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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Dissertation

CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY IN LIGHT OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY
MIGRATION

By

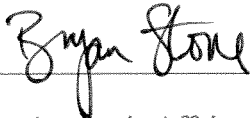
Nell Becker Sweeden
(B.A. Point Loma Nazarene University 2002; M.Div. Nazarene Theological Seminary,
2007)


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MIGRATION

By

Nell Becker Sweeden

First reader 
Dean Bryan P. Stone
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; James K. and Eunice Matthews Chair, E. Stanley
Jones Professor of Evangelism; Co-Director of the Center for Practical Theology

Second reader 
Dr. Shelly Rambo
Assistant Professor of Theology

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ABSTRACT

CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY IN LIGHT OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY MIGRATION

(Order No.)

Nell Becker Sweeden

Doctor of Philosophy
Boston University School of Theology, 2012

Major Professor: Dean Bryan P. Stone, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; James K. and Eunice Matthews Chair, E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism; Co-Director of the Center for Practical Theology

Christian practices of hospitality—theologically conceived as welcome of the stranger or alien within Judeo-Christian tradition and scripture—often involve members of an ecclesial community inviting an unknown person in need into a home or congregation. In Christian communities in the United States, the practice often takes shape as invitation into the community’s life and does not necessarily allow for a reciprocal invitation by the person welcomed. The relationship, therefore, is limited to a one-way exchange often excluding the full participation of marginalized persons. This dissertation challenges Christian hospitality practices in light of twenty-first century U.S. Latino/a migration. It does so by exploring new forms of spatial imagination that lend themselves to a journeying hospitality of accompaniment with and among persons migrating. This re-thinking of hospitality connects with practices within migrant communities and border churches surveyed in the dissertation. I press ecclesiological questions to a Christian theology of hospitality, moreover, by arguing for the nature and mission of the church as uniquely oriented toward alternative understandings of place and pilgrimage on earth.

The dissertation begins by introducing Christian hospitality practices and framing the investigation in the fields of practical theology and ecclesiology. It surveys current theological literature on hospitality practice and identifies common expressions of hospitality in the United States’ context. Drawing upon the fields of cultural anthropology and cultural studies, the study examines the global phenomenon of transnational migration while focusing on U.S. Latino/a migration patterns and identifying the particular challenges these migrants face in journeying to and residing in the United States. Drawing upon U.S. Latino/a theologians and postcolonial theologians, the dissertation critically analyzes hospitality, uncovering objections to traditional hospitality practice and re-shaping hospitality toward new patterns of journeying and ways of thinking about place, borders, and identity. The study explores constructive expressions of hospitality practice in light of changing patterns of migration along U.S.-Mexico borderlands and concludes with further ecclesiological implications.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The practice of Christian hospitality reaches back to the early centuries of Christian life as well as deep into Jewish history, life, and scripture. This practice is alive today in Christian churches and para-church organizations within the United States, but new contextual realities – in particular twenty-first century global migration patterns – have altered the conditions under which hospitality is practiced and in relation to which the practice has had to adapt itself. The reality of migration and its affect on human lives disrupts static conceptions of hospitality and challenges ecclesial communities toward contextual faithfulness.¹ This dissertation explores Christian hospitality practice in light of twenty-first century U.S. Latino/a migration and develops the notion of a journeying hospitality of accompaniment with and among persons migrating that fosters deeper relationships and formation. The new conceptions and expressions of hospitality I propose also press ecclesiological questions arguing for the nature and mission of the church to be uniquely oriented toward new ecclesial patterns and alternative forms of residing on earth.

¹ I have employed the term “ecclesial communities” rather than “churches” or “congregations” to encompass the wider range of hospitality practice within intentional communities, para-church organizations, and/or multiple congregational groups gathering together all of which may or may not identify themselves specifically as a “church” or “congregation.” I specifically address them as “ecclesial” rather than “Christian communities” because I wish to investigate how hospitality practice contributes to ecclesiology. By “contextual faithfulness” I mean that the shifting identities of persons ‘on the move’ challenges assumptions about what it means to welcome another in hospitality and ultimately what it means to be church from within these new relationships.

Christian practices of hospitality—theologically conceived as welcome of the stranger or alien within Judeo-Christian tradition and scripture—often involve members of an ecclesial community inviting an unknown person in need into a home or congregation. This welcome often includes sharing a meal and an exchange of material assistance or providing care.² For Christians, this hospitality is broadly recognized as an ethical responsibility mirroring the welcome of God in Jesus Christ. Traditionally, this practice has been understood and embodied as an invitation for the stranger to come *in* rather than the community venturing *out*. In Christian communities in the United States, the practice often takes shape as an invitation into a community's own life and does not necessarily allow for a reciprocal invitation by the person welcomed. This relationship, therefore, is limited to a one-way exchange often excluding the full participation of marginalized persons. The practice stops short of a mutual process of exchange allowing for the ecclesial community itself to be formed by this new relationship.

Postcolonial and U.S. Latino/a theologians raise objections in light of global migration to the above conceptions and embodiments of hospitality. Bodies displaced and on the move through forced migration challenge traditional notions of home, belonging,

² Christine Pohl notes: "For most of the history of the church, hospitality was understood to encompass physical, social, and spiritual dimensions of human existence and relationships. It meant response to the physical needs of strangers for food, shelter, and protection, but also a recognition of their worth and common humanity. In almost every case, hospitality involved shared meals; historically, table fellowship was an important way of recognizing the equal value and dignity of persons." In *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 6. Amy Oden writes: "While hospitality can include acts of welcoming family and friends, its meaning within the Christian biblical and historical traditions has focused on receiving the alien and extending one's resources to them. Hospitality response to the physical, social, and spiritual needs of the stranger, though, as we shall see, those of the host are addressed here as well. . . . On the face of it, hospitality begins with basic physical needs of food and shelter, mostly powerfully symbolized in table fellowship, sharing food and drink at a common table." In *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 14.

and identity as they pertain to hospitality.³ For example, persons who have migrated may have complex and varying memories of the home(s) they have left. Many continue to travel and are unable to settle into a new home. Some migrants may find that they have multiple homes. In such a context, a sense of belonging and identity formation take on complex forms depending on conditions such as a person's reason for migration, her or his journey to the United States, or her or his present residence and support community. When migrants are welcomed into U.S. congregations, they encounter a variety of familiar and unfamiliar ecclesiological formations. An invitation *into* a community is also an invitation into this community's own socio-cultural context. For this reason the investigation of hospitality must take into account how cultural and socio-historical factors, in addition to models of worship, denominational politics, and theological differences, all contribute to this welcoming or non-welcoming environment. Additionally, differences of race and ethnicity, gender, class, culture, language, etc. within the congregation are factors that must be taken into account in how a community offers hospitality and the degree to which the guest can participate in the life of the community.

In this dissertation, I intend to focus on the ecclesiological dimensions of the practice of hospitality and to construct a practical theology of hospitality that takes

³ I play with the language of "bodies on the move" and below "bodies marked by wandering" to signify the perpetual nature of migration and the mobile patterns of life that persons endure in transnational migration. I specifically utilize the word "bodies" to indicate the negative consequences of displacement in migration, in which persons out of their own control or will are forced to migrate in order to survive. I understand bodies forced to move as signifying how human lives are determined by global market forces. I employ this phrasing as a synonym to "migrants" or "migrations," as well as "displaced persons," as indicative of the negative consequences of migration.

seriously the realities of contemporary migration while advancing awareness of context, fostering mutual relationships, and incorporating self-critique and continued identity formation on the part of churches and other forms of faith community. To achieve this I examine postcolonial and Latino/a theological reflections in order to unearth potentially problematic conceptions and embodiments of hospitality practice in light of displacement experienced by migrants, refugees, or itinerants. By re-conceiving hospitality, I hope to provide guidance for continued ecclesial discernment and reflection on Christian practice in particular and ever-shifting contexts as ecclesial communities encounter, are encountered by, and are formed by persons who have migrated.

The International Organization of Migration (IOM) estimated that in 2010 the United States saw the largest number of international migrations, 42.8 million persons.⁴ Worldwide, there are an estimated 214 million international migrants, comprising 3.1 percent of the world's population.⁵ The reasons for migration vary, and many migrations are voluntary. This dissertation explores hospitality practice pertinent to persons who have migrated out of economic necessity, however, it also has implications for persons forced to migrate as refugees and asylum seekers due to natural disaster, persecution,

⁴ Cited on the International Organization for Migration Website available from: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/facts-and-figures/americas-facts-and-figures> (accessed October 26, 2011). Also see United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), "Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision," <http://esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=1> (accessed November 17, 2011).

⁵ Cited on the International Organization for Migration Website available from: <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/lang/en/pid/241> (Accessed March 23, 2010). Facts gathered from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2009). *International Migration Flows to and from Selected Countries: The 2008 Revision*. (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Flow/Rev.2008); available from <http://esa.un.org/migration> (accessed March 23, 2010). Also see, <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/lang/en> (accessed October 26, 2011).

political unrest, war, and as itinerants. IOM estimates that there are about 20 to 30 million unauthorized migrants worldwide and the global number of refugees is today at 16 million.⁶ Additionally, 49 percent of all global migrants are women.⁷ The twenty-first century reality of bodies marked by wandering makes necessary an investigation and re-appropriation of the Christian practice of hospitality that reflect migrants' identity, spirituality and faith practice, reasons for their migration, their journey, as well as the economic and political factors surrounding their migration. Because of the complexity of international migration and the distinctiveness of each individual context, I focus this study on *Latino/a* undocumented or unauthorized persons who migrate. Statistics show that from 2000 through 2004 an average of 800,000 undocumented immigrants per year entered the United States. While the average has dropped to 500,000 immigrants per year since 2005, the undocumented immigrant population in the United States has increased by 40 percent since 2000.⁸

Drawing upon postcolonial and U.S. Latino/a theological reflection on the factors surrounding this migration, it is important to address how certain forms of hospitality practice risk re-inscribing colonial tendencies in shaping the Christian identity and faith practice of migrants to imitate the host community. Building upon their critiques and

⁶ Ibid., Facts gathered from International Labour Organization's "Towards a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy;" available from http://www.ilo.org/global/Themes/Labour_migration/lang--en/docName--KD00096/index.htm, and United Nations' Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision (Accessed March 23, 2010); available from <http://esa.un.org/migration>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Jeffrey S. Passell and D'Vera Cohn, *Trends in Unauthorized Immigration: Undocumented Inflow Trails Legal Inflow* (Washington DC: Pew Hispanic Center, October 2008), i, iii. Cited in Miguel de la Torre, *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies in Immigration* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 2.

insights, I seek to uncover how a Christian theology of hospitality demands that the host community be confronted by those it encounters and enter into deeper relationship.

Hospitality demands that ecclesiology is continually shaped by relationships that involve risk and often demand change. In this investigation, I look specifically at the way place, gestures of welcome, gift and exchange, borders and boundaries, and journey or pilgrimage take on a heightened theological importance for persons on the move, and offer insight into creative ways hospitality practice must be adapted. I address how ecclesial identity and mission also must be altered by the relationship fostered between guest and host as ecclesial communities adapt their hospitality practices in light of this context.

Several Christian scholars in the last decade have explored the historical, scriptural, and theological sources of hospitality practice to unearth hospitality as a moral category for contemporary practice in the United States' ecclesial context.⁹ Published in 1999, Christine Pohl's work *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian*

⁹ Other works worth mentioning are: Amy Oden, *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality and Early Christianity*; John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1985); and Lucien Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000). Oden's work is more specifically a historical-theological sourcebook of early Christian texts regarding hospitality and its practice. Koenig provides a New Testament scriptural account of the practice. While both of these works are central to the practice, they do not directly focus on questions of context. Additional literature has been produced on hospitality for laity through Practicing our Faith Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith. Literature specifically on hospitality can be found at: <http://www.practicingourfaith.org/hospitality-ways-practice-books> (accessed October 23, 2011). In 2008, Amy Oden also published a lay resource guide on hospitality entitled: *God's Welcome: Hospitality for a Gospel-Hungry World* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2008). In 2001, Christine Pohl's work *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* also was adapted with Pamela J. Buck into a resource study guide for communities of faith seeking to understand this practice in their own congregations and settings: *Study Guide for Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001).

Tradition incorporates research of eight communities “for whom hospitality is a way of life” and makes a case for remembering the Judeo-Christian heritage of hospitality, reconsidering this tradition, and recovering the practice in present-day embodiments.¹⁰ More recently, Elizabeth Newman’s 2007 publication *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers* addresses hospitality in light of United States’ individualism and privatization of religion and presents an ecclesial understanding of this practice that directs readers toward a counter-cultural politics, economics, and ethics. Amos Yong’s 2008 publication *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor*, through a pneumatological framework, explores hospitality in a world of many faiths and the central role of this practice in revising Christian theology of religions in the twenty-first century. Finally, Letty Russell’s posthumous 2009 publication *Just Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference* presents the need for inclusivity in hospitality practice that is balanced by awareness and analysis of differences in persons’ lives. She draws upon two-thirds world theology and postcolonial theory to expand the action-reflection of this practice.

Each of these resources explores the practice of hospitality as it relates to ecclesiology in the United States through defining and challenging this practice, yet they do not explicitly address hospitality in light of the changing shape of the United States’ population with regard to migration. I build upon these scholarly contributions in

¹⁰ See Pohl, “Appendix: Communities of Hospitality,” in *Making Room*, 118. She outlines the communities she studied: L’Abri Fellowship (Switzerland), Annunciation House, L’Arche, The Catholic Worker, Good Works, Inc., Jubilee Partners, The Open Door Community, and St. John’s and St. Benedict’s Monasteries. Pohl’s study was originally part of her dissertation project. See Christine D. Pohl, “Welcoming Strangers: A Socio-ethical Study of Hospitality in Selected Expressions of the Christian Tradition” (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1993).

presenting the current reflection, formation, and embodiment of hospitality practice, and then probe further the context of migration. In particular, my research and analysis challenge ways of imagining, embodying, and practicing hospitality in the church when such ways neglect to respond to persons whose lives are marked by wandering and to the economic, social, political, and religious reasons for their wandering. Additionally, my analysis of this literature addresses two-thirds world and postcolonial theological concerns which question the ecclesial identity and faith practice into which migrants are being welcomed. I develop this as ultimately an ecclesiological question: *How should this new context of migration form hospitality practices and inform ecclesial communities' identity and mission?*

Practices and Practical Theology

I investigate hospitality practice, as well as the integrated relationship between ecclesiology and hospitality practice, building off of Alasdair MacIntyre's definition of practice and the practical theologians who draw from his work. MacIntyre believes that practices arise out of communal formation toward teleological ends and involve a community's ongoing, cooperative appropriation of these ends. He defines practice as:

a coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity, through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.¹¹

¹¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd ed., (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 187.

As a practice extended from the life of the church, I argue that Christian hospitality practice is theory-laden, rooted in Christian ecclesiology, scripture, and tradition, and tied to the concrete performance of the practice in ecclesial communities.¹² Dorothy Bass nuances MacIntyre's definition from a Christian perspective, and I draw from her definition in understanding how Christian practice shapes the life of the church. Bass defines Christian practice as follows:

Practices are born of social groups over time and are constantly negotiated in the midst of changing circumstances. As clusters of activities within which meaning and doing are inextricably interwoven, practices shape behavior while also fostering practice-specific knowledge, capacities, dispositions, and virtues. Those who participate in practices are formed in particular ways of thinking about and living in the world.¹³

Bass's definition is critical for uncovering how ecclesial communities' negotiate and adapt hospitality practice according to the contexts in which they find themselves.

Additionally, she points to how hospitality as a Christian practice might shape behavior, knowledge, virtues, and understanding of the surrounding context within the life of an ecclesial community. Bass also adds a teleological origination to Christian practice,

¹² For more information on practices as theory-laden, see Don Browning in *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposal* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 9, 47, 139. Dorothy Bass, Introduction," in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 1-12. See particularly p. 6. Here, Bass notes the distinction between MacIntyre's virtue ethics and the work of social theorist Pierre Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977). She writes, "MacIntyre's virtue ethics emphasizes that practice pursue a good in a coherent, traditioned way, while social scientists influenced by Marxist thought stress the constant negotiations over power that give particular shape to practice in specific social situations" (6). I build upon MacIntyre's virtue ethics, but argue that practices are continually negotiated as they are practiced in social situations where power dynamics are uncovered and challenged.

¹³ Bass, "Ways of Life Abundant" in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass, and Craig Dykstra (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 29.

noting, "...to be called 'Christian' a practice must pursue a good beyond itself, responding to and embodying the self-giving dynamics of God's own creating, redeeming, and sustaining grace."¹⁴ The focus of Christian practice toward a *telos* in God becomes important in how I point to the journeying ecclesial imagination of the people of God and how this journeying informs and is informed by hospitality with and among persons migrating.

Additionally, liberation theological perspectives and social locations, as well as their re-appropriations through the lenses of U.S. Latino/a theology and some postcolonial perspectives, are important for uncovering abuses, limitations, and weaknesses within current hospitality practice and ecclesial life. Gustavo Gutiérrez's definition of the theological task is helpful in my examination of hospitality as a practical theological and ecclesiological exercise. Gutiérrez defines theology as critical reflection on praxis in light of the Word of God.¹⁵ Praxis becomes a central theme in liberation theology as it points toward the indissoluble unity between action and reflection and the ongoing discovery of praxis in a continuous spiral of action and reflection.¹⁶ Gutiérrez presents the need for a recovery of historical praxis in light of the eschatological dimension of theology. In order to accomplish this task Gutiérrez and liberation theologians challenge traditional conceptions of theology and ecclesiology by uncovering

¹⁴ Bass, *For Life Abundant*, 30.

¹⁵ See Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, Salvation*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), 5-12.

¹⁶ Gutiérrez defines this as "reflection in light of faith must constantly accompany the pastoral action of the Church." Gutiérrez, 10.

critical perspectives and suspicion arising from the lived reality of the poor. They build off of Paulo Freire's process of "concientization," which refers to the form of liberating education by which the oppressed learn to perceive economic, political, and social contradictions and take action toward transforming this reality.¹⁷

Ecclesiological Orientation

Throughout this study, I seek to hold together in tension traditional conceptions of hospitality practice and the challenges posed to them by postcolonial and U.S. Latino/a theologians by focusing on how the church and its practice manifest themselves *in context*. To accomplish this, I draw from Nicholas Healy's insights on the church as a theodramatic performance and ecclesiology as a practical-prophetic discipline that he develops in *Church, World, and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*.¹⁸ Healy adapts Hans Urs von Balthasar's theodramatic theory to describe the relations between God, world, and church as a dramatic play in which humans are participants and live entirely within the drama. Healy interprets this play through Augustine's articulation of Christian existence struggling toward the City of God and the church as a mixed body

¹⁷ See Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 1986). Also see, Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1976). Segundo articulates a methodology for liberation theology through a hermeneutical spiral in which persons 1) experience reality and expose ideological biases, 2) apply ideological suspicion to theology, 3) experience a new ideological reality and develop exegetical suspicion, 4) discover a new hermeneutic for understanding scripture.

¹⁸ Nicolas Healy, *Church, World, and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

made up of members of both the city of God and the city of humanity.¹⁹ Thus, Healy reads Augustine's ecclesiology as an open-ended narrative of the two cities "in their interwoven, perplexed and only eschatologically separable reality."²⁰ Through theodrama, Healy develops an alternative and corrective ecclesiological horizon to what he calls "blueprint ecclesiologies" in order to focus more intently on the theological description of the context in which the church finds itself.²¹ "Blueprint ecclesiologies" he defines as ideal descriptions of what the perfect church should look like in its "true nature" or "essence."²² In contrast, Healy reveals how these theologies often fall short at explaining the concrete church in the world in its broken and sinful state. Healy focuses on theological inquiry as historical, ongoing, and open-ended.²³ He challenges blueprint perspectives because their over focus on the ideal church creates a disjunction between theoretical and practical reasoning, as well as doctrinal and moral reflection.²⁴ Not to

¹⁹ Healy, 55. Relying on Augustine's *City of God*, trans. H. Bettenson (London: Penguin, 1972/1984), which he abbreviates as (CoG), Healy writes, " 'The church proceeds on its pilgrim way in this world, in these evil days. Its troubled course began...with Abel himself...and the pilgrimage goes on from that time right up to the end of history' (CoG 18.51). The church is, indeed, 'even now the kingdom of God,' but, quite unlike the City of God, it is a 'kingdom at war' (CoG 20.9). Its task is therefore to gather those who have already been chosen for 'testing and training' so as to 'raise them from the temporal and visible to an apprehension of the eternal and invisible' (CoG 10.14)."

²⁰ Healy, 56.

²¹ Ibid., 22. The theodramatic horizon can hold together in tension a number of ecclesiological realities that could otherwise may be confused, separated, or treated one-dimensionally (Healy, 22). For Healy, "These tensive elements include the following: the church's identity is *fully* constituted by *both* divine and human agency, permitting *theological* reflection upon the *concrete* church; the church's role includes the *formation* of the individual disciple's *distinctive* identity; the church's orientation renders it *superior* to others, yet it is *dependent* upon others and is always more or less *sinful*; the church claims to be orientated to *ultimate* truth, yet it must acknowledge that our view of that truth is *limited* by our location within the ongoing drama." Ibid.

²² Ibid., 35, 36.

²³ Ibid., 57.

mention, blueprint ecclesiologies distort and often prevent theological reflection on the concrete church *in via*.

Healy turns to theodramatic performance to present an alternative practical prophetic ecclesiology, which he defines as:

The concrete church, living in and for the world, performs its task of witness and discipleship within particular, ever-shifting contexts, and its performance is shaped by them. Critical theological analysis of those contexts, and the present shape and activity of the church within them, should therefore be one of the central tasks of ecclesiology.²⁵

Healy does not treat the life of the church and cultural or sociohistorical (sometimes referred to as “secular”) context as different or separate spheres that need to be “correlated.”²⁶ In fact, he notes that these two entities cannot be described independently of one another, for the concrete church always finds itself residing within and formed by its context.²⁷ Healy notes how an ecclesial context incorporates all that bears upon or contributes to the “shape of Christian witness and discipleship and its ecclesial embodiment.”²⁸ Healy defines the church as the “communal embodiment of the search

²⁴ Ibid., 36. Here Healy builds upon Hauerwas’ analysis of modern theology in *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (Nashville, TN: Ignatius Press, 1991), pp. 193-28. Healy also add that blueprint ecclesiologies “undervalue thereby the theological significance of the genuine struggles of the church’s membership to live as disciples within the less-than-perfect church and within societies that are often unwilling to overlook the church’s flaws,” Healy, 37.

²⁵ Healy, 39.

²⁶ See Healy, 38-39, footnote 48. He points to the distinction between two correlatable poles as the basis of H. Richard Niebuhr’s classic work, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951).

²⁷ Ibid., 39.

²⁸ Ibid., 39.

for truthful witness and discipleship within the theodrama.”²⁹ His practical-prophetic ecclesiology becomes central to my project because of how he points toward the ongoing journeying and searching of the people of God in the world and the ongoing embodiment of their witness to God in ever-shifting contexts.

Though I build upon Healy’s practical-prophetic ecclesiology, I also challenge how his ecclesiology guides the concrete church in encountering both Christian and non-Christian ‘Others’ and the extent to which the church allows itself to be confronted by difference.³⁰ This challenge cannot be met without the concrete church recognizing and self-critically reflecting upon its own sinfulness and shortcomings, as Healy suggests. He holds together contemporary ecclesiological figures such as Stanley Hauerwas and George Lindbeck, in their understanding of ecclesiology as a social practice, together with Kathryn Tanner, in her challenge toward the theological work of ad hoc *bricolage* that recognizes a messier and conflictual ecclesiological reality.³¹ Tanner’s insights are valuable for focusing on the church *in via* particularly in light of cultural and contextual challenges. She writes:

the distinctiveness of a Christian way of life is not so much formed *by* the boundary as *at* it; Christian distinctiveness is something that emerges in the very cultural processes occurring at the boundary, processes that construct a distinctive

²⁹ Ibid., 108.

³⁰ Healy, 153.

³¹ See George A Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984) and Stanley Hauerwas, “The Servant Community: Christian Social Ethics,” in *Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 371-391. Originally published in *Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984. Also see Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997).

identity for Christian social practices through the distinctive use of cultural materials shared with others.³²

Tanner's observations are fitting for examining hospitality practice in light of the global phenomenon of migration.

