my creator. In order to serve him I must serve his creation. Heschel famously served American racial minorities along with Christian-Jewish faith communities and Patel has been worked with many diverse faith communities and thousands of young people. Because I am so young and my service has just started, I haven't centered on a specific group. I've realized that those in need of service are many in number and that people in need of service are from all different walks of life with unique backgrounds and stories. A verse that has opened my eyes about service is (Matthew 25:40, NIV) "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'" It tells me that by serving anyone in need, I am serving God.

So here is the final question, how do I serve? Up until now I have tried to be a kind and decent person, I've tried to help people and connect with them, and I've volunteered many hours to help fight world hunger. But I myself am very young and I hope the service that I've done so far will be just a fraction of a percent of my life's total service. When it comes to how I will serve, the possibilities are endless. I've learned from Heschel and our readings from the book "Hearing the Call across Traditions" that my service can be in many different forms, that every word and action counts, no matter how big or small they are. I hope to constantly serve in big ways and small ways just like Heschel did. Patel and my experience at the ACYTI have shown me the importance of Pluralism and hearing people's stories. Both men have shown me the importance of interfaith dialogue, respecting differences and diversity, and how standing against injustice is imperative. I can't say specifically what I will do to serve or what my passion will be, but Heschel and Patel have taught me a lot, they've inspired me, and helped me realize how to serve.

The service of these two men has significantly helped American society in many ways. From the Civil Rights Movement, to cooperation between faith communities, to helping individuals express and strengthen their own faiths. Heschel and Patel's stand for justice, interfaith dialogue, and coexistence has helped heal wounds, deepen faith, and create positive relations between diverse groups. By analyzing their stories and examining why they serve, who they serve, and how they serve, it is clear that Abraham Joshua Heschel and Eboo Patel are two very unique people but their service has many things in common, including that it's rooted in their devotion to God. Examining these men has helped me understand my own faith story better and has inspired me to serve and stand for justice.

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Answering the Call: The Service of Martin Luther King Jr. and the Dalai Lama

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"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works, and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)

We are called by God to reach out and to serve those in need. We are pushed to look past our religious differences and to serve without hesitation. But as we all know, it's not always that easy to let our light shine. Despite the fact that it can be very difficult to live up to this ideal, in recent history there are a few excellent examples of people who have done so. Martin Luther King Jr. was beaten, jailed, and mocked, but that didn't stop him from serving. If we have a role model such as this, why do we sometimes hesitate? Instead of hesitating, we should strive to find joy in serving, strive to become humble in the midst of our serving, and overall to follow in the steps of those who have served throughout their lives. Sometimes this striving for change can be overdone, leading us to turn compassion into pity and humbleness into hubris. Such is the message of the Dalai Lama. Like Martin Luther King, the Dalai Lama offers us a powerful model of service in the face of great hardships. Through the examples of these two men, we can learn that discipline helps us to be humble and compassionate, which in turn makes our service more like Christ's.

WHY DO WE SERVE? - Martin Luther King and the Dalai Lama and why they serve.

"...Make of this old world a new world." - Martin Luther King Jr.

These words were spoken from the lips of a man who served his people in an effort to bring peace and justice. He served not for greater attention for himself, but instead to embrace those who had been tormented for the color of their skin. He served with those for whom society shamed, and he served with those who had a different skin color than himself. Why? For Martin Luther King, service to others was to humble himself, and to become a servant of God. In the book, *Hearing the Call across Traditions*, Martin Luther King speaks of how he would like to be remembered. He states, "Tell them not to mention that I have a Nobel Peace prize; that isn't important. Tell them not to mention that I have three or four hundred other awards; that's not important.... I'd like somebody to mention that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to live his life serving others." (23) I believe this to be a way everyone should be remembered. To be remembered as a humble servant of God, to be remembered as someone who gave their life to serving others. As Martin Luther King wrote in his essay, *The Drum Major Instinct*, he cautions us to watch our "drum major instinct" and to work on being humble. As he explains it, the drum major instinct is the feeling we all have of wanting to be known in the world. Martin Luther King states that this drum major instinct is the "basic drive of human life." (14) Martin Luther King states that we need to control our drum major instinct or else our egos increase to a point where others might start to avoid you. Service is meant to help others, but as we sometimes find, serving others brings about a sense of joy which often makes us feel good. This good feeling can turn into something called compassion. The Dalai Lama's Buddhist tradition is centered on the practice of compassion. In his book, *The Essential Dalai Lama*, he states, "Compassion naturally creates a positive atmosphere, and as a result you feel peaceful and content. Wherever there lives a compassionate person, there is always a pleasant atmosphere." (23) This sort of compassion is based upon having respect for others. This entails feeling a "genuine sense of concern" (22) for those who are suffering. Although compassion is good, the Dalai Lama cautions us to monitor our compassion. In his words, "Any love or compassion which entails looking down

