STORY | THEOLOGY | VOICE

FULLER

RESTORE

"When people are pulled from their community and sent to war, the community should help own the suffering they bring back with them. That kind of pain is not meant to be borne alone. Veterans can't make sense of it alone. They need others to come alongside them, to listen to their stories, to help hold their pain so they can deal with it."

—NATHAN GRAESER [MDIV '12]

RESTORE

Miyoung Yoon Hammer, Guest Theology Editor

"Healing is possible even though there is no cure." Those are words that, as a medical family therapist, I often speak to my clients and their loved ones in the wake of a terminal diagnosis or following news that the patient has a chronic health condition that will necessitate long-term, perhaps lifelong, management. Their doctors have handed them this difficult news and now they're in my office because, regardless of how prepared they were for the news, they're struggling to navigate the reality of life with chronic illness or the prospect of imminent death.

The understandable longing is for restored normalcy—a return to life before the illness or the diagnosis. But there is no going back. Once we are confronted with our mortality and the vulnerabilities of human life, we are forever changed. Even in the instances where disease is eradicated, the only "normal" that can be attained is what is referred to as a "new normal"—a normal that accounts for the limitations wrought by illness or disability but is nevertheless full of new possibilities. And it is in the midst of this new normal that healing can begin. When we are no longer gripped by the desire to go back to who we once were, we are willing to explore who we are becoming and, perhaps, who we were intended to be in the first place. It is a peculiar phenomenon: the acknowledgement of our limitations and wounds has the potential to catalyze transformation into a restored life lived with greater purpose and integrity.

"Sanar es posible aunque no haya cura." Esas son palabras que, como terapista familiar médico, le digo a mis pacientes y a sus seres queridos a raíz de un diagnóstico terminal o al recibir noticias que el o la paciente tiene una condición crónica de salud que necesitará tratamiento a largo plazo, tal vez por el resto de su vida. Sus médicos les han entregado noticias difíciles y ahora están en mi oficina porque, sin importar cuán preparados o preparadas estaban para las noticias, se les hace difícil navegar por una vida con una enfermedad crónica o el prospecto de una muerte súbita.

El anhelo comprensible es por una normalidad restaurada - volver a la vida antes de la enfermedad o del diagnóstico. Pero no hay vuelta atrás. Una vez que nos confrontan la mortalidad y las vulnerabilidades de la vida humana, cambiamos para siempre. Aún cuando la enfermedad ha sido erradicada, la única "normalidad" que se puede obtener es a lo que nos referimos como nuestra "nueva normalidad" - una normalidad que toma en cuenta las limitaciones traídas por la enfermedad o discapacidad pero que aún así está llena de nuevas posibilidades. Y es en medio de esta nueva normalidad que la sanidad puede comenzar. Cuando el deseo de volver a ser quienes éramos ya no nos agarra, tenemos la disposición de explorar en quien nos estamos convirtiendo, y tal vez, en quienes estábamos destinados y destinadas a ser en primera instancia. Es un fenómeno peculiar: el reconocimiento de nuestras limitaciones y heridas tiene el potencial de catalizar transformación hacia una vida restaurada con un mayor propósito e integridad.

La restauración requiere humildad, a

"치료법이 없다 해도 치유는 가능합니다(Healing is possible even though there is no cure)." 가정의학과 상담사로서 저는 불치병 선고를 받았거나, 평생 다스려야 할 지 모르는 만성병 진단을 받은 환자, 그리고 보호자께 종종 이런 말씀을 드립니다. 의사로부터 감당하기 어려운 소식을 전해 듣고서 이분들이 제 진료실을 찾아오시는 이유가 있습니다. 지병을 안고 살아야 한다는 사실, 죽음이 임박했다는 사실은 설령 마음의 준비가 됐을지라도 쉽사리 짊어지고 갈 수가 없기 때문입니다.

모든 이들의 바람은 정상으로의 회복, 즉 발병이나 진단 이전의 삶으로 돌아가는 것입니다. 하지만 돌아갈 방법은 없습니다. 피할 수 없는 죽음과 생명의 연약함을 직면할 때 인간은 다시는 돌이킬 수 없는 변화를 경험합니다. 설령 병이 완치된다 하더라도 우리가 되찾을 수 있는 '정상(normal)'은 '새로운 정상(new normal)'이라 일컫는 상태로서, 질병이나 장애에 따르는 제약을 수용하면서 동시에 새로운 가능성이 가득한 상태입니다. 치유는 바로 이 새로운 정상의 한복판에서 시작됩니다. 과거의 자신으로 돌아가고픈 욕망의 손아귀에서 벗어날 때 비로소 우리는 성장해가는 자신, 아마도 태초에 하나님께서 의도하신 자신의 모습을 탐색할 의지를 갖게 됩니다. 이것은 이상한 현상입니다. 자신의 한계와 상처를 인정하는 행위에는 변화를 촉발시키는 힘이 있어, 우리는 더 숭고한 목적과 고결함이 있는 회복된 삶으로 이끌립니다.

우리는 하나님과 사람들과의 관계에서 우리에게 은혜가 절실히 필요함을 깨닫습니다. 그래서 회복에는 겸손이 필요합니다. 오직 겸손해질 때 우리는 옛 자아에 대해 죽어야 비로소 회복되고 새로운 존재가 될 수 있음을 이해하게 됩니다. 기독교 서사(narrative)가 바로 이러한 회복의 원형을 보여주는데, 우리는 부활절이 있으려면

Restoration requires humility as we realize our profound need for the grace that is experienced through our relationship with God and one another. Only then do we understand that dying to our old selves makes it possible to be restored and made new. The Christian narrative provides a template for this kind of restoration, as we remember that there is no Easter without Good Friday. On this side of heaven we cannot be cured of sin, yet we are called to live out the redemption story that leads us to the life that was intended for us rather than the life that is simply before us.

In this *FULLER* theology section, the contributors challenge us to consider restoring virtues, practices, and traditions that move us toward healing—toward shalom. The selected themes of creation, hospitality, belonging, identity, hope, and Sabbath all coalesce around the idea of restoring our communion with God and one another, which is undoubtedly how a restored life is intended to be lived.

There is pain all around us, and it is good to be reminded that we can be restored. We cannot—nor should we want to—go back to who we once were. Some conditions may be incurable and lives irreversibly changed, but when we acknowledge our limitations and realize our utter need for God's mercy, it is then that the healing—and the restored life that we were meant to live—can begin.

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medida que nos damos cuenta de nuestra profunda necesidad por la gracia que es experimentada por medio de nuestra relación con Dios y el prójimo. Solo ahí entendemos que el morir de nuestro viejo yo, le posibilita ser restaurado y hecho nuevo. La narrativa cristiana provee un modelo para este tipo de restauración, mientras recordamos que no hay Pascua sin el Viernes Santo. En este lado del cielo no podemos ser sanados o sanadas de pecado, pero aún así tenemos el llamado de vivir la historia de redención que nos dirige a la vida que fue diseñada para nosotros y nosotras, en vez de la vida que simplemente nos precede.

En esta edición de FULLER de teología, los y las contribuyentes nos retan a considerar restaurar virtudes, prácticas y tradiciones que nos muevan hacia la sanidad - hacia el Shalom. Los temas seleccionados de creación, hospitalidad, pertenencia, identidad, esperanza y el día de reposo, todos se incorporan alrededor de la idea de restaurar nuestra comunión con Dios y el prójimo, que indudablemente es como una vida restaurada fue diseñada a ser vivida.

Hay dolor a nuestro alrededor, y es bueno recordar que podemos ser restaurados y restauradas. No podemos - y no debemos querer - volver a ser quienes éramos. Algunas condiciones pueden ser incurables y vidas cambiadas irreversiblemente, pero cuando reconocemos nuestras limitaciones y nos damos cuenta de nuestra profunda necesidad de la misericordia de Dios, es ahí cuando la sanidad - y la vida restaurada que estamos destinados y destinadas a vivir - puede comenzar.

먼저 성금요일이 있어야 함을 압니다. 이 땅의 천국을 살아가는 동안 우리의 죄는 완치될 수 없습니다. 우리는 그저 앞에 놓인 삶을 사는 것이 아니라, 하나님께서 의도하시는 삶으로 이끌어줄 구원의 이야기를 살아내도록 부르심을 받았습니다.

이번 호 《풀러》에 실린 글들은 회복의 가치, 회복의 실습, 회복의 전통 등 우리를 치유로, 그리고 샬롬으로 나아가게 하는 것들에 대해 생각할 여지를 던져줍니다. 이번 호에서 선택한 주제인 창조, 환대, 소속감, 정체성, 희망, 안식일 등은 모두 하나님과의 연합 회복, 서로와의 연합 회복이라는 개념을 중심으로 얽혀있으며, d이 회복된 연합은 회복된 삶이 드러내야 할 구체적인 모습입니다.

고통은 우리 주변 어디에나 존재하기에 우리가 회복될 수 있음을 떠올리는 것은 즐거운 일입니다. 우리는 과거의 자신으로 돌아갈 수도 없고, 돌아가려 해서도 안 됩니다. 우리의 어떤 상황은 치료가 불가능하고 삶은 돌이킬 수 없이 바뀌었을 수 있습니다. 하지만 우리가 자신의 한계를 인정하고 하나님의 은혜가 무조건적으로 필요함을 깨달을 때, 바로 그때 치유, 그리고 하나님께서 바라시는 회복된 삶이 시작될 수 있습니다.

RESTORING CREATION: WITH REFLECTIONS ON LAUDATO SI

Tommy Givens

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Cynicism is seldom a healthy response to deep corruption, but it is hard to resist in response to Pope Francis's *Laudato Si*, "Praise be to you." This recent encyclical systematically points out the obvious: We are destroying our earthly home; we should instead care for it, and we can care for it. The reason for cynicism is not that the encyclical patronizes us, but that we would need to be told what is so obvious. Yet we do.

Christians have recently adopted the term "creation" as a fitting substitute for "environment." This is part of the problem, because it subtly reinforces the false impression that water, soil, plants, animals, and other parts of nonhuman life—not least the air we breathe—lie around us, neatly outside us. But in fact we are composed intricately over time of precisely these nonhuman parts of the heavens and the earth, for better or worse. Because they nourish and shape our bodies, our memories, our sense of place, and all the relationships that bind human beings to one another, they are not only around us but also in us. This unfathomable and intricate whole of life, of which God has made us a beautiful and powerful part, is what the Bible calls "creation."

The problem, then, for which "restoration" names a path of repentance and repair, is the estrangement that has come to prevail in the intricate relationship of human beings to the God-given life both around them and in them. It afflicts particularly those of us cultured in industrialized societies like that of the United States. The very patterns of language by which we relate to nonhuman life, which we have been formed to regard primarily as quantifiable and placeless "raw materials," or worth preserving as "nature" mostly for human recreation, exhibit this estrangement. Our language and corresponding systems of thought and aspiration perpetuate what we have inherited. But this estranged relationship is especially manifest in deeply established ways that can be described as exploitive. We take from the nonhuman life by which we live, but fail to make any sound commitment to sustain it and maintain its integrity. This systematic human behavior is destructive and is a self-destructive disease from which we must repent.

I have little doubt that when future generations are enduring wars that are more explicitly over water or the scarcity of arable land than current wars—assuming our current trajectory is not drastically altered—they will look at the generations of our time as barbaric, much as we do past generations addicted to social and economic evils like slavery. These past generations, incidentally, were often far more responsible than we are when it comes to caring for a community's place, including its elaborate and dynamic relationship with other places. But we need not consider our current estrangement only in terms of what our current patterns of life will entail over time. For those with ears to hear and eyes to see, the signs of our estranged relationship with nonhuman life, and therefore with ourselves, are already ubiquitous, though they are often removed from people and places that hold the lion's share of power in our day. We have largely destroyed the tree canopy of the Los Angeles Basin and squandered its groundwater, for example. Yet far more devastating are the effects of our mundane patterns of life on places, people, and other life that are—through distance and because of our economic status—far from our sights and our minds. "Restoration" involves re-

pentance from destroying our own place, which we always share with others. But it also involves addressing the addiction of so many of us to treating distant people and their places as mines for our own ways and place. If we don't, that mining will continue to escalate and expand until it consumes our own place, including us. People who live in their place by damaging other people and their places become people who damage their own place and themselves.

It would be naive to imagine that the estrangement I'm trying to describe affects only the relationship between human and nonhuman life. To give but one example, Fuller alumnus and Yale professor Willie Jennings has recently given us a compelling account of how our estrangement from nonhuman life, and our corresponding placelessness, have been at work for centuries in the spawning and spreading of racism (*The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race*). Those who relate to their places as raw materials have been prone to reduce other people to chattel and to institutionalize the resulting scale of being. Especially striking in his account is the prominent role superficially orthodox theology has played in the production of racism. And Jennings is right, I think, to insist that racial reparations will remain fleeting so long as we refuse to repair the way we live in our places, to work at restoring our estranged relation to nonhuman life.

