

Longing for (a Taiwanese) academy: practical theology as an essentially hospitable and balanced discipline

Steven K. Chen

To cite this article: Steven K. Chen (2024) Longing for (a Taiwanese) academy: practical theology as an essentially hospitable and balanced discipline, *Practical Theology*, 17:4, 388-404, DOI: [10.1080/1756073X.2024.2383027](https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2024.2383027)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2024.2383027>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 07 Aug 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 316




View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Longing for (a Taiwanese) academy: practical theology as an essentially hospitable and balanced discipline

Steven K. Chen 

Wycliffe Hall, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

ABSTRACT

This article argues for two things: the methodology of practical theology and its academic institutions intrinsically embody the concept of hospitality, and the Chinese principle of balance may enhance this understanding. The article begins with a personal reflection on the necessity of a Taiwanese practical theology academy and considers the encouragement received from the Asia Academy of Practical Theology Hong Kong (AAPTHK). It reconsiders the bridge metaphor of practical theology, suggesting a supplementary metaphor drawn from hospitality traditions – the interplay between the roles of host and guest. The article then introduces the Chinese cultural notion of balance to support this new metaphor and avoid some criticisms against intentional hospitality. This notion of balance is then applied as an interpretation tool to understand the dual ‘turns’ in practical theology methodology and the pastoral cycle, demonstrating how various cycle adaptations aim to maintain balance. Ultimately, the discussion culminates in a new vision for a future Taiwanese practical theology academy which is grounded in the principles of balance and hospitality.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 8 November 2023
Accepted 16 July 2024

KEYWORDS

Chinese culture; balance;
pastoral cycle; hospitality;
host and guest; academy

Introduction: the call for a Taiwanese academy of practical theology

My recognition of the necessity for a Taiwanese academy of practical theology emerged during my initial theological studies in Taiwan. I was committed to the church and passionate about doing theological reflection. However, I observed that the challenges faced by the church and theological education were becoming increasingly complex. For example, mega-churches are reluctant to delegate members to seminaries, stemming from a belief that seminaries do not adequately grasp the church’s needs. Moreover, there is a generational divide wherein the younger Christians, through a psychological lens, critique the entrenched Confucian values and patriarchal structures upheld by the elder leaders. Furthermore, the conservative Christian demographic is grappling with their position on same-sex relationships, which is increasingly accepted within higher education institutions, posing a conflict with their personal faith and public expression. The church

CONTACT Steven K. Chen  steven.chen@theology.ox.ac.uk  Wycliffe Hall, The University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

also faces a dilemma on how to navigate its public rhetoric in response to the political strife involving Taiwan and adjacent powers. The complexity requires interdisciplinary collaboration for resolution. This collaboration must integrate both scholars and practitioners, encompassing practical theology and other theological and social science disciplines. If Taiwan were to establish its own association for practical theology, such an association could serve as a platform for various professional organisations and experts from diverse backgrounds to exchange ideas. Ultimately, this would contribute to both the Taiwanese church and theological institutions. In light of this, what kind of vision for practical theology should we hold in anticipation of establishing a Taiwanese academy?

The metaphor of a bridge for practical theology

A bridge is sometimes a metaphor to illustrate practical theology's tendency to connect different areas: ministry and theology, practice and theory, church and society, secular wisdom and Christian tradition, etc. For instance, Doong (2019), a well-known Taiwanese practical theologian, adopts this image to describe the interdisciplinary nature of practical theology. An article I wrote with him and is about to be published is also called 'A Practical Theology for Bridging the Gap.' Besides Doong, this metaphor is also used to refer to practical theology's connection with social science by Forrester (1990, 6–7), and its connection with biblical studies by Hopkins and Koppel (2018). The bridge image is also adopted to describe the practical theology of Pope Francis from a Catholic side (Kelly and Pennington 2020).

The bridge metaphor aptly represents practical theology's interdisciplinary role in bridging gaps between diverse parties. This metaphor highlights relatedness as the core of practical theology. However, it does not explicitly clarify how, as a bridge, its two ends are related. Is it similar to traditional applied theology, where theology plays a normative role over social sciences? Or is it like Tracy's (1996) advocated critical correlation, allowing theology and culture to mutually inform each other? Or perhaps, as van der Ven (1998) suggests with 'intradisciplinarity,' where theology adopts the forms of social sciences, transforming itself into an empirical discipline? The bridge metaphor appears neutral. If used to describe an academy, it informs us of our expectation for a platform where everyone is related to each other. Nevertheless, beyond the bridge metaphor, I anticipate another metaphor with more directional clarity, providing a theologically congruent imagination for those involved in practical theology.

Hospitality and practical theology

I argue that the host–guest metaphor of hospitality can prompt a reevaluation of the nature of practical theology and serve as a compass of its academy. As Swinton and Mowat (2006, 91) suggest, hospitality is inherent to practical theology as the latter facilitates a meeting ground for disparate disciplines and fields. I will begin by discussing my experiences of receiving hospitality.

In 2020, I saw a social media post about a group in Hong Kong planning to set up the Asia Academy of Practical Theology (now AAPTHK). I was thrilled because that is exactly what I had been searching for. An academy like this would be perfect for sparking new

ideas and advancing the field. I reached out to them, introduced myself, and asked if there might be a way for me to get involved. They were not taking members from outside Hong Kong at the time, but they were happy to welcome me as an 'international affiliate,' now known as an 'affiliate fellow.'¹ The way AAPTHK welcomed me reminds me of the kind of hospitality God shows. It is like in the creation story, where God made the world from nothing and invited us into God's garden, giving us food in a gesture of hospitality. We came from nothing but love. We are receivers long before we can act on our own. AAPTHK did not just welcome me. They inspired me and a friend in Taiwan, another international affiliate and a theology teacher, to think about starting our own Taiwanese academy. Their president, Prof Simon Shui-Man KWAN, and some other members took the time to exchange emails and meet with us online. I was touched by their humility and enthusiasm. They went beyond just welcoming me but reached out to support our initiative. This experience, where I was a guest receiving hospitality and my subjectivity was encouraged, led me to start thinking about the academy through the lens of hospitality. Both the International Academy of Practical Theology (IAPT) and the British and Irish Association for Practical Theology (BIAPT) have hospitality at their root. IAPT started with a dinner at Richard Osmer's house at Princeton Seminary in 1991. BIAPT began with a group from different universities meeting in the 1960s, starting in Manchester and then turning into an annual meeting series (Rogers and Slee 2020, 3).