Tanner, as well as many feminist theologians, emphasize that churches are communities of faith *and* struggle. They caution against the church turning too hastily toward unity, because such unity can too easily become uniformity. Uniformity neglects the voices of margin and voices of opposition in community, which are necessary for a community of faith and struggle. I rely upon Letty Russell's imagery of the church for re-shaping hospitality practice in ways that demand honesty in relationship.³³ Russell focuses on new possibilities of unity and difference through her ecclesiology of "church in the round."³⁴ Stretching traditional conceptions of church, Russell presents new spatial and relational imaginations and focuses on community gathered around a round table. She writes, "Like the eucharist and like the church that gathers at Christ's table, the round

³² Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 115.

³³ Seeking to reform rather than discard hospitality, which some postcolonial theologians would protest, Russell draws upon hospitality as a way forward for the church in understanding how difference shapes the community in ways that resist uniformity.

³⁴ See Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993). Russell arrives at "church in the round" based on the notion that all are welcome *in the reign or household of God* (23). The ecclesial image of a round table comes from C.S. Song's description of Chinese culture and hospitality that has influenced Chinese paintings of Jesus and the disciples sharing a "last supper at the round table" (12). In this sense, based on the celebration of the Eucharist and the church gathered together around the Lord's Table, Russell notes that "the round table is a sign of the coming unity of humanity" (17). She continues, "If the table is spread by God and hosted by Christ, it must be a table with many connections. The primary connection for people gathered around is the connection to Christ. The church is the community of faith in Jesus Christ...Because Christ is present in the world, especially among those who are neglected, oppressed, both church and society, always welcoming the stranger to the feast to sharing the feast where the 'others' gather. Christ's presence also connects us to one another as we share in a partnership of service...The round table itself emphasizes this connection, for when we gather around we are connected, in an association or relationship with one another" (18).

table is a sign of the coming unity of humanity. It achieves its power as a metaphor only as the *already* of welcome, sharing, talk, and partnership opposes the *not yet* of our divided and dominated world.”³⁵ She develops the notion of a table principle that challenges the church body toward back-and-forth movement and continual discernment between margin and center.³⁶ Russell calls for ecclesial communities to reread tradition and scripture for new insight and in order to “talk back” to the tradition using the critical lens of marginality and power relationships.³⁷ Russell’s understanding of hospitality derived from the “church in the round” concept builds upon what she terms “kitchen table solidarity,” which reflects living with and among others and being drawn into a partnership of sharing and reflection amidst the sweaty tasks of daily living.³⁸ This imagery is important because it highlights the fact that community, relationships, and partnerships are born in difficult and often mundane tasks. Ecclesial communities continue to be shaped as all members perform life together in the ordinary that does not escape or separate out the chaos and difficulty of life.

While Healy is Roman Catholic and his work speaks back into this tradition and polity, Russell, a Protestant feminist ecclesiologist who worked in a variety of ecumenical contexts, develops intentionally relational and communal ecclesial imagery to

³⁵ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 17.

³⁶ Russell notes, “Because Christ is present in the world, especially among those who are neglected, oppressed, and marginalized, the round table is also connected to the margins of both church and society, always welcoming the stranger to the feast or sharing the feast where the ‘others’ gather.” *Ibid.*, 18.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 24-29.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 75.

expand notions of church. This dissertation attempts to hold together in tension a number of theologians' perspectives, social locations, and theology that are not normally juxtaposed. My intention is to explore the dynamic nature of ecclesiology through various theologians' contributions, in order to explore and identify alternative spatial imagination and hospitality praxis within the church in light of migration. The performative and contextual focus of Healy's practical-prophetic ecclesiology together with Russell's "church in the round," and others who suggest different manifestations of church in light of feminist and postcolonial critiques, provide unique perspectives on how practices of hospitality challenge ecclesial communities to change and adapt with context.

U.S. Latino/a and postcolonial theologians challenge ecclesial communities to identify and act against various forms of exploitation and occlusion of difference in their communities and suggest alternative ecclesial imagery in light of migration. This study relies upon feminist, postcolonial, and two-thirds world theologians who offer contextual approaches to theology and ecclesiology that recognize issues of race, class, and gender and call attention to cultural, economic, and political suspicion with regard to hospitality and other ecclesial practices. For example, postcolonial U.S. Latina theologian, Mayra Rivera, questions: "Must the 'white-washing' of Christianity continue to bleach out the colors of all of our lives?"³⁹ She notes the dramatic reversal between the geographical representation of Christianity 100 years ago and today: "In 1900 approximately 65 percent of the world's Christians lived in Europe and North America," whereas today

³⁹ Rivera, "Introduction: Alien/Nation, Liberation, and the Postcolonial Underground," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Keller, Catherine, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 4.

60.3 percent of global Christianity resides in Africa, Asia and Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean.⁴⁰ Postcolonial theology involves the representation, identity, and influence of former victims of colonialism and those who continue to be marginalized in current systems of power.⁴¹ This dissertation explores the theological contributions of persons who journey on the margins and because of their mobility may be excluded from a valued place in ecclesial communities. Fernando Segovia characterizes Latino/a theology as a theology of diaspora, born in exile, displacement, and relocation.⁴² Roberto Goizueta challenges U.S. Hispanic ecclesiology toward accompaniment in light of many migrants' experiences of having no way forward and having to forge a way as they walk. He presents hopeful possibilities through the communal invitation—*caminemos con Jesús* (let us walk with Jesus)—in an adapted liturgical procession by the San Fernando Cathedral parish in San Antonio, Texas. U.S. Latino/a and postcolonial theological voices

⁴⁰ Rivera, "Introduction: Alien/Nation, Liberation, and the Postcolonial Underground," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, 14-15. She notes Fernando Segovia's statistics of changes in global Christianity in "Interpreting beyond Borders: Postcolonial Studies and Diasporic Studies in Biblical Criticism," in *Interpreting beyond Borders*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 21.

⁴¹ See Michelle Gonzalez, "Who is American/a: Theological Anthropology, Postcoloniality, and the Spanish-Speaking Americas," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, 60. Gonzalez draws from R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Asian Biblical Hermeneutics and Postcolonialism: Bible and Liberation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 16. Gonzalez adds that the theme of exile is not exclusive to Segovia's work, but appears of various Latino/a theologians' work, including: Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1990); Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "By the Rivers of Babylon: Exile as a Way of Life," in *Mujerista Theology: a Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996).

⁴² Gonzalez, 60. Gonzalez writes: "Segovia characterizes Latino/a theology as a theology of the diaspora, 'born and forged in exile, in displacement and relocation.' The traits of this theology are as follows: 'a self-consciously local and constructive theology, quite forthcoming about its own social location and perspective; a theology of diversity and pluralism, highlighting the dignity and values of all matrices and voices, including its own; a theology of engagement and dialogue, committed to critical conversation with other theological voices from both margins and center alike'" (71-72). See Segovia "Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies: Toward a Postcolonial Optics," in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 53.

are central to in my critical analysis of hospitality practice and ecclesiology. Their insights and imagination direct me in beginning to re-shape hospitality practice in ways that take into account bodies displaced and on the move and their participation in and exclusion from ecclesial communities. The constructive or strategic practical theological proposals I build are not intended as solutions or rules. Rather, I propose a new sensitivity in ecclesial communities to the displacement and mobility experienced by migrating persons and suggest alternative patterns of hospitality practice and ecclesial life that open the church up to the contributions of Others whose participation has been and/or continues to be marginalized.⁴³ Additionally, I suggest that the reform of hospitality and ecclesiology is ongoing and never-ending. My project is a movement toward this end, but by no means a complete or finalized plan.

My practical theological investigation of concrete hospitality performance in ecclesial communities is a central contribution to my project. Often practical theological projects direct toward strategic proposals as a final move but offer recommendations rather than return to concrete examples.⁴⁴ Additionally, postcolonial theology, in its critical deconstructive moves, can be accused of paralysis in constructive thought and

⁴³ See Michael Nausner, "Homeland as Borderland: Territories of Christian Subjectivity," in *Postcolonial Theologies*. Discussing the tension between nomadic lifestyles and the sedentary culture of institutionalized religion, Nausner writes, "I am not proposing a solution to this tension. But I am suggesting that a new sensitivity to alternative ways of conceiving territoriality is important for Christian theology, if it does not want to align itself smoothly with imperial power." Nausner, 128.

⁴⁴ For example, see the practical theological method of Don Browning in *A Fundamental Practical Theology: Descriptive and Strategic Proposal* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1991). See pp. 47-58 for an outline of his four step strategic practical method. His final strategic step offers recommendations and practical solutions for Christian churches, (see chapters 3, 9, 10, and 11). My method, while it offers constructive proposals like Browning, also seeks to provide concrete embodiments where hospitality practice is already adapting to the contexts of global migration. This adds to the constructive element of my work.

action.⁴⁵ My turn to concrete alternative practices of hospitality in the final section of this dissertation draws postcolonial theology further into creative and constructive praxis.

Drawing from lived examples of hospitality on U.S.-Mexico borderlands, I describe how performative dimensions of ecclesiology, such as liturgies and rituals, help to shape the church community's hospitality practice, not to mention its broader discernment of faithfulness amidst ever-changing contexts. Again, these concrete manifestations span a variety of ecclesial traditions. Performative hospitality is demonstrated through creatively and intentionally contextualized practices of Roman Catholic parishes and movements as well as Evangelical, Mainline, and Free Church congregations and ecclesial movements. The variety of traditions represented reveals how performative expressions of hospitality can arise out of ecclesial communities in a number of ways. I also point to how communal and corporate partnership between congregations and non-profit organizations suggests how they can build relationships and form alliances in order to more expansively offer hospitality and advocate alongside and on behalf of migrants. I return to a wide span of ecclesial traditions as I explore the practices of baptism and eucharist in chapter six. Offering two contemporary manifestations of hospitality in eucharistic celebrations at the U.S.-Mexico border, I point

⁴⁵ Recognizing this critique, Susan Abraham directs attention toward the constructive side of postcolonial theology. She writes: "... the postcolonial context remains a contested but radically creative site for the continuing re-imagination of political, religious, and cultural communities. In particular, theological imagination in the postcolonial context is characterized by a marked distance from doctrinaire positions on identity, ethics, and liberation. In its stead emerge the heterogeneity of multiple (sometimes contrasting and contradictory) positions that remain an opportunity for creative revisioning. The practical context of postcolonial theology in view of globalization does not provide for the unifying and homogenizing visions of either liberal assimilation or conserving visions of "pure" or orthodox identity or ethics." Susan Abraham, "What Does Mumbai Have to Do with Rome? Postcolonial Perspectives on Globalization and Theology," *Theological Studies*. 69, no. 2 (2008): 376.

to Roman Catholic liturgy and theology in a mass celebration, as well as Free Church and Methodist traditions that shape a Christian worship gathering and love feast. U.S. Latino/a theologians, often drawing upon the Roman Catholic tradition, and the sacramental realist approach of John Howard Yoder, a Mennonite theologian, are important influences in this endeavor.

In discussing ecclesial practices, I rely upon Yoder's explanation of baptism and eucharist as two of five ways he proposes "in which the Christian church is called to operate as a *polis*. ...Our model in each case will be the practice of the early church as reflected in the writings of the New Testament."⁴⁶ Additionally, I present practices of the church as they relate to hospitality more generally, similarly to what Yoder refers to as the simpler sense of ecumenical.⁴⁷ He writes, "Our agenda is ecumenical, not in the modern organizational sense of arranging conversations among denominational agencies, or in the sense of comparing and contrasting the foundational documents of conflicting confessions, but in the simpler sense of being relevant to all kinds of Christians."⁴⁸ My intention, like Yoder, is not to create rules or procedural guidelines for hospitality practice or ecclesiology, and certainly not a set of beliefs. Rather, I seek to present how concrete practices shape the community toward particular ways of life together in the name of Christ. Yoder writes,

⁴⁶ See Yoder, introduction to *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992), ix.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, x.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

They have to do more with a style of approaching any question than with particular moral choices. They foster flexibility and readiness to approach any new challenge. That frees them from bondage to any one cultural setting; it frees them for evangelical interaction into any new missionary context. They are all good news, all marks of the new world's having begun.⁴⁹

I offer contemporary examples that point toward new patterns of journeying for hospitality practice, as well as strategic practical suggestions for congregations, to reveal how ecclesial practice cultivates an adaptability that is necessary for ongoing reform in the life of the church. Ultimately, the goal in this process is to inspire congregations to creatively manifest the gospel amidst ever-shifting contexts in the world.⁵⁰

Structure of Investigation

This investigation draws primarily from theology and cultural studies to address the current literature and practice of Christian hospitality, the context of migration and the problems it poses to hospitality practice, and strategic ecclesiological proposals toward re-conceiving hospitality practice in light of this context. I organize my investigation in seven chapters.

The chapter preceding this introduction, “Mapping Christian Hospitality: Place and Performance,” examines the current literature on the practice of hospitality and provides the span of its present understandings and embodiments in U.S. churches, denominations, and para-church organizations. Additionally, I explore current models of Christian hospitality and the ways in which they have dominated popular U.S.

⁴⁹ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 46.

⁵⁰ I use the terms “gospel” and “good news” interchangeably in reference to the *evangelium* announced and embodied by Jesus.

conceptions of this practice. Specifically, I investigate the Catholic Worker movement begun by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, intentional community models in what is commonly referred to as New Monasticism, and the L'Arche communities started by Jean Vanier. Christine Pohl's work is a resource as she identifies how the specific settings for hospitality address the relationship between physical locations, social relationships, and particular meanings and values associated with the practice.⁵¹ I also unearth different dimensions of the practice as they relate to identity, place, gestures of welcome, gift and exchange, borders and boundaries, and journey or pilgrimage.⁵²

The third chapter, "Understanding the Complexities of Migration: Contextual Considerations in Hospitality," introduces the global phenomenon of transnational migration, as well as the context of migration in the United States. I narrow my focus to explore more thoroughly the context of Latino/a undocumented immigration. Drawing upon cultural studies and postcolonial theory in conversation with U.S. Latino/a theology, I begin to critically analyze Christian hospitality in light of the displacement and mobility of persons in migration. Several U.S. Latino/a voices— Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Carmen Nanko-Fernández, Miguel de la Torre, and Virgilio Elizondo—become central to my description of U.S. Latino/a migration and uncovering the challenges it poses to theology and ecclesiology.

⁵¹ Pohl, *Making Room*, 150.

⁵² Such themes have been selected based on literature addressing the context of global migration coupled with postcolonial and two-thirds world theological insight draws attention to such themes of border and borderland, hybrid identity construction, the problems of place and "home" for migrations. These themes are based on the work of Kwok Pui-lan, Fernando Segovia, and Joerg Rieger. See bibliography.

Chapter Four, “Objections to Hospitality and Possibilities for New Ecclesial Imagination,” builds upon the contributions of various U.S. Latino/a and postcolonial theologians to challenge ecclesial communities’ hospitality practice in light of the cultural, economic, political, religious, and social factors of migration, while taking into account the intersectionality of race, class, and gender in these factors. This chapter analyzes identity construction and how it relates to borders and boundaries in church and society. Postcolonial theological reflections from Kwok Pui-lan, who considers alternative forms of spatial imagination in migration, and Joerg Rieger, who emphasizes the pervasiveness of empire in people’s lives, become instrumental to my critical analysis of hospitality. Additionally, I draw upon themes of accompaniment in the work of Roberto Goizueta, challenges to guest/host relations in the work of Amos Yong, and encounter and relationship to the ‘Other’ in the work of Mayra Rivera. Each of these theologians have differing theological and ecclesiological commitments, though their contributions suggest new possibilities for re-imagining hospitality. Letty Russell and Kathryn Tanner offer valuable ecclesiological reflection on how communities discern and negotiate Christian identity amid changing circumstances and the differing perspectives of church members.⁵³ Drawing from this analysis, I begin to point ecclesial communities toward new hospitality imagination and praxis focusing on themes of journeying and accompaniment and the need for critical self-reflection in the church.

Chapter Five, “Re-imagining Hospitality and Ecclesiology: Practical Theological Embodiments,” begins my constructive or strategic practical theological movement

⁵³ See Bibliography for authors’ texts.

toward re-imagining hospitality practice. I address how the performance of hospitality takes on new shapes and forms in light of changing patterns of migration along U.S.-Mexico borderlands. To arrive at concrete and practical proposals, I present and analyze contemporary embodiments of the practice of hospitality through: 1) the performance of liturgy and ritual outside the walls of the San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas, 2) simple acts of accompaniment through the Catholic Worker house Casa Juan Diego in Houston, Texas, and 3) the value of corporate and communal partnerships amongst organizations and churches in El Paso, Texas. These contemporary manifestations reveal a wide span of ecclesiological orientations, which I draw from in engaging my own ecclesiological commitments.

Chapter six, “Eucharistic Formation of a Hospitable Community,” constructively engages how hospitality practice arises from but also challenges the baptismal and eucharistic formation of the church. Here, I draw upon two expressions of hospitality through eucharistic celebrations shared across the U.S.-Mexico Border. I discuss how these manifestations of worship and hospitality question nation-state borders and boundaries and how they are interpreted within both ecclesial and national identity. I also uncover further economic and political aspects of both hospitality practice and ecclesiology. I seek to show how the practice of the eucharist can shape self-critical reflection in the church and nurtures new sacramental vision in how the church sees and acts in the world.

In my concluding chapter, “Journeying Somewhere Through Hospitality: New Imagination and Praxis,” I summarize my findings and reflect on how a re-conceived

notion of hospitality furthers explorations in ecclesiology and migration. Specifically, I suggest how ecclesiology is shaped by hospitality practice re-conceived in light of journey and accompaniment with and among persons who migrate. William Cavanaugh's concept of theopolitical imagination as well as Kwok Pui-lan's postcolonial diaspora imagination are central to my analysis of ecclesial praxis and its continued transformation. I further explore how hospitality practice relates to place and journey or pilgrimage in the church and tease out the spatial and temporal imagination of the church as a pilgrim people "on the way" of Jesus.

Contributions and Sources

This dissertation is intended to advance scholarship in the fields of practical theology, ecclesiology, and theology and expand conceptions and practices of hospitality in ecclesial communities in light of the context of global migration. The descriptions of global migration contexts that I reference from other disciplines are placed in dialogue with critical and constructive theological components of my method in ways that do not reduce the centrality of theology in understanding the Christian practice of hospitality. At the same time, outside disciplinary perspectives help me to raise questions and objections to some manifestations of hospitality in light of this context. This exchange is reflective of how theology, ecclesiology, and practical theology are *aided by* but not *reduced to* other disciplines' descriptions and analyses of the context under investigation.⁵⁴ The task of identifying the theological norms of this practice must be in conversation with these

⁵⁴ See Healy, pp. 4, 39, and chapter 7 "Practical Prophetic Ecclesiology."

disciplines as part of negotiating Christian practice in the world in which Christians live their day-to-day lives.⁵⁵ This interdisciplinary relationship and dialogue is far from simple.⁵⁶ Understanding Christian practice embodied in culture involves continual discernment and negotiation within ecclesiology.⁵⁷ This dissertation is an attempt to understand this practice in light of the context of migration as a practical theological window through which to illuminate further contextual explorations of ecclesial practice.

In this investigation, I rely on textual sources from the fields of cultural anthropology, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies in conversation with theological sources in order to analyze hospitality practice, current congregational formation and practice, and the context of migration. This study's primary sources of information include books, articles, published qualitative studies, and published testimonies of persons who have migrated or are migrating. Qualitative studies in the fields of cultural anthropology, sociology of religion, and congregational studies are useful in providing descriptive background to this context. Additionally, I reference literature and website material from a variety of communities focused on extending hospitality to migrants. Qualitative studies alongside these communities' self-descriptions are important in

⁵⁵ Graham Ward describes this method as: "Seeking to understand doctrine not in terms of some sealed-off Christian discourse (like the post-liberals and the neo-Barthians) but in terms of negotiating an understanding of the Christian faith in the world in which we live." *Christ and Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 19.

⁵⁶ See Tanner's critique of critical correlation in Chapter 5 "Christian Culture and Society" in *Theories of Culture*.

⁵⁷ Healy, 38-39.

engaging specific contextual examples of hospitality practice.⁵⁸ In addition, many of the theological and postcolonial resources upon which I rely are first-hand perspectives on theological issues surrounding migration.⁵⁹ In my critical analysis and constructive moves, I explore literature in U.S. Latino/a theology, postcolonial theology, and other contextual theologies and draw upon their various treatments of congregational life, critical race theory, cultural studies, and postcolonial theory.

Limitations

The scope of this project is focused on understanding Christian practices of hospitality in ecclesial communities. Specifically, I explore a Christian response to migration, though I recognize that many migrants are not professed Christians. While the Christian practice of hospitality certainly extends to non-Christian persons and persons of other faith traditions, I intend to address Christian ecclesial communities' welcome of Christian migrants even when they are of differing theological and ecclesial traditions and doctrinal commitments.

Due to the vast number of persons and communities who have migrated or are migrating into the United States in the twenty-first century, I have narrowed the scope of

⁵⁸ For example, see the work of David A. Badillo, *Latinos and the New Immigrant Church* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Daniel G. Groody, *Border of Death, Valley of Life: An Immigrant Journey of Heart and Spirit* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002); Miguel de la Torre, *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), etc.

⁵⁹ Particularly U.S. Latino/a theology is representative of such perspectives. For example, the work on immigration/migration done by Virgilio Elizondo, Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Carmen Nanko-Fernández, Miguel de la Torre, and Fernando Segovia are instrumental to my analysis and constructive proposals. See bibliography for their works.

my exploration to U.S. Latino/a populations and more specifically undocumented populations. For this reason, I am working closely in my critical analysis and theological construction with U.S. Latino/a theology and practice. The limited scope of this research allows me to more thoroughly investigate hospitality practice from a particular context of migration. It is my hope that this research will encourage further reflection on hospitality and ecclesial practice for other migration contexts as well.

I base my research on textual resources and the sociological research of others, which limits my description and analysis in that I rely on the gathered research and observations of others. While this is a limitation, the literature in this area is already considerable, and surveying this literature also allows for a more comprehensive view of hospitality practice reaching into a variety of U.S. Latino/a migration contexts and communities. Additionally, this approach allows me to uncover a variety of the issues surrounding hospitality and migration and points me toward creative and constructive solutions.

CHAPTER TWO

MAPPING CHRISTIAN HOSPITALITY: PLACE AND PERFORMANCE

Introduction

This chapter introduces contemporary Christian hospitality practice and the theological literature surrounding this practice in United States ecclesial communities. Here, I explore what aspects of this practice are shared in congregations today and at what points hospitality practice is being stretched and challenged to meet new contexts and developments in ecclesiology and culture. The challenges posed to hospitality practice, I argue, directly influence the life of the church and ecclesial identity, specifically how ecclesial identity continues to be discerned and negotiated amidst ever-changing circumstances. In this sense, I begin to explore how both hospitality *and* ecclesiology simultaneously are stretched in new contexts.

Analyzing hospitality practice and its effect on ecclesial identity sheds light on how churches adapt and respond to varying contexts. This will be important in investigating both how hospitality practice and ecclesial identity are shaped by new persons welcomed into a community. Such analysis lends to better understanding the place of the church in culture, and also the movement, or continued negotiation, of the church's identity and mission amidst various contexts and circumstances. I begin to explore how both place and journey in ecclesiology are shaped through an ecclesial community's hospitality practice. Insights gathered here will become important in investigating how hospitality practice and ecclesial identity adapt to the reality of global migration and specifically the context of U.S. Latino/a migration into the United States,

which will be analyzed in later chapters. Before addressing the U.S. Latino/a context and the phenomenon of migration, I first survey the current literature and practice regarding hospitality and reflect on how this relates to ecclesial formation and identity.

With the intention of mapping Christian hospitality, this chapter opens with a brief introduction of current ecclesiological resources on hospitality practice particular to the United States' context. Next, I explore three current manifestations of hospitality within Christian faith communities. I will investigate the Catholic Worker movement and Houses of Hospitality, intentional communities within the New Monastic movement, and L'Arche communities.⁶⁰ Building off of the origins and practices of these contextual embodiments of hospitality, I look deeper into the shared behaviors, gestures, and ways of life within ecclesial communities as these pertain to hospitality practice. I also identify practices of ecclesial life, such as sharing meals, and explore the relationship between boundaries and identity formation. Lastly, I reflect theologically upon the relationship between hospitality practice and ecclesiology—how they may mutually inform one another and be sharpened by one another as each responds to the contextual realities that surround a local congregation.