Earlier I noted that the way we human beings live has immense ramifications for the rest of creation around us and in us. This is why the way we relate to nonhuman life always has consequences for ourselves. Yet too many of us have stopped considering our life in terms of how it relates to nonhuman life or what future generations will inherit from us. This kind of thinking is not sustainable and deeply at odds with the intergenerational nature of faith in the Bible (e.g., Gen 15; Heb 11). In addition to asking what our life is doing to others who are distant from us in space or time, we must ask what our inherited patterns of life in industrialized societies are currently doing to our own character and our own neighbors. These are questions at once personal and political, yet the peculiar way in which they have been politicized, particularly in the United States, makes it hard to bring them clearly to light. Under a somewhat sterile term like "environmentalism" they have too often been bundled politically with other issues, such that many—including many evangelical Christians—discount these questions or counter them with claims about the need for "growth" or "investment." Then there is the matter of Christian doctrine that anticipates a future escape from the earth or imagines humanity redeemed by God as placeless souls, resurrected upon death.

In the face of these doctrines, restoration demands the Christian teaching of the empty tomb: not a disembodied or brand-new-bodied Jesus, but the resurrection of Jesus' crucified body, the seed of a whole creation healed rather than thrown away. Evangelical Christians, to my thinking, are a long way from recovering the deep wisdom of the Old Testament with respect to land and place, and from working out the complex implication of creation's intricacy in the New Testament presentation of Jesus, the Spirit, and the church community. Given the depth of our particular need for restoration and repentance, then, we may be thankful for the support of other traditions, including the Catholic one currently represented by Pope Francis, whose recent encyclical on our care of our places, *Laudato Si*, is worthy of patient reflection.

Many who detect in the encyclical a threat to some critical piece of their political platform, or irreverence for the market forces they hold dear, will not read it with any charity or introspection, but move quickly to brand and dismiss it. There is plenty of fodder for that in its many pages, whose theological discourse ranges across biblical testimony, traditional Catholic teaching, molecular biology, metaphysics, political economy, spirituality, technology, moral philosophy, and so on. Those so inclined will not have to look hard for soundbites or mantras with which to make *Laudato Si* into a straw man. Some Christians, both Catholics and others, have already made it clear that they prefer Christianity to remain conveniently in the private and postmortem provinces of life, so that they can continue what is, for many, an addiction to profitable false gods. But, as Pope Francis reminds us, the gospel is that Jesus is the gentle but persistent Lord of the whole world.

I suppose dismissive cherry-picking is as much a danger for those who applaud *Laudato Si*—those who reduce it to a simple endorsement of the scientific consensus on climate change, for example. The same cultural folly that needs the pope to tell us to stop destroying our home and to care for it leads us to receive his teaching as only a boost or threat to our factional views. Perhaps that is why so much of the encyclical pleads with us to listen to one another and cooperate patiently across the divides we have made: faith and science, socialists and capitalists, Christians and non-Christians, businesses and nonprofits, wealthy countries and poor ones. One hopes that evangelicals in particular can grow out of the resistance many of us have to Catholicism and tend thoughtfully to this latest gift from the riches of Catholic social teaching.

Why do we need to hear the Pope tell us what is obvious? It is much the reason that a child needs a mother to point out what is right in front of him but he hasn't had the experience to have learned, like keeping respectful distance from a poisonous snake or drinking sparingly on a long hike. Only, in our case, it is a learned ignorance that we have acquired by experience, with far more at stake. We have learned a way of life in which a crowd of romanticized but destructive patterns of production, communication, and consumption form our appetites and claim most of our attention, blinding us to what lies right before us.

RESTORING CREATION

Wendell Berry
The Peace of Wild Things

When despair for the world grows in me
And I wake in the night at the least sound
In fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
Rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
Who do not tax their lives with forethought
Of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
Waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

Our appetites and attention must instead be directed holistically by the intricate relationships that constitute the health of our place over time, and by the complex web of communities' places that is our created home. The consequence of our learned ignorance is a systematic externalization of costs from the manifold processes of our life, so that we do not name them, see them, or feel them, much less pay them ourselves—what Pope Francis repeatedly calls "the throwaway culture."

As the encyclical explains, we externalize costs from the present by exacting them on people and other created life of the future, treating our very own lands and yards, for instance, in such a way that will deprive future generations of their benefit. We externalize the costs of the way we live in one part of the city to other places in the same city or to the countryside, where we cannot see or feel their effect on us. We externalize the costs of industrialized economies to places in the world where local powerlessness, elitism, and the absence of adequate regulation permit it. Refusing even the limits of a jumbo national home, too many multinational corporations do in such less visible places "what they would never do in developed countries or the so-called first world" (par. 51). That is, they exploit them, including their local human populations, as mines and as dumps. Their business may be profitable for them and small parts of their national "home" today, but eventually will be devastating for all if unchecked. Costs that are externalized in such ways are too complex and far-reaching to be measured with money, and the claims of these enterprises to "profit" and "progress" are untruthfully partial.

Predictably, some authorities have already begun to speak against the encyclical for its refusal to affirm the forces of free markets and technology, since these have, in their view, blessed us with such bounty. But this is yet another case of externalizing costs, for the "blessings" attributed to these forces have, to a large extent, come at great cost to many people and places already, including plants, animals, and other gifts of God. Such sacrifices are deemed "worth it" by such critics, since they do not feel those sacrifices themselves, cannot imagine that those "blessings" could have been obtained more responsibly, and are unable to see that their negative impact is still far from abating. More patient readers will find in the pope's vision for cultivating a healthy home all kinds of room for markets, technology, and other such terms that are wrongly divinized or demonized in our sloganeering. It's a matter of thinking holistically and carefully about such terms rather than using them for a factional platform. It's a matter of refusing to use such terms to justify poor treatment of underrepresented people and other silenced parts of the world. It's a matter of ending our romance with technology and seeing that we ourselves must change, along with our technology, if we are to repent and live as we pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

One does not have to labor to discern in *Laudato Si* the theme that "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (par. 49). Making the vulnerable pay the costs of others' conveniences and excesses is among the primary modes of cost externalization in the current order of things. The theme encapsulated in this quotation is one of the encyclical's great strengths. It exposes the fact that a culture that so disproportionately impoverishes and jeopardizes people of color, whether in the United States or further afield, is the same throwaway culture that does not show enough concern for future generations, for the beauty of other places, or even a deep beauty of its own place. It can see only itself—and that very incompletely. Whatever it strives to possess it reduces to "raw materials," whose postconsumption excess is "disposable."

I invite you to take time to read the encyclical, the tone of which is conciliatory and constructive, especially its guidelines for healthy ways forward in the final section. There is plenty to quibble with, of course. I looked in vain, for example, for any explicit appeal to divest ourselves from corporations that are at the forefront of damaging the human home. This is an urgent matter for Fuller as it is for many other institutions promoting the kingdom of God. But rather than quibble with Christian teaching that calls our attention to the obvious, we are wiser to consider it thoughtfully and respond actively to its plea for a culture of care and loving sustainability. It is embarrassing, I know, to face the learned childishness evident in our inability to care for our own, God-given home. We prefer to imagine and market ourselves as above reproach, or at least as not knowing any better. But face our culpability we must, for praising God means caring for what God has given. Perhaps that is why it is good, despite the warning of Matthew 23:9, that the pope is called "Holy Father." In any case, as we attempt to learn our place within God's creation, *Laudato Si* offers some promising paths from systems of neglect to ways of restoration.

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RESTORING IDENTITY

Terry and Sharon Hargrave

"I cannot make sense of anything in my life," he said. "All of my life, I feel that I have been looking for something I cannot find—something or someplace where I will know I am secure and loved. I guess that is it. I feel locked in by this depression and won't be free until someone cares enough to give me the key."

In our businesses of teaching and doing marital and family therapy, we hear expressions like the one above often from not only clients, but also students and friends. If we are honest with ourselves, there are even moments when we are locked into our own sense of depression or anxiety and feel the same way. We sometimes get lost along the complex map of life and don't know exactly where we are, what we are doing here, and, most importantly, *who* we are. We suppose all of us feel this way from time to time.

Here at Fuller Theological Seminary and across the country, we are part of a growing community of therapists who practice a model called Restoration Therapy. In short, the aim of the approach is to restore as much love and trustworthiness to the individual, family, and relationships as possible. Why love and trustworthiness? We believe love and trustworthiness are the pillars upon which relationships are built. Love gives individuals meaning about their identities. Simply stated, love is the relational language where we as humans learn about our uniqueness, worthiness, and belonging. Trustworthiness, on the other hand, is the language of action where we learn about the reliable process of giving, the fairness and justice of balancing what we receive, and the openness and vulnerability that leads us to a sense of safety and security in relationships. Love informs our identity while trustworthiness forms our sense of safety. Together, this identity and safety form the nouns and verbs of our language of existence. But this combination of identity and safety is fragile because it is taught to us by fragile and flawed people in an often unsafe world. As is evident in the young man's statement above, when we are confused about who we are, we lose an important compass of what to do and how to be with others.

THE ESSENTIALS OF IDENTITY

If we are to understand how to restore identity, we must first ground ourselves with the knowledge of how it is shaped. We believe everything we know about who we are in the world is shaped by the way we are loved. We are most particularly shaped by this love when we are at our most formative and vulnerable stage of life in early childhood. When we observe parents' excitement over a newborn, we see how they often tenderly scoop up the child and gaze at the infant with both fascination and admiration. We hear them say things like, "You are the most beautiful child in the world. Yes, you are! I am so lucky to have you." Indeed, the parent is lavishing on the child a type of romantic love where the infant becomes an irreplaceable member of the parent and family. If this love continues, the young child will learn that he or she is absolutely *unique* in his or her identity. He or she is special like no other, and no one can take his or her place for the parents.

Does God love us with this type of romantic admiration? We believe so. In Ephesians, Paul reminds us that God saves us by grace and then makes this remarkable statement: "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" (Eph 2:10 NLT). We are God's special creation-filled uniqueness for the work set before us.

But the romantic love that shapes our identity around uniqueness is not the only love we need. We also are in profound need of knowing that our being is important and of great worth. Often we see parents making sacrifices for the good of their children. It may be in subtle ways, like a father wearing his shoes well beyond when they need replacing so that his children can have new shoes, or a mother who goes without lunch so the money can be used for a special field trip for a child. Whether these sacrifices are big or small, however, the love approximates the altruistic love demonstrated by Christ as he freely gave himself as a sin sacrifice to many.

We grew up in the era of the 1960s, when we were taught that God's love is unconditional. Our generation came to think the highest form of love was a sort of knockoff of Carl Rogers's concept of unconditional positive regard: God accepts us as we are, no matter what we have done, and welcomes us. Although this altruistic love does have some of this idea of unconditional acceptance, clearly the most profound feature of this type of love is found in the sacrificial nature of the love. When a parent sacrifices *what he or she needs* in order to meet the needs of the child, the child learns he or she is more important and dear to the parents than even the parents' lives. This infuses the child with an identity that speaks not only to the importance but also to the worth in which he or she is held in relationship. Ultimately, it gives profound meaning to our sense of worthiness to know this: "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NLT).

There is no doubt that if an individual feels unique or set apart as well as important and worthy, he or she would have a strong identity. But most of us also received a companionate type of love—a friendship love—in our families. We remember when our daughter started finding her identity strongly around age three. We quickly recognized that while she was our daughter genetically, she possessed a huge number of traits that clearly did not belong to either of us. She was, indeed, her own person from the very beginning. One of the things we did right in raising her is to get to know her personhood just the same way we would get to know a friend. We would take interest in the way she saw life and would have long discussions and observations about how she thought, believed, and behaved.

When a friend embraces us in this way, we are loved and carried in that person's heart no matter how different or seemingly strange we are in reality. When we are loved with this deep friendship love, we learn that we are not alone and we belong. Indeed, if you have a "best" friend, there is a very real sense that you can never be quite alone again because you are always carried in his or her heart, even when separated by time and distance. And this friendship, companionate love does not just happen with family and friends; it also happens with Jesus. "I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me" (John 15:15 NLT). We are friends with the living God, which infuses our identities with a sense of belonging.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY: BEWARE OF THE COUNTERFEIT

Of course, none of us grew up in a place of perfect family where we were perfectly loved, and none of us has identity that is unflawed. Somewhere deep inside of us, we feel we are flawed, plain, unworthy, and alone. The pain of those doubts—and sometimes the overt abuse of love from our families or others—leave us to try to figure out identity on our own terms. As therapists, we often see three devastatingly unsuccessful efforts of individuals trying to compensate for identity confusion. First, we often see folks who are so used to living in the pain of abuse or lack of love that they assume *pain as their identities.* This is not only painful for these individuals, it is painful for those who come to love them, because the wounds of past identity are inconsolable. It is as if these folks say, "I only know myself in pain, so it is too risky to try something different." They often reject the love of others because the rut of being alone, unworthy, and unloved is simply too deep to make the effort to correct.

Second, we often see individuals who try to make an identity based on their performance. The problem here is that *I am only unique, loved, or worthwhile if I prove my worth.* Anything less than perfect performance means my identity is lacking and I am undeserving of love. But even when these performers are close to perfect, they consider themselves only as worthy or remarkable as their last performance. They are, therefore, perpetually in a cycle of out-performing themselves on a stationary bicycle going nowhere. Only identity based in the solid confidence of being loved allows a person to make mistakes and relax in the warmth of security.

Finally, we see hurting people who have flawed identity simply withdraw and try to hide from others. Sometimes this hiding is locked in a deep cycle of shaming oneself and keeping others away in order to cover over flaws. Other times, this hiding is submerged beneath toxic behaviors or addictions like drugs, alcohol, work, or pornography, where the individual disappears into the behavior to escape the pain of lack of love and clarity.