My friend and I discussed the potential future of a practical theology academy in Taiwan, envisioning its form and function. We formed a group of people interested in practical theology. It included full-time ministers and students. Some were keen on shaping theological education, while others were content with pastoral work. Our goal was to delve into the various methodologies of practical theology. We met monthly on Google Meet, with a set reading to discuss each time. These meetings turned out to be very rewarding. With members from both church and academic backgrounds, we witnessed the mutual enrichment of ministerial and academic perspectives. Admittedly, there was tension – each side focuses on different things, and sometimes we find it hard to listen to topics that seem uninteresting or unfamiliar. Lyall and Ballard (2020) have written about how BIAPT faced similar challenges in blending the voices of ministers and scholars. But it is precisely this tension that allows us to practice hospitality and learn from each other. Practical theology, by nature, is a discipline of welcoming engagement. We reflect theologically with systematic theology, we understand context with social science, and we gain practical insights from ministry work. Although I initiated the group myself, throughout the process, I felt that I gained a lot from the other group members.

The interchange between the host and the guest

A key concept of the discussion of hospitality is that hospitality revolves around the interplay between the host and the guest. We assume the role of hosts, offering our resources to the guests; concurrently, as we receive from them, the roles may reverse, making us guests in our own right. The Bible vividly depicts this reciprocal exchange through various narratives. In the Old Testament, Abraham and Lot each received angels; Abraham was blessed with the promise of his son Isaac, while Lot and his family were spared from divine judgment. In the New Testament, the story of Zacchaeus

demonstrates transformation through hospitality: by welcoming Jesus, Zacchaeus himself was changed and received the assurance of salvation. This interplay highlights the often-indistinct boundaries between hosting and being hosted. The interchange of roles between host and guest further enriches the metaphor of the bridge, explaining that in the practice of theology, the encounter between different sides will bring forth the exchange of gifts from one another.

This insight is beneficial to imagining an academy in this age. In an era marked by specialisation, where disciplines fortify their ‘silos’ (Jacobs 2013, 13–26), theological education risks becoming increasingly disconnected from church and society (McLemore 2001). The interdisciplinary essence of practical theology compels a collaborative approach to comprehending reality in a holistic manner. We cannot all get multiple PhDs or do extensive fieldwork, which is why, as Helen Cameron and her colleagues (2010) suggest, teamwork is essential. However, without hospitality, our gatherings could become contentious, with personal ambitions turning collaborative spaces into war zones – a scenario all too common in higher education. What sets a Christian academy apart may be hospitality, a trait Pohl (1999) sees as a hallmark of the Christian tradition. It is a place to welcome the other, to live with tension, to receive from the other, and to grow from this process. The hospitable nature of practical theology is what can make our academy a welcoming environment.

Addressing the critique of indebtedness

The interchange between host and guest addresses the critique of excessive power held by benefactors. It is now widely agreed that generosity is a virtue and that we should share what we have with others, a notion frequently mentioned in discussions on hospitality. Andrew E. Arterbury (2005, 132) and Barreto (2018, 178–182) note that biblical hospitality involves welcoming those in need with an open heart. This tradition of hospitality has its roots in nomadic cultures. In a place without a city to expect and the invention of inns had not yet come, the travellers relied on others to keep their journey, even to survive. This culture of *Karam* (كرم, كَرَم) sets the stage for New Testament hospitality, where Jesus welcomed everyone with open arms. However, despite our willingness to be open to others, the question remains whether we are genuinely extending hospitality. In extending Emmanuel Levinas’s utilisation of the concept of hospitality as the foundation for human identity, Jacques Derrida constructed a set of ethical principles based on hospitality (Derrida 1999; Levinas 1991). Derrida questions the very possibility of hospitality, arguing that hospitality is bound by the logic of indebtedness. According to Derrida (2000), the act of giving places an obligation upon the recipient to reciprocate, inherently creating a power imbalance between host and guest. When one gives to others, others are obligated to pay back. He differentiates between the ‘invited guest,’ who is entangled in the conditional hospitality of reciprocity and the economic exchange, and the ‘visitor,’ who arrives unexpectedly, compelling the host towards an absolute hospitality that breaks free from this asymmetry. Only the visitor frees the host. The conundrum thus arises: if Derrida’s perspective holds true, then there can be no intentional hospitality. Consequently, every call for papers becomes an implicit summons into indebtedness, converting the academy into a domain of dominance. Should we establish our academy, the challenge will be to circumvent this critique. How can we value hospitality

while ensuring that we do not become benefactors to others? This critique indeed demands significant attention within the Asian context. Kwan (2022) criticises the Western-centric approach to pastoral ministry, arguing that discussions of hospitality often emphasise the role of the host, leading to a power hierarchy. He contends that in regions where Christians are a minority, such as East Asia, discussions of pastoral care should position the chaplain more as a guest than as a host.