Contemporary Christian scholars from a variety of ecclesial traditions have explored the historical, scriptural, and theological sources of hospitality practice to unearth hospitality as a moral category for contemporary practice in the United States'

⁶⁰ I specifically focus on the Catholic Worker movement, intentional communities in New Monasticism, and L'Arche communities because they represent contemporary movements that are often cited for their manifestations of hospitality practice in the United States context. Additionally, these three movements raise important challenges to certain U.S. societal norms also prevalent in the life of the church (i.e. societal perceptions of homelessness and poverty and their connection to the U.S. economy, as well as perceptions and actions regarding the 'ableness' of persons with special needs). These movements are also noteworthy in that they have inspired renewal in a variety of ecclesial traditions.

ecclesial context. Christine Pohl's seminal work *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, introduced above, incorporates research of eight communities that incorporate hospitality as a way of life together. Pohl invites her readers into remembering the Judeo-Christian heritage of hospitality, reconsidering this tradition, and recovering the practice in present-day embodiments. While Pohl brings together Christian voices from many traditions, her work is often considered a Protestant guide to hospitality as it stands alongside additional works on hospitality from Roman Catholic history and tradition, such as monasticism and specifically the Benedictine tradition, the Catholic Worker movement of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, and Jean Vanier's writings on the L'Arche communities. Additionally, other notable Roman Catholic lay resources on hospitality include Lucien Richard's *Living the Hospitality of God* and Henri Nouwen's *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*.⁶¹

Amy Oden's work on hospitality traces the historical-theological origins of hospitality in the Christian tradition in order to provide a resource guide for the practice. In *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity*, Oden presents a collection of early Christian texts about hospitality practice. Her excerpts include various literary genres spanning a range of times and places.⁶² The range includes North Africa, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, as well as Europe and covers the first through the eighth centuries; the bulk arising from the fourth and fifth centuries. Recently, in

⁶¹ See Richard, *Living the Hospitality of God* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000) and Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Three Movements of Spiritual Life* (Garden City, NY: Double Day, 1975).

⁶² See Amy G. Oden, ed., *And You Welcomed Me: A Sourcebook on Hospitality in Early Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001).

2008, Oden published a guide to hospitality for congregations entitled, *God's Welcome: Hospitality for a Gospel-Hungry World*. This work addresses the foundation of Christian hospitality arising out of God's welcome and guides congregations in how to stay rooted in God's welcome so as to practice a gospel hospitality in welcoming others. Other ecclesial resources on hospitality practice surface in the *Practicing our Faith* series edited by Dorothy Bass as well as John Koenig's work *New Testament Hospitality*.⁶³ Koenig's work is a historical-theological resource on hospitality practice in first-century Judaism and the early Christian church as it traces the teachings of Jesus. Each of these major works on hospitality practice can be used side-by-side as biblical, historical and theological guides providing background for congregational practice and theological reflection on hospitality.

What these works do not specifically address—and what I aim to investigate—is how hospitality practice has adapted and been stretched to accommodate new contextual realities. These works also do not pose challenges to hospitality practice or directly address its abuse or misuse in ecclesial communities. As this chapter explores the practice of hospitality I build off these resources, while also identifying various nuances of hospitality expression within the contexts of: 1) offering hospitality to persons who are poor and without homes in primarily urban settings; 2) hospitality that arises out of an intentional community that shares living space and meals and seeks to build lasting relationships with strangers in a geographical neighborhood; and 3) living out hospitality

⁶³ Dorothy C. Bass, ed., *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997) and John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*.

in caring for persons who have intellectual and physical disabilities. I also unearth various contextual challenges to hospitality practice. To begin this exploration and identify ways hospitality practice is being stretched, I turn to these three contextual manifestations of hospitality.

Context, Place, and Performance of Hospitality

The Catholic Worker Movement

The practice of hospitality in ecclesial communities takes on many shapes and forms in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the United States. Several movements and aspects of this practice stand out during this period and have made a large impression in understanding hospitality within Christian history. The Catholic Worker movement, cofounded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in the 1930s in New York, is one notable manifestation of hospitality. Drawing upon the influences of the early church and its saints, contemporary French personalists, Benedictine and ancient Irish monasticism, and keeping company with those who were poor and without homes in society, Day and Maurin inspired a worldwide movement embodying a radical renewal of Catholicism.⁶⁴ Their movement challenged the social and economic order of the times, which Day continually referred to as “the filthy, rotten system,” and inspired a faithfulness to the life and teachings of Jesus as he walked with and among the poor and was himself poor.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Mark and Louise Zwick, *The Catholic Worker Movement: Intellectual and Spiritual Origins* (New York: Paulist Press, 2005), 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

Day and Maurin began *The Catholic Worker* newspaper with writings that concerned faith and the situation of workers in 1933. They committed their lives to voluntary poverty, hospitality, and the Works of Mercy. As people began to read about hospitality in the newspaper, they arrived to receive it. The Works of Mercy followed by Houses of Hospitality, bread and soup lines for the hungry, and farming communities soon began.⁶⁶ Day and Maurin strove to live out the seven corporal and seven spiritual Works of Mercy based on Matthew 25:31:

The Spiritual Works of Mercy are: to admonish the sinner, to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive all injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead.

The Corporal Works of Mercy are to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to ransom the captive, to harbor the harborless, to visit the sick, and to bury the dead.⁶⁷

Matthew 25: 31-46 would become the default mission statement of the Catholic Worker movement and this is what the Houses of Hospitality seek to incarnate. The moral imperative to be poor and care for those who are poor arises out of Jesus' own identification with the poor in scripture and this Matthew 25 passage, thereby drawing a parallel between knowing and caring for the poor with caring for Jesus himself. Through this motivation, members of the Catholic Worker movement understand Christ in their encounter with the poor. Mark and Louise Zwick explain:

Dorothy spoke of the “long-continuing crucifixion” of the poor and the hope in sharing somehow in their poverty. As she said in her Easter meditation in the April 1964 *Catholic Worker*: “The mystery of the poor is this: That they are Jesus, and what you do for them you do for Him. It is the only way we have of

⁶⁶ Zwick and Zwick, 25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

knowing and believing in our love. The mystery of poverty is that by sharing in it, making ourselves poor in giving to others, we increase our knowledge of and belief in love.⁶⁸

Day's and Maurin's writings continued to advocate for the poor, but perhaps more effectively also put them into practice through their Houses of Hospitality and Agricultural Centers. Maurin encouraged three areas of cult, culture, and cultivation in the movement through emphasizing charity in hospitality, the centrality of liturgy, the importance of culture through literature, and the necessity of cultivation through agriculture. In this sense, their practice modeled monasticism, particularly Benedictine monasteries that emphasize hospitality, liturgical prayer, and manual labor.⁶⁹ In this light, Peter Maurin wrote:

The motto of St. Benedict was
Labore et Orare, Labor and Pray.
 Labor and prayer ought to be combined;
 labor ought to be a prayer.
 The liturgy of the Church
 is the prayer of the Church.
 The religious life of the people
 and economic life of the people
 ought to be one.⁷⁰

Life together in the Houses of Hospitality and farming communes was to be a witness to the gospel for the world, while also providing alternative economic models in local communities. As with monasticism, each House of Hospitality would stand as an autonomous community and pattern itself after the work schedule of the Benedictines in

⁶⁸ Zwick and Zwick, 41.

⁶⁹ See *Ibid.*, 45, 51.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

uniting labor, prayer, meals. Similarly, modeled after the understanding of ownership in monastic communities, each of the Catholic Worker communities sought to provide an alternative to economic individualism in that private property was not meant for individual use.⁷¹ Brigid Merriman describes Day's purpose for Houses of Hospitality as forming "...a center of Catholic action in all fields, to work for, teach and preach social justice, to form a powerhouse of genuine spirituality and earnest educational and vocational work, to dignify and transform manual labor, and to work for the glory and love of God and His Church."⁷²

Central to providing an alternative to the economic system and in the acts of welcoming brothers and sisters who are poor as Christ, the Catholic Worker movement's core is built on voluntary poverty. From the movement's beginning, all workers went without a salary, and were expected to share their work as gifts. Only basic needs would be met, what Maurin describes as "going without luxuries in order to have essentials."⁷³ The property and possessions were understood to be for everyone of the house. Mark and Louise Zwick write, "Catholic Workers knew from expertise how destitution ground people down, how difficult it was for those who had not chosen their poverty."⁷⁴ For this reason, there was a responsibility of the workers toward those forced into poverty; such persons had a special place in the house. Day continually struggled with the notion of

⁷¹ Zwick and Zwick, 138.

⁷² Brigid O'Shea Merriam, OSF, *Searching for Christ: The Spirituality of Dorothy Day* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 87, quoted in Zwick and Zwick, 42.

⁷³ Zwick and Zwick, 33.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

charity and its condescending tendencies. Charity, for her, could never be understood apart from justice or Christ's own identification with the poor. Charity must be distinguished from philanthropy. The Zwicks note this distinction through the words of James Douglass: "The condescending tone of the term 'charity' can be avoided only if we sink to poverty ourselves and continue to give from our poverty...The Catholic Worker counteracts these pressures [of the consumer, affluent society] by the protest of the poor giving to the poor, shattering the illusion of the billfold apostolate."⁷⁵ In this light, hospitality and voluntary poverty must be held together. Maurin said that serving the poor was in providing bread, meat, and coffee, but it was also the opportunity to practice Christian charity to an 'ambassador of God'.⁷⁶ In this way, the volunteer is the object of reform rather than the poor.⁷⁷ Day writes, "Too often we are afraid of the poor, of the worker. We do not realize that we know him, and Christ through him, in the breaking of the bread."⁷⁸

Today, there are over 185 Catholic Worker communities that remain committed to the founders' embodiments of voluntary poverty, prayer, nonviolence, and hospitality for the homeless, hungry, and marginalized.⁷⁹ They continued to be inspired to this work

⁷⁵ James Douglass, "Dorothy Day and the City of God," in *Social Justice Review* (May 1961), 42 quoted in Zwick and Zwick, 35.

⁷⁶ Zwick and Zwick, 33.

⁷⁷ See *Ibid.*, 34-35.

⁷⁸ William D. Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982), 166, quoted in Zwick and Zwick, 36.

⁷⁹ See Catholic Worker Website, <http://www.catholicworker.org/> (accessed June 1, 2010). The Website describes the movement as follows: "The Catholic Worker Movement is grounded in a firm belief in the God-given dignity of every human person. Today over 185 Catholic Worker communities remain

because of the belief in the God-given dignity of every human person. Additionally, in the same spirit as Day and Maurin, Catholic Worker communities are often known for their protest of injustice, war, racism, and violence of all forms.⁸⁰ Catholic Worker houses of hospitality may be most known for the acts of hospitality they offer to those in need; however, a commitment to confronting the unjust systems that often perpetuate poverty, homelessness, and exploitation of humans are intimately tied to this hospitality. This confrontation is wedded to hospitality because the economic and social system deeply affects the lives of those whom the Catholic Worker households welcome and with whom they share life. The Catholic Worker movement believed that the social and economic system needed to be changed and rebuilt.⁸¹ They were particularly concerned with the dignity of labor for workers and cautioned against growing materialism in U.S. society. Throughout the years Maurin and Day would be strong critics of industrial capitalism and investigated alternative economic models, drawing upon thinkers like Prince Peter Kropotkin and G.K. Chesterton. In the December 1948 *Catholic Worker*, Day wrote:

...we, who witness the thousands of refugees from our ruthless industrialism, year after year, the homeless, the hungry, the crippled, the maimed, and see the lack of sympathy and understanding, the lack of Christian charity accorded them (to most they represent the loafers and the bums, and our critics shrink in horror to hear them compared to Christ, as our Lord Himself compared them) to us, I say, who daily suffer the ugly reality of industrial capitalism and its fruits...⁸²

committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer, and hospitality for the homeless, exiled, hungry, and forsaken. Catholic Workers continue to protest injustice, war, racism, and violence of all forms.”

⁸⁰ See Catholic Worker Website, <http://www.catholicworker.org/> (accessed June 1, 2010).

⁸¹ Zwick and Zwick, 148.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 162-163.

The Zwicks draw parallels between the workers as ‘refugees from ruthless industrialism’ of the earlier Catholic Worker movement the ‘refugees from ruthless industrialism’ who today are migrants. They attribute massive migrations as being caused by “the violence of the global market.”⁸³ More will be explored with regard to the Catholic Worker practice of hospitality in the remaining sections, particularly how its hospitality practice challenges this violence of the global market and searches for alternative systems. For now, it should be said that the Catholic Worker’s commitments to alternative forms of economics, such as distributionism, as well as their commitment to nonviolence, fold into their larger vision-casting toward “a new heaven and a new earth, wherein justice dwelleth.”⁸⁴ The movement’s purpose is to seek God’s will on earth as it is in heaven. It should be noted that however radical Day’s and Maurin’s (and their followers’) commitments are interpreted to be, conservative and liberal, left- or right-winged positions in the Catholic church were not categories known in their time; rather, as the Zwicks point out “they are to be seen as sons and daughters of the church.”⁸⁵

Intentional Communities in New Monasticism

Drawing from Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, and the Catholic Worker movement among many other influences, more recent manifestations of hospitality houses and

⁸³ Zwick and Zwick, 315.

⁸⁴ See Ibid., “Appendix I: Aims and Purposes of the Catholic Worker Movement” (From *The Catholic Worker*, February 1940), 321.

⁸⁵ See the Zwicks’ comments on pages 298-299.

intentional communities have sprung up across the United States in what is being termed, “New Monasticism.” The shape and inspiration of these communities, of course, differs from the Catholic Worker movement due to the contexts, socio-economic make-up, and faith traditions of new monastic communities themselves. On their website (www.newmonasticism.org) the group writes, “We the ‘New Monastics’ are a bunch of Jesus followers who have committed ourselves to a new way of life in community.”⁸⁶ The Rutba House in Durham, North Carolina is one such Christian community formed around hospitality, peacemaking, and discipleship. They self-describe:

We are shaped by our common life and rule for living. We pray together daily, share meals, fast once a week, and worship together as a way of shaping our life around the gospel. These are important practices that form our identity as we try to be faithful disciples of Jesus. But it is our neighbors who ground the Rutba House and help us remember who we are.⁸⁷

Inspired by the monastic communities manifested throughout Christian history, these newer communities are drawn toward unearthing authentic Christian witness from within forces of empire, nation-states, etc. The overarching “New Monasticism” movement seeks grassroots ecumenism and prophetic witness within the North American church and is characterized by 12 marks: 1) Relocation to abandoned places of Empire; 2) Sharing economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us; 3) Hospitality to the stranger; 4) Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities combined with the active pursuit of a just reconciliation; 5) Humble

⁸⁶ See New Monasticism Website, <http://www.newmonasticism.org> (accessed June 1, 2010).

⁸⁷ The Rutba House, ed., Editor’s Preface in *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of New Monasticism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2005), vii.

submission to Christ's body, the church; 6) Intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community along the lines of the old novitiate; 7) Nurturing common life among members of intentional community; 8) Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children; 9) Geographic proximity to community members who share a common rule of life; 10) Care for the plot of God's earth given to us along with support of our local economies; 11) Peacemaking in the midst of violence and conflict resolution within communities along the lines of Matthew 18; 12)

Commitment to a disciplined contemplative life.⁸⁸ In exploring the new monastic communities as exemplars of hospitality practice, I will focus here on the first four marks as they relate to hospitality practice. Several of the remaining marks will be explored further in my critical analysis in the next chapters.

Drawn to what they call, "the abandoned places of empire," the new monastics seek to pattern their lives after Jesus' own life and ministry as well as the voluntary relocation of early desert monastics, in order to understand anew that they are called to dwell and gather as the People of God, the Church, in places rejected and unwanted by broader society. One of these places is the inner city. It is here that New Monastic communities gather, make homes, and build communities with their neighbors and witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ. In a similar vein to the Catholic Worker movement, resistance to unjust systems and values is an important part of community life. The communities believe in confronting injustice and providing an alternative way of life in Christ together. They do this by addressing their context:

⁸⁸ The Rutba House, xii-xiii.

The issues of our time, such as militarism, nuclearism, poverty, homelessness, and ecological problems, as manifested on the margins, will call for personal and communal conversion in the form of disciplined resistance in lifestyle and engagement in the search for solutions.⁸⁹

They seek to live this out locally as they live and interact with their neighborhoods and surrounding communities and cities.

New Monastic intentional communities share many aspects of life together, such as living space, prayer and worship, meals, and even finances. Moreover, their life together is built around the practice of hospitality. The Rutba House members find that “hospitality in the form of sharing food, roof and friendship with neighbors will foster both compassion and engagement and will be a form of holy communion with marginal cultures and poor populations.”⁹⁰ The New Monastic communities describe the motivation for hospitality and shared life together arising out of God’s abiding love that draws humanity near. They see God as a God of welcome, and they live by the moral imperative that Christian identity ought to reflect this.⁹¹ The God of welcome is most fully known in Christ’s incarnation—that is, God physically drawing near to humanity and becoming human. They describe this as a “radical relocation”—God in Christ “took on flesh and moved into the neighborhood.”⁹² In the same way, they challenge Christians

⁸⁹ The Rutba House, xii-xiii.

⁹⁰ Sr. Margaret M. McKenna, “Mark 1: Relocation to Abandoned Places of Empire,” in *School(s) for Conversion: 12 Marks of New Monasticism*, ed. The Rutba House (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2005), 21.

⁹¹ See Maria Russell Kenney, “Mark 3: Hospitality to the Stranger,” in *School(s) for Conversion*, 45.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 45. Russell Kenney borrows language from Eugene H. Peterson’s *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002).

to draw near to the other and build community there. This drawing near to the stranger also arises out of the identity of God's people—the calling forth of the nation of Israel—in Hebrew scripture.

The New Monastics understand hospitality as a discipline that needs to be cultivated and practiced by all. Though it takes many shapes and forms depending on context, food and sharing meals are central. Through sharing meals, their communities pattern their lives after Jesus' own meals with 'sinners', Jesus feeding the 5,000, and Jesus supping with his disciples just before his crucifixion. Sharing meals also draws the communities together to participate in the origins of the Eucharist, which will be discussed further below.⁹³

In her chapter on "Mark 3: Hospitality to the Stranger," Maria Russell Kenney illustrates four different ways hospitality in New Monasticism takes shape. First, she points to the Mercy Street community in Houston, Texas, which began by welcoming Somalian refugees and helping them resettle and adjust to life in the United States. As a response to the moral imperative to "welcome strangers in the land" evidenced in Israel's law, Mercy Street focuses on helping refugees resettle and adjust in unknown and "foreign" lands. The second community, Solomon's Porch in Minneapolis, Minnesota, emphasizes a hospitality crafted around spirituality. Their practice includes sharing in regular meals, but also goes beyond them in emphasizing hospitality as a "way of drawing out and drawing in, of allowing people to share of themselves and their journeys with God, and then bringing them and their experiences together with others in the family

⁹³ Russell Kenney, 47-48.

of faith.”⁹⁴ Thirdly, Russell Kenney highlights the L’Arche Communities founded by Jean Vanier, which is an international association of 132 communities in 34 countries comprised of ““people with a learning disability and those who choose to share their lives.””⁹⁵ The emphasis here is on friendship and mutual care for one another across lines of ‘ableness’ in ways that move beyond a one-way relationship typical of a patient-assistant. Russell Kenney also describes the gift of being a stranger and receiving hospitality from another stranger. Here, she challenges the host toward the the need to flip the guest/host relationship and relinquish control to another—true hospitality must be reciprocal and mutual. Particularly in recognizing the inherent power found in the host role, a re-positioning is important for Americans who, Russell Kenney adds, “have largely forgotten what it’s like to be a stranger.”⁹⁶ Tragically, she adds, “With our massive borders and relative isolation, we have lost touch with the sense of our own vulnerability.”⁹⁷ Vulnerability is a necessary part of building human community. It is through such diverse manifestations of hospitality that New Monastics emphasize how strangers become friends and how this enriches the gifts found in each of the communities, and nurtures mutual care and love for one another.

⁹⁴Russell Kenney, 50. Also see Mercy Street’s Website at: <http://www.mercystreet.org> (accessed October 22, 2011).

⁹⁵ Ibid., 51. Also see the L’Arche Website at: <http://www.larche.org> (accessed October 22, 2011). For reference to a number of communities and presence in countries, see Carolyn Whitney-Brown, “Introduction” in *Jean Vanier: Essential Writings*, by Jean Vanier (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2010), 13.

⁹⁶ Russell Kenney, 52.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 52.

In seeking to plant themselves in ‘abandoned places of empire’, specifically in the inner city, New Monasticism has focused on how hospitality practice relates to lament for racial divisions and seeking reconciliation. In many cities, particularly in the South, this racial divide may be more characteristically “white” and “black”, though New Monasticism also recognizes the complexity of race and how it interfaces with questions of class, ethnicity, and minority status in society. New immigrants to the United States also represent minority communities that are disproportionately affected by issues such as violence, HIV/AIDS, family break-down, incarceration, etc.⁹⁸ This movement laments how racial segregation in many forms has divided the church body. The movement also seeks to uncover the painful ecclesial history of racism—what Wendell Berry calls a “hidden wound”—that has shaped the life of the church, particularly in the South. Those New Monastic communities located in the South practice lament and often focus on building relationships that cut across the historical divides of “white” and “black.” Chris Rice writes, “America’s church patterns of “us” and “them” were and continue to be indelibly shaped by trajectories birthed in legal segregation and church schisms that had very little to do with housing preferences or worship styles, and everything to do with race, white supremacy, and slavery.”⁹⁹ Lament is a necessary practice in the refusing forgetfulness of this history and refusing complacency in further allowing racial division to be normalized in congregations and ecclesial communities. In this way, Rice describes

⁹⁸ Chris Rice, “Mark 4: Lament for Racial Divisions within the Church and our Communities Combined with the Active Pursuit of a Just Reconciliation,” in *School(s) for Conversion*, 55-67.

⁹⁹ Russell Kenney, 59.

how “lament becomes a practice and task of remembering and grieving well, though which Christians do not forget and continue naming the truth about the past,” and he adds, “what comes into view is that as we pursue holiness, we are also called to do the hard work of social analysis. Behind faithful lament is theological and social discernment.”¹⁰⁰ Such lament, remembering, and social analysis do not come easily, and these communities seek to define their hospitality practice around such challenges. It is important to move the community away from the tendency to gather among “people like us,” and hospitality is a necessary practice in this formation. In contrast, Rice notes:

The way “people like us” begins to become examined is through our openness and hospitality to the stranger, to people *not like us*—to the neighbor I have not loved...the alien in my midst, the enemy across the divide, the least of these, the orphan, the widow, the prisoner. Calls to these practices are deeply embedded in Scripture...Openness and hospitality to the stranger are a check against culture (or cultural preference, or the church as a personal refuge) becoming an end in itself. Such openness puts our identity at risk, for we cannot remain the same in the exchange.¹⁰¹

Rice presents some key components to hospitality here in light of racial division, not to mention class divisions, within ecclesial communities. Hospitality is always a move away from sameness and pursuit of one’s own self-interest. Rather, hospitality challenges the church toward ongoing relationship-building with people not like us, that is, the stranger. Those who have been made “strangers” are more than those one does not know personally. Rather, New Monasticism recognizes how social and economic systems, history, society, and church have helped to define some people groups as “strangers” and

¹⁰⁰ Russell Kenney, 60.

¹⁰¹ Rice, 61.

perpetuated divisions across ethnic, class, and racial lines. Confronting the power differential in society and in churches and unlearning the habits of marginalization and exclusion begins with communities seeing differently and living together differently. New Monasticism continues to face challenges because the majority of those who comprise the intentional communities are: “educated whites who came from family histories of social privilege, and had come to see the dead end of materialism and the ‘rat race,’ were now willing to mobilize downward.”¹⁰² In contrast, downward mobility is not necessarily the motivation of others with whom the community seeks to build relationships. Many persons made to be “strangers” in society—that is of minority, ethnic, and/or lower socioeconomic status—do not seek further downward mobility or understand this as a priority. New Monasticism has felt the consequences of this reality in often not being able to bridge the race and class divide in its own community make-up. Despite the best intentions, the communities often remain largely white, middle to upper-middle class, and young adult. They continue to seek to build relationships across divides, unlearn the habits of racism, go to unfamiliar places, and practice lament so as to be challenged out of complacency and toward furthering God’s intentions for reconciliation. They recognize, however, that this work is beyond their intentions, efforts, and desires, but is a work of the Holy Spirit. In light of these challenges, Rice concludes:

It is exactly right to put “lamenting racial divisions” in front of “pursuing a just reconciliation.” Lament reminds us that we are not God, that visions like the new monasticism do not capture the Kingdom, that true reconciliation is only in the eschaton, when all things are reconciled in Christ. We keep naming the ‘not yet’ of the coming Kingdom, keep praying to be interrupted by the unexpected, keep

¹⁰² Rice, 65.

reaching out to the stranger, keep holding our hands outward for the gift of new people that the Holy Spirit may bring us tomorrow. Or not.¹⁰³

L'Arche: Ableness, Growth in Community, Spiritual Journey

In searching for authentic community and friendship in response to societal discrimination and misunderstanding of persons living with disabilities, in 1964 Jean Vanier began sharing a small house with Raphaël Simi and Philippe Seux, two men living with severe intellectual disabilities, in Trosly-Breuil, France. This would be the beginnings of L'Arche, today a worldwide charitable foundation and network of over 130 communities, as was introduced briefly above. The L'Arche communities value shared living space among persons with differing ableness. Vanier describes this community as "...groupings of people who have left their own milieu to live with others under the same roof, and work from a new vision of human beings and their relationships with each other and with God."¹⁰⁴ They focus on developing friendship, providing care, and nurturing trust among the community. This life is not easy, and those who have mental handicaps often come with considerable needs. Hospitality is here defined in the welcome of friendship and care that works through the difficulties between the relationships of 'assisted' and 'assistants'. Vanier encourages community members to persevere and find

¹⁰³ Rice, 67.