Either way, the withdrawing or hiding makes it unlikely or impossible the individual will have any experience of real intimacy or get access to the potential healing of romantic, altruistic, or companionate love. Whether through making pain my identity, believing my identity is my performance, or hiding my identity, the counterfeit buys the individual no security and no sense of ultimate peace.

HOW DO WE GET OUR IDENTITIES RESTORED?

We all come from backgrounds and relationships that were flawed, threatening our sense of love and safety, but it does not mean that we cannot have our identities restored on sound footing—where we clearly know about our unique specialness, our importance and worthiness, and our sense of belonging to others. We often say in our work with individuals, couples, and families that restoring identity comes from three potential sources: others, God, and self.

One of the amazing realities we find in the physical universe is how time and space do funny things. We are somewhat backyard astronomers in our family, and one of our "thrills" on a particularly dark evening is to search the heavens in a spot where we know to look for the Andromeda Galaxy. The galaxy itself is about 100 million light years away, but if we are patient and slightly avert our vision, the faint smudge of light is there—actually, the light the galaxy emitted 100 million years ago. You see, what we currently experience in viewing the deep sky object in the here and now is actually the history of the galaxy from the long past. We remind ourselves of this fact of time and space doing

funny things when we sit with someone who suffers from an injured identity. Most often, they were denied love from their parents, siblings, mentors, teachers, peers, and even spouses in the past, and we experience this damage of the past in the present by seeing severe depression, out-of-control anxiety, anger, or addiction. But one of the wonderful things about human beings is the power they have to speak healing love into each other in the here and now. Terry's parents are now in their late 80s, yet they still have the power to speak healing love into his identity. It was their place in the beginning to program his identity with the three forms of romantic, altruistic, and companionate love, and in many ways they retain that power now.

God puts powerful "others" in our lives to restore our identities, such as key friends and spouses, and even sometimes works miracles in families that were previously damaging to restore identity. But it is clear that God intends the church to be this place of healing love. "Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law" (Rom 13:8 NLT). If we, as the church, take the time and care to speak this love to one another's hearts, our identities will be restored and we will be able to pass along the restoration we have been given from others.

It is not only God's church that has the power to restore our identity, but also God. "Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son" (Eph 1:4–6 NLT). While God is not our parent, God is our creator and knows every part of who we are and what we are to become. It is indeed a thrilling proposition to realize that from the beginning, God loved us romantically, companionably, and altruistically. We are absolutely and truly known by God as we are and, in the most important act of human history, God pours out grace to us through Christ in order to restore our identities in a new relationship.

God and other people do hold the power to restore our identities, but they only have this power if we allow the love to come to us. In the most essential way, once we become aware enough to reckon with our identity, our brains become powerful enough to make the choices about whether or not we listen to others or even to God. As we mentioned before, we struggle at times with our own identities much in the same ways we see our clients struggle. We know what it is like to have the kind of love that shapes uniqueness, worthiness, and belonging for others because we experienced and practiced this love in raising our children. We did not do it perfectly, but we did love them intentionally and sincerely with the intent of shaping their identities well. The point is that we have power in ourselves to be lovers and programmers of the identities of others. Yet, while we willingly take this job seriously with loving our children, spouses, or friends, we too often refuse to take the power of the position in facing and loving ourselves.

We all have a choice of whom we believe. We can believe in the love that God and others infuse into our lives or we can reject it, preferring to stay in our own struggling and damaged identities. This is the power of the self when it comes to restoring our identity. One of the "truism" statements that has come out of neuroscience is that negative thoughts in the human brain are like Velcro, while positive thoughts are like Teflon. Perhaps it is our nature, but it is much easier for us to remain mired in the identity of the past than to let this restorative love into our perceptions of ourselves. But few choices can be more important. The kind of love that is truly healing and safe to others only comes out of us when we are settled in our own identities of being uniquely gifted, belonging in relationships, and knowing we are strategically important in the loving work of God's kingdom. Restoring our identities is not only dependent on our choice of what or whom we believe about ourselves, but also makes the difference in how we restore identities to others. "Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. So letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death. But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace" (Rom 8:5–6 NLT).

As therapists working in the Restoration Therapy model, we seek to help others live within the truth of who they are in relationship with others in their lives, with God, and with themselves. Others can love us passionately and sincerely. God can love us sacrificially and unconditionally and welcome us back. But in the end analysis, we have to be involved in the process ourselves to decide whether or not we will choose to believe and restore our identity to the path of life and peace. As we help clients, students, and ourselves grasp this psychological and biblical truth, identity will be truly restored, and only then will we be agents of identity restoration to others. As a strong sense of identity grows, we learn how to deal with issues such as depression and anxiety while also learning about who we are in relationship—and how to restore love and trust to individuals, families, and the communities in which we live and serve.

RESTORING IDENTITY

The Brilliance

See the Love

I wanna see the love
All around you all around you
I wanna know
I wanna know that love
Is all around you it's all around
See how it lights you up.

RESTORING HOPE: BEING WEAK AND BECOMING WELL

Kutter Callaway

Kutter Callaway, assistant professor of theology and culture and co-director of Reel Spirituality at Fuller Seminary, focuses his research and writing on contemporary culture and its theological significance. Books he has authored include *Scoring Transcendence: Contemporary Film Music as Religious Experience* (Baylor University Press, 2012), *Watching TV Religiously* (Baker Academic, 2016), and the forthcoming *Sex, Saints, and Singleness*. He also writes for *Christianity Today* and is a blogger for the *Huffington Post*. Prior to teaching at Fuller, Dr. Callaway served in pastoral ministry for nearly a decade, focusing primarily on young and emerging adults.

> *Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool called Bethzatha in Aramaic, which has five covered walkways. A great number of sick, blind, lame, and paralyzed people were lying in these walkways. Now a man was there who had been disabled for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and when he realized that the man had been disabled a long time already, he said to him, "Do you want to become well?" (John 5:2-6)*

Do you want to become well?

It's such a simple question. Who doesn't want to become well? Who endures 38 years of misery, going so far as to show up every day at a mystical pool of healing water, without a deep desire for their suffering to come to an end? Throughout the Gospels, we witness Jesus repeatedly posing these sorts of eyebrow-raising queries.

Do you want to become well?

Maybe something more is going on in this passage. Maybe Jesus isn't just stating the obvious. Maybe he's engaging in some kind of performance art, playing the part of instigator and provocateur. Or maybe he's asking a rhetorical question—a stylistic flourish designed to focus the crowd's attention on the miracle he is about to perform. Or maybe he is simply offering this disabled man a chance to actualize his faith—prodding him to give voice to what would otherwise remain inarticulate and thus unrealized. Or maybe Jesus' question is touching on a far more troubling reality. Maybe we don't always want to become well.

On a personal level, it's fairly easy for me to identify with the man lying beside the pool of Bethzatha. We are about the same age. We both suffer from a chronic ailment that, at least in my case, disables me to varying degrees. And just like this man, I too have been willing to try almost anything in my quest to find healing and relief.

I suffer from a degenerative disc disorder that causes varying degrees of pain in my back, arm, and neck depending upon the day. It is a constant reality that forces me to live a fundamentally different life than the one I once imagined. I have written about chronic pain elsewhere, but there is one aspect of my own experience that I have left untouched, in part because I only became aware of it recently, but also because it is far more difficult to speak about openly. Structurally, my condition results from the degenerating discs in my spine. But the actual source of my pain is neurological. It is related to the collapsing spaces that surround the many nerves that connect my spinal cord to the rest of my body. And any time nerves are involved, the pain associated with them is never purely physical. It is psychological too.

I realized this recently when my neurologist suggested a newer medication that had proven itself effective in treating not only neurological pain, but also its twin sibling: depression. He referred me to a psychiatrist to determine if I was a candidate for the drug. At the time, I was enduring a particularly bad flare-up of my symptoms, so I was ready to try anything. But like most things in life, I wasn't fully prepared for what this decision would demand of me.

Do you want to become well?

I remember the moment with a kind of visceral clarity. I was driving home from my most recent psychiatric appointment. In the seat next to me was the prescription for a drug that promised to bring my physical

pain down to a manageable level. It was also supposed to treat what my psychiatrist had now diagnosed as clinical depression. And that's when I lost it. I had to pull my car over to the side of the freeway because I couldn't see through my tears. I had stumbled upon a revelation, and I was terrified. I was afraid of the person I would become if I actually experienced restoration and healing.

My pain had been at an all-time high, but so too was my creative output. I had just written what I believed to be some of my better theological essays. I had also conceived and developed a novel that could only have emerged from the state of conflict, darkness, and angst I was enduring. Even the music I was writing had made a decided shift into more complex terrain than ever before. I was a tortured soul to be sure, but I was something more. I was an artist.

The irony was rich. For the first time in as long as I could remember, I had a glimmer of hope that my physical pain might come to an end. But pain is in the business of violent distortion, and hope is often one of its first victims. I had become so fully bound up with my pain and brokenness that the mere suggestion of healing and restoration meant that the core of my identity was now under threat. Without my beloved pain—my ever-present companion and friend—I would no longer know who I was.

Do you want to become well?

Here then is my personal confession. My brokenness is so profound that my response to Jesus' question is often "no."

No, I don't want to get well.

My own struggle with chronic pain might seem like an odd place to begin a theological conversation about restoration and Christian hope, especially when I am willing to admit that I might not even *want* restoration. But that's exactly the point. Restoration, whatever it may be, is never abstract. It is always concrete, always particular. Hope, whatever it may be, is always a hope in the face of hopelessness. It is always in spite of something. This "in spite of" nature of our lived experience shapes our understanding not only of what restoration or "becoming well" means, but also how it is that Christians dare to hope for any kind of restoration in the midst of a reality defined by unyielding pain.

Christian hope has unique dimensions that can only emerge when seen through the lens of our pain and suffering. This is not meant to be a comprehensive treatment of the concept of "hope" in the historic theological tradition. Rather, my aim is simply to offer a few theological signposts that, drawn as they are from my experience as a chronic sufferer, might point us toward a more robust understanding of Christian hope.

SIGNPOST #1: CHRISTIAN HOPE IS WEAK

To engage in a meaningful conversation about Christian hope, we need to admit that our picture of what restoration entails is as frail and broken as we are. We must confess that we don't know *what* to hope for, much less *how* to hope for it.

This way of thinking about what it means to hope runs counter to almost every narrative in the modern world—Christian or otherwise. Contrary to what modern science and technology would have us believe, we are not in control. Likewise, in contrast to many of the internal narratives within evangelical Christianity, we are not the authors of our story. Regardless of how much "faith" we muster, we cannot produce a meaningful existence through our own efforts. The source of our hope lies, literally, beyond us.

Admitting our weakness in a world defined by power and orchestrated by the powerful might seem like an admission of failure, worthlessness, or insignificance. But it is actually the opposite. In a scandalous turn befitting only of the biblical narrative, to acknowledge our powerlessness is to create the very conditions for hope. As the Apostle Paul reminds us:

> *I asked the Lord three times about this [thorn in my flesh], that it would depart from me. But he said to me, "My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor 12:8–10 NET)*

Strangely, there are moments when I am thankful for the weakness brought about by my chronic pain, primarily because it serves as a daily reminder that I am not in control as I, physically, cannot do certain things. But beyond these physical restrictions, my pain has also forced me to accept that, even if I wanted to, I could never bring about the kind of restoration I desire for myself or for others—physically, mentally, emotionally, or spiritually. In other words, I have been spared a terrible burden: that of living in

a pain-free state. I can only imagine that, without a tangible and constant reminder of my weakness—a thorn in the flesh—it would be incredibly difficult, perhaps even impossible, to recognize my desperate need for restoration, much less to hope for it.

Others have not been so fortunate. Most people are able to go about their daily lives entirely unaware of the fact that, as Nancy Eiesland has said, we are all only temporarily able-bodied.[1] And this notion echoes the deeper truth that the Apostle Paul is addressing in 1 and 2 Corinthians. That is, whatever power or strength we may think we possess is in fact an illusion.

Put differently, our hope for restoration is not ultimately Christian hope if it depends upon our own capacities. Our hope is not hope at all if its source is something other than the God whose power is made perfect in weakness rather than in displays of strength.

SIGNPOST #2: CHRISTIAN HOPE IS OUR IDENTITY

Like pain of almost any kind, chronic pain diminishes our ability to hope—not simply by making healing or restoration seem like impossibilities, but by becoming an essential part of our identity. We don't just experience pain and brokenness; we are pained and broken people. As such, it is possible to experience restoration not as a return to wholeness, but as a loss of self.

As Terry and Sharon Hargrave point out in their contribution to this issue of the magazine (p. 40), the sense of losing one's identity is actually quite normal, which is why they have developed the Restoration Therapy model of psychotherapy. If we consider this therapeutic model in an explicitly theological mode, we might say that, at its core, to hope as a Christian is to engage in a process of remapping our basic identities—to construct practices by which we navigate pain and suffering in faithful, integrative, and healthy ways.