Building on Derrida's critique, Lees-Smith (2021) identifies three stages of movements in the local church's practice of hospitality. Initially, the church acts as a host, using its premises to hold events and inviting guests to participate. The second stage, as Derrida mentions, involves encountering the unexpected visitor, presenting an opportunity for more genuine hospitality. The final stage involves clergy stepping out of the church and into community spaces like cafes, taking on the guest role. Lees-Smith argues that this last stage is ideal, where the church should transition from host to guest, offering true hospitality at the margins. However, Lees-Smith's distinction between host and guest heavily depends on physical location and overlooks the potential power imbalances that might still exist, even if clergy visit cafes. For instance, due to their respected status in the community, the clergy may still engage in a sort of host role with the cafe owners. Willingness to be a guest is a profound act of humility, but the challenge lies in never being able to ensure that one can intentionally assume the role of a guest. Moreover, it is undeniable that caregivers sometimes need to take the host role within pastoral care relationships, which aligns with the faith tradition and effectively benefits the recipients (Youngblood 2023). After all, there are times when people indeed wish to be hosted. Youngblood suggests that valuing the interchange between the roles of host and guest is essential for caregivers to balance humility and assertiveness. Therefore, I propose that a self-reflective approach that appreciates the critiques of Derrida and Kwan should involve examining whether one's own beliefs and awareness are transformed by the encounter with the guest when acting as a host. In this context, I introduce the concept of balance from Chinese culture, which I believe assists in reading hospitality and practical theology. This understanding may further inspire the imagination concerning an academy.

The concept of balance from ancient Chinese culture

I propose that we need a perspective on hospitality which considers the simultaneous action of 'giving' and 'receiving,' ensuring that the interplay between host and guest occurs concurrently within the discourse. In the ensuing paragraphs, I draw from the Chinese cultural emphasis on balance to propose that true hospitality involves an invitation to mutual equilibrium, thereby negating any notion of debt. This balanced approach to understanding hospitality offers a lens through which to interpret the methodologies of practical theology and the operations of its scholarly associations.

One characteristic of traditional Chinese culture is its emphasis on harmony and unity. These two elements are not achieved by eliminating differences but by pursuing a balance and inclusiveness between different sides (Guo 2006). For instance, in interpersonal relationships, Tseng (2002) examines the traditional Chinese management style, pointing out that a key principle is to take both into account rather than choosing between two opposing things or people with different positions. This principle emphasises finding a 'reasonable balance point.' Regarding views on nature, Geng (2011) cites the *I Ching*,

indicating that the traditional Chinese cosmological view recognises celestial and natural laws within various phenomena, thus maintaining constancy within change – a perspective that sees balance in everything, including natural disasters. As for the relationship between human and nature, Wu (2018) highlights that traditional Chinese philosophy values harmony between these two and the dynamic equilibrium within ecosystems, forming a balanced relationship with the environment. Concerning culinary culture, Wong (1996) notes that harmony is the focus of Chinese cuisine: complete flavours, diverse cooking methods, full-color spectrum, and comprehensive nutritional values. And the renowned modern Chinese writer Lin Yu-Tang, in *The Importance of Living* (1998), regards a balanced life as the ideal lifestyle, believing that Chinese people value finding an orderly lifestyle between two extremes. In summary, in the traditional Chinese understanding of balance, opposing units are not antagonistic but interdependent.

This interdependence manifests a philosophy wherein diverse conditions counterbalance and collectively foster unity. The root of the concept of balance can be traced through Confucianism and Daoism, and found in the shamanistic traditions of ancient China (Li 2018, 49). The shamanistic rituals necessitated maintaining ‘proper measure’ (*do*, 度) to facilitate communication with the spiritual realm, embodying moderation and the avoidance of extremes in all things. *Do* means ‘going too far is similar to not going far enough’ or ‘adding even one degree is too much, and reducing one degree is too little’ (p.52). This ethos of moderation extended to military strategy, governance, and personal virtue, underpinning the pre-modern Chinese cosmological view of a harmonious universe (Henderson 2010, 181). As humans are an integral part of nature, living in harmony with the environment is essential (Kubin 2010). The Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi (莊子) articulated this sentiment with the statement, ‘All things and I are one’ (萬物與我原為一), advocating for existence in balance with the natural world. Bao and Liu (2013) point out that a major goal of Qigong (氣功), a Daoist practice, is to pursue ‘bodily balance’ at the individual level, stability at the social level, and harmony in the relationship between humans and nature. As the *Tai-Chi* symbol, also rooted in Daoist philosophy, exemplifies this cultural ethos. It represents the dynamic equilibrium and harmonised unity of opposites – a conceptual framework that interlaces existence, cognition, and action. This perspective always considers the complementarity of elements: in the presence of *yin*, one should seek *yang*, and vice versa.

Typically, when Chinese authors adopt the concept of balance across various fields, they do not specifically define it but rather use it based on their everyday understanding of the term. However, some still explain it from an epistemological perspective. Robin Wu, in discussing Yin and Yang as a Chinese thinking habit, points out that it reflects a ‘thinking paradigm’ that seeks the ‘non-present or unseen’ and fosters dynamic equilibrium (Wang 2012, 20). From the Confucian perspective, Shen (2017) believes that Confucian thought inherently contains a dynamic balance of introspection and extrapolation. The former involves self-reflection and inward exploration, while the latter involves reaching out to others, moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar and the different.

Two turns in the epistemology of the new practical theology

So, how does the Chinese notion of balance help us better understand what is practical theology as a hospitable discipline? From a balance perspective, there are at least two ‘turns’ in the epistemology of the so-called new practical theology, and each is a pursuit of balance.

