

This I believe: God is Love. I believe that we learn about God when we learn how to love. I believe the work of the Gospel is caring for and loving other people.

The people I have encountered on my journey at BU, classmates and colleagues, students I've counseled, and students I've taught, have all taught me about how to love. I met the love of my life, the Rev. Dr. Jennifer Quigley, at undergrad orientation, now almost seventeen years ago. We have been classmates, colleagues in ministry, co-adventurers, and partners in life. I learn from her and her work. She has taught me that love is about mutual investment and shared commitment. She has taught me that the church is a koinonia, a joint-venture, in the work of the Gospel. We are co-laborers in loving God's kindom into existence.

Working for nearly a dozen university offices, including Marsh Chapel, over the course of five degree programs at BU, I've learned a lot about institutions. After 383 credit hours, three summers of archival research in windowless rooms, and one dissertation on the history of theological education, I believe that institutions and their histories matter so that we can do good, and not harm, through them.

I believe that denominational communities do well to remember that this work of the Gospel, to love one another, is best achieved in community, and I believe we, as individuals, do well to remember John Wesley's three simple rules, "Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God." I believe that the church has too often lost sight of these. Great harm has been done and continues to be done to gay, lesbian, bi, trans, non-binary, and other queer folk but also divorced people and unmarried people, indigenous people, people of color, and Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christian people of faith. I believe Christian communities have an obligation both to repent and speak honestly and openly about failures in living into a Gospel of love. I believe that when harm has been done, the appropriate response is to seek to do good and seek reconciliation. University chaplaincy and my work in interreligious spaces, facilitated by the School of Theology, have taught me that communities of faith can accomplish so much greater good in the world working together than apart.

I believe that the modern American research university, so often built upon the educational foundation of training Christian clergy, does well to remember its roots in cultivating personal character and equipping graduates to care for the needs of the world. I believe a quality professional education, regardless of discipline must "Unite the pair so long disjoined, knowledge and vital piety: learning and holiness combined." I believe that the university must be a place to forge friendships and establish partnerships and its education must prepare graduates, regardless of their religious affiliation, to be co-laborers in caring for the world and the people on it.

We all share in a koinonia of love. This I believe.