Of course, because identity-shaping practices involve our bruised and broken bodies, the hope they cultivate is never easy but always hard won. Take, for example, the Christian practice of Communion. This devotional practice is hope-filled not because it does away with our pain, but because it requires us to bring our hurting bodies to

+ RESTORING HOPE

Lewis Smedes

Keeping Hope Alive for a Tomorrow We Cannot Control

Bred in the bone . . . Hope is the Creator's implant into us, His traveling children, on the move into a future we can imagine but cannot control. Hope is our fuel for the journey. As long as we keep hope alive, we keep moving. To stop moving is to die of hope deficiency.

the table in order to become one with the hurting body of Christ. To hope in a Christian mode is to enact and perform our collective suffering as it participates with the One who suffers with the world.

Indeed, as Paul says in Romans:

> *Not only this, but we also rejoice in sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance, character, and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. (Rom 5:3–5 NET)*

Communion is the means by which hope becomes inscribed not only into my body, but also the body of Christ. As we gather around the table, the integration of my fractured self becomes the avenue through which I am able to connect with and commune with others.

I continue to be amazed at how my particular, infinitesimally small story has found its way into the hearts and minds of those whose pain is both alike and yet different than my own. It is a constant reminder that my pain is no longer my own, and neither is my hope. I am no longer my own. My identity can no longer be reduced to my hurting body because I cannot get away from the fact that I am fundamentally a person-in-relation. Borrowing from Henri Nouwen, my pain has become the pain:

> *[T]he deeper truth is that . . . Your pain is the concrete way in which you participate in the pain of humanity. . . . Jesus' suffering, concrete as it was, was the suffering of all humanity. His pain was the pain. . . . Once you discover that you are called to live in solidarity with the hungry, the homeless, the prisoners, the refugees, the sick, and the dying, your very personal pain begins to be converted into the pain and you find new strength to live it. Herein lies the hope of all Christians.*[2]

SIGNPOST #3: CHRISTIAN HOPE IS AN (ESCHATOLOGICAL) EVENT

During the more intense moments of pain that my chronic ailment produces, I often find myself praying some version of Revelation 21:

> *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: "Look! The residence of God is among human beings. He will live among them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will not exist any more—or mourning, or crying, or pain, for the former things have ceased to exist." (Rev 21:3–4)*

Here is the vision of Christian hope writ large. No more tears. No more pain. The whole of the created order restored. God fully present—taking up residence—with human beings. This is not a return to a world that once was or to some imagined version of our former glorious selves. No, this is something altogether new. It is a recapitulation—a return to God's original intention for creation.

I long for this day with every fiber of my being. In some very tangible ways, it is a reality that is already present among us, while at the same time, it is a reality that has yet to come. It is a vision that remains elusive, obscured by my pain, so much so that I, like so many others, often succumb to hopelessness.

So why even bring it up? Because this is exactly where the rubber meets the road theologically. It forces us to ask how, if at all, Christian hope speaks to the deepest pains of the world.

As I have grappled with this question throughout the course of my own journey, I have been helped greatly by Jürgen Moltmann, a German Reformed theologian who recast the Christian notion of hope not as some kind of vague desire for future happiness located in the abstract "beyond" of eternity, but as an urgent call for Christians to bear the cross of Jesus here and now for a world wrought by pain. And for Moltmann, Christian hope is grounded in the revelation of God in Jesus, who is both the Crucified One and the Risen One.

So the Christian hope for restoration—the hope for a created order in which there will be no more "crying, or mourning, or pain"—is rooted in the faithfulness of a crucified God who promises to be present in and through our pain. As Moltmann says, "[God's] promise announces the coming of a not yet existing reality from the future of the truth."[3] In fact, the divine name itself suggests that this faithful promise is what constitutes who God is in the world. According to some translators of the First Testament, the name that God first reveals to Moses in Exodus 3:14 is something like "I will be-there howsoever I will be-there."[4]

In other words, hope has a name. It isn't an idea or a state of mind. It isn't simply about changing our perspective and it isn't some kind of wish fulfillment. As philosopher John Caputo would say, hope emerges from the event that the name of God discloses. It is an event in which God invites us to respond to God's promised future by bringing it to bear upon the pain-filled world around us. It is a dynamic and Spirit-filled promissory event that undoes all of our attempts at controlling or dictating the way in which our future might unfurl. It thus lays a claim upon our lives, summoning us to suffer with and for those who are suffering.[5]

Do you want to become well?

It is a simple question. But the truth it exposes is far from simple. We often don't want to get well. Our sense of self is so bound up with our past trauma that to become well is to become unrecognizable. As a result, we often fail to see just how desperate for restoration we really are.

And this, in the end, is the unsettling truth. Our calling is itself "chronic," and not only because it is a vocation that lasts a lifetime. It is also chronic in that it urges the body of Christ to commit itself to sustaining practices: embodied forms of life that express and communicate our pain in ways that can be shared with our fellow sufferers during times of both turmoil and peace. To be hopeful people we must practice hope in season and out of season. We do so in order to develop our capacity not to avoid pain, but to bear one another's hopelessness and despair—so that, when asked, we might be able to speak on behalf of those whose pain has robbed them of their voice: "Yes. We want to become well."

ENDNOTES

1. I have been helped tremendously in my thinking about a theology of chronic pain by Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).
2. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey through Anguish to Freedom* (New York: Image Books, 1998), 103–4 [emphasis in original].
3. Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. James W. Leitch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 85.
4. Cf. Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Random House, 1995).
5. See John D. Caputo, *The Weakness of God: A Theology of the Event* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006).

Christine Pohl is the associate provost and professor of church and society/Christian ethics at Asbury Theological Seminary, where she has been teaching since 1989. Dr. Pohl has written influential books on hospitality and other practices that include *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Eerdmans, 1999) and *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices that Sustain Us* (Eerdmans, 2012).

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RESTORING HOSPITALITY: A BLESSING FOR VISITOR AND HOST

A CONVERSATION WITH CHRISTINE POHL

Christine Pohl's writings on hospitality have influenced my own thinking and practices about life as a Christian living in community. Dr. Pohl generously shared her insights on the topic of hospitality in a thoughtful and inspiring conversation from which the following article was taken. —Miyoung Yoon Hammer

MIYOUNG YOON HAMMER: I would like to explore what it means to restore hospitality as it was intended to be practiced. With that in mind, I'm wondering if you could begin by talking about the origins of hospitality.

CHRISTINE POHL: I don't think we can state definitively what the origin of hospitality is, because it's a very ancient practice valued by most ancient cultures. Perhaps we could say that its origin is in human vulnerability, sociality, and longings for community. As a stranger a person is often vulnerable, and when they're traveling, they're very dependent on the kindness of other strangers, other people whose community they're trying to enter. So I suspect that hospitality began as a form of mutual aid. Before there were hotels and restaurants and inns, everyone, whether they had resources or not, was dependent on the kindness of strangers when they were traveling. Everybody was, in a sense, vulnerable.

As a practice, hospitality was really important to human well-being. Oftentimes cultures associated it with their gods or with some understanding of the divine: that protection and provision for strangers was linked in some way to concerns about divine things.

I think the other early component to hospitality was almost always eating together. That's a profound form of mutual recognition and respect for human relationships which, again, has its origins in human sociality—in being made for a community.

MYH: An assumption I have is that when we have to start teaching something explicitly that was once an organic part of our lives, it means there's been a shift away from how things once were. Does our having to give instruction about hospitality and what it means to be hospitable suggest that it is something that has been lost and needs to be recovered?

CP: A practice like hospitality has to be talked about and taught in some ways, or "caught" at least, for the next generation to pick it up. It's true that one of the reasons that we need more explicit teaching today about the history and practice of hospitality is because in many ways it has gotten lost, at least in US culture. People stopped telling the stories about it. What's interesting historically is the number of stories woven through various traditions about the practice of hospitality: the surprise in who the guest turns out to be, or who the host is, or in the blessing associated with it. When people stopped talking about it, or took it for granted, or became too busy for it, the whole practice began to change. You can make an argument that many of the pieces of the practice of hospitality have endured historically but that it has stopped being a coherent whole—that we've lost the sense of the practice being located in a larger narrative.

MYH: A couple of words you have used to describe hospitality are mutuality and vulnerability, and that vulnerability necessitates hospitality. Perhaps, at least in Western American culture, while mutuality may be valued, vulnerability really isn't.

CP: That's true. We can protect ourselves from vulnerability if we're middle class and have resources. We're not nearly as dependent on the kindness of strangers as we used to be except in emergencies, when we again

see hospitality played out in more traditional ways. People do want to show hospitality and not only in emergency situations—but the reality is that most of us today don't depend on strangers if we're traveling; we have hotel rooms and restaurants for that.

MYH: You've visited with a number of different faith communities and engaged in conversations about hospitality. In your book *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* you wrote, "Sustained hospitality requires a light hold on material possessions and a commitment to a simplified lifestyle." Can you comment about this connection between holding lightly to material possessions and having a deeper sense of hospitality?

CP: Hospitality by definition involves welcoming people into a space that's lived in—and some possessions are certainly helpful for people to be comfortable. But there is a certain irony in the reality that the more possessions one has, the more one can feel the need to protect and care for those possessions and thus be less willing to risk welcoming strangers into their context. That's not always true, but it's often the case.

What was notable among the faith communities I visited was the choice to live pretty simply. That can make it more comfortable oftentimes for the strangers who are being welcomed. Neither they nor the hosts have to worry about anyone harming possessions. People still care about their possessions, which is why I talk about a lighter hold rather than no possessions at all. It's a complicated relationship: possessions usually make things more comfortable, but too many can actually make welcoming others uncomfortable and even unworkable as hosts become more protective.

MYH: Would you say that hospitality is a cultural tradition or a spiritual tradition, or is it both?

CP: It's definitely both. Hospitality is practiced in every culture. Different cultures emphasize or treasure different aspects of hospitality, but almost all practice it one way or another.

It is interesting, however, how often hospitality is connected in some way to blessing and to God. Hospitality is certainly foundational in the Christian tradition, but it is decidedly also spiritual in its connection to mystery—to the presence of God or angels—so it's very much a spiritual tradition that is often linked to blessing. In the stories involving hospitality in the Old Testament, blessing is very frequently present. Strangers turn out to be angels, or guests bring good news, or they offer the promise of a longed-for child. Ultimately hospitality is very much both a cultural and a spiritual practice.

MYH: When it comes to hospitality, we more often think about what the host is giving. But you're talking about what the stranger has to offer.

CP: It goes both ways, and that's part of the mystery and the wonder of it. In the Christian tradition, hospitality is connected to Jesus being both guest and host to us. Something that stood out to me in talking with practitioners of hospitality—and resonated with my own experience of welcoming refugees and people who are homeless—was that we so often go into these interactions thinking that we're the one who is providing the benefit, the help, the care our guest needs. In fact, it is the guest who brings the blessing. My life has been changed through these kinds of interactions. You do really have a sense that you're standing on holy ground when you're interacting with strangers. It can be quite a remarkable thing.

Today hospitality is generally understood more as a duty to welcome others, but that differs from the early Christian understanding, which was a much richer one. The tradition of hospitality in those times was so powerful because there was an assumption that there would be blessings for everyone, both host and guest. Not that it wasn't also difficult or risky at times, because it was. But the expectation that God would be present was very strong in the earlier centuries.

MYH: How did we lose hospitality as a core part of our tradition? While very much alive and explicit in some Christian communities, as a tradition it seems to have been lost in the greater church community. What story do you tell about that loss?

CP: It is a complicated story with cultural, political, and socioeconomic components to it. Hospitality, as a robust practice, has often been associated with an earlier period when social and economic arrangements were different. My work has focused on tracing a very Western understanding of hospitality—starting in my own context and then looking back historically. The story would be traced out a little differently for other cultures around the world.

In the West around the modern period, hospitality stopped being, in a sense, as useful as it had previously been. It wasn't seen as a particularly helpful way to meet the needs of people anymore, especially as there were more and more needy individuals disconnected from communities. It also increasingly was misused as a way of reinforcing power and privilege. By the time we got to the Reformation, the reformers were more hesitant to see the value of hospitality in the

STORY AND HOSPITALITY: A UNIQUE FULLER EXPERIMENT

In my final year of the MDiv program on Fuller's Pasadena campus, I was longing for an opportunity to combine my passion for justice and storytelling as a way to practically apply what I was learning in the classroom and to prepare myself for whatever lay ahead after graduation. By divine coincidence, I was asked by the editor of *FULLER* magazine to consider being the coordinator of the magazine's budding Story Table experiment. I found myself quickly inaugurated into a hands-on engagement of the relationship between justice and hospitality through storytelling. What unfolded over the next nine months was a messy and exhilarating trial-and-error process of putting my hands and feet to the task of embodying a theology of welcome.

Birthed out of *FULLER* magazine and now an important part of *FULLER* studio, the Story Table is a gathering originally intended to bring the content of the magazine to life around the intimate space of a communal dinner table. We invite seven storytellers to share their personal stories over a meal around a theme explored in the magazine. In addition, we invite—and feed—people from the community who encircle the dinner table, acting as witnesses to the sacred and transformative act of storytelling.

At its core, the Story Table is about hospitality. The sacred and transformative component of Story Table would be lost if it weren't for shared space and shared food. It's about tearing from the same loaf of bread and dipping a ladle into the same pot of soup—food meant to be shared communally. Shared food acts as an equalizer. Though it cannot erase the value-laden differences of race, gender, age, native language, or socioeconomic status, it can—for a brief few hours—unite us as the same simple meal provides the same nourishment to all who have gathered. We believe that story can have the same effect.