¹⁰⁴ Jean Vanier, Introduction to *Community and Growth: Our Pilgrimage Together* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), x.

joy in the daily, mundane tasks, to spend spontaneous time with people, and to learn to recognize one's own weakness and need.¹⁰⁵ Vanier describes L'Arche as follows:

L'Arche is special, in the sense that we are trying to live in community with people who are mentally handicapped. Certainly we want to help them grow and reach the greatest independence possible. But before "doing for them", we want to "be with them." The particular suffering of the person who is mentally handicapped, as of all marginal people, is a feeling of being excluded, worthless and unloved. It is through everyday life in community and the love which must be incarnate in this, that handicapped people can begin to discover that they have a value, that they are loved and so loveable.¹⁰⁶

L'Arche, for Vanier, was not just about becoming responsible to others in the community, but rather, about developing relationships of mutual love and interdependence. What is most difficult and demanding in this commitment is less about the needs of others, and more about a revelation of one's own weakness.¹⁰⁷

Vanier's journey was defined by coming to understand the weaknesses in himself and discovering what it meant to be human through persons living with mental handicaps. Upon visiting centers for people with mental disabilities before beginning L'Arche, he writes, "I was touched by these men with mental handicaps, by their sadness, and by their cry to be respected, valued, and loved."¹⁰⁸ This caused him to consider his own longings

¹⁰⁵ After Vanier returned from being hospitalized after falling ill from exhaustion while traveling, "he highlights in a new way the importance of spending spontaneous, unscheduled time with people. His own experience of being assisted in his weakness underlies a new sensitivity to the problematic aspects of L'Arche's distinction between the assisted and the assistants: 'Everything I see here makes me really question our L'Arche communities and the double culture of the 'assistants' and the 'assisted' that can exist'" Vanier, *Essential Writings*, 40-41.

¹⁰⁶ Vanier, Introduction to *Community and Growth*, xi.

¹⁰⁷ Vanier, *Community and Growth*, 27.

¹⁰⁸ Whitney-Brown references Vanier's words in her "Introduction," to Vanier's *Essential Writings*, 29.

and to reflect on the course his life had taken. His was an interior spiritual journey found in building deeper community with persons often hidden away from society and by delving deeper into his own spiritual personhood to discover the mystery of God there.

He writes:

Since I was a child, there have been three very distinct stages in my life. When I was thirteen, I joined the navy and spent eight years in a world where weakness was something to be shunned at all costs. We are required to be efficient and quick to climb up the ladder of success. I left this world, and another world opened up to me—the world of thought. For many years, I studied philosophy. I wrote a doctoral thesis on Aristotelian ethics, and I embarked on a teaching career. Once again, I found myself in a world where weakness, ignorance, and incompetence were things to be shunned—efficiency was everything. Then, during a third phase, I discovered people who were weak, people with mental handicaps. I was moved by the vast world of poverty, weakness, and fragility that I encountered in hospitals, institutions, and asylums for people with mental handicaps. I moved from the world of theories and ideas about human beings in order to discover what it really meant to be human, to be a man or a woman.¹⁰⁹

Vanier's spiritual journey and his life with others caused him to turn inward. He reflected on solitude, on simplicity, on the body, on recognizing his own poverty, and on the meaning of real relationships. He encouraged listening to the anger, anguish, loneliness, and pain in one's own heart. Vanier discovered that if he listened to this, he would also hear something deeper—the voice of God, a voice that professes love.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Jean Vanier, *Our Journey Home: Rediscovering a Common Humanity beyond Our Differences* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 33. Carolyn Whitney-Brown cites this in her "Introduction," in Vanier, *Essential Writings*, 29.

¹¹⁰ Vanier spoke of the value of slowing down... "Let us simply stop and start listening to our own hearts. There we will touch a lot of pain. We will possibly touch a lot of anger. We will possibly touch a lot of loneliness and anguish. Then we will hear something deeper. We will hear the voice of Jesus; we will hear the voice of God. We will discover that the heart of Christ, in some mysterious way, is hidden in my heart and there, we will hear, "I love you. You are precious to my eyes and I love you." In *Images of Love, Words of Hope* (Hantsport, N.S.: Lancelot Press, 1991), 82. Carolyn Whitney-Brown cites this in her "Introduction," in Vanier's *Essential Writings*, 40.

Vanier's writings emphasize the necessity of growth in "becoming human," something that he encountered in living with persons with intellectual disabilities. This attitude is not often found among the general public. He presents a progression of five attitudes in broader society toward people with intellectual disabilities: 1) persons in society may view disability as a sign of disorder and suppress it; 2) they may develop a 'so-called' charitable attitude (that is in fact pity) toward those with intellectual disabilities, and the general public may glorify those who do such compassionate work; 3) the general public and professionals may begin to recognize, respect, and feel compassion toward persons with disabilities and see how they grow and progress; 4) stemming from the third, the public may develop relationships and friendships with persons with intellectual disabilities; 5) finally, persons may come to see their own humanness and that of their new friends, recognizing how they lead persons to see God and the wholeness of humanity.¹¹¹ The love and care Vanier experienced from working with persons of varying intellectual abilities in L'Arche was a continual motivation to challenge societal perceptions of disability, as well as societal pulls toward elitism, strength, and competition. Living with members of L'Arche also challenged him, on the other hand, to recognize the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized in society as human of dignity and value. Vanier invites one to find humanity in growing downward, at the bottom of the social ladder. The hospitality and community he nurtures is one that concomitantly challenges the status quo because it calls for a Christian, alternative understanding of wholeness in humanity and recognition of the value of differing

¹¹¹ See Whitney-Brown's "Introduction," in *Essential Writings*, 48.

‘ableness’ in society. Vanier’s teachings would have broader influence in society as well in promoting peace and love amidst racism, injustice, and violence throughout the world. As Vanier’s teachings intertwined with his own journey of spiritual growth and life in community, he continually emphasized the need “to change the world, with love, one heart at a time.”¹¹² This “changing the world” is found in the simplicity of hospitality—welcoming others who are made strangers in society and discovering them as friends.

Jean Vanier’s motivation for L’Arche communities also led him to begin an international Christian ecumenical movement for people with disabilities, and their families and friends. Vanier met Marie Helen Mathieu in the 1960s, and they would later plan a pilgrimage to Lourdes for people with handicaps and their families. Vanier encouraged these pilgrimages with his own communities as well. He saw the importance of traveling together as a community in celebration and joy, while also helping to bring out persons who often do not get to travel, and their parents, for new experiences in which society also encountered them. Of the importance of making pilgrimages together he writes, “The Jewish people, the Muslim people, the Hindu people as well as the Christian people, throughout the centuries have always had a deep sense of pilgrimage.”¹¹³ These pilgrimages for persons living with disabilities and their families has grown into a network of travel communities known as Faith and Light. In 2008, there were fifteen hundred Faith and Light communities in eighty countries.

¹¹² Emphasis noted in Whitney-Brown’s “Introduction,” in *Essential Writings*, 42.

¹¹³ Whitney-Brown, “Introduction,” in *Essential Writings*, 37.

These three embodiments of hospitality represent the wide scope of the practice and the variety of contexts in which hospitality is practiced. I sought to highlight unique aspects of each group's hospitality practice as well as some of the similarities between groups. These embodiments reveal numerous ways in which various traditions have concretely interpreted scripture and theology to shape hospitality practice. While these movements have been inspired by important literature in hospitality practice, including Judeo-Christian scripture, each *embodiment* of hospitality reveals important aspects of the practice, such as how hospitality teaching is appropriated in context and adapts as circumstances change. These manifestations portray the discernment and negotiation involved in practicing hospitality. Building upon this groundwork, I now turn to discuss some of behaviors and expressions involved in practicing hospitality.

Behaviors, Gestures, and Ways of Life Together

While there are several key movements that come to mind when one thinks about contemporary Christian hospitality, there are countless small moves—indeed “little moves against destructiveness”—that contribute to the breadth of hospitality practice.¹¹⁴ This section will explore a variety of behaviors, gestures, and ways of life that ecclesial communities have developed as part of their hospitality practice. Here, it is important to begin to identify the parallels in hospitality practice between communities, as well as how their hospitality practice is uniquely stretched and challenged by ever-changing

¹¹⁴ For further information on the language of “little moves against destructiveness” see Pohl, *Making Room*, 12. Pohl draws from ethicist Philip Hallie's words in Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).

contextual circumstances. I will begin to identify the various ways ecclesial communities encounter, are encountered by, and are formed by those that they welcome.

Eating Together

Preparing food and the practice of sharing meals together, is a hallmark of hospitality. Perhaps more than home ownership or shelter, food has become central to welcoming others and building community. Eating together takes on heightened theological importance as it relates to Christian hospitality practice because of the emphasis on Jesus sharing meals with his disciples and others as portrayed in the Gospels. Additionally, the ritual of the eucharist reenacts Jesus' last supper with his disciples before his crucifixion. Celebration of the eucharist, or the Lord's Supper, is a meal that defines the life of the church. The eucharist, of course, is much more than sharing a meal, but implies the significance of Christ life, death, and resurrection ushering in God's kingdom to the world. More will continue to be discussed on the theology of eucharist in later chapters, but, for now, it is of note that early Christian communities celebrated the eucharist as a shared meal. Reflective of chapter two and four of Acts, early Christian communities understood that in this meal none were to go away hungry. The early practice of eucharist involved sharing a lavish meal, what came to be known as a love feast. While many traditions today partake of a wafer and wine in the celebration of eucharist, love feasts continue to be practiced today in many ecclesial traditions. The practice of sharing a meal also has been adopted anew in intentional communities focused on hospitality, such as in New Monasticism. Shared meals may be

celebrated in such communities as the *de facto* Lord's Supper or are often understood to be tied to the communities' additional celebration of eucharist during a worship service or Mass, for example. Additionally, such shared meals may be understood less as a formal sacramental practice, and more as an act of welcome and fellowship, such as gathering for a Sunday-afternoon "potluck."

Christine Pohl notes in her article, "A Community's Practice of Hospitality: The Interdependence of Practices and of Community," that the Open Door Community in Atlanta, Georgia invites others to share meals daily throughout the week, while they also celebrate the eucharist together once a week as part of worship together. Both the table fellowship and the celebration of the eucharist are understood as central to worship. At the same time, sharing meals daily draws the community deeper in friendship and fellowship and is an integral component of their hospitality practice. Worth quoting at length, Pohl describes the union of this meal sharing:

When the community's eating place is transformed on each Sunday afternoon in preparation for the sharing of the Lord's Supper, the connections between the common meal and the Eucharist become obvious. The two are so spatially and temporally proximate that daily meals literally flow into the feast Jesus shared with his disciples, the feast he now shares with those gathered in this place. One of the community's greatest strengths is that the flow between worship and daily life will continue, as the sacrament informs the convivial Sunday evening supper that follows and then all the other meals of the next six days. Ed Loring of the Open Door community writes, "We understand that every meal we eat is related to the Eucharist, to the eschatological banquet—that promise by which we live that there is enough for everybody, and that when we obey God's Spirit who is moving across the earth there will be no hunger."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Ed Loring in *I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door: Writings from "Hospitality"* (Atlanta: The Open Door Community, 2000), 6 in Christine D. Pohl, "A Community's Practice of Hospitality: The Interdependence of Practices and of Communities," in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in the Christian Life*, ed. Miroslav Volf and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 135.

In this sense, the ties between sharing meals and sharing the Lord's Supper are intimately wedded. Here, the basis for eating together at all—in fact, the basis for engaging in hospitality—originates in the theology of the eucharist. The life, ministry, and sacrifice of Jesus, as well as the joys of God's abundant provision in the eschatological banquet, bring meaning and moral value to hospitality practices of food and feasting. Pohl adds, "In the Eucharist, Jesus' sacrificial welcome is continually reenacted; in the daily meal, practitioners remember and recognize God's generous and gracious provision, as they enjoy one another's company and feed one another's bodies."¹¹⁶ Celebrating the eucharist together beacons the community to reflect the same love for one another as God has for them. In such a way, community members learn to give of themselves to others because they have received God's gifts and trust in God's continued provision.

In her article, Pohl draws from the work of Jualynne Dodson and Cheryl Townsend Gilkes in their article entitled: "‘There's Nothing Like Church Food’: Food and the U.S. Afro-Christian Tradition: Re-Membering Community and Feeding the Embodied Spiritual(s)." Here, Dodson and Townsend Gilkes present the significance of food in the Black Church in light of African American history of slavery, African religions' influences on Christianity, and emphasis on the Holy Spirit. They draw attention to the grand meals and the importance of sharing food as a way of drawing the community together during significant events like weddings, funerals, welcoming new pastors, etc. Such meals are also important for remembering the community's heritage

¹¹⁶ Pohl, "A Community's Practice of Hospitality," 135.

and reaffirming the people's identity in a hostile world. Drawing from ethicist Peter Paris, Dodson and Townsend Gilkes make note of equality and siblinghood in black churches and how this relates to food. The sharing of meals echoes scripture's calls to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, and together with "the tradition of Spirituals lifts up the story of the rich man and Lazarus in such a way as to make clear God's eternal displeasure at our failure to feed those who are laid at our gate."¹¹⁷ Following God's commands to love and care for one another involves "feeding." Among many African American influences and denominational traditions, Dodson and Townsend Gilkes particularly point to the church movement associated with "Father Divine," an evangelist who made available meals, clothing, and shelter to the black community during the Great Depression. Similar to Ed Loring's vision of shared meals mirroring trust in God's provision in the great eschatological banquet, Dodson and Townsend Gilkes write,

Father Divine's own religious vision indicated that his dining rooms were a microcosm of the Utopian vision articulated in the Gospels at the great eschatological banquet. The actions in the meals were signs of the actions of a better world to be actualized through his movement. He said:

So I Am glad to say that charity, or love, begins at home and spreads abroad; we are going to manifest this mighty love right here in this dining room and from here we are going to manifest this Truth from shore to shore and from land to land, and it all comes about through those who are willing to sacrifice.

Throughout the Great Depression "Father Divine furnished food, clothing and shelter to destitute blacks, but he also provided a theology that promised a better life and a brighter future to anyone, regardless of economic status."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Jualyne Dodson and Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, " 'There's Nothing Like Church Food': Food and the U.S. Afro-Christian Tradition: Re-Membering Community and Feeding the Embodied Spiritual(s)," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63 (Fall 1995): 534.

¹¹⁸ Quote originally spoken November 16, 1931 quoted in Jill Watts, *God, Harlem U.S.A.: The Father Divine Story* (Berkeley: University of California Press. 1992), 49, and cited in Dodson and Townsend Gilkes, 535.

Hospitality and love revealed in the preparation, giving, and sharing of food is pervasive in African American church. This love ethic reflects a counter-cultural identity evidenced in Christ and for African Americans. Acts of hospitality remind the congregation that “they are pilgrims and strangers and that as they feed somebody one day, they may stand in need on another.”¹¹⁹ Dodson and Townsend Gilkes note how black congregations understand the need to gather together and challenge the hostilities of the world and to continue to feast together calling forth the God’s great eschatological feast. They conclude their article:

The hyper-individualism endemic to American cultural values is challenged and overcome with the New World African "spirituality of interdependence" (Murphy: 1). And in a world of hatred and conflict, with its racism and deprivations, the saints are able to sit together at their welcome tables and remind one another in the giving and receiving of food, that they may continue to believe that "the greatest of these is love." There is nothing like church food.¹²⁰

Not only are hospitality and love central to identity and continued practice, but church food is necessarily wedded to such practice and identity.

Understanding Boundaries in Identity Formation

Other denominational traditions, such as the Anabaptists, reflecting a different heritage of oppression and persecution, also focus on this love ethic and being drawn toward God’s eschatological banquet. Here, one may find different emphases rather than a formal sacramental eucharist celebration or even a “spirituality of interdependence.” Anabaptist communities celebrate Love Feasts, specifically as an enactment of their

¹¹⁹ Dodson and Townsend Gilkes, 535.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 536.

identity in Christ, an identity alternative to that of the world. Gilbert Bond writes, “Anabaptists have been historically suspicious of the worldly *Gesellschaft*, not only because they were themselves persecuted by macro-institutions of the church and the world, but also because they contended that certain institutional structures were incapable of manifesting or mediating the Kingdom of God.”¹²¹ Anabaptists practice the Love Feast as an enactment of living alternatively toward a holy *Gemeinschaft*.

At first glance, it may seem like an Anabaptist Love Feast is exclusive and inhospitable because it exhibits a boundary between the community and its relationships with the outside world. Here, it is important to unpack the identity-shaping nature of the activity and the role of boundaries as they relate to a community’s identity and its hospitality practice. Gilbert Bond’s chapter “Liturgy, Ministry, and the Stranger,” will be helpful. Bond explains that outsiders are permitted to be present during the Love Feast, however, only members of the community are allowed to partake in the three movements of the Feast: foot washing, agape meal, and bread and cup.¹²² The work of reconciling within the community to prepare for a Love Feast is central because the Feast is to reflect the manifested Christ already in the community. It may take many months and years of preparation, while the Love Feast is postponed until all relationships within the community are made right. The feast day begins with a full worship service in preparation, until the foot washing begins. Men and women are divided into two groups

¹²¹ Gilbert Bond, “Liturgy, Ministry, and the Stranger: The Practice of Encountering the Other in Two Christian Communities,” in *Practicing Theology*, 144.

¹²² Bond, 145.

and each person in each group carefully washes one another's feet. After a pair exchanges washing, they stand, embrace, and confess their brotherly and sisterly love for one another. The progression is slow and intentional as the purpose is building community. An agape meal follows, accompanied by prayer and scripture reading. The tone is solemn, as the passages read are those narrating Jesus' last acts before his crucifixion. The third and final movement follows with sharing the bread and cup. This is the only time "communion" is celebrated in the community because "reconciled community is the context within which the bread and cup are celebrated."¹²³ In this sense, Bond notes that contrary to other traditions, the bread and cup do not make community. These acts unify the community's covenantal bond while also setting apart the community from the world. For this reason, they do not expect outsiders to participate in these rituals with them. Their relationships with those outside the community, however, do not end with this boundary. They believe they are called out to be sent into the world as suffering servants.¹²⁴

There is an important role for boundaries within community. This role particularly comes to light and often produces tensions in hospitality practice. Boundaries often more poignantly disclose a community's identity as *distinct from* the world; at the same time they also serve in identity formation, such as was illustrated in both African American and Anabaptist congregations and contexts, though their histories and traditions differ. Jean Vanier's reflections are helpful as he describes both the necessity and the tension of

¹²³ Bond, 146.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

boundaries in community-building. In *Community and Growth*, he writes, “A community has to be apart from society and open to it at the same time. To the extent that its values are different from those of society, it must necessarily be apart from it.”¹²⁵ The ecclesial community walks a fine line between relating to broader society and remaining distinct from it. Both are necessary particularly in the practice of hospitality. Vanier cautions against communities throwing off their traditions and the sense of their beginnings too quickly because when a community loses identity, it also loses its community.¹²⁶

At the same time, boundaries are porous and must remain open to the mystery of encountering God’s providence in others. Vanier continues, “One of the risks that God will always ask of a community is that it welcomes visitors, especially the poorest people, the ones who disturb us.”¹²⁷ Being disturbed and disrupted is important for growth in a community; after all, a community can easily slip into complacency and isolation, perhaps assuming an insular ‘status quo’ within itself, even (and perhaps especially) while it remains distinct from the world. The tensions that boundaries bring to a community are necessary for identity formation, continued growth, and relationship with others.

In fact, this tension is important in the various acts of welcoming others. Communities often wrestle with tensions experienced around issues of race, class,

¹²⁵ Vanier, *Community and Growth*, 61.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

ethnicity, and ‘ableness’ in seeking to understand how to welcome others and how identity is maintained and re-shaped in hospitality practice. At the same time, many church communities also challenge the status quo in terms of sexual orientation. Many congregations throughout Boston, for example, may profess on their building signage “All are welcome” or “We are a welcoming congregation.” In many cases, this has come to mean that the church openly embraces persons of differing sexual orientation. This signage also has come to mark these congregations as challenging a heteronormative status quo that may be present within other congregations and denominational traditions. Not only does this welcome challenge the boundaries of societal heteronormativity, but it also challenges the church’s own heteronormative welcome. Pressing up against such boundaries is, in part, identity-forming for the community and, in part, challenge to other communities’ identities. At the same time, it also manifests itself in welcome and hospitality toward others, particularly to others who have been marginalized because of sexual orientation. Letty Russell’s work in ecclesiology specifically calls churches to press up against preconceived notions of boundaries as an important way to identify with and welcome those who have been marginalized by the church because of its failure in light of patriarchal or heteronormative abuses of power. The church extending welcome and building relationships on the boundaries and margins of its communities, in turn, helps to shape and influence the center. More will be presented on Russell’s important contribution to this subject in later sections.

The Anabaptist Covenantal Community, which participated in the Love Feasts that Gilbert Bond helped us explore above, also undergoes challenges to such identity-

forming boundaries as church members encounter and are encountered by others in society. Bond describes the challenges found in identity-forming boundaries and Anabaptist ecclesial identity for the Chicago First Church of the Brethren in their experience with federally-supported food services in the 1980s. The church opened its doors throughout the week to be a food distribution center to help those in need in their surrounding community. The congregation received a food subsidy of cheese and powdered milk for distribution, yet this subsidy also required the Church of the Brethren to “prove” that the recipients of the cheese were poor. Bond notes that “the comic absurd part of the requirement became apparent when one reflected upon who else would wait in the Chicago winter outside a church for several hours to receive a five-pound brick of processed cheese if they could afford to buy it or a better grade of cheese in a grocery store.”¹²⁸ As this requirement was enacted, soon resentment began to fester, and during the process of donation, proving poverty status, and reception, eventually a feud broke out. The violence in their community forced the congregation to face the tension between, first, this government-supported food distribution ministry to the community as part of its Anabaptist identity toward sacrificial servanthood, and, second, the peaceful resistance to violence that Anabaptists have maintained for centuries. After painful discernment the community decided to shut down the food distribution ministry deciding that the requirements of the program conflicted with the community’s own broader Anabaptist identity. In negotiating the tension between such requirements and boundaries, the congregation reclaimed part of its identity and also re-shaped its

¹²⁸ Bond, 142.

hospitality ministry to the community so that it would reflect this identity. This reformed hospitality would still involve the sharing of food. As a pastor in this congregation, Bond reflects:

That violent Saturday called us to ourselves. We eventually...contacted some of the people who used to line up outside the church for cheese and powdered milk and invited them to a meal, a meal that members of the church prepared. And with some fear and trembling, we sat and ate with people who were very much not like us, people who knew little about being Anabaptist or Brethren; but in eating together, we discovered we were very much like each other.¹²⁹

Eventually these meals blossomed into deeper, long-standing relationships. Though this congregation would continue to maintain the boundaries of the Love Feast outlined above, its own Anabaptist identity led the community to discern how to share in a different love feast with others. The boundaries and the tensions in the community and its relationships with others stretched its identity and hospitality practice. Bond notes,

If we carried the logic of our most powerful, liturgical enactments to their conclusion, we could define our practice of encounter the stranger as an effort to create the conditions that would enable us to wash one another's feet. Receiving from those we were supposed to serve, from those outside of our community, stretched, painfully, the boundaries of our understanding of ourselves and our perception of others.¹³⁰

In this sense, boundaries are not meant to be fixed or static, but reflect a necessary elasticity and continually re-shaping.