The turn to practice

The first is ‘turn to practice,’ which makes theology practical. It renders theology as a discipline rooted in and oriented towards practical matters. Hence, the field is termed ‘practical theology.’ Historically, in Western thought, theology was regarded as an enterprise of intellectual speculation rather than as a repository of practical wisdom. Forrester (1990) mentions that the prevailing perception positions theology as the least pragmatic among contemporary academic disciplines, suggesting that anything could be considered more practical than theological study. The term practical theology could be seen as an oxymoron. However, contemporary practical theologians no longer view the movement from theory to practice as a unidirectional trajectory. There is a transatlantic consensus among them that theoretical and practical dimensions are mutually inclusive (Cahalan and Mikoski 2014, 13). Reflective practice is increasingly acknowledged as a well-spring for theological insight (Tracy 1981). Forrester (1990) contends that practical theology is not applied theology, a term which insinuates that practical theologians are merely implementing the findings supplied by biblical and systematic theology. It is a bidirectional process where practice can also be the progenitor of theory. For example, Fiddes (2000) states that the early Church shaped its theology, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, through its own experiences of encountering God. Meanwhile, Graham (2002) explores practical theology from a phenomenological perspective.²

This shift toward practice serves as a balancing power to mitigate the inclination towards an abstract, context-detached theorisation – a legacy of Enlightenment thought that often dichotomises cognition and action, substance and form, intellect and embodiment, and knowledge and experience (Tracy 1998, 235). Such binary thinking culminates in a deleterious rift between academic theology and ecclesial practice, with the former perceived as cerebral and the latter as engaged in real-world action. The ‘turn to practice’ critically addresses this division, advocating for a more integrated approach that acknowledges the interplay between reflective thought and tangible action. This movement seeks to heal the detrimental divide by reaffirming the relevance of theological inquiry to ecclesiastical and societal praxis. In short, now we consider theology practical. We believe that our practice and experience are sources of theology.

The turn to theology

The second is ‘turn to theology,’ which makes practice theological. Proponents of practical theology, like Root and Dean’s (2011) exploration of youth ministry, argue for a theological underpinning in understanding practical domains. They suggest that the phenomenon of adolescence can be interpreted not only through the lens of developmental psychology but also through existential theology, thus forming a theological anthropology applicable to youth ministry. This perspective shapes our conception of adolescence with theological insights, prompting youth workers to engage in their roles with theological responsiveness. Likewise, the Theological Action Research project (TAR) in the UK posits that all existing practices in a congregation can be seen as bearers of a certain kind of theology, suggesting that practice is intrinsically imbued with theology (Cameron et al. 2010; Watkins 2020). The presence of theology in practice challenges the notion of neutral, value-free actions, asking whether practices should be theological

or merely influenced by other values. This turn also balances another extreme case, radical pragmatism, where the underlying values within practical actions are often ignored, potentially leading to adverse outcomes. For instance, the church growth movement prioritises numerical expansion and often misses a robust ecclesiological foundation. Such uncritical adoption of management principles can inadvertently align the church with consumer capitalist ideologies. Similarly, in youth ministry, a lack of theological understanding of adolescents' identities and needs may lead to a superficial engagement with trends. Such an approach risks youth ministry becoming an endless cycle of chasing contemporary relevance, only to replace aging leaders with younger ones. Radical pragmatism is a kind of contextual determinism, suggesting that we are just the products of our context. However, the 'turn to theology' offers a critical counterpoint to this trend, proposing that theological reflection can bring renewed perspective to our current practices and understandings.

Practical theology as a balanced theology

Viewing the method of theology through the concept of balance allows us to consider the various opposing concepts within theological thought. When we consider both the 'turn to practice' and 'turn to theology' in practical theology, we understand why Forrester says the mission of theologians is not to 'reverse the classical priorities' but to 'transcend the duality' – knowing that 'understanding and doing, reason and emotion, loving and knowledge are integrally related and interdependent' (1990, 6). This attitude of 'both-and' is what the concept of balance in Chinese culture looks for. The concept of balance has been used in the dialogue between Chinese culture and the Christian faith. Chan (2024) points out that Chinese culture holds a balanced view of divinity and humanity, thus avoiding the dichotomy often seen in the West between the natural and supernatural, or the opposition between God and humanity. Kwan (2020) also uses the indivisibility of the 'heavenly Dao' and the 'human Dao' in traditional Chinese thought to suggest that Chinese culture can contribute to Western practical theology in terms of methodology, enabling it to encompass both universal implications and the practical dimensions of everyday life.

The appearance of the two turns captures the need for balance in the methodology of practical theology. Applying the concept of 'seeking the absent' or 'maintaining balance' to the field of practical theology facilitates comprehension of the dynamics within the 'turn to practice' and 'turn to theology.' When theological epistemology becomes excessively aligned with abstract theorisation, a 'turn to practice' is necessary. Conversely, when an extreme form of pragmatism dominates ministerial discourse, a 'turn to theology' becomes imperative. The ethos of balance inherent in Chinese philosophy perceives all entities as existing in a state of tension that must be equilibrated. Admittedly, an overemphasis on turning to either practice or theology risks creating a new form of imbalance. Therefore, both turns are advocated concurrently, and all practical theology endeavours necessitate a future effort to balance themselves.

To pursue balance requires dialogues. In their editorial work on practical theology, Woodward and Pattison (2000, pp. 15–16) characterise the field as inherently dialectical, highlighting eight points of tension that necessitate critical engagement. These include the interplay between theory and practice, the dialogue between religious traditions

and contemporary contexts, the reconciliation of particular situations with universal principles, and the negotiation between descriptive and prescriptive approaches, as well as the relationship between religious communities and the broader society. The intrinsic interdisciplinarity of practical theology encourages integrating human sciences to complement theological inquiry (McKitterick 2016, 10). Therefore, unsurprisingly, Pattison (2020) posits that the essence of practical theology lies in conversation, implying that true discourse facilitates a balance of diverse perspectives, provided all voices are given equal opportunity to contribute.

Looking at hospitality through lens of balance

An understanding of balance aids in our grasp of the interplay between the roles of host and guest within the concept of hospitality. Youngblood (2023) highlights that in pastoral care, the dynamic role shift from guest to host can facilitate a balance between humility and assertiveness, both of which are necessary for a chaplain depending on the situation. Contrasting with Lee-Smith's argument, which was made in response to Derrida's critique, that Christians should continually move towards a guest identity, Youngblood (2019) opposes the idea that caregivers should constrain their religious commitments when interacting with recipients or merely adopt a secular language from a third party. The former approach risks erasing the caregiver's subjectivity, while the latter negates the religious beliefs of both sides. Youngblood maintains that hospitality must be interpretative and transformative; by engaging with others with a focus on hospitality, one can balance the tension in interreligious work without forgetting the otherness of the others.