on the other is not genuine compassion.”(22) As he sees it, compassion that leads one to feel richer or better than others is not genuine. As a Buddhist, one way to make sure that your compassion is true is by becoming one with yourself and creating inner strength before giving service to others. In his essay *Compassion*, from the book *Hearing the Call across Traditions*, the Dalai Lama states that we definitely can become compassionate and create for ourselves and the world a positive atmosphere. (86) Having been tortured and exiled himself, the Dalai Lama, through prayer and discipline, grew to be compassionate towards his enemies. He believes that if we all come together as compassionate people and serve, then we can make a better and more compassionate world.

WHOM DO WE SERVE? - Martin Luther King and Dalai Lama on who they serve.

Martin Luther King Jr. is sometimes seen as a man who helped only the people of his same skin color. Granted, Martin Luther King was living during a period of racial injustice, where African Americans were often berated, but many people overlook the fact that MLK not only helped the African Americans but people of all skin colors. Martin Luther King was not driven to be seen as a hero of his race, but instead was driven to walk in Jesus’ footsteps. In his essay, *The Drum Major Instinct*, Martin Luther King writes, ... “I can do my duty as a Christian ought, if I can bring salvation to a world once wrought, if I can spread the message as the master taught, then my living will not be in vain.”(24) As a Christian, he saw the importance of bringing peace and justice to all people. Like Martin Luther King Jr., the Dalai Lama also served those who were suffering. For nine years the Dalai Lama tried resist the oppression of the Chinese government. He tried to negotiate with the Chinese government and urged his followers to avoid any violent uprisings. In 1959, Tibet was taken over by the Chinese military and the Dalai Lama and thousands of others were forced into what would be a long journey of exile. His service was given to many who were suffering, as well as those who weren’t. In *Compassion*, he writes, “Since you can see others suffering, you develop a genuine sense of concern.”(85) With this statement, the Dalai Lama shows he is an open servant, willing to help anyone, no matter his or her race or gender. It is words such as these that can bring peace and justice to the world. With the examples of these two men, who have given their life to serving, it is our duty to pick up where they have left off and continue their service.

HOW DO WE SERVE? - Martin Luther and the Dalai Lama speak on how they serve.

On December 1, 1955, an African American woman refused to relinquish her seat for a white man on a bus. This woman was immediately arrested and thrown into jail. Her arrest sparked outrage in the African American community, which lead Martin Luther King to lead a massive bus boycott. There was something different about the demonstrations and the boycott that Martin Luther King led. No violence was ever shown by the protesters. These people were beaten, attacked by dogs and doused with firefighter hoses, but no one within the leadership of Martin Luther King dared to raise a hand to strike back. They wouldn’t; they were following the example of Jesus who walked nonviolently all the way to the cross. Being nonviolent, Martin Luther King and some of his followers were put in jail. But this didn’t faze the strong group of peaceful fighters. Martin Luther King comments in *The Preacher King*, “Go to jail if necessary, but you never go alone. So I am not sorry that we broke the injunction in Birmingham... I’m happy that in breaking it I have some good company... I have Jesus and Socrates. I have all the early Christians, who refused to bow.”(204). These people wanted to be known and seen as instruments of peace and they were not going to be let down by being in jail. As long as they had each other, they were stronger than any racist. 7,000 miles away, a single man was traveling all over the world, spreading the word of peace and universal responsibility. I believe that if the Dalai Lama was sitting across from us at this moment in time, he might look at us with years of wisdom in his eyes and say, “It’s not who you serve, it’s