¹²⁹ Bond, 147.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Challenges of 'Place' in Hospitality Practice

In addition to the Anabaptist Covenant congregation, Bond also takes a look at welcome and hospitality practice in an Afro-Baptist congregation. His specific focus is to uncover and wrestle with the differences in gestures of welcome offered to persons entering the sanctuary for Sunday-morning worship and the welcome offered to others through the congregation's shelter for homeless men at another location. In this sense, as with his description of the Chicago First Church of the Brethren, Bond's purpose is to explore gestures and the implicit theologies behind them within these two congregations. Bond's participant observation insights, however, also shed light into the present discussion of boundaries, tensions, and identity formation. Meanwhile, his insights also invite reflection on the challenges surrounding the 'place' where welcome occurs, such as church, home, social service agency, etc., as well as the guest/host roles and relational dynamics. Each of these dynamics also provide insight into a community's intentions of shaping hospitality practice and the tensions that may arise as a community understands its identity and continues to shape that identity.

Bond describes the centrality of African American Christianity in corporate worship and in a corporate missional task arising out of ties to the black community on a "pilgrim journey" seeking to reconstruct an unjust society.¹³¹ Welcome and hospitality, here again, are important pieces of this worship and mission. Additionally, the church as the place of refuge and gathering together is of particular importance. Bond describes

¹³¹ Melva Wilson Costen, *African American Worship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 125 quoted in Bond, 148.

how slavery severely dismembered the African American family as familial and conjugal bonds were continually broken, as slaves and their children were sold and resold, to populate an ever-expanding slave market. Drawing upon the work of Cheryl Sanders, Bond notes that after the Civil War,

...the church became the place wherein displaced and dislocated slaves could seek out lost or missing relatives in an effort to reunite families. Rituals of hospitality and welcome were therefore integral to the condition of their lives and the character of the church community. Hospitality as an African American Christian practice thus addressed an array of overwhelmingly urgent social and historical conditions.¹³²

Keeping this painful yet important history and motivation in mind, Bond explores how the Immanuel Baptist Church in New Haven, Connecticut enacts hospitality in the sanctuary and in the shelter through particular bodily gestures of “the gloved hand,” which symbolize the relationship to both the personal and the collective body of the church.¹³³ Bond describes the elaborate and well-received gestures and physical touch of the ushers, each with hands gloved in white, who invited him into the sanctuary on his Sunday-morning visit, greeted him with a hand shake, and guided him forward to each step of welcome process with soft touch. He writes, “Ushers gently insinuate themselves into his interactive ritual and redirect its energy with gesture, word, and presence.”¹³⁴

¹³² Bond, 149. Bond draws from Cheryl Jeanne Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

¹³³ Ibid. Here, Bond is following Antoine Vergote’s argument that “the ritual gesture reveals and unfolds the intentions of the body as lived. It inserts itself into the space of the humanized world, concretely links the subject to the human community, and attaches it to the Other who is source and ultimate meaning of its existence,” in “Symbolic Gestures and Actions in Liturgy,” in *Liturgy in Transition*, ed. Herman Schmidt, S.J. (New York: Herder & Herder, 1971), 46.

¹³⁴ Bond, 151.

Continuing this tactile theme, Bond notes how the sermon carried such gestures to a crescendo as the pastor concluded his sermon: “none are strangers; but all are children of the Most High.”¹³⁵ Bond observes:

As the service moved toward the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, I realized that the cloth used to cover the bread and wine was white, the same color as the globes the ushers wear. The ushers had brought the congregations and visitors to this moment of connection through word, deed, and sign, forming a visible and tactile unity. Their soft white touch, contrasting white gloves, and white nurses uniforms had signaled to all that this is a safe and healing place, and these corresponding signs of connectedness and community were now leading to communion.¹³⁶

Later that day, Bond visited the shelter for homeless men in another building. Here he was met with different tactile rituals of greeting. Though he himself had been warmly received, he later watched as men began to enter the shelter obligated to pay three dollars for their night’s stay. Contrary to that morning, the greeting was cold and sterile, and touch was now turned around to be alienating and isolating. The hosts, employees working at the shelter, wore yellow latex gloves and examined each man who was required to spread his legs and raise his arms. Suddenly the sterile distance evoked in this sort of touch was made real. Bond writes: “The movement across the boundary from outside to inside made each many an inside alien, as each received the confirming touch that marked his presence as a potential source of contamination, so dangerous that his hosts were required to don protective equipment.”¹³⁷ As one might imagine, the alienation and social isolation triggered by this distant and cold touch upon entering the

¹³⁵ Bond, 151.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 153.

shelter did not end here. This was a different kind of welcome—one severely limited by the surroundings and place of welcome, one which would necessitate large barriers and boundaries for safety, one mechanized by the routine of welcoming so many men each night, one of social service.

Certainly, many different dynamics play out here due to the boundaries, the place, and the intentions of such a service of hospitality. In light of his experience of hospitable gesture and touch, Bond laments that fact that something is seriously lost between the gloved hands attached to worship in the sanctuary on a Sunday morning and the gloved hands of the shelter intruding upon personal privacy and dehumanizing persons who seek shelter. He ends questioning: “What could help heal the rupture between the ritual of hospitality that invites communion and community within the sanctuary and the ritual of contagion enacted at the shelter?”¹³⁸ Bond notes that Christian practices are ambiguous, evident in these two very different manifestations of hospitality, let alone the differences between the Afro-Baptist and the Anabaptists congregations. On the one hand, the purposes of the practice may waver and are not determinate, yet the strength of practices lies in their capacity to be transformed.¹³⁹ Perhaps the fluid nature of such practices is due to the fact that they involve human community, human bodies, and how they live and react in an array of contexts. Practices do not exist in isolation. Bond notes, “We all struggle with the tension between self-preservation and the inherent risks we face as

¹³⁸ Bond, 155.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 156.

human beings and as Christians.”¹⁴⁰ Bond echoes back to Vanier’s earlier comments of the necessity of boundaries and the need to live at the tension of such boundaries in community. The boundary between identity and openness to change must always remain fluid, in order to maintain a community and to preserve its capacity to be transformed.

In later chapters, further questions remain to be asked and explored in light of the tensions inherent in hospitality practice and ecclesial identity. In this section and this chapter, I have begun to address issues of boundaries and identity formation within communities that practice hospitality. Additionally, I have introduced how preparing food and sharing meals, as well as the place of hospitality and welcome, play important roles in this practice. More remains to be explored in each of these areas and further investigation remains to be done regarding the challenges of guest/host roles and relationships in contemporary manifestations of hospitality in Christian communities. For now, I turn to discuss the relationships between ecclesial identity and hospitality practice when it is specifically oriented toward the “margins” of society

Ecclesial Identity and Hospitality Practice

On the Margins

Pohl devotes a chapter of her book *Making Room* to “Hospitality from the Margins,” adding important insights with regard to place and performance of hospitality as well as the identity and positioning of Christians as guests and hosts. She notes, “we offer hospitality within the context of knowing Jesus as both our greater host and our

¹⁴⁰ Bond, 156.

potential guest.”¹⁴¹ Those who Christians have historically welcomed often bear a status “on the margins” of society. This is certainly reflected in key passages in the Gospels, such as Matthew 5:1-11, Matthew 25:31-46, and many other scripture passages. The degree to which the host bears a marginal identity, however, is somewhat different and changes over time. She notes how the biblical narrative makes clear that marginality for the People of God is normative. For example, “alien status for the early Christians suggested a basis for a different way of life and loyalties to a different order, which in turn challenged conventional boundaries and relationships.”¹⁴² Additionally, the alien status of Christians afforded them the vantage point to see the importance of taking root in a home and nurturing hospitality for others, but this perspective also altered their understanding of “home.” In fact, because of early Christians’ journeying existence as resident aliens, Pohl draws attention to the fact that home was always provisional. It is precisely because home is always provisional for Christians who trust in the abundant provision and welcoming grace of God, that they are called to lavishly extend hospitality to others, and particularly those who fell between the cracks of society.

Pohl draws upon Victor Turner’s notion of liminality to describe the particular identity and place associated with hospitality practice in the church. Christians historically welcomed persons who were the poor, marginalized, and outcast by virtue of the ecclesial community’s own marginalization and alien status. Liminal persons and communities, claims Victor Turner, “slip through the network of classifications that

¹⁴¹ Pohl, *Making Room*, 105.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 105.

normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom.”¹⁴³ Pohl notes certain figures in Christian history who sought to deliberately create and sustain a liminal identity, such as monks, Chrysostom, Olympias, John Wesley and the early Methodists, etc. Liminality becomes an important characteristic of Christian identity and how Christians historically resided in the world—that is, *on the margins*. Turner’s notion of liminality—in the sense of slipping through the network of classifications—will have important implications as this study continues to explore the relationship between ecclesial identity and place in reference to issues of migration, borderlands, and empire.

Pohl is quick to note, however, that lavish care and welcome of the poor and marginalized in the name of Christ often waned in Christian history as wealth, power, and influence grew in the Christian community.¹⁴⁴ The other spheres to which hospitality was relegated in society also changed. Pohl writes,

Christians moved their expressions of hospitality into places like hospitals, hospices, and orphanages, the “hosts” were assigned specific roles and were often paid for their work. As a result, they experienced little encouragement to develop normal relationships or to find things in common with the “guests.” Specialized institutions tend to flatten social relations to one dimension—that of caregiver and recipient, or professional and client. These roles are not interchangeable, and the bonds among people are narrowly defined.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 95 quoted in Pohl, *Making Room*, 106.

¹⁴⁴ Pohl, *Making Room*, 113. Pohl adds, “As Christians became more established in positions of influence and wealth, their marginal status was diminished and their hospitality was more likely to reflect and reinforce social distinctions than to undermine them.”

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

The flattening of the guest/host relationship to one patient/client, severely limits relational dynamics to the single dimension of care and service. In fact, this flattening was of great concern to Vanier and one of his motivations for beginning his L'Arche houses where deeper relationships could be established. He specifically encouraged assistants, and all human beings, to discover their own human weakness and need in and through their relationships. Additionally, Pohl notes that as relationship between society and Christians continued to change, hospitality also came to be associated with smaller, private households, separate from the church. For example, as property and ownership became more common, hospitality became less and less associated with Christians' identity as aliens, pilgrims, and sojourners. Such changes in place and performance, not to mention ties between Christian identity and hospitality practice, altered how hospitality would be carried into future centuries of the church. This also would have a profound effect on the relationship between hospitality and power. Pohl cites Anthony Gittens's caution on the subject:

Unless the persons who sometimes *extends* hospitality is also able to sometimes be a gracious recipient, and unless the one who receives *the other* as stranger is also able to *become* the stranger received by another, then, far from "relationships," we are merely creating unidirectional lines of power flow, however unintended this may be. And that is quite antithetical to mission in the spirit of Jesus.¹⁴⁶

Pohl, here, insinuates the dangers of a one-way or one-directional flow of hospitality and how this shapes power dynamics between guest and host. Hospitality bears the inherent

¹⁴⁶ Anthony J. Gittens, "Beyond Hospitality? The Missionary Status and Role Revisited," *International Review of Missions* 83, no. 330 (July 1994): 399 in Pohl, *Making Room*, 119-120.

risk of reinforcing social distinctions while offering the illusion of relationship. The guest/host relationship can domesticate the guest and perpetuate the guest's indebtedness to the host, while the host is always in a position of power and control as benefactor.¹⁴⁷ These dangers still are present in a hospitality in which the host takes on voluntary poverty, as Dorothy Day herself feared. Pohl cautions that one cannot neglect to see the differences in the guest and host. The status of the host may be a chosen identity, while the guest's marginal identity in society is no choice of her or his own.

Pohl's work touches upon some important aspects of contemporary hospitality practice, and some necessary challenges to bear in mind. She invites further reflection upon Christian identity and the relationship between place and performance of hospitality. This bears upon how Christian identity is formed and shaped, indeed, performed, in contemporary society. Pohl draws attention to a Christian counter-cultural identity that nurtures a distinct way of life for Christians.¹⁴⁸ In all cases, hospitality practice is never a static enterprise. The relationships between Christian identity and performance always require discernment, evaluation, and negotiation. This is in fact the challenge of residing "on the margins," as both Pohl suggests. Pohl writes, "the practice of hospitality challenges the boundaries of a community while it simultaneously depends on that community's identity to make a space that nourishes life."¹⁴⁹ At the same time,

¹⁴⁷ See Pohl, *Making Room*, 120.

¹⁴⁸ See *Ibid.*, 124. Pohl specifically mentions this in reference to Stanley Hauerwas's and William H. Willimon's work *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989).

¹⁴⁹ Pohl, *Making Room*, 130.

Pohl does not go far enough in her analysis to question hospitality's boundaries, to identify its margins, and unpack what is at stake in this practice for both the guest and host. She makes mention of power dynamics in guest/host relationships and indebtedness in hospitality practice, but does not address what some have deemed as the impossibility of hospitality. Pohl suggests these issues from an observational standpoint, but she does not reach beyond the surface to critically analyze hospitality practice and its relationship to Christian identity and ecclesiology. More work remains to be done in this area, specifically as ecclesial communities engage varying contexts in their hospitality practice.

Ecclesiological Challenges in Hospitality Place and Performance

Elizabeth Newman's 2007 publication *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers* addresses hospitality in light of United States' individualism and privatization of religion and presents an ecclesial understanding of this practice that directs readers toward a Christian counter-cultural politics, economics, and ethics. Newman's work parallels Pohl's observation that hospitality practice with and among the poor and marginalized—not to mention Christian identity on the margins of society—waned in Christian history as the wealth, power, and influence of Christians grew. Newman seeks to reclaim the Christian meaning of economics and politics from U.S. cultural frameworks. She identifies hospitality based on God's economy understood through triune giving and receiving. Her purpose is to call the church back to its identity

in Christ, found in giving oneself away to others. This giving originates in God's own abundance.

Central to Newman's exploration is how hospitality practice both arises out of and also shapes ecclesial identity. The problem, however, is that Christian hospitality has become subordinated to U.S. cultural emphases on consumerism and individualism. She identifies the dangers and distortions in current understandings and practices of hospitality when they have become subsumed within popular notions in society: sentimental hospitality, privatized hospitality (i.e. a religion of civility), hospitality as a mode of marketing (i.e. hospitality industry, exchange value determines worth), hospitality as inclusivity, and homeless or placeless hospitality.¹⁵⁰ Newman diagnoses these distortions as a sign of the local church's loss of identity and formation and a continual cultural turn toward individualism. In turn, she seeks to recover and re-define hospitality practice in light of the fullness of God and the gospel. She emphasizes the importance of communal worship as the way Christians come to know and participate in God's hospitality toward us. In worship liturgy, and particularly through participation in Holy Communion, the church body receives God's gifts, offers itself back to God, and is sent out to offer what it has received to others in the world. In a sense, then, worship is the enactment of hospitality—it enacts the giving and receiving that constitutes the church's life oriented to God. Newman writes, "Truly to receive from God is to be made part of a people, called to worship, to give and to receive for and on behalf of the

¹⁵⁰ See Newman, *Untamed Hospitality: Welcoming God and Other Strangers*, see Chapter 1 and pp. 19-40.

world.”¹⁵¹ Thus hospitality practice rooted in God’s hospitality to humanity is central to the church’s understanding of its identity and mission in the world.

More broadly, Newman diagnoses Christianity and Christian churches in the U.S. as plagued by a sense of homelessness sparked by late modernity—“by stripping us of particular traditions, locales, and authorities, and by substituting the free and universal self, [late modernity] has left the actual self bereft, subject to political and economic forces that it is often hopeless to resist.”¹⁵² In other words, wealth, power, and influence in society all compromise the church’s identity and water down its hospitality practice, and the Christian narrative is buried under other concerns. When the church loses sight of its identity and mission, it is more easily oriented toward other narratives and practices. Resisting the pulls of consumerism and individualism away from the Christian narrative, Newman seeks to recover the church pointed toward God’s *oikos*, or household and economy. This *oikos* comes to mean a people gathered by God in and for the sake of God’s purposes in the world. The church’s economics are not marked by the autonomy and independence reflective of U.S. societal values, but rather dependence, gift, and reception.¹⁵³ God’s economy in the church is about communion; it is about giving and receiving, generosity and abundance shown in God. Newman contrasts true Christian hospitality with the McDonaldization of society in global market capitalism. A McDonalized hospitality shapes bodies toward a unified end—toward efficiency,

¹⁵¹ Newman, 61.

¹⁵² Ibid., 50.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 96.

calculability, predictability, and control.¹⁵⁴ None of these outcomes, however, reflect a Christian hospitality that arises out of faithfulness to God's purpose and calls for patience with and love for those who are vulnerable and neglected by society. God's hospitality calls Christians to mirror God's abundant giving and inspires God's people to feast together and receive others as they would receive Christ.

Additionally, Newman articulates how Christian hospitality arises out of God's gifting to humanity, rather than the ethical choice of the individual. Christians learn in the ecclesial community what it means to be members of one another and live a particular way of life together, rather than how to be autonomous individuals. Additionally, this community is not formed only with those who gather in a building, but encompasses the communion of saints across space and time.¹⁵⁵ Newman writes,

That we are created for communion with God and others means that we are part of a tradition in which we are dependent on others (including those not explicitly within our tradition) to demonstrate to us what we are to be. Such a politics does not depend on individualism but rather on *friendship*. It depends less on the language of rights and more on the language of *gift*.¹⁵⁶

Christian hospitality, for Newman, thus reflects an alternative to the politics of liberal democracy in its embodiment of a politics unique to the people of God. In ecclesial politics and economics, the people of God are shaped into a dwelling place for God. They are shaped into this dwelling that reflects God's gifting celebrated and shared in the practice of the eucharist. In the Lord's Supper, the church community find "Christ is the

¹⁵⁴ Newman, 90.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 115, 135.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 141.

host (transcendent), Christ is the companion (a table fellow), and Christ is also the food (immanent). Christ is both the giver and the gift.”¹⁵⁷ In fact, the eucharist is the hospitality Christians receive and extend to others; it is that by which their bodies are shaped by God’s abundance. This is the practice out of which hospitality extends to make strangers friends who gather toward a common end—to love and serve God.¹⁵⁸

Challenges of Unity and Difference

While Newman addresses some direct challenges to a hospitality that has become diluted and subsumed by individualism and consumerism in United States’ society, Letty Russell concerns herself with how Christian identity and hospitality practice have neglected openness to differences *within* the body of Christ. Russell challenges the church toward embracing those who are of different race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. She exposes patriarchal abuses of hospitality practice that have continued to exclude certain persons from full participation in the church. Russell’s work will be important for understanding how hospitality practice continually is adapted in new and ever-shifting contexts in society, through uncovering voices that have been silenced in the past and excluded from participation. She devotes her energy to understanding difference in communities and how this stretches previous boundaries and margins that may have shaped communal identity. Recognition of boundaries and margins becomes important to church life, as members are encouraged to recognize their place and to

¹⁵⁷ Newman, 169.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 179.

continually seek to change the “center” by living from the perspective of the “margins.” Russell focuses on hospitality as an activity that must be done *at the boundaries* and as a distinctive way of forming identity that tends boundaries uniquely. It is when the body of Christ fails to adjust and negotiate its identity on the margins that it compromises its mission in the world. Russell’s challenges to the church and to hospitality practice will lead into the next section where I will more directly address questions of Christian hospitality as it relates to the context of U.S. Latino/a migration into the United States.

Russell’s posthumous 2009 publication *Just Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference* presents the need for a re-forming and re-framing of hospitality practice that is balanced by personal awareness and understanding differences in others’ lives. In this work, she draws upon her personal life experience in working throughout the world—with the World Council of Churches and alongside two-thirds world theologians—and the critical lens of feminist and postcolonial theologies to expand the action-reflection of this practice. Russell delves deep into the challenges surrounding traditional practices of hospitality as they are adapted to new contexts. Her unfolding of hospitality is housed within her own ecclesiology, by which she seeks to build the unity of the church torn apart by difference working in partnership toward God’s mending of all creation. Understanding “difference” is an important aspect of Russell’s unfolding of hospitality because it recognizes, celebrates, and welcomes the many forms of diversity in the world and all that makes up each human person. She carefully distinguishes unity

in the church from uniformity and draws upon the practice of hospitality as vital for understanding difference and building true unity.¹⁵⁹

What makes Russell's contribution to the discussion of hospitality and ecclesiology particularly important for this investigation is not only her vast experience working internationally, but her drawing from two-thirds world and postcolonial theological insights that expose potential abuses and distortions of hospitality in the life of the church. Drawing upon Botswana theologian and New Testament scholar, Musa Dube, Russell exposes the domination of the West in setting universal standards in education, culture, politics, etc. which are imposed upon non-western groups. She exposes a perpetuation of Western 'sameness' in education rather than the recognition and value of differences between cultures.¹⁶⁰ Before working toward a "just hospitality," Russell calls for an examination of how ecclesial identity is predicated by covering over the voices and participation of members who embody differences that threaten the status quo.¹⁶¹ Difference, Russell explains, is often misused as a tool to silence, exclude, or oppress the other because she or he does not match the universal norm carried by the

¹⁵⁹ Letty M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference*, ed. J. Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 71. Also see *Church in the Round*, Chapter 5.

¹⁶⁰ Russell draws from Musa W. Dube's works, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalis Press, 2000); Dube, "Postcoloniality, Feminist Spaces, and Religion," in *Postcolonialism, Feminist, and Religious Discourse*, ed. Laura E. Donaldson and Kwok Pui-lan, 100-122 (New York: Routledge, 2002); Dube, "Go Therefore and Make Disciples of All Nations," in *Teaching the Bible: The Discourses and Politics of Biblical Pedagogy*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998). She also relies upon Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

¹⁶¹ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 31. Here, she also explains the theme "emancipatory difference," which will be discussed in later chapters.

dominating group. Russell emphasizes the need for examination of how a Western worldview has dominated knowledge production in order to examine where Western cultures are inadvertently reinforced as “better” or more “advanced.” This calls for further examination of how globalization has shaped a multilayered and intersecting oppressions of racism, classism, and imperialism, etc. Russell instructs her North American readers to be aware of U.S. foreign policy’s impact on the globe.

From these insights that expose various layers of oppression, Russell develops a framework for a hermeneutic of hospitality. First, members of the church must uncover the power quotient, that is, the various levels of power and access one has based on his or her social location.¹⁶² Second, drawing from a liberationist preferential option for the poor, Russell insists that priority be given to the perspective of the outsider and marginalized, which will in turn be given privilege in influencing the “center” of the church. Lastly, the church must understand the work of hospitality as directed toward the larger purposes of God’s unfolding promise in mending creation.¹⁶³ Russell writes, “Today, God’s hospitality as a partnership with humankind in the ‘repair of the world’ becomes the mandate as we look for ways to work with one another to transform the world.”¹⁶⁴ In her constructive development of hospitality, Russell finds that postcolonial strategies help to provide the necessary tools for analysis and resistance to continued imperialism and oppression, as well as transformation of the church toward God’s

¹⁶² Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 49.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

unfolding promise. Subsequent chapters will continue to delve deeper into the challenges that postcolonial insights expose with regard to hospitality practice and ecclesiology.

Unity in the church requires self-examination and intentionality that does not reinforce dualism or seek to create unity through sameness.¹⁶⁵ Russell cautions that the failure to recognize real difference in race, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc. can result in misperceptions and deeper exclusion. Russell proposes “just hospitality” as a model of communion and sharing of many gifts. She explains:

Hospitality is an expression of unity without uniformity. Through hospitality community is built out of difference, not sameness; there is no “either/or,” “right/wrong,” “win/lose.” Instead, there are numerous options for ways to faithfully express our unity in Christ and unity among religions and nations. Hospitality in community is a sharing of the openness of Christ to all as he welcomed them into God’s kin-dom. Because this unity in Christ has as its purpose the sharing of God’s hospitality with the stranger, the one who is “other,” it assumes that unity and difference belong together. When they are not together, and unity is achieved through exclusion or domination of those who are different, this is no longer unity in Christ.¹⁶⁶

Russell develops hospitality as *partnership* with the ‘Other’. This sort of partnership is nurtured in the community of Christ in which the source of unity is Christ’s presence calling for openness to one another.¹⁶⁷ Russell cautions against welcoming the Other in ways that continue to suppress and the gifts that the Other brings and may even seek to conform the Other to be “like us.” She notes, Henri Nouwen’s observation that

¹⁶⁵ See Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 63-64.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

“Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the lifestyle of the host, but the gift of a chance to the [guests] to find [their] own.”¹⁶⁸ In this sense, the ecclesial community does not welcome in order to “convert” its guests to *one* way of doing things, but as a catalyst for creating partnerships in the gospel.¹⁶⁹ Russell challenges the church to welcome with an openness that allows for a safe and welcoming space where each can find a sense of humanity and worth.¹⁷⁰

The test for such unity is a community’s ability to break down barriers, seek the marginalized, and welcome the outsider. Similarly to Newman’s challenge away from a “sentimental hospitality,” Russell challenges the church to reform a *cheap hospitality* associated with “terminal niceness.” She also exposes the church’s tendency to offer a *limited hospitality* only to those who are “like me” in terms of class, race, nationality, language, etc. Additionally, she confronts *deformed hospitality*, that is, when communities patronizingly offer to care for “inferior” people out of their own superior status.¹⁷¹ In contrast, hospitality as partnership in the gospel seeks a unity without uniformity reflective of God making possible communication “across differences of language, culture, and social location (Gen 11:1-9; Acts 2:1-12).”¹⁷² Unity, difference, hospitality, and overcoming what Russell terms the “impossible possibility” of

¹⁶⁸ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 173.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁷⁰ See *Ibid.*, 173-175, 180-181, 192.