I think this is why food practices were so important to Paul in the New Testament. Paul knew that food rituals are deeply engrained in our cultural and religious practices. Whether instructing the church in Corinth or the believers in Rome, Paul implored Christians to welcome to the table all who believe, whether Jew or Gentile, wealthy or impoverished, slave or free, male or female. Much like the early church, we continue to learn how to gather and break bread across lines of difference, and the Story Table is one place where this spiritual discipline is put intentionally to practice. When I encounter the raw and real story of my neighbor at the dinner table, I encounter God in a new and unexpected way. Theologian Diane Pavlac Glyer connects this poignant moment with years of Christian practice, explaining, "The ancient tradition of hospitality specifically meant to take our eyes off ourselves and linger face to face with someone who is not like me."[1]

At the Story Table on reconciling race, Associate Professor of Urban Mission Jude Tiersma Watson shared her own story of an intense moment gazing at a photo of a lynching and seeing a face very like her fiancé's father in the man hanging from the tree. She realized that her fiancé's story and his father's story were also becoming her own story as they joined together as family. She recalled Paul's image of the body of Christ—if one member of the body is hurting, all are hurting—and it transformed her understanding of God and what it means to be God's people.[2] This is the power of story that can open us to new encounters with the divine in unexpected ways.

Hospitality creates space and safety for the courageous act of storytelling, and storytelling is consequently transformative because it is a crucial step in living out the gospel of reconciliation. Once we enter into that intimate shared space, we are transformed by the stories to which we bear witness. Stories do not eliminate or blanket over difference; stories make difference no longer alien. This is why it is essential that these stories not be shared in a vacuum—they are shared in a room that also hosts a crowd of witnesses. These witnesses are charged with the act of bearing the truth of the stories that they have experienced within their own spheres of influence.

I think about when I have witnessed a really powerful performance that has transformed my understanding of friendship, or sorrow, or God in a way that I felt compelled to share with others. In the same way, MDiv student Caleb Campbell's story about a friend's violent death outside a home in Torrance, California,[3] or PhD student Leah Fortson's story of being invited to preach but provided with a lower podium because she is a woman,[4] have the power to transform our understanding of neighbor-love, of systemic discrimination, and of God's unfolding justice in the world. Like a drop of water in a still pool, these stories ripple through our communities and leave us changed.

The final product of the Story Table may look neatly polished, but the steps along the way were a constant exercise in examining my own practices of hospitality. Even logistics become a discipline in extending welcome. Can our guests hold these plates in their laps easily? Is the lighting too severe? Does it feel as if we are inviting people to dine in the home of a friend—as we do consider them our friends! There were even some painful moments when my patience was put to the test as we anxiously awaited all of the communal elements of one Story Table to fall into place. From the way loaves of bread are sliced to the careful selection of the storytellers, every step of Story Table planning has challenged me to embody the same hospitality that we see present for the few hours that our community gathers, dines, and delves into the intimate act of sharing stories.

ENDNOTES

1. Diane Pavlac Gyler, "Intellectual Hospitality," *APU Life* (Summer '15), 16.
2. Read Jude's full story from the Story Table on reconciling race at https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/story-table-reconciling-race/.
3. Read Caleb's full story from the Story Table on reconciling race at https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/story-table-reconciling-race/.
4. Read Leah's full story from the Story Table on women at https://fullerstudio.fuller.edu/story-table-women/.

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church. We still recognize it of course, and Calvin is particularly eloquent about the importance of hospitality toward refugees. But older trajectories of hospitality—crossing social boundaries, building community, offering respect to people different from yourself—got lost. One of the stories I tell in my book is about John Wesley in the 18th century, who for the most part recovered the activities and practices associated with hospitality but didn't ever call it hospitality, because by that time, the word "hospitality" was associated with a very different set of commitments and activities.

MYH: If not hospitality, what did he call it?

CP: He didn't call it anything; he just did it. He even talked about how these acts were recovering ancient traditions, but he talked about it in terms of having small groups in homes or making a place for strangers, even forming a "stranger's friend society." All of the practices were there—for example, church leaders sharing meals with widows and orphans—but without the vocabulary of hospitality, and if you don't use the vocabulary, it's harder to connect it with the ancient tradition. So it's a bit of a complicated story. The tradition endured more visibly in the Catholic church, particularly through the Catholic Worker Movement, which was connected to a Benedictine monasticism that never really lost its connection to historic hospitality.

MYH: Why is it important to restore hospitality as a Christian tradition?

CP: It's fundamental to our identity and our lifestyle as Christians. It's what makes us distinctive, because Jesus called us to a particular kind of hospitality that welcomes those who often, on the face of it, don't seem to have as much to offer. When Jesus says in Matthew 25 that in welcoming the stranger or the needy person we might be welcoming him, and when he says in Luke 14 that when we give dinner parties, to invite not friends and family but the poor and the lame, he's talking about inviting people who are usually excluded and seeing them as an important part of our lives and our communities. That's a distinctive understanding of hospitality. Along with that is the possibility of blessing: that we might be welcoming Jesus, and that clearly God is our host.

Christian hospitality flows out of a life of gratitude. We've been welcomed into fellowship with God, and that welcome came at a huge cost. The connections between gratitude and hospitality, between God's welcome and our welcome, feed and undergird the Christian life. Losing track of hospitality means we have lost a very beautiful and life-giving practice—often difficult, but beautiful and life-giving.

MYH: Would you say that hospitality ought to look different when it is lived out by Christians as opposed to non-Christians?

CP: I think it ought to look distinctive because of Jesus' identification with the least of these. In the historical Christian tradition there was significant teaching that we shouldn't use hospitality instrumentally, to gain advantage. It shouldn't be what the early writers called "ambitious hospitality." We should give it as a response to the welcome that we have received—and to that extent, it is a distinctive kind of hospitality. We should be willing and interested in truly making room, especially for people who don't usually have a place.

MYH: Concerning the broader social landscape, you have written about the power of recognizing and acknowledging others, and the role of hospitality in respecting the dignity and equal worth of every person and transcending social differences. As we consider the power of recognizing, how are Christians called to live out hospitality in the face of challenging and important social issues such as immigration, same-sex marriage, and racism?

CP: The first move on the part of a Christian should be in the direction of welcome. It's not the only move, but hospitality as a tradition challenges us. It's a helpful framework for thinking about some of these issues. It also functions as a warning because Christians haven't always done very well on these things.

For me, hospitality means our impulse is going to be to love as God loves, to welcome as God welcomes. This posture, of course, doesn't address all of the issues that come up with the challenges we're facing today. Hospitality is complex and not the only practice that Christians have to take seriously, but hospitality helps us think about the power of dynamics, the recognition issues, the guest-host relations.

There is, though, a tension between welcoming strangers and maintaining identity and community—a tension that's never fully resolved. It is actually traceable right back to covenantal understandings of faithfulness. Hospitality, at least, helps us name some of the challenges we face and reminds us that when people's basic well-being is at stake, our call is to make room, to offer welcome.

Some see hospitality as the full answer to these challenging issues, but I don't believe that hospitality alone can be our response. Other practices such as fidelity and truthfulness are critical as well, and sometimes they interact in a complex way with hospitality. Most significant of all, to me, is gratitude: hospitality becomes grudging and distorted if it does not flow from a life of gratitude. Committing to a tradition of hospitality grounded in gratitude, it seems to me, would take us a long way down the road toward faithfully responding to God's love—as we recognize the value in every human being and come together with respect, integrity, and truth.

A MORATORIUM ON HOSPITALITY?

Evelyne A. Reisacher

Evelyne A. Reisacher, associate professor of Islamic studies and intercultural relations, has taught at Fuller since 2001. Her current research involves exploring gender issues in Islam, Muslim-Christian relations, world religions, and affect regulation across cultures. Before coming to Fuller, Reisacher worked at an organization called L'Ami for 20 years in France, facilitating the relationship between churches and North African immigrants and developing courses, teaching tools, and seminars for sharing the gospel cross-culturally. She has trained Christian leaders and church members in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. More from Professor Reisacher can be found at Fuller.edu/Studio.

Recently a Muslim friend, whom I will call Leila, told me bluntly, "I was born in the wrong century." When I asked why, she said: "Would you feel welcome in the world when there is so much negative talk about Islam and Muslims, and people are so afraid of you? I don't know where to turn in order to feel that it is okay to be a Muslim and treated like the rest of the world." I could see deep pain in her eyes as she talked.

Until recently, Leila had a good life in France. She and her husband have excellent jobs as doctors. Their children attend reputable schools and have promising careers. Although she was born into a devoted Muslim family that migrated to France, Leila rarely practices her faith and did not disapprove when her children decided to adopt a nonreligious lifestyle. Nevertheless, Leila's heart is broken when she hears how Muslims are often portrayed as terrorists and Islam considered a threat to civilization. If Leila were the only person with such views, I would not be worried, thinking that she is perhaps too sensitive. But I meet more and more practicing and nonpracticing Muslims with similar feelings. If this trend grows, we will see more and more fear, distrust, and hate, which will only escalate existing intractable conflicts.

Indeed, countries that welcomed Muslims in the past are now more reluctant to do so. Muslims who have been living peacefully in those countries for years feel increasingly threatened. Likewise, Christians are increasingly afraid of Muslims, especially since the rise of terrorist attacks, beheadings, and other types of aggressions perpetrated by some in the name of Islam. As Christians, we are standing at a crossroads. We can participate in the current polarization between Muslims and non-Muslims, leading potentially to even greater conflicts than the ones we witness today in Syria and parts of Africa. Or we can join people of good will, like the three Christian scholars of Islam I will describe in this article, who invite us to adopt missional practices of hospitality toward Muslims.

At the outset of this article I want to reaffirm that welcoming Muslims does not mean that I water down my faith. I like sharing the gospel with Muslims in the joyful spirit of the resurrection of Christ. In preparation for my talk at the North American InterVarsity's Urbana student missions conference in December 2015, I reflected much on this question. I proposed that Christian witness among Muslims today should include "Welcome, Wisdom, and Wonder."[1] I will focus here on "welcome," because this attitude addresses the first assertion that I heard from Leila: "I do not feel welcomed!"

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN TIMES OF TERROR

Leila admits that today's tensions are not new. Throughout history, there have been peaceful times but also countless wars and conflicts between Muslims and non-Muslims, including Christians.[2] The reasons have been manifold, but often interpreted as theological. Christians and Muslims, who both claim Abraham and Moses[3] as their ancestors, disagree on their descriptions of God, salvation, and other key doctrines. But there have been other reasons behind these conflicts, such as the disparity of resources that sometimes exists between religious communities, or claims over territory. Early Muslim empires, for example, conquered land from the Christian Byzantine Empire. Later, during the Crusades and toward the end of the Ottoman Empire, Christians fought to regain control over some of these territories. Today, there are examples of all of these types of conflicts.

They are often called "religious" because Muslims and Christians, whose worldviews are God-centered, include religious language and ideas to support their actions, but they are often loosely linked with theological controversies and have more to do with economic, political, or social issues.

Thankfully, however, interfaith relations have also included harmonious times throughout history, and even today many contemporary societies have developed models of peaceful interfaith coexistence.[4] Freedom of religion is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In France, Leila has the choice to practice her faith or not. Evangelicals are increasingly engaging in interfaith dialogue without losing their passion for sharing the gospel with Muslims.[5] On the Muslim side, the recent Marrakesh Declaration is an important step in protecting the rights of religious minorities in predominantly Muslim majority communities.[6] All these examples show that religious pluralism has become the norm in many societies that host different religious communities, although there is still progress to be made—such as, for example, encouraging Muslim societies to provide more protection for Muslim-born followers of Christ, since apostasy is still considered a crime in many Muslim societies.

Why is Leila so distressed, if there is greater freedom of religion? Her anguish is generated by daily global news reports of conflicts involving ISIS, Boko Haram, and other radical Islamic groups. These have drastically altered the dynamics of Muslim-Christian relations. I mentioned earlier that, traditionally, Muslims do not remove God from the public sphere; ISIS moves the rhetoric further. Its entire discourse is saturated with Qur'anic and Hadith passages to justify horrific acts made in the name of Islam, although their war is primarily about territory and influence rather than theology.[7] Most Muslims today contest the way ISIS misuses those sacred passages to justify violence, beheadings, and bombings.[8] Nevertheless, gradually in the minds of non-Muslims, ISIS becomes the symbol of the "real Islam" and all Muslims become terrorists-in-waiting! This is what saddens

+ RESTORING HOSPITALITY

HENRI NOUWEN

Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life

The paradox of hospitality is that it wants to create emptiness, not a fearful emptiness, but a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages, dance their own dances; free also to leave and follow their own vocations. Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the life style of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own.

Leila: She is the first to critique the way ISIS uses Qur'anic texts to justify killing innocent people and does not believe that they represent the majority of Muslims.