how you serve." It is with these words that we can see a man who has spent long hours praying for the world. It is with these words that we can see a man who has spent his whole life perfecting himself, knowing that perfecting oneself would bring more peace and wisdom to this world. It is with this knowledge that we can see a man who has worked hard on keeping his people fighting non-violently. These two men were both non-violent instruments of peace who have sacrificed their lives to giving peace to others.

Jesus preached that we should heal the sick, feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. This teaching has stuck with me ever since I first heard it in Sunday School. Why do I serve? I serve to fulfill my life as a Christian following in Jesus' footsteps. Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry and clothed the naked. He was ridiculed for helping the poor and keeping company with the sinners, but yet he still kept on serving. Like Jesus I strive to serve with my whole heart. For me it is that smile or thank you I get that makes me want to do it again.

Whom do I serve? I try to serve anybody in need. I serve to those who are sick, hungry or sad. Following the Dalai Lama's example, I serve not out of pity but out of compassion. When I was seven years old, I was adopted from Russia. I was taken out of my home due to poverty. Having real experience with suffering, I strive to make sure that my compassion is never over-done and that it is genuine. This compassion leads me to serve those who are less fortunate than I.

How do I serve? I serve with my hands as well as my heart. Helping at homeless shelters, Loaves and Fishes, teaching Sunday School, fundraising for the Heifer Project, and giving food to food shelves. I know that sometimes my actions may look small, but it's a start to helping those who have less than me. Knowing that Martin Luther King Jr.'s actions may have seemed also small, it's amazing to see what can happen when someone doesn't give up. Seeing where his actions led him inspires me to never see my actions as too small or unworthy. I have also served by going on a mission trip with my church to Guatemala where we worked only with our hands. Having no machines there, was labor-intensive work for our group. We filled dirt into bags that would soon become the growing place for a coffee plant. We found the work to be tiring and sometimes slow going, but when we were done and we saw our progress, our spirits were lifted. It is with this service that one realizes the change they could do in the world.

In conclusion, service is one way we can follow in Jesus' footsteps. We should strive to become humble, to become one with ourselves and to moderate our compassion and feelings. It is our privilege to follow the examples of leaders such as Martin Luther King and the Dalai Lama and to keep that service going.

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Why Serve?

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"I sometimes call the twentieth century a century of bloodshed, a century of war. Over this century there have been more conflicts, more bloodshed and more weapons than ever before. Now, on the basis of the experience we have all had this century, and of what we have learned from it, I think we should look to the next century to be one of dialogue." This quote is from *The Essential Dalai Lama: His important Teachings*, and states that in his belief this century will be one of dialogue, replacing the previous one of conflict. I believe this to be true, but would also add on that this century will be of interfaith dialogue specifically, and service to others. Martin Luther King Jr.'s and the Dalai Lama's articles both express their ideas on why to serve. Martin's article on the drum major instinct provides a reason for much of humanity's problems that can be redirected to help serve others and help the world. The Dalai Lama's article on compassion explains what it is and how it can help the world. Although these articles both take different approaches on addressing the need for service and why to serve, both inform me on the importance of service and its position in society.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s reason for service is contributed to the drum major instinct. In his article, MLK (Martin Luther King Jr.) uses a quote from the bible in which James and John ask Jesus, "Grant unto us that we may sit one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand in thy glory." (Mark 10:35) to explain the drum major instinct as the desire to be recognized and to be first. He goes on to explain that the drum major leads to undesirable situations, including debt. Economists explain that a person should not purchase a car over half of his or her income, or a house over double the income, yet people do so in order to be recognized as better than their neighbors. The drum major may also lead to crime as a way to attract attention, or exclusivity in fraternities and social clubs as a way to say one is better than another. All of these are negative effects of the drum major, but MLK goes on to explain that, if harnessed, it can be positive. If a person redirects that desire to be first into a category such as service, then it will be good thing. In my opinion, this is why he served; he wanted to be recognized as the drum major for justice, peace and righteousness (King 24).

