

# Changing Identities, Changing Narratives: Can Theology Contribute to a New Cultural Imagination of Migration?

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Religious communities, not least the Christian community, can play a decisive role in helping citizens and refugees alike to re-imagine cultural identity. This contribution suggests theoretical and practical steps in the direction of peaceful co-existence in times of cultural and religious change due to migration. The development of *new narratives* and the nurture of a constructive *culture of remembrance* represent primary tasks which are intimately interwoven and need to be undertaken in active cooperation with refugees. For such constructive re-imagination to occur, the contribution considers the *embrace of multiple belonging* and the *resistance of simple classification* as key factors. Insights into the lived experience of multiple belonging and into the flaws of simple classification, however, can only develop if certain general rules are agreed on by religious and secular agents alike: Intentional and organized encounters between citizens and refugees need to take place, migrants need to be taken seriously as agents, and self-criticism needs to be paired with a readiness to defend *others* from misrepresentation. The last part of the contribution explores theological potentials to contribute to a constructive re-imagination of cultural identity, first by probing into basic migratory aspects of Christian identity and finally by assessing the Author's Methodist tradition and its ambivalent relation to migration.