¹⁷¹ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 80.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 71-2.

differences are reflective of Christ's presence on earth, a presence that constitutes the church through the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷³ The "impossible possibility" is found in recognizing the church's grave failures presently and throughout history to truly welcome difference, while also finding hope and trust that God will one day fulfill this unity of the church and mend creation. God's hospitality to us in Christ is the cornerstone of such good news. The church is continually transformed to see its neighbor with new eyes, to welcome and receive them as Christ, and to learn of God's welcome through the neighbor as the body of believers continues to nurture the practice of hospitality. For Russell, just hospitality opens the church toward continuing God's mission, this is a justice concerned with ending oppression—"the impossible possibility that one day God will fulfill the unity of the church and mend the creation that has been so torn apart. Our actions of just hospitality begin that mending."¹⁷⁴

Russell's work will be instrumental in understanding how hospitality practice must be challenged and stretched in ways that welcome the margins and celebrate difference and diversity. I argue that the church's ability to respond to such challenges is central to its own transformation toward God's household. As the church is always called to look forward and live into God's coming reign, it is continually being shaped toward God's purposes as it seeks to live out the good news in particular times and places. Russell's presentation of the challenges of hospitality is a catalyst by which I undergo

¹⁷³ Russell, *Just Hospitality*, 68-69. Russell adds, "It is a *community of Christ* because Christ's presence, through the power of the Spirit, constitutes people as a community gathered in Christ's name (Matt 18:20; 1 Cor. 12:4-6)."

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

rethinking and re-shaping of hospitality practice in subsequent chapters. While the hospitality practice detailed by Christine Pohl and Elizabeth Newman also touch upon some of these challenges, Pohl and Newman do not go far enough in addressing questions of uniformity within the church as well as the dangers and potential abuses in extending of hospitality to Others. The next chapter will introduce the context of transnational migration, and specifically U.S. Latino/a migration, into the United States. Subsequent chapters will further articulate challenges posed to ecclesial communities seeking to live out hospitality amidst the difficult reality of displacement and mobility for migrating persons. In chapter four, drawing from U.S. Latino/a and postcolonial theologies, I return to investigate and question the dimensions of hospitality and ecclesiology—place, gestures of welcome, gift and exchange, borders and boundaries, and journey or pilgrimage—as they relate to transnational and Latino/a migration. This deeper investigation demands new constructive imagination in how hospitality and ecclesiology must be retooled in response to changing patterns of migration in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER THREE

UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITIES OF MIGRATION: CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS IN HOSPITALITY

Introduction

This chapter introduces many of the factors contributing to the growing phenomenon of global migration and explores its interconnectedness with globalization in the twenty-first century. This context reveals the increasing prevalence of transnational migration in the lives of persons, families, nations, cultures, as well as Christian faith practice and communal gathering, particularly within the United States. The factors that contribute to migration are complex and multilayered. To examine this context critically and with depth, I draw from the fields of anthropology, cultural studies, postcolonial theory, theology, and ethics. Additionally, in order to more concretely address the complexities surrounding migration, I turn to the particularities of the U.S. Latino/a immigration context drawing this investigation into further concreteness and more detailed description of what can be an incredibly elusive and often concealed reality. After presenting these contexts, I explore the insights and challenges of U.S. Latino/a theologians and ethicists, which specifically speak into the experience of migration and its effects on the life of the church in the United States inviting deeper theological analysis of ecclesial practice. Drawing on these insights, I seek to unearth the potentially problematic conceptions and practices of hospitality in light of persons displaced and on the move as migrants, refugees, or itinerants.

The ecclesiological dimensions of hospitality practice responding to migration in the twenty-first century U.S. context, I argue, must take seriously the complexities of contemporary migration—advancing awareness of migration context, fostering mutual relationships across physical and figurative borders, and incorporating self-critique and continued identity formation on the part of churches and other forms of ecclesial gathering. I argue that ecclesial communities' hospitality practice must be stretched to encompass the challenges this new context brings, incorporating a more dynamic and textured welcome, that involves accompaniment with and among migrants, addressing critical needs and valuable perspectives migrants bring with them to a new community. Hospitality extended in ecclesial communities must seek honesty and depth in relationship-building in order for the community to begin to understand and be confronted by the particular experiences and culture migrants—or any new visitors—bring with them. Critically engaged and creatively faithful re-appropriations of this practice are necessary in this changing global landscape in light of the harsh realities many undocumented migrants face as they journey to and/or reside in the U.S. This chapter investigates the migration context in depth in order to further explore the demands of theological and ecclesiological response and practice as I have presented them. The following two chapters will theologically analyze ecclesial practice in light of the complexities of twenty-first century migration inviting further insights in ecclesiology, as well as two-thirds and postcolonial world theological reflection, before entering into more constructive and strategic ecclesiological proposals in the final chapters.

The Complexities of Transnational Migration

The capitalism of the late twentieth century and the increasing globalization and geopolitical market construction have proliferated peoples on the move. While migration, exile, diaspora, and pilgrimage are phenomena visible throughout all of history, the reality and urgency of coerced migration in a globalized world is complex and alarming. This section will identify the multifaceted factors contributing to transnational migration, while also beginning to introduce how questions of identity, home, and borders/boundaries are challenged and stretched as they relate to global migration.

Avtar Brah, in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, suggests that the twenty-first century question for transnational migration is not simply *who* travels, but *when, how* and under what socio-economic, political, and cultural circumstances. Thus, she notes the importance of asking such questions in order to understand the complex forces that drive migration. The intersectionality of power relations and the confluence of economic, political, cultural, and psychic processes are central to contemporary explorations of migration.¹⁷⁵ While such forces intersect, they are not all the same. Brah specifically calls attention to how present-day migration inhabits those who have migrated and their descendents *as well as* those who are represented as indigenous, or possessing citizenship in host countries. Brah presses all persons to consider the reality of migration and movement and their participation in it. This phenomenon includes citizens

¹⁷⁵ Avtar Brah, "Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities," in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 178-210. Brah understand diaspora not as a transcendental consciousness, but she develops it as conceptual category that signals to the processes of multi-locationality across geographical, cultural, and psychic boundaries. In her work, diaspora is a space for theoretical crossovers and intersections.

and permanent residents in “host” countries, as well as those persons perpetually moving and crossing borders. The interconnectedness of the twenty-first century globalized landscape allows no person or nation-state to consider itself exempt from acknowledging and participating in this reality. If all are indeed implicated in global migration and the perpetuation of bodies displaced and on the move, this invites new questions about how residence, identity, and migration are perceived in society and, particularly for the purposes of this study, in ecclesial communities. For now, however, this study will continue to introduce some of the broader societal implications, while keeping in mind how bodies on the move in light of twenty-first century globalization also deeply affect the gathering, participation, and life of ecclesial communities.

Transnational migration, particularly for persons forced to migrate, challenges traditional notions of home and familial community and also brings questions of belonging and national identity-construction to a new complexity. In the 1990s, both the fields of cultural studies and anthropology began to turn focused attention toward the global phenomenon of migration. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, Cristina Szanton Blanc, in their article “From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration,” explore the various definitions of a new concept—transnational migration. “Transmigrants,” they note, “are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relationships to more than one nation-state.”¹⁷⁶ Interestingly, transnational

¹⁷⁶ Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, Cristina Szanton Blanc, “From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 68, no. 1. (Jan., 1995): 48. They also draw upon the work of Glick Schiller *et al.* 1992a; Basch, *et al.* 1994.

migrants both reflect continual movement, yet also settle in multiple locations. The move between “home” and “host” is not so easily defined. Schiller, Basch, and Blanc further explain this complexity:

[Transnational migrants] are not sojourners because they settle and become incorporated in the economy and political institutions, localities, and patterns of daily life in the country in which they reside. However, at the very same time, they are engaged elsewhere in the sense that they maintain connections, build institutions, conduct transactions, and influence local and national events in the countries from which they emigrated.¹⁷⁷

Naturally, the reality of transmigration alters previous and current understandings of who is the immigrant. Often the immigrant is conceived of as a person who uproots from a home and country, and seeks to incorporate herself or himself into a new society and culture.¹⁷⁸ Likewise, it is assumed that the immigrant will “assimilate” into the new society’s presumed way of life, language, cultural customs, etc. In contrast to this widely held perception in society, however, cultural theorists point out that transnational migrants maintain complex relationships and remain embedded in more than one society.¹⁷⁹

Additionally, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo and Michael Peter Smith in “The Locations of Transnationalism,” go further to note the scale and scope of multivalent cause and effect factors surrounding increased transnationalism:

- the globalization of capitalism with its destabilizing effects on less industrialized countries;
- the technological revolution in the means of transportation and communication;

¹⁷⁷ Schiller, Basch, Blanc, 48.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 48.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

- global political transformations such as decolonization and the universalization of human rights; and
- the expansion of social networks that facilitate the reproduction of transnational migration, economic organization, and politics.¹⁸⁰

In light of the number of intersecting factors contributing to transnational migration, these scholars point out the disconnect between the host country's nation-building processes and transnational migrants' own identity-construction as it relates to two or more countries/nation-states. Scholars identify migrants positioning as "multi-local" to signify that they actually have multiple 'homes' or nation-state localities to which they are responsible. The multiple locals are not necessarily recognized by home or host nation-states.

Such scholarship points to complexities of migration that question the assimilation-process of national identity particularly as it relates to the United States as a host country. Additionally, however, these complexities reveal the necessity and urgency of considering anew how ecclesial participation and belonging is challenged by persons who continually criss-cross borders and maintain close ties to more than one culture. Do ecclesial communities maintain a similar pattern of a presumed way of life and customs? How might these presumptions affect the community's hospitality practice? Additionally, these observations pose further questions of how members of any Christian community may understand their relationship with their national community. What is the cultural embeddedness and what are the questions of assimilation with regard to how Christians

¹⁸⁰ Luis Eduardo Guarnizo and Michael Peter Smith, "The Locations of Transnationalism." in *Transnationalism From Below*, ed. Michael Peter Smith, Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 4.

might understand their commitments, identity, and loyalties toward both their national and faith communities? How does the privileging of certain cultures affect national perceptions of migration, and how does this shape Christian welcome of the migrant? Can citizens of a host country extend hospitality to migrants in ways that do not perpetuate abusive power dynamics? Considering the complexities of twenty-first century migration are necessary for evaluating Christian identity practice with and among migrants. This chapter further explores these contextual realities in order to theologically negotiate more faithful praxis in the life of the church in light of migration. The realities of transnational migration and questions of national identity processes pose important challenges to ecclesial communities' identity formation, to the static and one-dimensional welcome of hospitality practice, to the lack of reciprocity in relationship, and to the presence of power dynamics in guest/host roles.

As Brah's observations above pose the necessity of investigating the circumstances from which persons migrate, it is important to explore how transnational migration relates to the global economy as well as a number of other intersecting factors. Such factors also naturally feed into the lives and economic practices of church members. Transnational migration, a product of transnationalism in many forms, is a phenomenon of global interconnections necessary for and sustained by a capitalist system of production.¹⁸¹ Interestingly, scholars note how the factors related to the global economy draw twenty-first century transnational migrants to uproot to global centers, while also maintaining ties to home countries:

¹⁸¹ Guarnizo and Smith, 50.

Three conjoining potent forces in the current global economy lead present day immigrants to settle in countries that are centers of global capitalism but to live transnational lives: (1) a global restructuring of capital based on changing forms of capital accumulation has led to deteriorating social and economic conditions in both labor sending and labor receiving countries with no location a secure terrain of settlement; (2) racism in both the U.S. and Europe contributes to the economic and political insecurity of the newcomers and their descendants; and (3) the nation building projects of both home and host society build political loyalties among immigrants in each nation-state in which they maintain social ties.¹⁸²

These observations point out the effects of global economic policies in contributing to migration, yet they also draw attention to how negative perceptions in the United States and Europe further perpetuate risks for transnational migrants. Racism and questions of national identity contribute to migrants gathering in ethnic enclaves in receiving countries and provide further impetus for migrants to maintain strong ties to sending countries.

These results contribute to what majority populations in receiving countries may perceive as resistance to assimilate into a new culture, causing angst and often anger. These observations point out some of the challenges surrounding transnational migration—both the factors that contribute to it and the perception of migrants in host countries have created unique social results in terms of how migrants reside in host countries and how they also continue to “reside” in a different sense in sending countries.

On top of the challenges of multi-local identity construction, migrants are further challenged by United States’ identity construction. In “The Locations of Transnationalism,” Guarnizo and Smith critically analyze the United States nation-

¹⁸² Guarnizo and Smith, 50. The authors continue: “Faced with wide-spread deterioration in their standards of living, professionals, skilled workers, unskilled workers, merchants, and agricultural producers all have fled to global cities or to countries such as the U.S. that still play central roles in capital accumulation. However, once in these countries, immigrants confront a deepening economic crisis that often limits the economic possibilities and security many are able to obtain. Moreover, those sectors of the current immigrant population who find themselves racialized as “Hispanic,” “Asian,” or “Black” find that even if they obtain a secure position, they face daily discrimination in the pursuit of their life dreams.”

building processes in light of migration, which, they argue, often reflect hegemonic tendencies both in the perpetuation of transnational migration as well as in its policies toward transnational immigrants who criss-cross its borders. Guarnizo's and Smith's observations made in 1995, though 15 years old, are still applicable to the transnational migration situation in 2011:

Concepts of “America, the white” are reinforced. Yet at the same time, documented immigrants are being drawn into the debate on the side of enforcement, validating their right to belong but differentiating themselves from other migrants. There is a dialectic between inclusion and exclusion that disciplines transnational migrants by focusing public attention the degree to which they belong in the U.S. The current debate on immigrants in U.S. will lead not to the effective policing of national borders but to the reinscription of boundaries. It serves to counter transnational identities and loyalties and creates a terrain in which immigrants are drawn into defending whatever they have achieved or obtained by defending it against the undocumented. They are therefore drawn into a discourse of identity that links them to the U.S. nation state as a bounded structure of laws and institutions as well as a defended territory. Yet none of the nation-building processes encompasses fully the complexity and multiple identities which constitute the lives of transmigrants.¹⁸³

Specifically, their observations reflect the lack of attention to the realities transnational migrants face in understanding U.S. nation-building. This reality, of course, is complicated in the way it affects migrants' identity and ways of life. Persons who emigrate from other nations themselves are drawn into the U.S. immigration debate and encouraged to turn against one another in order for survival. Guarnizo's and Smith's observations also point to other factors that must be considered. Specifically, the question of boundaries and borders—both physical and psychosocial—are important factors to consider in identity discourse. These factors, together with understanding

¹⁸³ Schiller, Basch, and Blanc, 59.

transnationalism as a multifaceted and multi-local process, will be important to my further investigation of hospitality and ecclesiology.¹⁸⁴

These factors press ecclesial communities to address how Christians are called to reside and build Christian community together in the United States when the members may be migrants and/or citizens representing many different nationalities. Such considerations reach into the life of the church, pressing questions of how persons belong to an ecclesial community and how formation in that community shapes persons' attitudes toward migration, national identity, and belonging. Additionally, it is important to consider how such formation affects their economic practices and ethics, etc. As national and faith loyalties may conflict and collide, investigation is needed with regard to how Christians are discerning their identity and the extent to which this identity is formed by the boundaries of their participation in ecclesial communities.¹⁸⁵ The question

¹⁸⁴ Guarnizo and Smith, 6.

¹⁸⁵ For example, a 2006 Pew Hispanic Center study, "Attitudes Toward Immigration: In the Pulpit and the Pew," by Gregory A. Smith, surveyed views of white evangelical Protestants, white mainline Protestants and white no-Hispanic Catholics (who together account for nearly 60% of the population)—as well as on the views of secular Americans, who comprise 11% of the public regarding the relationship between religion and attitudes on immigration. Here, it was concluded that,

When we hold constant the impact of various demographic and socioeconomic factors such as income, education and gender that may influence attitudes toward immigration, we find that frequency of church attendance is associated with more favorable views of immigrants and immigration on several of these questions. In other words, among the largest religious groups, those who are the most religiously committed tend to be more similar to seculars than are those who are less religiously committed. Across all three religious groups, for instance, those who attend church infrequently are much more likely to view immigrants as an economic burden than are those who attend church at least once a week...

Regardless of their religious background, Americans have serious concerns about immigration and favor a cautious approach to immigration policy. This is true even of Catholics and mainline Protestants, whose leaders have been quite outspoken in support of immigrants and a more hospitable immigration policy. But within each of the three largest religious groups in the U.S., the most religiously committed Americans tend to hold views that are more favorable toward immigrants. While church shepherds may not be getting through to all of their flock, they may be having better luck reaching their most attentive parishioners.

of boundaries and borders in hospitality practice is raised to new importance in light of global migration. How boundaries and borders shape national identity and Christian identity will be important considerations. These questions and influences will be investigated later in this chapter.

Ecclesial communities across the United States are largely divided on the immigration debate, yet many agree that the system is broken and needs to be fixed. While, varying perspectives in the United States government have certain stakes to defend in this debate, the Christian church's position is often polarized and divided according to national law and policy. Such questions and polarization invite Christian scholars from various traditions to examine and investigate the role of the church in assisting and welcoming migrants. The next section will explore various theological perspectives that advocate on behalf of migrants, specifically for their rights, safety, and well being. While this study is timely due to the increased discussion of immigration in the United States, its purpose is not to outline in full the various sides of this national debate. Rather, I seek to address how U.S.-based ecclesial communities might adapt and appropriate Christian hospitality practice differently as they begin to understand and become affected by the complex situations migrants face as they journey to and reside within the United States' borders. I seek to identify new expressions of hospitality found in ecclesial communities' accompaniment with and among migrants. To accomplish this, I draw upon theologians' insights regarding migration in order to better understand how

For more on this see: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/20/attitudes-toward-immigration-in-the-pulpit-and-the-pew> (accessed February 22, 2008).

the complexities outlined above factor into ecclesial communities' reconsideration and re-appropriation of hospitality practice.

Transnational Migration and the Role of Ecclesial Communities

The historical particularities, complex identities, and multi-local influences encapsulated in transnational migration, pose new challenges to Christian faith communities' identity formation and contemporary hospitality practice. While the purposes of my overall investigation will focus on these factors, it is also important to briefly note the larger role faith communities may play in the various stages of the migration process. In their article, "Calling Upon the Sacred: Migrants Use of Religion in the Migration Process," Jacqueline Hagan and Helen Rose Ebaugh research a transnational Mayan community with members in the western highlands of Guatemala and Houston, Texas. Their study traces the role of religion and the influence of faith communities in each step of a migrant's journey. Specifically, they highlight the role of religion and faith communities in the following stages of the migration process: 1) decision making; 2) preparing for the trip; 3) the journey; 4) the arrival; 5) the role of the ethnic church in immigrant settlement; and 6) the development of transnational linkages.¹⁸⁶ While their observations do not necessarily evaluate the role of these faith communities and how they are forming migrants' own understanding of their journey, I draw attention to them here in order to reveal the layered importance of migrants'

¹⁸⁶ Jacqueline Hagan and Helen Rose Ebaugh, "Calling Upon the Sacred: Migrants Use of Religion in the Migration Process," *International Migration Review*, 37, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 1145.

relationships with the faith communities they leave, those from which they continue to seek guidance, the new faith communities they encounter along the way, and any new faith communities they may join as they reside in another country. In this sense, the practices of hospitality and accompaniment may take on various forms as ecclesial communities encounter migrants along the various stages of their journey.

U.S. Latino Transnational Migration

Daniel Groody, Assistant Professor of Theology and Director of the Center for Latino Spirituality and Culture at the University of Notre Dame, devotes his theological work to studying migrants' faith and spirituality through their journeys northward through Mexico and across the U.S.-Mexico border. In *Border of Death, Valley of Life: An Immigrant Journey of Heart and Spirit*, Groody uncovers the suffering endured by migrants along this route and how this suffering affects their spirituality, specifically from a Roman Catholic theological perspective. Initially Groody explores the spirituality migrants bring from the background of their families, culture, and faith communities in home or sending countries, the challenges that test their spirituality in their journey northward, and the spirituality that may be lost as well as that which remains as they come to reside in the United States. Then, he turns to investigate the possibility for spiritual transformation by considering migrant-specific missionary activities. Specifically, Groody studies the *Encuentro Misionero* retreats offered as a part of the Valley Missionary Program, which began in 1973, by the Congregation of the Holy Cross in Southern California's Coachella Valley. The Coachella Valley, located about 60 miles

north of the U.S.-Mexican border, is a prime area for agricultural development. The valley offers many possibilities for finding seasonal agricultural labor and has been a chief destination for many Mexican migrants seeking employment. Groody notes that the town of Coachella is “a small, agriculturally rich but economically poor town of about 20,000 people, most of whom are immigrant Mexicans. In the midst of this poor town is one of the most powerful spiritual renewal centers in the country, which is called the Valley Missionary Program.”¹⁸⁷

Unveiling the difficult dynamics of a migrant’s journey, Groody describes the political, social, and economic context that motivates Mexican migration northward. Unequal distribution of wealth and its consequences is one of the chief causes of global migration and certainly one that precipitates some Mexicans to leave their homes and make a dangerous journey to the United States. Migrants often leave their families behind and travel alone to the United States for economic reasons. They are breaking with everything previously known to them, creating insecurity as well as many emotional and practical challenges. Groody portrays this dangerous journey across the U.S.-Mexican border as the crossing of the border of death.¹⁸⁸ Upon arriving to the United States, the insecurity continues as the immigrant faces alienation and marginalization (political-cultural, socio-economic, psycho-spiritual) and is quite literally “a stranger in a foreign land.”¹⁸⁹ Groody writes,

¹⁸⁷ Daniel Groody, *Border of Death, Valley of Life: An Immigrant Journey of Heart and Spirit* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2002), 41.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-33. Also see his discussion of this journey as and “journeying to the very margins of life,” p. 19.

In leaving Mexico, many immigrants enter a world of social poverty and become disconnected from family, culture, and homeland. "The most painful thing is separating from the family and leaving behind your loved ones as you search for a more dignified life," said Gustavo. Loneliness is a heavy burden and one of the most unrecognized aspects of the immigrant's pain. . . Many immigrants live in isolated and rural areas. Because their experience of the institutional Church is often limited, some see priests infrequently, so they have little contact with the sacramental life of the Church. They often have a negative or neutral understanding of God and the institutional Church.¹⁹⁰

Groody describes how the suffering experienced by immigrants is an important element for understanding their spirituality. For Groody, through their sufferings, immigrants reveal the mystery of Christ found in Matt 25:31-26:2.¹⁹¹ He writes, "Within their particular stories of hunger, thirst, estrangement, nakedness, sickness, and imprisonment we can begin to see the face of a crucified Christ (Matthew 25:31-26:2)."¹⁹² Groody in no way seeks to glorify the suffering of migrants, but rather notes the parallels between Jesus' suffering in the Way of the Cross and immigrants' suffering on their journey northward across the U.S.-Mexico border. Groody finds that revisiting the life of Jesus in scripture can provide immigrants with new understanding of their journey. He writes, "Life in the United States is the place where many immigrants experience a contemporary Golgotha, but it is also the place where some experience the rising to a new way of life."¹⁹³

¹⁸⁹ Groody, *Border of Death*, 31. See pp. 20-33.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 33.