Viewing hospitality through the lens of balance underscores its transformative nature. In the interaction, the host is invariably transformed, embodying a balanced process. Moyaert (2011, 236) draws on Paul Ricoeur's understanding of linguistic hospitality, pointing out that translators navigate the gap between the familiar and the foreign, seeking a balance between continuity and discontinuity. Ricoeur (2006, 10) underscores the delicate balance in translation, which involves both the joy of immersing oneself in another's language and the pleasure of making foreign expressions comprehensible within one's own linguistic framework. He emphasises that translation is not merely a linguistic conversion but an intercultural negotiation that respects the original while adapting to the target audience. Ultimately, it is not conformity that prevails, as the translator engaging in linguistic hospitality is themselves transformed by the foreign language. Indeed, Moyaert (2011) frequently discusses hospitality in terms of balance throughout her book, whether in terms of openness and self-identity or unity and diversity. I propose we retain this philosophy of balance, as such a stance fosters a comprehensive understanding of hospitality. The simultaneous interplay between being a host and being a guest exemplifies the balanced position one maintains in any interpersonal encounter. What emerges on the surface is harmony, with neither the host nor the guest being overshadowed by the other.

Balancing the pastoral cycle

The methodology of practical theology, as I have demonstrated, fundamentally embodies the spirit of hospitality. And this essence of hospitality is best understood through the

concept of balance. I now illustrate that a theological reflection method employed within practical theology is similarly committed to fostering balance.

The pastoral cycle/circle is widely recognised in East Asia. In Taiwan, it is almost the one and only practical theology method people know due to Doong's indigenous work (Doong 2019). In Hong Kong, both Green's (2010) and Ballard and Pritchard's (2006) practical theology works have been translated into Chinese. I try to understand this method through the concept of balance or 'seeking the missing part.' I will start with a brief introduction to this method.

The pastoral cycle is rooted in the adaptation of Catholic social teaching by Joseph Cardijn (Wijsen, Henriot, and Mejia 2005, 10) and nurtured into a four-stage cycle by liberation theology (Boff and Boff 1987; Segundo 1976), it then finds variations among authors from both Catholic (Holland and Henriot 1983; Killen and Beer 1994) and Protestant (Green 2010; McKitterick 2016; Osmer 2008; Swinton and Mowat 2006) writers. The pastoral cycle focuses on doctrine, context, and practice in their respective stages. It usually starts with stage one, the identification of a problem in current practice. Stage two then explores the societal factors which help shape the status quo in the context. One turns to doctrinal tradition to find normative insights in stage three, and seeks to establish new practices in stage four. It provides a platform for dialogue between Christian doctrine, lived context, and practice within that context.

However, this method is under several critiques. In general, people tend to consider the first two stages as devoid of religious significance, ignoring the fact that religious beliefs may also help shape practice in context and thus need to be articulated (Hug 2005). Although more than one author emphasises that the whole process is theological (Holland and Henriot 1983, 13; Swinton and Mowat 2006, 96; Wijsen, Henriot, and Mejia 2005), the doctrine usually plays the role of saviour (in stage three) who addresses a problematic situation as identified by social science (in stages one and two) despite the fact that theology can be used to identify the problems or describe the world, and secular science can also be used to solve some problems. Here, an imbalance happens between theological stage three and the other stages.

It seems that when the pastoral cycle divides theological reflection into stages and gives differently weighted attention to practice, context, or doctrine in each stage, it faces several problems when one treats the subject matter in each stage individually, because the others are missing at that thinking moment.

A second critique is the subjectivity of stage one. The pastoral cycle values the authenticity of experiencing the world, so it starts with experience and postpones contextual exploration in stage two. In stage one, just name the feeling and one's experience. This gives us a sense of being value-free in our experience. What is missing is an admission that how we perceive or sense is guided by what kind of people we are and what kind of value we hold (Hug 2005, 201–203). So, the following so-called 'thick description' based on this experience is also guided in a certain direction.

Another critique regarding stage two is that although we claim the objectivity of using social science, we are directed by our theological interest (Cahalan and Nieman 2008). Why we explore in this direction rather than that? The selected secular disciplines also betray our limitations and background (McKitterick 2016, 19). Why use psychology rather than sociology, or anthropology instead of management studies? Pattison (2007, 254–258) says geography is crucially important for exploring, while few practical

theologians use it because few have a background in it. What is missing here is a complementary voice. We cannot do what we do not know while admitting that to grasp the reality, we need all of them.

Lastly, directly proceeding from the normative stage three to the pragmatic stage four raises the suspicion of being applied theology (Ward 2017, 102). The pastoral cycle, thus, would find it difficult to contribute to doctrinal discussion, since doctrine remains an immovable truth. What is missing here is a reconsideration of the doctrine which is adopted in stage three before we end the reflection cycle.

There are at least five approaches to structure the pastoral cycle. My intention is neither to solve the problems mentioned above nor to associate these types with specific problems. Furthermore, I do not claim that they are mutually exclusive. What I am interested in is understanding these endeavours through the concept of balance.

I refer to the first approach, which addresses certain critiques, as *intentional dialogue*. All Emmanuel Lartey, Thomas Groome, Mark Lau Branson, and Juan Martinez advocate for a five-stage pastoral cycle to foster enhanced dialogue between contextual and doctrinal elements. Lartey (1996) introduces a phase titled 'situational analysis of theology' subsequent to the traditional third stage, allowing the theology that has just been contextualised to be subject to analysis. Groome (1998) employs a similar stage for 'dialectical hermeneutics,' facilitating a dialogue between the reflective practice and the insights from faith traditions. Branson and Martinez (2011), meanwhile, utilise the additional stage following the traditional third to attentively engage with the congregation's narrative, thereby discerning and participating in God's activity. Consequently, these dialogues contribute to a more balanced interplay between contextual understanding and doctrinal insight.