There are two reactions Christians can adopt in the face of terrorism. Either they can turn their backs on Muslims out of fear and mistrust (which is legitimate when one faces a real terrorist), or they can seize the opportunity given by this new context of terror to understand Muslims better in general and to engage with them in the name of Christ. This means that Christians have to ask honest questions: Do I truly know Muslims

before I pass judgment? Am I aware of the diversity that exists within Islam? Do I know the theological debates taking place within Islam? Am I ready to address difficult issues such as, for example, recent abuses toward women in Cologne, Germany, allegedly committed by members of Muslim communities?[9] Christians and Muslims may be neighbors living next to each other, but that does not mean they deeply know each other. One can live next to a neighbor for a lifetime without truly knowing him or her. Why is it important to get closer to Muslims? Because without a strong bond, humans cannot withstand the kinds of turbulent times we face today. Those who had Muslim friends before the ISIS crisis have reacted very differently than those who did not. These bonds formed with Muslims prior to the conflict affirm that Muslims can be trusted and are not all terrorists in disguise.

Could our current global situation thus offer an opportunity instead of a challenge in Muslim-Christian relations? I see it as an opportunity, and would like to share some of the ways we can engage with Muslims in a time like this. The way forward is not to live in a place where we retreat from each other. Our times require opening up and conducting a genuine dialogue, not just theological but also societal, looking at how Muslims and Christians can live together on this planet in respectful ways that do not compromise their beliefs. In order to help us practice this kind of hospitality, I share three examples of Christians who decided to turn toward Muslims instead of away from them in times of terror and war. In their presence, Leila would certainly feel welcomed.

SACRED HOSPITALITY

Hospitality was a key concept for Louis Massignon, an eminent French Catholic Islamicist of the 20th century. Before learning it from the Bible, he personally experienced the lavish hospitality of a Muslim family who rescued him when he was in captivity in Baghdad, Iraq, in the early 1900s, accused of being a spy in a time of intense conflict between Muslims and Christians in the Middle East. Their extravagant Muslim hospitality was inspired by the desert culture and by precepts from the Qur'an and the Hadith.[10] Massignon was deeply moved by this, and later in his life, "sacred hospitality" became a major theme of his engagement with Muslims. He based his reflections on the study of Abraham and the three hosts (Genesis 18:1–10). In Abraham's time, as in Muhammad's time in Arabia, there were no institutions and no hotels; hospitality was the responsibility of individuals and families. It was considered a sacred virtue, since the survival of strangers in unfamiliar and hostile places depended solely on the protection of generous hosts. The Genesis passage depicts Abraham sitting at the entrance to his tent on a very hot day. He offered three wayfarers standing nearby water, tree shade, and food as refreshment. Without anticipating it, Abraham ended up hosting messengers of God.

Massignon developed this theme of hospitality to stimulate Christians to engage with Muslims. To Massignon, sacred hospitality was shaped by the example of God who is "at once Guest, Host, and Home"[11]—reflections that inspired many Islamicists to use this model of engagement with Muslims.[12] He practiced this model of hospitality not just in times of peace but also during the French-Algerian war in the 1960s, showing that sacred hospitality is also relevant when there are risks involved, as enacted by the Muslim family who rescued him in Iraq. This led Massignon to very practical actions, such as helping peaceful Algerian demonstrators who were arrested in the streets of Paris on October 17, 1961, by trying to "recover bodies [of those] discarded in the River Seine to provide proper Islamic burials. His efforts elicited physical attacks at speaking engagements and criticism by embarrassed friends and family."[13] Massignon's love for the Algerians in times of war deeply touched the heart of Leila when I told her that story.

INVERTED PERSPECTIVE

Miroslav Volf, professor of theology at Yale Divinity School, provides a second model for hospitality in times of terror. As a Croatian Protestant he experienced firsthand the conflict between Muslims and Christians in the Balkans.[14] He has also wrestled with the question of reconciliation after 9/11.[15] In a chapter on "Living with the 'Other,'" Volf explains what he means by "inverted perspective."[16] He writes, "if we consider other people like 'other', namely 'not so good in some regard as I am myself,' then, I am also an 'other' to this person." That is certainly what Leila is feeling. Once she was "the other" in a negative way to French people, the French became "the other" to her and she felt a deep disconnect. How would she not feel undesirably "other" when the daily news reports horrific acts coming from people who claim they are Muslims, or when a Google search for images of Muslims essentially reveals horrific faces, or when the fear of Muslims becomes a motto to win elections? Psychologists know that negative memories are easier to remember than happy ones.[17] Who remembers the news of a happy Muslim family versus the bombing of a school by Muslims?

Volf invites us to understand the "reciprocity involved in the relation of otherness" so that we also better understand what others think of us. After the terrorist attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, I recalled the people who came through my apartment in Paris during my many years of ministry among Muslims there. Hundreds of young second-generation North Africans attended our Bible studies. Some were extremely distressed by that feeling of derogatory "otherness." Several became followers of Jesus, while others remained Muslim or became faithless. I wonder if the feeling of "otherness" is not one of the feelings that ISIS plays on to attract some into perpetrating the horrific terrorist acts committed in Paris. Could we, as Christians, practice inverted perspective to help others not choose this way but instead feel deeply connected to the country in which they live?

Volf tells us that inverted perspective invites us to "see others through their own eyes." This to me involves listening and even more: the other must feel that you have truly heard him or her. In conversations with Leila this would mean hearing not just the positive things she has to say about non-Muslims, but also the pain she feels and her feelings of rejection, without automatically reacting in defensiveness. Volf's "inverted perspective" also invites us to "see ourselves through the eyes of others." Do we ask Muslims how they see us? Of course, they may not express these feelings right away, but instead of systematically rejecting their critiques, can we take time to listen to their grievances as we hope they will listen to ours?

What I like about Volf's approach is that he does not ask people to avoid the tough questions; rather, he knows that they need a safe place for holding those conversations. He calls this "embrace."[18] Without a safe and welcoming context, communication will not succeed. Unfortunately, in our current times Muslims and Christians often start with arguing before listening to each other. I read Volf's book many years ago but picked

+ RESTORING HOSPITALITY

MARILYNNE ROBINSON
Gilead

There's a shimmer on a child's hair, in the sunlight. There are rainbow colors in it, tiny, soft beams of just the same colors you can see in the dew sometimes. They're in the petals of flowers, and they're on a child's skin. Your hair is straight and dark, and your skin is very fair. I suppose you're not prettier than most children. You're just a nice-looking boy, a bit slight, well scrubbed and well mannered. All that is fine, but it's your existence I love you for, mainly. Existence seems to me now the most remarkable thing that could ever be imagined.

it up again recently because I believe it is so relevant for today's context. "Embrace" is a form of hospitality. It does not ignore challenges. It welcomes hospitality rules that provide safety not for one but all communities involved, protects the human rights of all individuals, looks at all the consequences (short- and long-term) of welcoming new communities, and pays special attention to the poor and the needy. This hospitality is practiced with the mind of Christ.[19]

THE GOSPEL OF RECONCILIATION

In an article on the gospel of reconciliation within the wrath of nations, missiologist David W. Shenk discusses peacemaking in a conflict-ridden context in Indonesia between Muslim and Christian communities.[20] He explains how a Christian pastor leading a reconciliation movement in Indonesia paid a visit to a Muslim leader. Shenk writes, "The commander greeted him gruffly: 'You are a Christian and an infidel, and therefore I can kill you!' Unfazed, the pastor returned again and again to the commander's center to drink tea and converse."[21] Later the pastor invited this leader to help in the post-tsunami reconstruction work of Banda Aceh. As these two leaders, Muslim and Christian, worked together, shared the same room, and ate together, they became friends. Shenk concludes this article by saying, "One evening around the evening meal, the commander began to weep. He said, 'When I think of what we have done to you, and how you reciprocate with love, my heart has melted within me!' He confided to the pastor, 'I have discovered that you Christians are good infidels.'"[22]

I report this story to remind us that in times of war and terror, there have been Christians whom God has used as peacemakers and witnesses of the gospel of reconciliation. I will never forget the example of the seven Cistercian monks of the Abbey of Tibhirine in Algeria, who were murdered in 1996 because they wanted to stay with their Algerian friends during a brutal civil war in which terrorism claimed the lives of over 200,000 Algerian civilians. Hospitality and welcome can pose aggravated risks in wartime. I would not recommend to anyone that he or she stay in a context of terror to be a witness, but some choose to do so because they feel God's calling to share the struggles of innocent populations who cannot flee war.

The devastating consequence of terrorism, beyond, of course, the killing of innocent people, is that it destroys the practice of hospitality. We are afraid to invite the "other" or to be guests of the "other." We need to acknowledge this challenge in order to be wise in our practice of hospitality. Welcome is concerned about safety. In any culture where hospitality is valued, there are rules to make the practice of hospitality sustainable long term. Furthermore, hospitality must sometimes

be practiced from a position of weakness and not of power. The Cistercian monks of Tibhirine made the choice to be weak and to become guests of those who suffered and were in danger. Not everyone will be led to experience hospitality in such dangerous contexts, but the lessons of hospitality from a position of weakness are an integral part of mission.[23] Our greatest model is Jesus, who lived in times of interfaith and inter-ethnic conflict. He was both host and guest of those who were despised. He entered the house of Zacchaeus and accepted water from a Samaritan woman. They were considered foreign, heretical, and immoral by people in their local community. Jesus welcomed them not as a host but as a guest, just as he would certainly become a guest to Leila and ask for her hospitality—and just as he became a guest in the lives of all of us who now call him Lord.

CONCLUSION

Many have this question on their minds: Should Christians support a temporary moratorium on hospitality during times of terrorism? I hope my article shows that they should not. Hospitality and welcome are Christian practices, as they are sacred for Muslims as well. Let's be hospitable in the name of Christ, without ignoring the unique challenges that times of terror bring. Let's design practices that are not based on emotional responses only, but that shape a long-term future in which religious communities can peacefully live together because they know and respect each other deeply. I hope that the three models provided here will be useful resources for those who want to exercise this kind of interfaith hospitality. Although my article starts with the painful feelings of Leila, I trust that she will meet more and more people who will understand and practice sacred hospitality, act out of an inverted perspective, and live out the gospel of reconciliation.

ENDNOTES

1. "Welcome, Wisdom, and Wonder," presentation at InterVarsity's Urbana youth mission conference, December 29, 2015, available at https://vimeo.com/150282939 or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNd0auxPdis.
2. In his book *A History of Christian-Muslim Relations* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000), Hugh Goddard, professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh, retraces major events characterizing the encounter between Christians and Muslims throughout history with its ups and downs.
3. See, for example, Qur'an 3:84, which reads, "We believe in God, and that which has been sent down on us, and sent down on Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, and the Tribes, and in that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and the Prophets, of their Lord; we make no division between any of them, and to Him we surrender" (Arberry's translation).
4. See Goddard, *History of Christian-Muslim Relations*.
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RESTORING BELONGING AMONG "THE LEAST OF THESE"

THE VOICE OF THE CHURCH IN A TIME OF HEIGHTENED IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT

Lisseth Rojas-Flores

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> *Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. (Matt 19:14)*
>
> *I was a stranger and you invited me in. (Matt 25:35)*

There are few social issues in America that pose the kind of challenge to our concept of belonging that the issue of immigration does. We are a nation founded by immigrants and many of us take pride in being a nation of such rich diversity. However, we are perplexed by the complex issues that surround immigration, particularly as it pertains to undocumented migration. At the heart of this web of concerns, the impact of undocumented status, deportation, and the persistent threat of deportation on the children of immigrants has stirred much interest in the domains of mental health, social services, and social policy. Foundations of health—spiritual, physical, cognitive, and emotional—are established during childhood. A multidisciplinary body of research documents that systems and social structures affect the development of children and the health of the family. Like race, class, and gender, legal status[1] is considered a major social determinant of health and a "societal risk factor" under which people live.

From a Christian perspective, these societal risks can be perceived as potential obstacles in the path to reaching God's purpose, provision, and projections for each one of us. These obstacles can be present in corporate contexts, and we know that the corporate sin of social injustice negates the very *imago Dei* nature that God has bestowed upon us. The Greek word *hamartia*, or "missing the mark," highlights our failure to live up to what God intended us to be. Theologian Stanley J. Grenz argues that "sin refers to whatever seeks to thwart God's plan and goal, namely, the establishment of a community."[2] Social structures that cause alienation and estrangement skew God's proposed plan for humankind to live in community and connection. As followers of Christ, we must transcend the pull of our culture and expose the ill effects of injustice that often are hidden in plain sight. Immigration enforcement in the United States, as it is structured today, is one such social structure that leaves many children at risk of "missing the mark" of reaching their full potential.

THE GRAVITY AND MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

The world is experiencing a dire humanitarian crisis. Massive numbers of displaced peoples are moving from one region of the world to another in search of safety, security, and shelter. Every continent, from Africa to Europe to the Americas, is struggling with mass migration. More often than not, we are seeing the inability of national leaders and policies to cope with this growing concern. From 2014 to today, there has been a surge in the number of family units (mothers with young children) and unaccompanied minors fleeing from violence-stricken Central American countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico to the United States. Aggravating this crisis is the fact that nearly 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States are caught in a vacuum of immigration reform debates marked by inaction and grave polarization. Failure to create pathways to legal residency and citizenship has paved the way for the heightened immigration enforcement of today and resulted in historic levels of deportations of Latinos, many of whom are parents of citizen children. In fact, 5.5 million children in the United States live with at least one undocumented parent, and 88 percent (4.5 million) of these children are US-born citizens.[3] In just over

two years, between July 2010 and September 2012, nearly 250,000 parents of citizen children were deported, representing an annual average of about 90,000 parental deportations.[4]

Although "illegal" immigration has been with us since our nation's creation, immigration enforcement has grown in a manner never known before. In a Migration Policy Institute report[5] on illegal immigration and the dramatic growth of enforcement, the authors state that over the past 25 years this institution has evolved into "a complex, cross-agency system that is interconnected in an unprecedented fashion." Fueling today's historic level of deportations is the intersection of the criminal justice system and immigration enforcement, with the collaboration of local enforcement. For-profit companies overseeing detention and deportation centers, such the Corrections Corporation of America and the GEO Group, add to a growing need to keep the immigration enforcement machine running. Add an "us" versus "them" rhetoric, and the problem is compounded exponentially. It is not surprising, then, to see how immigration enforcement has become a powerful force against powerless and displaced peoples.