Groody investigates how spiritual transformation is made possible through the *Encuentro Misionero* program that specifically addresses the context of the migration journey and applies a contextual theology and spirituality for Mexican immigrants' situations as they settle in a new land. The *Encuentro* retreat is an adaptation of the *Cursillo* retreat contextualized by Mexican immigrants for immigrants. Through the retreat, Groody explores the process of conversion of the heart and a spirituality deeply intertwined with the social circumstances surrounding migration. Groody argues for focused attention toward how immigrants' spirituality can be revitalized and how this spirituality can serve as to revitalize the spirituality of others.

Groody also explores the continued support and community cultivated through the Valley Missionary Program as migrants are invited into a more intentionally shared life together through ecclesial base communities in the Coachella Valley. David Badillo in *Latinos and the New Immigrant Church* describes this program as an offshoot of liberation theology, which is often considered a south-of-the-border phenomenon.¹⁹⁴ Badillo notes that the Congregation of the Holy Cross “adopted the Latin American model of creating hundreds of base communities among immigrants to pave the way for religious and social activities.”¹⁹⁵ These communities and their activities are specific to the Mexican immigrant experience, spiritual journey, and struggle. Groody's work is important here for understanding the theological and spiritual complexities of migrants during their journey and as they arrive to the United States. Groody describes his work as

¹⁹⁴ David A. Badillo, *Latinos and the New Immigrant Church* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 190.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

“done at the crossroads” between Mexico and the United States, as well as between spirituality and theology, culture and theology, fieldwork and theology, sociology and theology, and the grassroots and the academy.¹⁹⁶ I will revisit Groody’s insights regarding how hospitality is contextualized in light of immigrants’ experiences in later chapters.

Groody’s investigation begins to illustrate what Graham Ward terms “the fierce spirituality of being a migrant, that body which is marked by a wandering.”¹⁹⁷ Noting Abraham’s own migratory existence, Ward writes,

...because we are stretched out towards a future hope in faith. And anyone who knows what such a stretching out means, anyone who knows what it is to like in that condition, given over to the grace of God in a radical dependency, will understand why I call it a ‘fierce spirituality’. To live for a promise that is not received, to confess you are a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, to set out not knowing where you will end up, for a place which will be received only retrospectively: that is not easy. But I suggest nevertheless that is our human condition as God has graciously fashioned it.¹⁹⁸

The reality of U.S. Latino/a immigration is also often understood as an increasingly transnational phenomenon, by which persons criss-cross the U.S.-Mexico border multiple times without documentation is an extremely dangerous journey. In fact, taking account of this reality, Kwok Pui-lan coins the term “border passage” as opposed to “border crossing” to reflect the growing reality of perpetual transnational migration throughout

¹⁹⁶ Groody, *Border of Death*, 5

¹⁹⁷ Graham Ward, “Hospitality and Justice toward ‘Strangers’: A Theological Reflection,” paper presented at the ‘Migration in Europe: What are the Ethical Guidelines for Political Practice?’ symposium, Katholische Akademie, Berlin November 2003 [available at: http://www.katholische-akademie-berlin.de/Veranstaltungen/2003112729/Ward_pdf.pdf (accessed October 28, 2008)].

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

the globe.¹⁹⁹ Such border crossing(s) often requires a costly rite of passage that involves both ‘uprootedness’ (of culture, family, and identity), as well as a life-threatening journey, for many migrants and in this case for Mexicans and Central Americans.

In his work, *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration*, Miguel A. De la Torre details a typical migrant’s journey from Mexico, across the U.S.-Mexico border, and into the United States. His description is worth quoting at length:

Their journey may start in Altar, Mexico, where they first have to avoid becoming prey to government officials, *coyotes*, (smugglers), and criminals trying to take advantage of their desperation. Women and children face the additional hazard of becoming victims of physical or sexual abuse. And they need money to live on the Mexican side of the border while they wait to cross—for many this is an event that must be repeated.

If they make it to the border, they must spend several days walking through mountains and deserts. Men, women, and children follow trails where at any turn they can be robbed, beaten, raped, or murdered by drug-smuggling gangs, U.S. anti-immigrant vigilante groups stationed on the border, racist ranchers, and rogue Border Patrol or Mexican law enforcement agents. A foot blister or a sprained ankle can be a death sentence because those who cannot keep up are left behind. Unless they receive help, they die of exposure. Thousands have already died this way. Those who elude the border vigilantes or the official Border Patrol and make it to a major city quickly try to blend into the community’s fabric. But they still live with the daily terror of being detected, arrested, and deported, being forced to leave behind parents, spouses, and children.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Kwok Pui-lan, “A Theology of Border Passage,” in *Border Crossings. Cross Cultural Hermeneutics*, ed. D. N. Premnath (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 2007), 103-117. In her essay, Kwok Pui-lan explores the sense of place and shape of border passage and the implications for theological reflection in the twenty-first century. More will be discussed on Kwok’s contributions in later chapters. Also note Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn. *A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, April 2009), executive summary, p. 2. Their research illustrates this “border passage” phenomenon. They write, “Patterns of migration between the U.S. and Mexico are varied. Many immigrants come from Mexico to settle permanently, but large numbers also move both ways across the U.S.-Mexico border throughout the year, sometimes staying for only a few months, a pattern known as circular migration. Mexican-U.S. migration also tends to be seasonal, with larger northbound flows in the spring and summer and larger southbound flows in the fall and winter.” <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=107> (accessed September 16, 2010).

²⁰⁰ Miguel A. De la Torre, *Trails of Hope and Terror: Testimonies on Immigration* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), 2.

Even if one makes it safely across the U.S.-Mexico border and into the United States, the threats, risks, and dangers of deportation abound. Life is not easy for migrants north of the border—there is much discrimination, little to no job security, much distrust, and many unknowns. The threat of being deported always looms as a present and future possibility.

Understanding the Causes of Migration and the Residual Effects of NAFTA

The risks that migrants face to make the journey northward are great. Many seek to understand and describe the strong motivation that outweighs these risks and continues to drive many to leave their homes and families south of the U.S. border to attempt the journey. Often, the reasons for embarking on this difficult journey are multifaceted. In his work, De la Torre seeks to offer insight into why migrants risk this dangerous journey and what is at stake in making such life-threatening decisions. Additionally, Aviva Chomsky in *“They Take Our Jobs!” and 20 Other Myths about Immigration* seeks to clarify the root causes of migration pointing out the incredible complexity of the variety of factors that contribute to transnational migration. She describes how each immigrant has particular, individual motivations for migrating, but also how patterns of immigration have structural and historical causes. There are many interrelated factors that structure immigration historically and still today.²⁰¹

²⁰¹ Aviva Chomsky, *“They Take Our Jobs!” and 20 Other Myths About Immigration* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2007), 121-122.

The situations providing an impetus to migrate are commonly—though perhaps too simplistically—referred to as push- and pull-factors. Push-factors are described as situations of poverty, lack of opportunity, and danger or threat, which push persons to leave. Pull-factors, then, may be new situations that offer opportunity, jobs, education, and safety.²⁰² These factors, however, describe the surface reasons for migration, and do not address the complexities and root causes of migrants' situations. Chomsky writes,

They fail to explain just why some places seem to be characterized by poverty, lack of opportunity, and danger while others offer opportunity, jobs, education, and safety. They also don't explain why long-standing inequalities among regions or countries lead only sometimes to flows of migration.²⁰³

In fact, De la Torre notes that, contrary to popular opinion, the goal for immigrants is not merely to find a “better life” and live off the social services provided in the United States. He reminds his readers that many would rather stay with their families and friends and their culture, traditions, and birth places. Despite all the factors stacked against them, De la Torre continues, migrants “attempt the hazardous crossing because our foreign policy has created an economic situation in their home countries in which they are unable to feed their families.”²⁰⁴ De la Torre's observations draw attention to the complex economic factors— such as the United States' economic trade policies with other countries—that are major factors in U.S. Latino/a migration.

The 1994 establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), for example, is a large motivating factor for northward migration across the U.S.-Mexico

²⁰² Ibid., 122.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ De la Torre, 16.

border. De la Torre discusses NAFTA in light of the U.S. economic expansion, in which, “free trade came to be defined as moving goods freely across borders—free from tariffs or taxes.”²⁰⁵ Free trade, however, references a limited freedom. This agreement is only “free” for the movement of certain goods and free for only some persons, as it turns out.

De la Torre describes:

while workers looking for better jobs were *not* intended themselves to cross borders freely, the products of their cheap labor did, as goods were produced and exported. While people were expected to stay in place, factories moved across borders in order to maintain their high profit margins by paying the lowest possible wages. The quest for low wages meant that many industries relocated south of the 1,833-mile border between the United States and Mexico.²⁰⁶

The U.S. perspective, however, often overlooks the consequences the NAFTA agreement brings upon the Mexican economy. While it appears that the agreement would benefit Mexican economic export, it simultaneously legalized U.S. industry to cross the border and generate production in the south, permitting fewer restrictions and cheaper working conditions. As companies migrated southward, the Mexican economy, Mexican businesses, and Mexican laborers bear many costs. De la Torre outlines the negative spiraling effects of NAFTA on the Mexico-side of the agreement, particularly for the workers:

Although large numbers of U.S. jobs moved to Mexico, in general Mexicans did not experience a windfall. While numerous factories, known as *maquiladores*, opened along the border after the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, Mexicans sank deeper into poverty. Many Mexican farmers were forced to abandon their lands because they were unable to

²⁰⁵ De la Torre, 13.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

compete with U.S.-subsidized imported agricultural goods. At first they saw salvation in the *maquiladoras*, but this proved to be an illusion.²⁰⁷

By way of illustrating both Chomsky's and De la Torre's observations of the historical and structural factors going into migration and the political and economic factors of U.S.-Mexico NAFTA relations, Douglas Massey explains the case of Mexico and the reality of the migration of persons northward:

That Mexico is by far the largest source of U.S. immigrants is hardly surprising. In addition to sharing a land border with the United States, it was twice invaded by U.S. troops in the 20th century (in 1914 and 1917), it has been the target of two U.S.-sponsored labor recruitment efforts (during 1917-18 and 1942-64), and since 1986, at U.S. insistence, it has undertaken a radical transformation of its political economy and entered the global market. Moreover, since 1994 it has been linked to the United States by NAFTA, a comprehensive economic treaty that presently generates \$250 billion per year in binational trade.

Under these circumstances, immigration between the two countries is inevitable, even though Mexico is wealthy by Third World standards. With a per capita gross domestic product of \$9,000, it is one of the richest countries in Latin America. It is in the interest of the United States, therefore, to build on this economic base by accepting Mexican immigration as a reality and working to manage it in a way that minimizes the costs and maximizes the benefits for both nations.²⁰⁸

The U.S.-Mexico situation is one example of many in how global economic exchanges and globalization intensify transnational migration all throughout the world.

²⁰⁷ De la Torre, 13-14. De la Torre cites the following authors as contributing to this statement: "It is estimated that in the first ten years after the implementation of NAFTA, approximately 780,000 jobs in textile and apparel manufacturing in the United States were lost (Public Citizen Product ID 9013, *Another America is Possible: The Impact of NAFTA on the U.S. Latino Community and Lessons for Future Trade Agreements* [Washington D.C., 2004], 5) and Miguel A. De la Torre, "For Immigrants," *Church and Public Life: An Agenda for Change*, ed. Rebecca Todd Peters and Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 73-84.

²⁰⁸ Douglas S. Massey, "Closed-Door Policy: Mexico Vividly Illustrates How U.S. Treatment of Immigrant Workers Backfires," *American Prospect*, July 1, 2003, <http://prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=6824> (accessed October 23, 2011). Also see, Chomsky, 131.

A 2009 Pew Hispanic Center reports that 11.9 million undocumented immigrants live in the United States, and based on 2008 Census Bureau data, the center estimates that undocumented workers make up 4% of the nation's population and account for 5.4% of its workforce.²⁰⁹ The report continues that about three-quarters (76%) of the undocumented population are Hispanic, the majority (59%) being from Mexico.²¹⁰ Chomsky specifically tries to place migration in a larger historical context, as part of a larger global system.²¹¹ She writes, "Citizen workers who have lost their jobs to global restructuring and migrants who have come to the United States to fill the new secondary labor market are part of a system that is much larger than themselves."²¹² In this sense, contrary to popular opinion in the United States that migration is a *cause* of such global economic exchanges, Chomsky specifically illustrates how migration is a result or product of such changes.²¹³

Additional policies, as well as a politics of fear toward the immigrant in the United States complicate the situation, creating further risk for many migrants. De la Torre notes many economic, political, and historical factors that have exacerbated migration risks particularly in light of the implementation of NAFTA in 1994. One

²⁰⁹ Passel and Cohn, A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States, <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=107> (4.14.2009) (Accessed September 16, 2010). The report continues: "*Significant regional sources of unauthorized immigrants include Asia (11%), Central America (11%), South America (7%), the Caribbean (4%) and the Middle East (less than 2%).*

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ Chomsky, 132.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

residual effect of NAFTA in the southwestern United States is Operation Gatekeeper, of which the primary strategy was to reduce undocumented migration in the San Diego area, thus forcing migrants eastward into more dangerous mountainous and desert terrain. It was thought that the possibility of death would hopefully deter further migration attempts. Operation Gatekeeper has not resulted, however, in any substantial decrease in border crossing attempts, despite the increased risks. Rather, as De la Torre notes, there has been a 20 percent increase in known deaths associated with unauthorized border crossing and has resulted in a conservative estimate of nearly thirty-six hundred bodies recovered on the U.S.-side of the border between 1995-2005.²¹⁴ De la Torre's description of the risk factors contributing to these deaths is indicative of the problem:

The unforgiving and harsh terrain toward which Hispanics are presently funneled can have daytime temperatures in excess of 115 degrees Fahrenheit, higher during summer months, and frigid nighttime temperatures that pose the risk of hypothermia. The majority of deaths, almost 60 percent, are caused by exposure to the elements, specifically hyperthermia, hypothermia, and drowning. Most who perish are in the prime of their lives; around one-third are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-nine, and almost 20 percent are thirty to thirty-nine. Even if death does not claim the life of a border crosser, many still suffer permanent kidney damage caused by dehydration. Women are nearly three times more likely to die of exposure than men, and those women who do not succumb to the cruelty of the desert face the cruelty of sexual assault. It is now common practice for women preparing to make the crossing to use a method of birth control prior to their journey as they are more than likely to be sexually assaulted.²¹⁵

This description illustrates how a politics of fear in the United States in fact intensifies the real dangers and risk of death that many migrants face in their attempts to cross the

²¹⁴ De la Torre, 14-15.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 15.

U.S.-Mexico border. Little regard is given to the dignity and protection of human life (when these humans are not U.S. citizens), in terms of United States' policy decisions.

La Frontera (The Border): Division of Race and Class?

The populations surrounding the U.S.-Mexico borderlands are large. It is estimated that 12 million people live along the 1,833-mile U.S.-Mexico border, with about 6.3 million living on the U.S. side of the border and 5.5 million living on the Mexican side.²¹⁶ While it may appear that Operation Gatekeeper is a policy limited to the geopolitical borderlands of the southwestern United States, the suffering endured as migrants cross the U.S.-Mexico border remain scars imprinted on minds, hearts, and lives no matter where migrants may settle or find work. De la Torre notes,

Still, the U.S. borderlands are more than a geographical location; they are also the existential reality of Latina/o alienation. A Latino/a does not need to live in one of the towns or villages along the U.S.-Mexican border to experience the alienation of living on the border. Borders exist in every state, country, city, and town that separates Hispanics from Euroamerican-designated spaces. The invisible walls are as real in Kansas City, San Francisco, and Chicago as are the visible walls in Chula Vista, California; Douglas, Arizona, or El Paso, Texas.²¹⁷

La Frontera (the Border) is a multifaceted symbol of danger, fear, and trauma for many migrants who have survived it, and some who have lost love ones to it. *La Frontera* also is a symbol of division, separating Mexico from the United States. This division runs far deeper than geography, reaching into divisions of race, class, and gender in the United States. As a symbol of both racial and class division, *La Frontera* has become an

²¹⁶ De la Torre, 115.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 115.

identifying marker of persons who came from “south of the border” as foreign, unwelcome, other, and assumed to be lesser and not eligible for human rights. For many migrants, *La Frontera* symbolizes the imminent reality of the many walls that they face and will continue to face as long as they reside north of the border, with or without documentation. De la Torre observes:

To be Latina/o living anywhere in the United States is to face constantly a border that separates him or her from the benefits that society has to offer. This is evident in the continuing segregation existing in housing, public schools, and employment.²¹⁸

Finally, *La Frontera* as a border is a very real mark of exclusion, symbolizing the constant threat of deportation, no matter how far north one settles. In summary, much more than a geopolitical boundary marker, the U.S.-Mexico border reflects a social imaginary perpetuated by U.S. dominant culture that marks inclusion and exclusion based on class, ethnicity, and race.

Mestizaje: Race and Identity

The poetic image of Francisco Alarcón speaks to the reality of a transmigratory existence—“mis raíces las cargo siempre conmigo enrolladas me sirven de almohada (I carry my roots with me all the time rolled up I use them as my pillow).”²¹⁹ Perpetual migration does not afford a migrant the luxury of home, of rootedness, of family, of

²¹⁸ De la Torre, 115.

²¹⁹ Carmen Nanko-Fernández, *Theologizing in Espanglish: Context, Community, and Ministry* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 110. Originally published as: Carmen M. Nanko-Fernández, “Beyond Hospitality: Implications of Im/migration for Teología y Pastoral de Conjunto,” in *Perspectivas: Hispanic Theological Initiative Occasional Papers 10* (Fall 2006): 51-52.

comfort, of safety, etc. Similarly, Cuban American theologian, Fernando Segovia describes a migrant's perpetual state of wandering in which she or he exhibits a placeless existence. In his article "Two Places and No Place on Which to Stand," he describes the constant sense of placelessness that comes with living in two worlds but at home in neither one.²²⁰ He describes the feeling of not fitting where he came from and certainly not where he is presently located. He writes,

We are a people living in two worlds: away from our traditional home, creating and establishing a new home; firmly tied to a rich cultural past, yet ready and struggling to take on yet another dimension of cultural miscegenation; accustomed to intolerable levels of political oppression and instability, searching for a measure of political peace and freedom; rejected and denigrated, poor and ignored in our new home, culture, and country—in the very midst of the land of promise and plenty. We are thus a bicultural people at home in neither world—the permanent "others."²²¹

In many senses, the social imaginaries of nation-state borders reflect this 'placelessness'—a migrant from the global south may never experience the welcome of being "at home" in the United States because she or he is always marked by the glaring divide of exclusion in *La Frontera*—whether that border is marked by lines on a map, by walls, by fences, by bodies of water, by rivers and mountains. Similarly, this exclusion persists whether that dividing line is documentation, employment, gender, language, poverty level, or skin color.

In his seminal work, *The Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise*, U.S.

Hispanic theologian Virgilio Elizondo theologically reflects on the bicultural aspects of

²²⁰ Fernando F. Segovia, "Two Places in Which to Stand: Mixture and Otherness in Hispanic American Theology," in *Mestizo Christianity*, ed. Arturo J. Bañuelas (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis books, 1995), 35.

²²¹ Virgilio P. Elizondo, *The Galilean Journey: Mexican-American Promise* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 33.

the person of Jesus from the lens of the bilingual and bicultural reality of Mexican-Americans. Elizondo uniquely parallels the hybrid identity inherent within Mexican-American *mestizaje* and God's calling of the church to hybrid, multicultural identity in Christ.²²² Elizondo traces the double *mestizaje* of Mexican-American identity. He details the history of *mestizaje* as the product of two invasions: first, the Spanish Catholic conquest of Mexico, and second, the Nordic-Protestant Conquest of Mexico. The second conquest describes the Protestant colonization of North America encompassing the migration of North Europeans to a new territory, the elimination of Native American populations, and further westward expansion (in the name of Manifest Destiny). This colonization led to the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty of 1848 in which Mexico conceded to the United States the present states of California, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as large sections of Colorado, Nevada, Utah, and the prior annexation of Texas.²²³ This second invasion did not simply involve territory, argues Elizondo, but emphasized cultural and racial "purity" and hegemony, which further justified expansionism against those who were not white, pure-blooded, English-speaking, and Protestant.²²⁴ In response to this second invasion in particular, Elizondo "considers acculturation as an accommodation to the dominant group that makes one leave behind one's own

²²² Later scholars add the term *mulatez* alongside *mestizaje* to include the subjugation of persons of African origin who were brought to the Americas as slaves of the colonizers. The terms are often juxtaposed as *mestizaje/mulatez*, however, this juxtaposition was not in Elizondo's earlier work. I will transition the term *mestizaje* to include *mestizaje/mulatez* in the next chapter where more recent theological development of subject will be addressed.

²²³ Elizondo, 15.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

culture.”²²⁵ In this sense, Elizondo’s identity analysis responds to discrimination and oppression of persons based on cultural markers, such as, language, color, ethnicity, etc. Such discrimination results from economic, political, and even religious marginalization of particular communities in the face of the dominant group.²²⁶

In building his argument regarding *mestizaje*, Elizondo uncovers the true history of Mexican Americans in the southwestern United States, who are treated as aliens yet historically had not “crossed” any border. Rather, he muses, their Mexican ancestors had been “crossed” by the expansionist practicalities of manifest destiny in the 1840s resulting in the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty.²²⁷ De la Torre builds upon Elizondo, noting “even though Hispanics are seen as foreigners by the dominant culture, many are actually occupying the native lands of their ancestors.”²²⁸ In this sense, some *mestizo/a* U.S. citizens and residents have the “contradictory distinction of being the first inhabitants and the latest migrants.”²²⁹ Elizondo argues that religious symbols have become the final justification by which a particular community and their way of life are molded into a cohesive, meaningful world order in which some are ‘in’ and others ‘out’. These invasions created the binary politics of identity of oppressor ‘in-group’ and oppressed ‘out-group’ creating group inclusion/exclusion, social distance, and paternalism.

²²⁵ Ada María Isasi-Díaz, “The New *Mestizaje/Mulatez*: Reconceptualizing Difference,” in *A Dream Unfinished: Theological Reflections on America from the Margins*, ed. Eleazar S. Fernandez and Fernando F. Segovia (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2001), 207.

²²⁶ Nanko-Fernández, *Theologizing in Espanglish*, 29.

²²⁷ Elizondo, 13-16.

²²⁸ De la Torre, 115.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

Additionally, Elizondo and U.S. Hispanic theologians seek to uncover and disrupt the myth of racial purity that pervades the United States national consciousness, and also is painfully present in the life of the church in the United States. This myth lies deep within the United States' public psyche and perpetuates a politics of fear that drives the anti-immigration sentiment and discrimination of Mexican-Americans and other U.S. Latino/a populations. De la Torre notes how many within the cultural majority in the United States view persons of Central and South American as well as Caribbean origins as one group, yet also judge them as inferior because of their racial mixture:

Many within the dominant culture see Latina/os as a monolithic group with few or no differences, even though there are Central Americans, Caribbean natives, Mexicans, and Chicano/as. In a culture where some groups still cling to the idea of racial purity, Hispanics are seen as inferior because they represent a *mestizaje* (mixture) of cultures, races, and ethnicities.²³⁰

De la Torre goes on to detail the multilayered heritage of Latino/a identity and *mestizaje*:

Latino/as are heirs of several different cultures, including Amerindian or indigenous peoples (the Taíno, Mayan, Aztec, and Zapotec), remnants of medieval Catholic Spain (influenced by Muslims and Jews), and Africa (primarily the Caribbean and Brazil), Asia, and due to their continuous presence within the United States, various European groups.²³¹

While some Euroamericans may look upon such mixture with disdain, they point out that, in fact, there is no such thing as a “pure” Hispanic or American. While the dominant whiter-skinned majority prefers to overlook is their own cultural, racial, and ethnic mixture, in fact, there is no “pure” United States citizen. Disrupting the myth of racial purity, U.S. Latino/a theologians embrace *mestizaje* as the reality of identity, in which

²³⁰ De la Torre, 114.

²³¹ Ibid., 114.

many cultural and racial influences are united into one. It is for this reason that many U.S. Hispanic theologians characterize their own identity by mixture, *mestizaje*, and borderland.²³² Ada María Isasi-Díaz further elaborates upon *mestizaje/mulatez* as signifying a new people, a new ethnic group, with cultural as well as biological characteristics.²³³

While the social imaginary space of the U.S.-Mexico border may represent a “clean line” that represents nation-state borders as well as the inclusion/exclusion of citizenship rights and luxuries, this border in no way translates into a clean break from migrants’ home countries and clean entrance into a new host, soon-to-be home country. As the above studies indicate, the pervasiveness of dominant culture and impetus to assimilate into this culture complicates the processes surrounding migration and immigration creating much misunderstanding, occlusion of difference, and racism. Additionally, some persons may always be perceived as migrants though their families may have lived within the later established U.S. borders since before the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty. More will continue to be discussed regarding the complexities of race and ethnicity within identity in the following chapter.