The second type is termed *flexible sequence*. Swinton and Mowat (2006, 80–81) adapt Pattison's method of mutual critical correlation to enhance the pastoral cycle, particularly in its engagement with social sciences. They propose that the progression through stages one to four need not be linear; instead, it may proceed in a non-linear fashion, allowing for movement back and forth between the stages. Killen and Beer (1994) posit that the inception of theological reflection does not necessarily have to commence with experience. They elucidate various starting points for reflection, such as life situations, religious traditions, cultural contexts, texts, specific topics, personal beliefs, and, indeed, religious experience. Thus, a balance that respects the structure of the pastoral cycle while asserting the need for adaptability is claimed.

I call the third approach *frugal discernment*. It is discernment because it meticulously engages with the intricacies of doctrinal reflection. It is frugal because it carries out this discernment without adding an extra stage to the pastoral cycle. McKitterick (2016) highlights the concept of a 'kairos moment' – a Spirit-informed instance that facilitates the transition from the descriptive stage two to the imperative stage three, emphasising a temporal moment rather than a procedural stage. Green (2010) advocates for a mini cycle within stage three to critically evaluate the theological resources in use. Both approaches are united in their intentional search for the often-missing and blurred components of doctrinal reflection: one seeks the active discernment through the Holy Spirit, while the other searches for unutilised theological perspectives that lie in abeyance.

The fourth type, *enrichment of context*, advances pastoral theology through heightened awareness. Leach (2007) proposes a stage called 'attention to my own voice,'

following the traditional second stage that surveys broader contexts, which she terms 'attention to the wider issues.' This stage acknowledges the researcher's subjectivity and deliberately includes the researcher's perspective in the reflection process. Consequently, the contextual examination becomes more comprehensive, encompassing not just external factors but also the researcher's responsive interpretation. In parallel, McKitterick (2016) suggests employing Theological Action Research in the second stage to discern the inherent theology within the context, which may otherwise implicitly influence the description. Hence, a dual awareness of the researcher's perspective and theological nuance is incorporated, aspiring to a more balanced depiction of reality that integrates social science with the researcher's or theology's articulation.

The final variation is the *theologisation of method*. Osmer (2008) articulates theological meaning in four tasks by drawing parallels with the work and role of Christ: priestly listening, sagely wisdom, prophetic discernment, and servant leadership. While not the first to propose a theological dimension to method, Osmer distinctively assigns explicit theological names to each phase. In the Chinese context, Doong (2019) echoes Osmer's approach, integrating Anderson's (2001) view of practical theology as oriented towards God's eschatological purpose. Similarly, Branson and Martinez (2011) insists that each stage of the process requires discernment of God's activity within the community, suggesting that practical theological reflection is not an isolated task but a communal one, involving both congregational members and the Holy Spirit. This approach acts as a counterbalance, addressing the longstanding critique of the pastoral cycle's perceived Marxist tendencies by reaffirming its inherent theological framework. Theological reflection is thus characterised not merely by its theological concern but by its structured theological approach.

These five approaches are not to be understood as mutually exclusive; indeed, an individual scholar's work may often intersect with multiple categories. The observation I make here is that these scholarly endeavours represent a concerted effort to establish a balanced relationship between divergent aspects of theological inquiry. This quest for balance is less about relinquishing existing perspectives and more about complementing them by integrating previously neglected components. Thus, the ideal of balance envisaged here is one that seeks to augment and enrich all contributory elements, fostering a more comprehensive and nuanced engagement within the discipline. For those who engage in practical theological reflection, we can be mentally prepared that we will be balanced and transformed.

Conclusion: longing for a hospitable and balanced Taiwanese academy

Reflecting on my initial struggles and observations of the deficiencies within Taiwanese Christianity, I now employ the valued Chinese principle of balance, in conjunction with the hospitable nature of practical theology, to gain a deeper understanding. What I perceived was an imbalance due to various lacks: the absence of practitioners' perspectives in theological education, a deficit of theological reflection within the church community, a theoretical shortfall in practical theology, and a practical gap in other theological areas. Notably, Taiwan's lack of a practical theology academy also stands out. In addressing these deficiencies, practical theology can serve as a bridge between various parties,

fostering connections. However, this discipline is not merely a bridge. As a discipline characterised by hospitality, it possesses its agency and is not just an inert platform. Practical theology, with its methodology and association, is willing to initiate the exchange of gifts. Nevertheless, as a hospitable profession, practical theology is not immune to Derrida's critique of indebtedness. Hence, it must recognise that the interplay between host and guest in the tradition of hospitality must always occur simultaneously to prevent each academic endeavour from resulting in greater imbalance.

In this article, I have revisited my contemplations on a Taiwanese practical theology association and, through the concept of balance derived from Chinese culture, enhanced our comprehension of hospitality as the essence of practical theology. Discussing practical theology's methodology of 'two turns' using the concept of balance and exemplifying one of its methods through the pastoral cycle, I have demonstrated that practical theology is continually engaged in hospitable searches for missing elements to achieve a harmonious enrichment of its internal components.

If we return to the earlier discussion in this article on associations, what insights can 'balanced hospitality' provide us regarding the future formation and functioning of such an indigenous association? Individually, as scholars or practitioners, we must be conscious of the dual role we play within associations: as contributors who present our work and as learners who glean from others. We are contributors; we offer presentations and written articles. We are also learners; we assimilate feedback from our presentations and gain insights from attending others. We are in a constant state of exchange within the intellectual community. In the context of an association – should Taiwan one day establish its own practical theology academy – we proactively seek and engage with unfamiliar people and fields. With every call for papers or related activity, there is an acknowledgement that our invitation to potential contributors is also an opportunity for our enrichment. We are cognisant of the academic reality where scholars require exposure and publication records. This reality often creates an asymmetry between the academy and individual members. Nevertheless, maintaining a spirit of hospitality, we do not exploit this imbalance to place others in our debt but approach with humility, continuing to welcome contributors to share their gifts and help balance our perspectives on many subjects.