Caught in the middle of unprecedented immigration enforcement and anti-immigrant rhetoric, many children of immigrants struggle to make meaning of their experience as US citizens. These kids are growing up with a unique sense of having what I call a *vulnerable citizenship*. Many citizen children of undocumented immigrants have a deep-seated sense of not belonging anywhere: many have never been to their parents' countries of origin and, at the same time, because of their parents' legal status they feel they do not fully belong in the United States. Like their undocumented parents, these citizen children are often "living in the shadows."

In the School of Psychology, through research funded by the Foundation for Child Development, my students and I have borne witness to the tenuous and confusing sense of belonging many children of immigrants contend with on a daily basis. Many know that their vulnerable citizenship means their parents could easily vanish at any time when immigration enforcement takes them away. A 12-year-old child in our study described her emotional dilemma and constant uncertainty, saying she often worries her parents could be deported at any time, anywhere:

> *If my parents are deported . . . I am afraid my parents will have to go to Honduras and they won't have a job there. They would worry a lot about me and my little sister. . . . I think I would go with my mom if she was taken by* la migra *. . . but I worry because I can't read or write Spanish. I've never been in Honduras.*

The developmental implications of growing up under the shadows are well documented. Research shows that having an undocumented parent puts children at risk for a host of potential problems, negatively impacting children's successful development and academic achievement over and above what one would directly attribute to the ill effects of poverty.[6] Further, clinical research demonstrates that sudden and unexpected family separation can cause emotional trauma and psychological distress in children. So it is not surprising to learn that children of unauthorized immigrants experience higher risk for depression, anxiety, and trauma.[7] These mental health challenges are known to rob a child, as well as society, of the intellectual capital and overall well-being of that child and can persist well into adulthood.

+ RESTORING BELONGING

HENRI NOUWEN

Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life

In our world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture and country, from their neighbors, friends and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a painful search for a hospitable place where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found. Although many, we might even say most, strangers in this world become easily the victims of a fearful hostility, it is possible for men and women and obligatory for Christians to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings. The movement from hostility to hospitality is hard and full of difficulties. Our society seems to be increasingly full of fearful, defensive, aggressive people anxiously clinging to their property and inclined to look at their surrounding world with suspicion, always expecting an enemy to suddenly appear, intrude and do harm. But still—that is our vocation: to convert the hostis *into a* hospes*, the enemy into a guest, and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced.*

When one lives in the shadows, his or her connection to community is often disrupted. Unauthorized parents' withdrawal from social life in an effort to avoid deportation has reverberating effects on their citizen children's access to services and opportunities to thrive. Moreover, these uncertain and challenging realities often lead children of unauthorized immigrants to question their inherent dignity and worth individually, and as a society we start "missing the mark," failing to live how God intended us to live.

In times such as these, when an unprecedented number of peoples are displaced globally, how does the church respond to the immigrant and the refugee? In our own personal geographical location and missional vocation, how are we as Christians to respond toward the immigrant in a time of heightened immigration enforcement? How are we to respond in light of the Christ's words: "I was a stranger, and you invited me in? " Can the church set an example of taking strangers in and affirming they belong?

WHAT IS THE CHURCH TO DO?

How do we fight corporate sin—social injustice—as it relates to unjust laws and practices against the immigrants in our midst? Perhaps we begin with intercessory prayer, missionary proclamation, Christian activism, and compassionate hospitality. With these practices, Christians throughout the nation can join in the quest to restore and promote healing and justice for these vulnerable populations so that they may know that they have inherent worth and they belong.

Intercessory Prayer

Intercessory prayer confronts the realities of our time with grief and lament. Theologian Walter Brueggemann describes three prophetic tasks of the church—reality, grief, and hope[8]—that are very relevant to our current times. As we intentionally recognize and face the daunting realities of immigration enforcement in the United States, we can be pushed into a place of disbelief and grief. This pain and grief, once placed before God, can turn into a righteous indignation that may propel us to act: to restore a sense of belonging to our neighbors and to bring healing to our society as a whole.

Our research participants frequently told us about the life-giving spiritual accompaniment they experienced when they saw their family torn apart by deportation. One eight-year-old girl eloquently described this:

> *Most of the time I was very sad, and I did not tell my friends that my mother had been deported because I was afraid of what they will think of me and my family. I only told one friend, and she went to our home and would give us hope. She is Catholic, and she would pray for us every day.*

Missionary Proclamation

Recently Pope Francis urged us, as Christians, "to build bridges and not walls." Indeed, the gospel is clear that one of our missionary tasks, as followers of Christ, is to construct bridges, to build paths, and to assemble ladders across the divides and schisms that separate us from our neighbors and God. As Christians, our words, deeds, and actions ought to proclaim that our "God is our fortress and our refuge." Therefore, we do not need to build walls around us.

Christian Activism

Christian activism takes many shapes and forms. Theologically grounded sanctuary initiatives as well as simple, daily choices one makes regarding this overwhelming issue are all avenues of Christian activism. One of my students reported that, after feeling convicted about corruption in for-profit incarceration/deportation centers, she chose to withdraw her investments from accounts that supported some of the for-profit companies running immigration detention centers. Educating members of the church about injustices in our system of laws and foreign policies is another way to practice Christian activism. The possibilities for action are many.

Hospitality

How can the church reclaim the biblical meaning of hospitality in its quest to restore a sense of identity and belonging to the least of these—and particularly to those who may not be able to pay us back now, or ever?

The church must apply and exercise its missionary function toward the immigrant among us with intentionality and responsibility. Through our research efforts with families affected by immigration enforcement, we were able to appreciate up close the convening power of the church. Many of our participants living in the shadows would willingly meet us in churches, where they felt safe and accepted regardless of their immigration status. We had Catholic families being interviewed in Pentecostal churches, and charismatic folks willing to be embraced by Christians they otherwise deemed to be in theological and ideological opposition to them. Overall, fear and denominational barriers were neutralized when a clear message of acceptance and respect for the divine in these vulnerable families was expressed.

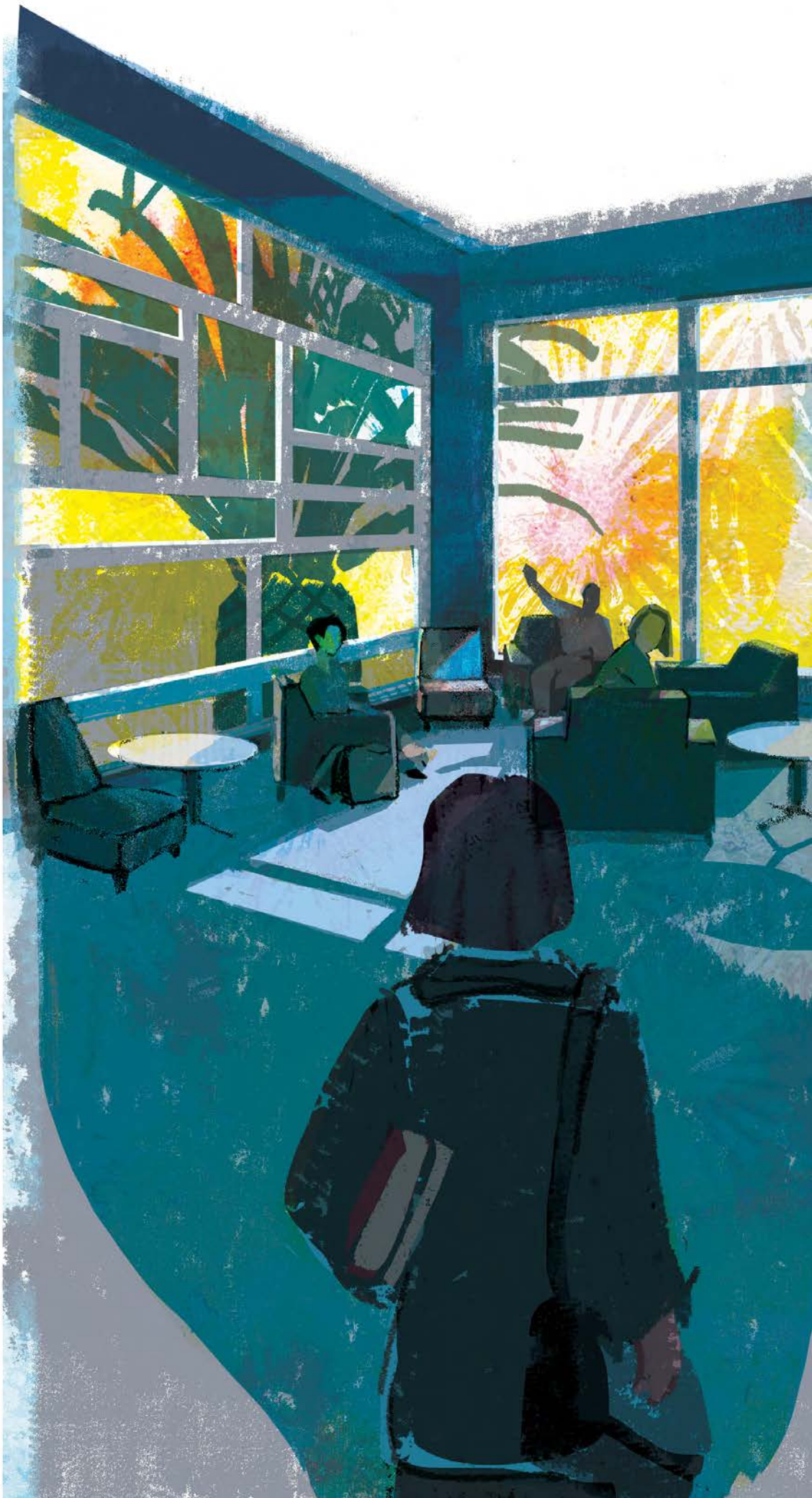
COMPASSION AND THE NURTURING OF A GOD-CENTERED IDENTITY

In this broken world we encounter pain and suffering as part of our human condition, but God designed in us the capacity to transcend our suffering. Resilience is an essential yet ordinary power that promotes growth in the midst of stress and adversity. Many children of unauthorized immigrants thrive in the midst of the adverse conditions I have described. However, it is also clear that their life circumstances present challenges that too often undermine their overall well-being and potential. Emerging developmental research highlights what communities of faith have known for a long time: all of us are wired for community and connection. The communal power of the church must be mobilized to help buffer the ill effects of forced family separation. Research shows that children develop a positive sense of who they are, and feel valued and respected, when embraced by at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or another adult. It is in these caring relationships and safe communities that resilience is built over time. Communities of faith were designed to do this best.

Whether in the therapeutic or pastoral or discipleship relationship, we are all called to restore hope and to foster and honor a God-centered identity in everyone, and particularly with "the least of these." At Fuller, we train not only future pastors and church leaders but marriage and family therapists and clinical psychologists whose faith guides their clinical practices and outreach. Our coming alongside the least of these affirms that God is present in human history, even in its most tragic episodes. In the end, regardless of educational background or title, we are all responsible for embracing the immigrant in our midst as members of the body of Christ. This form of accompaniment is at the center of the gospel.

For those in communities of faith, the bib-

lical mandate to care for the stranger and the moral urgency of immigration reform may be enough to move us into action. For others, the enormous economic costs to our society may be a more compelling argument. Many activists today are responding to this urgency out of social compassion, political conviction, and diverse social ideologies. Whatever your reasons and wherever you stand on the issue of immigration enforcement, the stakes are high for the next generation of US Americans, and we must act: both individually and corporately as the body of Christ.



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SABBATH AS A MODEL FOR RESTORATION

Johnny Ramírez-Johnson

Johnny Ramírez-Johnson has served at Fuller as professor of intercultural studies since 2014. Previous to joining the faculty, he served on Fuller's Centro Latino Advisory Council. Dr. Ramírez-Johnson's primary research interest centers on the intersection between culture, ethnicity, and religion; he has received grants from Kaiser Permanente, the School of Religion at Loma Linda University, and the University of Texas-Pan American College of Health Science and Human Services to support his work. He is currently writing a book titled *Race Reconciliation* with InterVarsity Press.

Restored normalcy is a human goal for anyone who feels his or her life has been upset by family breakup, disease, economic crisis, natural disaster—or any disruption large or small. Yet seeking this homeostasis in the midst of our daily routines is not easy. God foresaw this reality and established an oasis in time, a place of communion with him. How could all humans, from all walks of life and from anywhere in the world, gain equal access to such a temple? Only through God's establishment of a temple in time: the Sabbath.