Similarly, the Dalai Lama also contributes his reason for service to a human instinct, compassion. In his entry the Dali Lama starts by explaining how humans are very intelligent and that this is both good and bad. This intelligence means that we have more fear as a whole, especially the amount of imagined fear. We fear for the future and what could happen more than any other animals. Our intelligence also allows us to create our own ideas and beliefs and these differences lead to conflict and create an unhappy state of mind. Then, much like MLK, he states how this can be turned positive. If utilized properly, he believes our intelligence can lead to less harm caused upon each other and the planet, thus leading to happier lives. In his analysis and explanation of compassion, he sets the base by stating that every human has an innate sense of "I" and the desire for happiness. This is essential for compassion to exist. He says that compassion is based on having the respect for another and realizing that they have the right to be happy and overcome suffering just as much as you do (85). He goes on to state how he believes compassion and human affection is the dominant force of life (88). His explanation includes that an affectionate environment is needed for proper development as a child, from the womb, to an infant and all the way through childhood. In order to increase happiness and solve problems we need to have dialogue. Compassion and hatred are opposites and only one can be present at a time; compassion increases communication while hatred restricts it. How to remove hatred can often be difficult, but it can be done through the use of logic. In order to eliminate hatred one must take a wider view of the situation and see it from multiple viewpoints. This technique will clarify the situation and make the solution easier to find. Religion

also helps one reduce hatred through its lessons. The gospels teach turning the other cheek, Buddhism believes all life is precious and will create concern for others. Overall, from his article I believe the Dalai Lama's reason for service is rooted in compassion and helping others achieve happiness so that you can as well.

Both Martin Luther King Jr. and the Dalai Lama had very similar ideas on whom to serve, even though they were worded differently. Both believe one should serve everyone they can. MLK says that you should utilize the drum major instinct and strive to be the best in service to others; this would mean serving as many people as possible as much as one can. The Dalai Lama's idea of compassion is recognizing one another's right to pursue happiness and that concern for them would encourage one to serve everyone as well. Then, his ideas on removing hatred and replacing it with compassion would also encourage serving your enemies as well as your friends.

Just like in whom to serve, both Martin Luther King Jr. and the Dalai Lama believe one should serve in whatever way possible. I believe this to be a common belief among many, just like service to anyone possible. Martin Luther King Jr. specifically mentions the attempt to love someone, be right on the war question, feed the hungry, cloth those who are naked, visit those who are in prison, and to love and serve humanity (24). These are just the ones he listed specifically, but I believe his point was that one should serve in any way they can. The same would apply to the Dalai Lama. That he believes one should serve in any way possible.

I serve for a combination of reasons including compassion and the selfish reasons that the Dalai Lama described. My first reason for service is compassion. I pursue happiness in any way I can and I have been fortunate enough to be born in a country with the freedoms and opportunities to do so. I've also been given the chance to go to college, which greatly assists in my pursuit for happiness. I realize that other people have just as much a right to pursue their own happiness, but are often limited by their country, family, health or financial situation. So this is my reason for service. To alleviate any of these restrictions that people face so they can pursue their own goals for happiness. My second reason for service includes many smaller reasons, but they all fall under a selfish category. In a way I believe in Karma. I think that those who perform good actions won't necessarily have good things happen to them, but I do think it will increase their chances and in no way harm them. So I serve others with the hope that one day, if I am in a similar position as them, someone might help me. Another selfish reason I have for serving others that I believe many also possess is the desire to have that good feeling when helping someone in need. In reference to MLK's drum major instinct I wish to be better or in higher standing than my peers. So I serve as in some situations it may elevate my position amongst them, specifically on my resume for college applications. All of these are reasons for my service, the biggest one of them being my compassion for others.