It is commonly believed that practical theology in Asia lags behind that of Europe and America. However, Kwan (2020) points out that the development of practical theology in the Chinese-speaking world is not late; in fact, Chinese culture has always valued pragmatism. Therefore, he believes that practical theology in the Chinese context should be understood from a cross-cultural perspective. Consequently, Eastern and Western practical theology can act as hosts and guests to each other, exchanging gifts. As someone from Asia without a doctoral degree, I feel welcomed by the fact that my article was published in *Practical Theology* in 2023 and that I was able to present at the BIAPT 2023 conference. The feedback I received at the conference showed me how BIAPT exemplifies the concrete realisation of the spirit of hospitality. People welcome me, coming from afar, and equally keen to learn from me. Should the occasion arise back in Asia, if one day I am to host students or scholars from other regions, as a practical theology thinker from Asia, I am also eager to contribute my knowledge to the West, and I am equally willing to be balanced and transformed.

Notes

1. That's how I became the proud holder of member number 001.
2. Graham (2013) also believes that practical theology is a form of action research, as both recognise the value embedded in practice, both consider that human practice generates knowledge, and both emphasise the transformation of the external world and the researcher during the research process.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Steven K. Chen was a full-time minister in Taiwan and recently completed his MTh in applied theology at the University of Oxford, graduating with distinction. He will begin his PhD in systematic theology at the University of Toronto in September 2024.

ORCID

Steven K. Chen  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0571-1536>

References

- Anderson, Ray. S. 2001. *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Arterbury, Andrew. E. 2005. *Entertaining Angels: Early Christian Hospitality in its Mediterranean Setting*. Sheffield: Phoenix.
- Ballard, Paul. H., and John. Pritchard. 2006. *Practical Theology in Action*. London: SPCK.
- Bao, Hai-Yan [鮑海燕], and Pin Liu [劉平]. 2013. “「天人合一」還是「天人分離」—道教氣功商榷 [Heaven-Human Unity or Heaven-Human Separation: Discussing Daoist Qigong].” *宗教哲學 [Journal of Religious Philosophy]* 64:49–60. [https://doi.org/10.6309/JORP.201306_\(64\).0005](https://doi.org/10.6309/JORP.201306_(64).0005).
- Barreto, Eric D. 2018. “A Gospel on the Move: Practice, Proclamation, and Place in Luke-Acts.” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 72 (2): 175–187. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020964317749544>.
- Boff, Leonardo, and Clodovis Boff. 1987. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Branson, Mark Lau, and Juan Francisco Martinez. 2011. *Churches, Cultures and Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.
- Cahalan, Kathleen A., and Gordon S. Mikoski. 2014. *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cahalan, Kathleen A., and James R. Nieman. 2008. “Mapping the Field of Practical Theology.” In *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, edited by Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra, 62–85. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans.
- Cameron, Helen, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney, and Clare Watkins. 2010. *Talking About God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology*, edited by Helem Cameron. La Vergne: Hymns Ancient and Modern Ltd.
- Chan, Tak-Kwong [陳德光]. 2024. “出凡歸聖的追求——聖經與中華文化對話 [Sanctity in the Bible and Chinese Cultures: An Attempt of Dialogue and Integration].” *哲學與文化 [Philosophy and Culture]* 51 (2): 17–32.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1999. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Derrida, Jacques. 2000. “Hostipitality.” *Angelaki* 5 (3): 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09697250020034706>.

- Doong, David [董家驊]. 2019. *Practical Theology as Discipleship [21世紀門徒現場: 實踐神學新探索]*. New Taipei: Campus Evangelical Fellowship Press.
- Fiddes, Paul. S. 2000. *Participating in God: A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.
- Forrester, Duncan B. 1990. "Divinity in Use and Practice." In *Theology and Practice*, edited by Duncan B. Forrester, 3–9. Westminster: Epworth.
- Geng, Zhi-Hong [耿志宏]. 2011. "從周易循環、平衡的天道觀看天災與人口之研究—以民國47年至99年的台灣為研究對象 [A Study of Natural Disasters and Population from the Cycling-and-Balance Perspective of Book of Changes: With Special Reference to Taiwan, 1958-2010]." 華人前瞻研究 [Journal of Chinese Trend and Forward] 7 (2): 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.6428/JCTF.201111.0001>.
- Graham, Elaine L. 2002. *Transforming Practice: Pastoral Theology in an age of Uncertainty*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock.
- Graham, Elaine L. 2013. "Is Practical Theology a Form of 'Action Research'?" *International Journal of Practical Theology* 17 (1): 148–178. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijpt-2013-0010>.
- Green, Laurie. 2010. *Let's Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology; Completely Updated and Revised*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Groome, Thomas. 1998. *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Guo, Yin [郭瑩]. 2006. "論中國傳統文化的處世哲學 [The Social Philosophy of Traditional Chinese Culture]." 哲學與文化 [Philosophy and Culture] 33 (10): 155–164. <https://doi.org/10.7065/MRPC.200610.0155>.
- Henderson, John B. 2010. "Cosmology And Concepts Of Nature In Traditional China." In *Concepts of Nature: A Chinese-European Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Vol. 1, edited by Hans Ulrich Vogel and Günter Dux, 181–197. Leiden: BRILL.
- Holland, Joe, and Peter J. Henriot. 1983. *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Hopkins, Denise D., and Michael S. Koppel, eds. 2018. *Bridging the Divide Between Bible and Practical Theology*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Hug, James. 2005. "Redeeming Social Analysis: Recovering the Hidden Religious Dimensions of Social Change." In *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, edited by Frans Wijsen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia, 196–210. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Jacobs, Jerry A. 2013. *In Defense of Disciplines: Interdisciplinarity and Specialization in the Research University*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kelly, Thomas, and Bob Pennington, eds. 2020. *Bridge Building: Pope Francis' Practical Theological Approach*. New York: A Herder & Herder Book, the Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Killen, Patricia O'Connell, and John De Beer. 1994. *The Art of Theological Reflection*. New York: Crossroad.
- Kubin, Wolfgang. 2010. "The Myriad Things: Random Thoughts On Nature In China And The West." In *Concepts of Nature: A Chinese-European Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Vol. 1, edited by Hans Ulrich and Günter Dux, 516–525. Leiden: BRILL.
- Kwan, Simon Shui-Man. 2020. "Practical Theologies in Chinese Speaking Societies—A Cross-Cultural Consideration." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 24 (2): 303–326. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijpt-2020-0051>.
- Kwan, Simon Shui-Man. 2022. "Is Hospitality Enough for Interfaith Spiritual Care by Christians?" *Practical Theology* 15 (3): 206–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2021.1996308>.
- Lartey, Emmanuel. 1996. "Practical Theology as a Theological Form." *Contact* 119 (1): 21–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13520806.1996.11758765>.
- Leach, Jane. 2007. "Pastoral Theology as Attention." *Contact (Geneva, Switzerland)* 153 (1): 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13520806.2007.11759074>.
- Lees-Smith, Anthony. 2021. "The Challenge of Hospitality: Marking Remembrance as an Anglican in a Multifaith Parish." *Practical Theology* 14 (5): 442–453. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2021.1882166>.