The Sabbath is a weekly appointment between God and human, a respite from turmoil. It can take place in the confines of incarceration or a hospital bed just as well as in the liberty of health and freedom. In its ideal rendition it is shared with the family of God at home and at church, and through outreach to society. This article will explore several attributes of the Sabbath as it contributes to the restoration of our relationship with God, family, others, our churches, and with our world.

RESTORING HOLINESS THROUGH SABBATH

Evil is pervasive and seemingly ever-present. How can humans avoid evil and find holiness when we are so fragile and full of sin? There are those who seek justice by keeping the law and showing their good deeds as a sign of holiness—salvation by works. The heart of the law, however, makes this evident: We pursue holiness when we take 24 hours every week for personal rest as an act of worship to God. Even from the time of the Old Testament, the key to holiness was not salvation by works but, instead, was made clear in a commandment to rest in God.

The fourth commandment demands that we include all family members in this rest, but it does not stop there. We are also required to seek out our neighbors, to embrace the employees under our care in this rest and, in addition, to be ecologically minded and include the natural world in this rest with God! The words of Exodus 20:8–11, in effect, expand the rest promoted by this commandment into ever more encompassing concentric circles: from self (in the text, the male head of household), to family (male and female), to employees (slaves in the Old Testament context), to neighbors (the "alien" within our spheres), to the animals in our care.

Sabbath-keeping is about restoring justice in the home, within our families, within our communities, and within the church. A superb presentation of what is expected of Christians today was developed by John in the fourth chapter of his first epistle: "Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen" (1 John 4:20). Many evangelicals have tied holiness with morality because in demanding particular behaviors, the Bible seems to tie them together. How then shall we best help one another to remember the Sabbath as a holy time for worship?

Perfect justice, if there is any on earth, comes through time distribution. Since we all get the same number of hours in a day and the same number of days in a week, we are all accountable to the same demand to devote our time toward Sabbath and cultivating holiness. In a cycle of seven days, we are called to one 24-hour period for Sabbath rest and worship. Of course, I am not talking about those who are trapped in any kind of indentured service, who do not control their time. But as evangelical churchgoers living in freedom, most of us control our time and what we do with

it. It may feel like we do not control our time when we are obligated to complete assignments for school or tasks at work. But fundamentally, we are in control of our time. Sabbath keeping is about resistance, confronting the economics of work and accomplishments with the outlook of peace and rest.[1]

What shall we do with our time within the inner circles where we exercise most control in order to resist evil and promote justice at home, family, and church? We must make it a priority in our lives to keep the Sabbath, and in so doing, to seek holiness through rest and restoration.

SABBATH AS TESTIMONY

As the church seeks to follow Jesus Christ as Lord, it finds itself in an oppositional place vis-à-vis the world and the government of its land and country. It was so declared by Jesus:

> *If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. (John 15:18–19)*

On the other hand, as he prayed for the church, Jesus said, "I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one" (John 17:15). Evangelicals are thus in opposition to the world but should not seek to leave the world. Instead, they must seek to avoid the sins of the world while engaging with the world through the sharing of their testimony. One of the testimonies to be shared is the way one spends his or her time, by radically setting aside a holy time for God, to be in communion with him.

God calls all his followers to set aside this weekly temple in time to come and rest in him—rest that is the very opposite of working for one's salvation. Sabbath is a weekly 24-hour reminder of the righteousness by faith that comes from a God who is both creator and liberator. These two roles of God are enshrined in the fourth commandment as recorded in Exodus and Deuteronomy, while the New Testament book of Hebrews marries the Sabbath to righteousness by faith. To more fully understand the Christian Sabbath as expressed in the New Testament we must read the epistle to the Hebrews, specifically chapters three and four.

+ RESTORING SABBATH

LAUREN WINNER

Mudhouse Sabbath:
An Invitation to a Life of Spiritual Discipline

But there is something in the Jewish Sabbath that is absent from most Christian Sundays: A true cessation from the rhythms of work and world, a time wholly set apart, and perhaps above all, a sense that the point of Shabbat, the orientation of Shabbat, is toward God.

SABBATH AS A SIGNPOST OF FAITH

In the book of Hebrews, Sabbath becomes the anti-works commandment: salvation is by rest in faith! In this book the Israelites' Sabbath is presented as a signpost of faith, with rest afforded to those who are saved by the grace of God. The author of the epistle indicates that the Israelites who left Egypt died in the desert and did not enter into

RESTORING SABBATH

MARK BUCHANAN

The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath

Sabbath is both a day and an attitude to nurture such stillness. It is both a time on a calendar and a disposition of the heart. It is a day we enter, but just as much a way we see. Sabbath imparts the rest of God—actual physical, mental, spiritual rest, but also the rest of God—the things of God's nature and presence we miss in our busyness.

God's rest in the promised land because they lacked faith: "And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief" (Heb 3:18–19). The argument that Sabbath rest can only come to those who have faith and can only be experienced in grace is brought to its climax in chapter four:

> *Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest is still open, let us take care that none of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For indeed the good news came to us just as to them; but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, "As in my anger I swore, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" though his works were finished at the foundation of the world. For in one place it speaks about the seventh day as follows, "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." And again in this place it says, "They shall not enter my rest." Since therefore it remains open for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he sets a certain day—"today"—saying through David much later, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later about another day. So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs. (Heb 4:1–11)*

These passages from Hebrews define Sabbath rest as only achievable by those who have faith in the gospel message of Jesus as Savior of the world. Faith allows you to enter his rest; Sabbath is about rest, not about obedience to the law as a way of salvation.

We are invited to enter Sabbath rest, so do not harden your hearts, says the author of Hebrews. There is a Sabbath rest for us all: Will I enter that rest, or continue to work away at my salvation? Contrary to those who seemingly sought to achieve their salvation by seeking good works, God invites us every week to show that we are saved by faith and to embrace the righteousness Jesus offers us by keeping Sabbath rest in our community of faith.

RESTORING SABBATH THROUGH RELATIONSHIP, NOT CONFRONTATION

As Eusebius documented, Romanus, a

deacon martyr in AD 302, was a zealous Christian seeking to dismantle the Roman Empire through his own power.[2] This type of power fixes its eyes on what we can do, on what worldly propositional logic can accomplish with a righteous view of the Christian God. Romanus sought to force God into action through his own might, attempting to stop the daily pagan sacrifices of the Roman Emperor Diocletian by erupting into a verbal diatribe condemning Diocletian during a popular Roman festival at the public plaza. Romanus was arrested and a year later he was executed.

Today we evangelicals have a similar choice—one made clear by theologian Robert E. Webber: "Thus creation has the power to choose to be in union with God, to work in harmony and in concert with God, or to break away from God and to move in a direction that asserts independence."[3] Webber further indicates that there are epistemological differences between the old traditional and the new contemporary evangelical leaders and missionaries. The propositional logic of past evangelical missionaries and church leaders often focused on confrontational approaches that separated the church from the world—like Romanus going to the public square and decrying the Roman emperor's pagan sacrifices as rituals offensive to the true God.

Many accomplishments came about historically through the work of evangelical missionaries following propositional truth, and for these undertakings we salute and celebrate them; we indeed stand today on the shoulders of giants. But the age of propositional logic they inhabited is gone. Says Webber, "Because the younger evangelical is turning away from theology as ruled by reason and scientific method toward theology as a reflection of the community on the narrative of Israel and Jesus," new questions are emerging as central.[4]

The three questions proposed by Webber are all seemingly central to the Sabbath rest commandment: "(1) How are we to interpret the Genesis account? (2) How are we to view the stewardship of creation? (3) How is truth known?"[5] A "new normal" has emerged for evangelicals—a normal that accounts for the limitations of historical models of doing church based on more of a rational approach. Youth now demand a logic of "doing": how does it work, what does it do for me, how does it feel? This is radically different from the propositional truth of the old paradigm of Christendom, but it is nevertheless full of new possibilities.

The Sabbath commandment helps us respond to Webber's first question about our interpretation of Genesis. Instead of addressing evolution-creation paradigms, Sabbath rest addresses the more fundamental question of "so what?" As creator, God provides for a relational rest that builds a community of faith interested in the ecological issues of the day. We're not to fall into an "us versus them," evolutionist-versus-creationist argument, but instead, as believers, to follow a God who calls on the powers of modernity to stop in its tracks once a week and acknowledge him as redeemer of our mess.

I dream of a community of faith that takes it further, impacting not only a renewed day of rest, but also impacting a way of living the other six days; the *oikos* of God being transformed one household at a time, one church institution at a time. It is a change that makes the kingdom of God on earth a kingdom based on love, not greed. This is the invitation of stopping in your tracks for 24 hours—moving toward a whole life of living out love as a community. Why 24 hours? Because the liturgy of God in Scripture invites us to be radical, and as difficult as this may be, the failure of our human efforts are overturned with the blood of Christ. "Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs" (Heb 4:11). This is the rest that comes from accepting our failures by submitting to the love of the gospel, a gospel that wants to change society. I call it the gospel message of a Sabbath rest, a Sabbath of the blood of our Savior—a paradigm to live and see the world as God does. We find ourselves in an ecological and personal mess that only a relational God can address to satisfaction—a mess that's never addressed satisfactorily by declarations of dogma among ourselves.

The question proposed by Webber about creation's stewardship can also be addressed by the only one of the ten commandments that involves the environment. The ecological niche we inhabit is to rest with us once a week; animals within our *oikos* (household) are to rest. The Sabbath thus forces a weekly accounting of our relationship with nature, even one as simple as how we view our pets. This kind of posture is not about the propositional truth of a set of commandments, but about a relational God who placed us in a web in which we are intertwined with nature, others, and God himself.

The last of Webber's questions deals with a new definition of truth—one that points to Truth with a capital "T," as in the person of Jesus: "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6). Truth in a relational epistemology is about a triune God relating within the human web of relations, a personal God who defines Truth as a person. It is a Truth that came to be human and meets with us daily, particularly during our Sabbath rest.

Are we keeping the appointment with him and with the natural world he created?

We humans live in a web of relations that cannot be disowned. The worldwide web of irreducible, inscrutable relational approaches for accomplishing the *missio Dei* has replaced the propositional approaches of the past in the Christian West. The South comes to evangelize the North; the West comes to convert to Christianity the East; and, in the words of Walter Brueggemann, we all are now "irreducibly, inscrutably interrelated."[6]

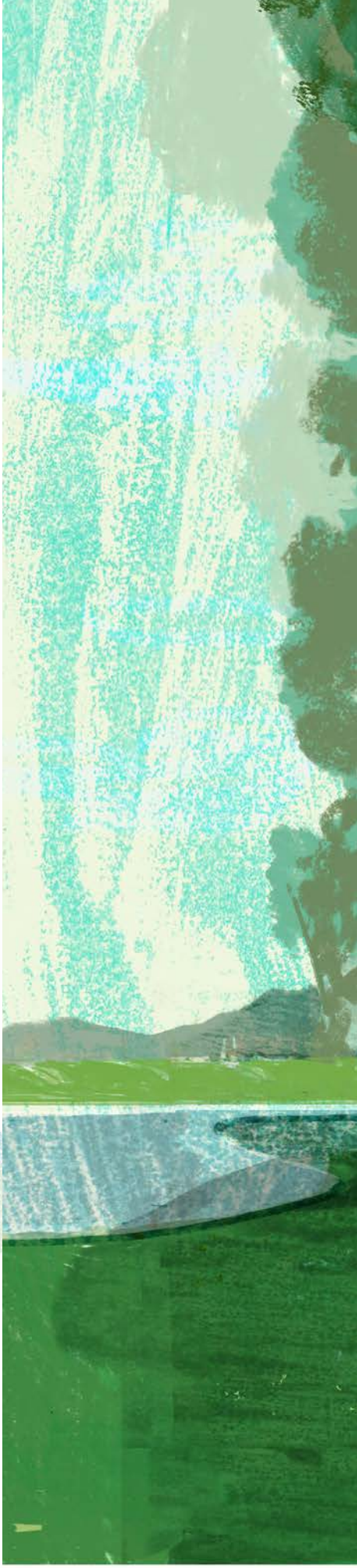
Remember the invitation in Hebrews: "So then, a Sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs" (Heb 4:9–11). The justice we are seeking in this world will come via our rest—a sabbatical rest of faith and grace, of Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath.

Legalistic Sabbath-keeping places the emphasis on practices; God-fearing Sabbath-keeping places the emphasis on our relationship with Jesus—a relationship based on embrace: acknowledging his embrace and embracing one another, even those who offend us.

When we make space in our week to celebrate a narrative of creation, ecology, redemption, and faith in an irreducible, inscrutable relational community, then, as Brueggemann expresses it, the Sabbath commandment "provide[s] for rest alongside the neighbor. God, self, and all members of the household share in common rest on the seventh day; that social reality provides a commonality and a coherence not only to the community of covenant but to the commandments of Sinai as well."[7] We follow this commandment in fulfillment of God's mission: to restore in all humans whom he loves an attitude of embracing rest for self and the other for life!

ENDNOTES

1. Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance* (Westminster John Knox, 2014).
2. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, *History of the Martyrs in Palestine*, trans. William Cureton (Fort Worth, TX: RDMc Publishing, 2015).
3. Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 85.
4. Ibid., 87.
5. Ibid.
6. Walter Brueggemann, "Irreducibly, Inscrutably Relational," from Fuller Seminary Payton Lectures, May 1, 2015, unpublished manuscript, p. 14.
7. Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance*, 1.



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