I usually serve those who are close to me, both physically and relationship wise. I serve my friends and family more than anyone else as they are the closest and easiest ones to serve. Anyone I am in contact with frequently I often serve, whether it is at organizations I'm involved in or other social events. The only people I may have served without meeting may be the people that received food packaged by my church group at the food shelf or people who received donations from us that were distributed by the salvation army and other organizations.

I serve in many more ways than the obvious volunteering or community work. Although not usually thought of as services, any little thing like assistance on homework, chores or any task is a service. First of all, the service I do at home includes doing things asked of me, helping my siblings on

homework, helping with electronics and really anything that makes something easier for one of my family members. At school it's much the same. I help people understand the lessons and homework and they do the same for me. Opening doors for people, tutoring, taking trays to the trash, all of these things are little services that are often overlooked and happen without notice. Some of my more obvious services include church activities, like big brother big sister programs, packaging food, and other activities. This summer I also volunteered at the summer solstice festival and look to volunteer at other similar activities throughout the school year through the National Honor Society.

Overall I believe both the ideas on the reason for service being the drum major instinct and compassion, by Martin Luther King Jr. and the Dalai Lama respectively, are correct in their own way. My ideas on service would land somewhere between the two, but closer to the Dali Lama's. I think that desire to be first in service does attribute to the desire to serve, but not nearly as much as compassion.

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Comparing and Contrasting the Dalai Lama and Abraham Joshua Heschel: Two Different Men, Two Different Cultures, and How They Have Inspired Me

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Be the change you want to see in the world. – Gandhi
“...whoever wishes to become great among you must be the servant.”

What comes to your mind when you think of these two individuals: The Dalai Lama and Jewish theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel? Perhaps you haven't heard of these men, but if you have, do the words “Buddhist” or “Jew” come to your mind? You would be right, but that is only a brief description of these two men. Both are revered members of their communities and both are individuals who broke the barriers of their time and are now praised today. But with the many similarities there are just as many differences.

First, let's start with some background on each individual. Rabbi Heschel was born on July 11, 1907ⁱⁱ in Warsaw, Poland to Hasidic Jewish parents. While they survived World War I, his father Moshe Mordechai Heschel was a revered member in the Hasidic Jewish community who did not survive the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1916. It greatly impacted how the family earned money, but they pulled together and found a way to survive. The young Rabbi Heschel never forgot about his father. While in college in 1933 at the University of Berlin, Germany, he wrote a book of Yiddish poems, *Der Shem Hamefeyrosh: Mentsch*, which he dedicated to his father. In the later part of 1938, while renting a room from a Jewish family in Frankfurt, he was arrested and sent back to Poland. Thanks to the help of Julian Morgenstern, Rabbi Heschel left Poland six weeks before the Nazis invaded. He was only able to get one visa to get himself out, and had to leave family members behind. Sadly, this was the last time he would see his mother and sisters alive, and he would never return to Warsaw. From Poland, he came to New York City, NY in 1940, and was a faculty member of the Hebrew Union College. In 1945 he became a Professor of Ethics and Mysticism at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New Yorkⁱⁱⁱ, but he became disenchanted with US students because of their lack of passion and determination compared to some of the students he had taught in Europe. Despite his concerns, he knew his family, which now included a wife and children, was safer in the United States than they would be in war-torn Europe. By 1962 he had written his fifth book called *Torah min HaShamayim* which is considered by many scholars to be the masterwork of his writings. Translated, the title means “Torah from Heaven to the Light of the Generations.” It summarizes various Rabbis in the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrausch about the many natures of the Torah. It summarizes the lives of the Hebrew prophets and looks at their lives in historical context. This examination of one's life in the context of his personal history led him to reflect on the horrors he had survived in World War II Europe, and to reflect on the journey of the African Americans in the civil rights struggles in the US in the 1960s. This led to his marching with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King during the civil rights movement and the march to Selma. “When I marched to Selma my legs were praying,” (Wikipedia, Abraham_Joshua_Heschel, 2012/08/13).