- Levinas, Emmanuel 1991. *Totality and Infinity An Essay on Exteriority* (4th ed. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Li, Zehou. 2018. *The Origins of Chinese Thought: From Shamanism to Ritual Regulations and Humaneness*. Leiden: Brill.
- Lin, Yu-Tang. 1998. *The Importance of Living*. 1st Quill ed. London: Willam Morrow.
- Lyall, David, and Paul Ballard. 2020. "Soil, Roots and Shoots: The Emergence of BIAPT." *Practical Theology* 13 (1–2): 8–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2020.1730057>.
- McKitterick, Alistair. 2016. "The Theological Imperative Model for Practical Theology." *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 16 (4): 5–20.
- Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. 2001. "Contemplation in the Mids of Chaos: Contesting the Maceration of the Theological Teacher." In *The Scope of our art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher*, edited by Jones L. Gregory, and Stephanie Paulsell, 48–74. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Moyaert, Marianne. 2011. *Fragile Identities: Towards a Theology of Interreligious Hospitality*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Osmer, Richard R. 2008. *Practical Theology: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Pattison, Stephen. 2007. *The Challenge of Practical Theology: Selected Essays*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Pattison, Stephen. 2020. "Conversations in Practical Theology." *Practical Theology* 13 (1–2): 87–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2020.1722345>.
- Pohl, Christine D. 1999. *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Ricœur, Paul. 2006. *On Translation*. New York: Routledge.
- Rogers, Andrew P., and Nicola Slee. 2020. "BIAPT 2019 Anniversary Conference Issue: Roots, Shoots and Fruits: The Past, Present and Future of British and Irish Practical Theology." *Practical Theology* 13 (1–2): 1–5 <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2020.1744795>.
- Root, Andrew, and Kenda Dean. 2011. *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry*. Downers Grove: IVP Books.
- Segundo, Juan Luis. 1976. *Liberation of Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Shen, Vincent [沈清松]. 2017. 返本开新论儒学: 沈清松学术论集 [Renovate Confucianism]. 孔学堂书局.
- Swinton, John, and Harriet Mowat. 2006. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. London: SCM Press.
- Tracy, David. 1981. *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York: Crossroad.
- Tracy, David. 1996. *Blessed Rage for Order: The new pluralism in theology* ([New ed.] with a new pref). the University of Chicago press.
- Tracy, David. 1998. "Traditions of Spiritual Practice and the Practice of Theology." *Theology Today* 55 (2): 235–241. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004057369805500208>.
- Tseng, Shih-Ching [曾仕強]. 2002. "華人管理的六字真訣 [Three Main Steps of Chinese Management]." *興國學報 [Xin-Guo Journal]* 1 (1): 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.29950/JHKUM.200207.0001>.
- van Der Ven, J. A. 1998. *God Reinvented?: A Theological Search in Texts and Tables*. Leiden: Brill.
- Wang, Robin. 2012. *Yinyang: The way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese Thought and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ward, Pete. 2017. *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Watkins, Clare. 2020. *Disclosing Church: An Ecclesiology Learned from Conversations in Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Wijzen, Frans, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia, eds. 2005. *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Wong, Zi-Hui [王子輝]. 1996. "中國飲食文化的根本之道 [The Fundamental Principles of Chinese Culinary Culture]." In 中國飲食文化學術研討會論文集 [Proceedings of the Academic Symposium on Chinese Culinary Culture] 王子輝: 337–352. Foundation for Chinese Dietary Culture.

- Woodward, James, and Stephen Pattison. 2000. "Introduction to Pastoral and Practical Theology." In *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, edited by John. Patton, James Woodward, and Stephen Pattison, 1–19. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Wu, Meng-Shan [吳孟珊]. 2018. 存在與轉化 – 變奏山水的現象 [Existence and Transformation The Phenomenon of Landscapes Painting Variations] [Master Thesis]. National Taiwan Normal University.
- Youngblood, Peter Ward. 2019. "Interfaith Chaplaincy as Interpretive Hospitality." *Religions* 10 (3): 226. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10030226>.
- Youngblood, Peter Ward. 2023. "Chaplains as Hosts: Balancing Humility and Assertiveness in Spiritual Care." *Practical Theology* 16 (2): 232–246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2023.2188518>.