Next is His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama^{iv}. He was born Tenzin Gyatso on July 6, 1935 in a farming community and horse-trading family in the small part of Taktser in outer Tibet^v. But little did he know at the time that when he was two years old, a search party was being sent out to locate the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama. After a long and arduous search, the search party found the house to have features similar that were described in a vision by another monk. He was originally recognized as the 14th Dalai Lama on November 15th, 1950. Since this was during the time of Chinese revolution, his life was drastically changed forever. It got so dangerous for him and

his followers to live in Tibet that they moved to a monastery in India. With the help of CIA Special Activity forces, he crossed into India on March 30, 1959 where he has lived ever since. He is the most well-traveled and widely-known Lama ever. He has served for over fifty years, and has spoken to millions of people, many of whom were inspired by his words. No stranger to technology, he has a Facebook page, he uses Twitter with regular postings every other day^{vi}, and he has a website at DalaiLama.com. “We need an approach to ethics which makes no recourse to religion and can be equally acceptable to those with faith, and those without” (Twitter, 4:28 a.m. CDT, 2012/08/13).

His beliefs have also been formed by the challenges he has faced in his life. He is very passionate about non-violence and the use of religious harmony throughout the world. Because of his steadfast faith he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 for “the struggle of the liberation of Tibet using peaceful resolution” (Wikipedia, “14th Dalai Lama”, 8/13/2012). He didn’t change his views and beliefs on non-violence throughout the struggle. In 2009 in Memphis, TN he spoke at the National Civil Rights Museum. He said, “I call myself a feminist. Isn’t that what you call someone who fights for women’s rights?” (Wikipedia, “14th Dalai Lama”, 8/13/2012).

Now, given their very different upbringings, there are as many similarities between these two men as there are differences. Both men’s studies, in different religions led them to very similar beliefs in some areas.

1. **Who do they serve?** Both men serve populations of millions across the world who face tyranny and oppression. Their personal experiences of oppression and being outcasts have led to their fervent beliefs. Although the Dalai Lama focuses on monks and Buddhists across the world and Abraham Joshua Heschel focused on Jews and African Americans, both men saw oppression in the world and worked to remove it.
2. **Why do they serve?** The personal experiences of the Dalai Lama lead him to serve everyone who is oppressed, and to promote non-violence, religious harmony, and all world religions, especially for the Tibetan people in exile. Abraham Joshua Heschel served to promote changes for a more just world.
3. **How do they serve?** Abraham Joshua Heschel served through scholarly academic work. He always tried to find the best in all people, even when he saw the bad. He believed that words were the most powerful tools, so he used words and actions to work for the change that was needed. Among his actions were marching with Rev. Dr. Martin King, Jr. in Selma, visiting the Pope, and opposing the Vietnam war. The Dalai Lama serves by speaking on behalf of the welfare of the people and monks that follow him, and he promotes religious harmony and understanding among the world’s other religions. He also promotes non-violence in his quest to promote the Tibetan culture for the next generation, going so far as to build schools for Tibetan children who live in exile in India.
4. **Who, how and why do I serve?**
“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ, and stewards of God’s mysteries.” ^{vii} I want to see the change that I can make in other people’s lives. For example, I have walked in the Junior Diabetes Walk-a-Thon for two years with a family I know who is dealing with the disease. I’ve done this the past two years and hope to continue. I serve as a baby sitter and someone my younger cousins can look up to. I want to be there for them and for the children who I babysit and nanny. I served my teachers by studying to be a Special Ed teacher. I want to carry on their important work. I served as a small group confirmation leader at my church. Since I was closer in age to the confirmands, I felt I could relate to them better than older adults. I serve many people, family, friends, neighbors, and I want to

be known by the things I do. Not just my name, not just my hometown, but by the kindness and consideration in my spirit. I know that it is God's grace that saves me, and service what I do to show gratitude. "For by grace you have been saved through, faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast."^{viii}

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