²³² Michelle A. Gonzalez critiques the positive adoption of *mestizaje/mulatez* for U.S. Latino/a theology, noting that the heritage of violent Spanish conquest of indigenous persons is complex and should not be glorified. She writes, “Claiming a *mestizo/a* or *mulato/a* identity is a manner of ‘whitening’ one’s racial identity, gaining privilege over black and indigenous peoples. They remain, nonetheless, important categories that speak to the mixture and ambiguity that characterizes Latino/a peoples. While problematizing *mestizaje* and *mulatez*, I have no desire to dispose them as viable and important categories for Latino/a discourse.” In “Who is Americana/o: Theological Anthropology, Postcoloniality, and the Spanish-Speaking Americas” in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, ed. Keller, Catherine, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 67. More will be discussed on this more complicated symbol of identity in the next chapter.

²³³ Isasi-Díaz, “The New *Mestizaje/Mulatez: Reconceptualizing Difference*,” 207.

Elizondo's development of *mestizaje* arises out of his theological argument for the centrality of multicultural identity at the heart of Jesus' ministry and mission. For Elizondo, the life of Jesus of Nazareth forms the symbol of new creation out of marginalization for the Mexican American people and for all people. Galilee is a symbol of the crossroads of cultures, as well as a site of multiple rejections.²³⁴ Within the social boundaries of Galilee, Jesus has little regard for these categories of 'belonging'. Rather, he transcends them and offers a new anthropology: "dignity, confidence, security, docility, and self-respect based on freely chosen dependence on the one absolute: God."²³⁵ Dependence on God allows for Jesus' followers to relate with one another in radically new ways in interdependence and cooperation rather than segregation and marginalization. In fact, arguing that every reading of the gospels is a cultural reading arising out of the faith reality of a people, Elizondo asserts that Mexican-American faith identity is uniquely hybridized in such a way as to speak prophetically to the church at large. Elizondo offers the collective, hybridized identity of the Mexican-American *pueblo* as a prophetic enactment of the gospel. The good news for God's people is embodied in the move from marginalization to new creation *beyond all borders* in Christ Jesus.

²³⁴ While Elizondo employs Galilee as a metaphor for cultural hybridity, this metaphor is not without risks and shortcomings. Contemporary U.S. Hispanic scholars also press back on Elizondo's theological development of Galilee. Scholars claim that *Galilean Journey* enacts an inadvertent anti-Judaism, but more specifically represents a poorly researched cultural-historical view of Galilee. They question Elizondo's hermeneutical method. Instead of moving from the contextual-historical Jesus to the theological interpretation of Jesus, Elizondo works anachronistically to apply his perspective of modern mestizo culture onto a theological interpretation of Jesus and first-century Galilee. These perspectives are represented in Michael E. Lee, "The Galilean Jesus as Faithful Dissenter: Latino/a Christology and the Dynamics of Exclusion," in *Jesus in the Hispanic Community: Images of Christ from Theology to Popular Religion*, Ed. Harold Joseph Recinos and Hugo Magallanes (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 23-26.

²³⁵ Elizondo, 58

Conclusion: Toward Further Theological Reflection on Migration

This chapter has sought to bring to light the complex factors surrounding twenty-first century transnational migration, and U.S. Latino/a migration to the United States specifically. Here I presented how these complexities extend beyond national citizenship and geopolitical borders into cultural, socioeconomic, and racial factors evident within globalization. Additionally, while it is often assumed that migrants may travel from a home country to build a new life in a host country, studies show that this is not always the case. Many migrants' lives are marked by perpetual travel and criss-crossing borders, so that "home" and residence take on new meaning. The economic survival of many migrants and their families depends on continual communication and monetary support flowing across borders. While the issue of migration is multifaceted, not to mention varied and particular in terms of individual migrants' experiences, these layers of complexity reveal a need for ecclesial communities to build awareness, education, and understanding of the realities migrants face. Additionally, the physical, psychological, socioeconomic, and spiritual challenges migrants face when they reside in a new country reveal the need for ecclesial communities to examine and adapt their hospitality practice to this context. In fact, twenty-first century global migration presents multiple challenges to how contemporary hospitality is practiced in North American churches.

The factors of transnational migration and U.S. Latino/a migration that I have presented here, I argue, challenge United States-based ecclesial communities in their identity formation and praxis. The fact that United States' ecclesial communities are

offering hospitality from the powerful position of acting as “host” while also being part of the “host nation” uncovers important objections to whether hospitality is possible at all. This powerful positioning certainly raises questions about what sort of formation is enacted in this practice. If hospitality is possible—and though contested, I argue that it is—what are the steps necessary for constructing a different response in the church than the often inhospitable perceptions present in U.S. national consciousness and the inhumane policies that seek to deter or prevent migrants from crossing and residing north of the U.S.-Mexico border? Can and does the church enact a different understanding and action toward persons on the move? Many theologians question whether it is possible.

These complexities and questions reveal that much work remains to be done with regard to the practice of hospitality. This process is far from simple. In discerning and negotiating hospitality practice, ecclesial communities must take into account: 1) concealed economic and political factors within migration; 2) barriers and borders that perpetuate racism, marginalization, and exploitation of migrants who come to reside (however provisionally) in the United States; and 3) the effects of power dynamics and boundaries on national and ecclesial identity formation. From a theological standpoint, the next chapter will critically analyze how the migration-related complexities introduced here evidence themselves in the life of the church in order to investigate how hospitality might be retooled differently. Any steps forward in affirming the possibility of hospitality will involve a difficult journey of awareness and change for an ecclesial community and depend on the deepening of human interaction and relationships. Certainly, the above treatment of twenty-first century transnational migration and, more specifically, U.S.

Latino/a migration northward and into the United States, demand an urgency that presses the church to reflect on how its witness is manifested and made visible through the practice of hospitality. The next chapter draws more specifically from U.S. Latino/a as well as postcolonial theologians' perspectives and the difficult questions they pose to ecclesial communities regarding economy, race, and power.

CHAPTER FOUR
OBJECTIONS TO HOSPITALITY AND POSSIBILITIES
FOR NEW ECCLESIAL IMAGINATION

Introduction

The context of twenty-first century migration and the challenges it poses to Christian hospitality and ecclesiology creates an urgency for ecclesial communities to self-evaluate how they welcome Others and embody their identity in Jesus Christ. Taking into account contemporary ecclesial practice and the theological discussion of hospitality outlined in chapter two alongside the complexities of global and U.S. Latino/a migration presented in chapter three, this chapter critically analyzes how a transnational context poses important theological questions to traditional conceptions and embodiments of hospitality. I will draw upon postcolonial theology as well as U.S. Latino/a theology to deepen this analysis. These two contemporary theologies develop and extend the argument presented in chapter three regarding cultural, economic, political, religious, and social factors of migration by uncovering hidden power differentials as they relate to race and class in the life of the church. Building upon their critical analysis of hospitality and ecclesiology, I seek to explore how hospitality practice might be re-shaped through accompaniment and journey alongside migrants in their faith, as well as the building of relationships that inform and shape one another's lives.

In the next sections, I revisit several U.S. Hispanic voices introduced in the previous chapter—Virgilio Elizondo, Carmen Nanko-Fernández, Ada María Isasi-Díaz, and Fernando Segovia—to theologically analyze ecclesial identity as it relates to place

and journey or pilgrimage. Through the postcolonial reflections of Kwok Pui-lan and Joerg Rieger, I further problematize hospitality and ecclesial practice discussing diaspora spatial imagination as well as empire-related power dynamics. I analyze themes of identity construction and how they relate to borders and boundaries in church and society. Additionally, I delve deeper into questions regarding hospitality, drawing upon themes of accompaniment and encounter and relationship to the ‘Other’ in the work of Roberto Goizueta, Amos Yong, and Mayra Rivera.²³⁶ I build on the feminist and postcolonial theological reflection of Kathryn Tanner and Letty Russell and address how their works, along with the U.S. Latino/a theology and context, suggest alternative imagination and praxis in the life of the church that opens up different possibilities for practicing hospitality. The above theological figures, though they hold a variety of theological and ecclesiological convictions, give me tools for constructing new ways of imagining space in the church that shape a *journeying* hospitality of accompaniment.²³⁷

***Mestizaje/Mulatez* and Hybrid Identity: Calling the Church without Borders**

U.S. Latino/a theology arises directly from theologians’ own experience of immigration into and marginalization within the United States. Building upon the specific context of Latino/a undocumented migration, I will hold together U.S. Latino/a theologians’ first-hand observations and challenges, alongside postcolonial theology’s

²³⁶ See Bibliography for authors’ texts.

²³⁷ I am indebted to Roberto Goizueta in how he develops themes of accompaniment and journey in *Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995). Goizueta’s contribution to this investigation will be discussed in more depth in chapter five.

emphases on identity and borders and its challenge to cultural and racial hegemony in the United States. Rivera notes that the main focus of U.S. Hispanic theology is “not those physically outside the geopolitical centers of power but those marginalized subjects within it” because it is a theology, by definition, “of Others *within* the territory of hegemonic power.”²³⁸ U.S. Hispanic theologians’ concrete embodiments of living on the margins as a bicultural or multicultural people help to ground postcolonial themes (empire, hybrid identities, border crossings/passage) within a concrete place, time, and context.

Elizondo’s emphases on *mestizaje* and marginal identity present important ecclesial considerations that begin to illuminate the politics of identity within national identity as well as ecclesial identity as it relates to migration. A transnational context calls into question how identity relates to place and national boundaries, as well as culture and ethnicity, specifically for ecclesial communities in the United States. Emphasis on the people of God journeying together toward the new creation *beyond all borders* in Christ Jesus offers a radically new way to be human that confronts the sins of racism and ethnocentrism along with the forms of liberal capitalism that divide persons from one another. A new sense of belonging in Christ allows for the possibility of a new *us* because it disrupts the ‘us vs. them’ binary with the in-breaking of God. According to Elizondo, Jesus’ own Galilean journey is key to this ecclesial imagination because Jesus was sent forth precisely from Galilee—the site of marginal existence—to make disciples of all nations beyond all borders. Though Elizondo’s hermeneutical method in reference

²³⁸ Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 78-79.

to first-century Galilee has been questioned in contemporary scholarship, his early development of *mestizaje* prophetically calls for a reforming of welcome in the church at large that invites the voices and lives of persons who have often been excluded from the conversations and social locations that determine theology and ecclesiology.²³⁹

Additionally, his work is instrumental in reviving *journey* as the mode of existence for God's people gathered as the church—a church united rather than divided by national, cultural, and racial borders. The social, cultural, political, and religious imagination of *mestizaje* or mixing is a prophetic reminder of the people of God beyond all borders. For Elizondo, the church, as the body of Christ, is united in Christ so as to overcome the geopolitical or psychosocial borders that divide persons in society based on race, class, national identity, or other division. The church *beyond borders* or *without borders*, therefore, becomes an important symbol of unity in Jesus Christ that recognizes the prevalence of borders in human life but shows how the church might overcome these divisions.

Building upon Elizondo's work, *mujerista* theologian Ada María Isasi-Díaz, in her essay "The New *Mestizaje/Mulatez*," argues for the reconceptualizing of difference from the perspective of marginalized peoples.²⁴⁰ She attempts to understand difference through relationship rather than through categories of exclusion or the impetus for assimilation. Isasi-Díaz's work, alongside other Latino/a theologians who are not Mexican American, continued to expand Elizondo's definition to incorporate the

²³⁹ See footnote 234 in the previous chapter.

²⁴⁰ Isasi-Díaz, "The New *Mestizaje/Mulatez*", 203.

mestizaje/mulatez of many Hispanic or Latino cultures, such as Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and including nationalities in Central and South America.²⁴¹ Additionally, *mestizaje/mulatez* has come to represent the mixing culture, history, religious practice, and experience.²⁴² For instance, she notes that the Spanish language, popular religion, social-cultural-psychological survival, economic oppression, and a vision of the future are five crucial elements that draw together the *mestizo/a* community residing in the United States.²⁴³ *Mestizaje/mulatez* is extended to denote the mixing and bringing together of many elements of difference, not simply race or ethnicity, to form deep community. Isasi-Díaz draws upon the work of Roberto Goizueta and José Vasconcelos.²⁴⁴ Rather than impose unity through exclusion or assimilation like other cultures, Goizueta develops how the mestizo community instead

...achieves it through empathic love. In so doing, the mestizo community affirms the identity of other persons as particular, unique, and different subjects (i.e., historical agents in their own right) who, as subjects, can be known only through love. The mestizo community is, by definition, open to mixing and interacting with other cultures races without undermining the integrity of each particular culture and race.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Isasi-Díaz does this alongside Yolanda Tarango in *Hispanic Women: Prophetic Voice in the Church* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993); Isasi-Díaz extends these definitions in her work *En la Lucha: A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993).

²⁴² Also see Isasi-Díaz, *En la Lucha: A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology*.

²⁴³ See Isasi-Díaz "The New *Mestizaje/Mulatez*," 216. Also see Isasi-Díaz, *En la Lucha*, chapters, 1-2.

²⁴⁴ Goizueta's work *Caminemos con Jesús* draws from José Vasconcelos' developments of *mestizaje* as *la raza cósmica* (the cosmic race) in *Obras Completas*, 4 vols (Mexico, DF: Libreros Mexicanos Unidos, 1958-61)

²⁴⁵ Goizueta, 98. Also see Isasi-Díaz, "The New *Mestizaje/Mulatez*," 208-209.

Isasi-Díaz builds upon these observations in order to challenge negative conceptions of difference and work toward alternative understandings. She hopes changes regarding perceptions of difference will shape a “moral subject for whom goodness is relational, for whom love and justice are inseparable, and who finds expression in effective solidarity.”²⁴⁶

Through *mestizaje/mulatez*, Isasi-Díaz suggests several strategies for developing relationships amidst difference in community. Because of the hypermobility of today’s world, she calls this “travelling between worlds,” which signifies “entering the world of other people in such a way that not only do we learn how they see us but also we come to understand better how they construct themselves in their own world and the role we play in that construction.”²⁴⁷ Such traveling demands recognition that the worlds of difference are always under construction, relative, and fluid.²⁴⁸ For Isasi-Díaz, this understanding of difference supports the possibility of mutuality and points toward deeper solidarity. She suggests coalition-building among marginalized groups, redefining difference through relationships rather than through dividing lines of exclusion.²⁴⁹ Isasi-Díaz challenges communities toward a recognition of differences in relationships that echoes back to liberation theologians’ development of *concientización*—a process of becoming aware of and developing suspicion about one’s condition. Recognition of differences in

²⁴⁶ Isasi-Díaz, “The New *Mestizaje/Mulatez*,” 209.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 213.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 213.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 214.

relationships requires a deeper critical awareness that searches for root causes and fosters dialogue. This way of being and relating in the world is always a continual praxis “to situate oneself in time and space, to exercise one’s creative potential, and to assume one’s responsibilities” in order to form authentic community.²⁵⁰

Postcolonial theologians also pick up on the multicultural reality but challenge and nuance the concepts of *mestizaje/mulatez* because of the ambiguous mixing of human identity and the way power shapes this identity construction. In fact, many recent U.S. Latino/a theologians who also engage postcolonial theory problematize identity further in terms of understanding difference.²⁵¹ Several of these theologians challenge the term *mestizaje/mulatez* and push back on the possibility of mutuality and solidarity that Elizondo, Isasi-Díaz, and Goizueta develop. Michelle Gonzalez, for example, argues against the glorification of *mestizaje/mulatez* because it covers over the violent colonial history behind the mixing of races. This history is more complicated than earlier U.S. Latino/a theologians insinuate, though she still finds their contributions helpful in other ways. She writes,

Claiming a *mestizo/a* or *mulato/a* identity is a manner of “whitening” one’s racial identity, gaining privilege over black and indigenous peoples. They remain, nonetheless, important categories that speak to the mixture and ambiguity that characterizes Latino/a peoples. While problematizing *mestizaje* and *mulatez*, I have no desire to dispose of them as viable and important categories for Latino/a discourse.²⁵²

²⁵⁰ Isasi-Díaz, “The New *Mestizaje/Mulatez*,” 214. And see Gutierrez, 92. For more on concientization see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 3.

²⁵¹ For example, see works in bibliography from Fernando Segovia, Mayra Rivera, and Michelle Gonzalez.

²⁵² Gonzalez, 67.

Instead, Gonzalez problematizes identity, exposing the privilege of a “whitened” identity and questions who is Americano/a at all. She writes, “Far from fitting neatly into the identity-categories that dominate U.S. discourse, the complexity of Latin American and Latino-a peoples challenges oversimplified typologies of race and ethnicity.”²⁵³

Gonzalez, also drawing from Goizueta, discusses an alternative locus for theological anthropology in the human as relational and communal.²⁵⁴ Postcolonial theologians’ critical analyses as well as their unique imagination for theology offer important insights in this investigation because of how they expose and problematize complicity, complacency, and participation in abuse of power and suppression of particular voices in theology and the church.

One of the major tasks of postcolonial theology is to disrupt and destabilize the Western production and implementation of binary identity construction. Some of the binaries include: center/margin, civilized/savage, same/other, white/black, male/female, First/Third worlds, West/East, North/South, etc. Postcolonial theorists particularly seek to uncover the hidden power dynamics that create and perpetuate the first term of the binary as primary, while the second term is unthinkingly dominated or defined as a lack of the first. Postcolonial theologians challenge the literal and figurative boundaries and borders created by these binary identity constructions and point toward a more fluid hybrid

²⁵³ She adds, “Far from accepting the unified subject of Western European philosophy and theology, the anthropology underlying Latin American and Latino/a communities is mixed, hybrid, and contentious. At the historical root of this subjectivity is the birth of an “American” colonial subject that resulted from the violent meeting of African, indigenous, and European cultures within the Americas.” Gonzalez, 59-60.

²⁵⁴ Gonzalez, 73.

identity in which all are mixed. Additionally, they seek to disrupt the myth of a “pure” identity—not only a racially or ethnically “pure” identity—but socially, economically, politically, religiously “pure” identities as well. They call attention to the myriad of experiences and differences that are woven into each of our lives and each contribute to our hybrid or mixed identity. Fernando Segovia’s Latino/a theology of exile and diaspora forged in displacement and relocation is indicative of postcolonial problematizing. He describes this theology as:

a self-consciously local and constructive theology, quite forthcoming about its own social location and perspective; a theology of diversity and pluralism, highlighting the dignity and values of all matrices and voices, including its own; a theology of engagement and dialogue, committed to critical conversation with other theological voices from both margins and center alike.²⁵⁵

Postcolonial theologians diagnose Christian identity as shaped by colonialism and note how Christians often stand in varying positions with regard to colonial power. In fact, recognizing that one cannot completely escape colonial influence, they seek to disrupt this influence and look for ethical alternatives. To do this, postcolonial theologians turn toward the spatial imagery of borderlands, interstices, in-between places, or margins in identity construction. Additionally, they draw attention to themes of journey, placelessness, diaspora, border crossing and passage, and borderlands. In questioning the position of power of the church in the twenty-first century, they also heighten the problem of divisive borders in both society and the church. They offer new

²⁵⁵ Fernando F. Segovia, “Biblical Criticism and Postcolonial Studies: Toward a Postcolonial Optic,” in *The Postcolonial Bible*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 53. Also see Gonzalez, 71-72 for more discussion on the subject.

imagery for where church might happen in ways that resist understanding borders as markers of divisions and instead propose theologizing along *borderlands*.

Spatial Imagery: Communities of Border Passage

Drawing from both postcolonial and U.S. Latino/a theological reflections, understanding place and residence in the church alongside the movement of journey and migration in the twenty-first century creates a complex tension that must be analyzed and unpacked. D. N. Premnath's edited compilation of essays, *Border Crossings: Cross Cultural Hermeneutics*, presents biblical and theological scholars negotiating multiple worlds and boundaries in their work, while also reflecting on the many border crossings persons undergo in the twenty-first century.²⁵⁶ Border crossings are conceived compositely, including national, racial, social, and cultural aspects. Borders can reflect mixed and complex social symbolism: borders can be designated to include or exclude, to reflect fixity and fluidity, and to open up an in-between alternative space that generates distinct meaning. Premnath's collection of essays honoring R.S. Suringtharajah's pioneering work in postcolonial biblical criticism gives insight into how postcolonial discourse challenges the legacy of colonialism, exposing borders that benefit the majority and restrict the Other from participation and voice. Here, postcolonial discourse hopes to create a space for the Other to speak and redefine the relationship between the margins and mainstream. Simultaneously, postcolonial discourse warns against seeing

²⁵⁶ D. N. Premnath, ed., "Introduction," in *Border Crossings. Cross Cultural Hermeneutics* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 2007), 1-2.

relationships only in terms of polarities, and challenges homogeneous and static representations of identity. Such discourse shows the multifaceted nature of social identity and the re-imagination of many border crossings within social identity that incorporate and interweave shifting boundaries of place, identity, history, and power.²⁵⁷

In congruence with my analysis of twenty-first century transnational migration in the previous chapter, Kwok Pui-lan notes that the state of being of persons who are forced into perpetual migration for economic survival is more than a one time “border crossing.” Rather, the reality of transnational migration is better reflected by the term “border passage.”²⁵⁸ Understanding new spatial realities of people on the move for a number of differing factors is key to understanding the effects of twenty-first century globalization. For many persons in the two-thirds world, for example, the “border passage” they undergo or that their family members undergo, though a relatively recent phenomenon, has become necessary for their survival. They may live between two or more nations and communities and travel between them often. In light of a border passage existence, Kwok investigates and questions place and other spatial imagery confronted by persons forced to migrate. Places of home, space, safety, identity and belonging are contested in the rapid pace of the world’s movement. For many, border passage existence means that migrants are continually journeying, not looking for home, or perhaps they have multiple homes. This existence not only questions the very

²⁵⁷ Premnath, 1-11.

²⁵⁸ Kwok Pui-lan, “A Theology of Border Passage,” 104.

possibility of place and home, but also certainly challenges notions of home and place embodied by persons who can afford such stability.

Kwok ties this notion of border passage to a diasporic imagination.²⁵⁹ Though traditionally diaspora has its roots in the Jewish tradition, it has increasingly become a global phenomenon related to cultural and economic grouping after decolonization as well as forced and voluntary migration and transnational migration related to globalization.²⁶⁰ Kwok writes, “Today, the term ‘diaspora’ shares a broader semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate, refugee, migrant worker, exile community, and ethnic and racial minorities.”²⁶¹ As the term has broadened, so have the characteristics of the Jewish diaspora so that the memory of, a longing for, and continual identification with homeland, for example, may no longer be the ideal. Kwok notes how postcolonial theorists often deploy traveling metaphors to denote the transient, unsettling nature and displacement of persons in late twentieth-century culture.²⁶² Noting new spatial imagery, she writes,

Instead of speaking of home or the roots, James Clifford proposes the *route* to capture the sense of ‘traveling-in-dwelling’ and ‘dwelling-in-traveling.’ Much related to this is the notion of *transition*, which destabilizes a fixed time and

²⁵⁹ Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 45. Kwok defines diaspora as follows: “Since the 1960s, the term ‘diaspora’ has been more generalized to apply to many contexts besides the classic cases of Jewish, Greek, and Armenian diasporas. Such a development is the result of the migration of formerly colonized peoples to the metropolitan West, the weakening of the nation-state, and the displacement of people because of the massive transnational flows of capital and labor in late capitalism.”

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 43-44.

space, and resists pinning down by preconceived identities or satisfaction with ready-made answers.²⁶³

For Kwok and postcolonial and cultural theorists, diasporic discourse in light of the global phenomenon of migration raises insatiable questions about the construction of the center and periphery, borders and boundaries, the negotiation of multiple loyalties and identities, the relationship between ‘home’ and the ‘world’, and the political and theoretical implications of dislocation and border crossing.²⁶⁴

Border passage existence and diasporic imagination pose important ecclesiological and theological questions in light of the *place* that the church occupies in the world. As new realities of home, journey, pilgrimage, and space and time represent the unique experiences of migration in the twenty-first century context, they challenge how ecclesial communities relate with persons they encounter who are migrating in their midst. For example, though safety and a place of refuge may be immediate needs for some migrants, migrants’ experiences are continually shifting and not all experiences are the same. Border passage and diasporic imagination problematize how ecclesial communities come to understand their Christian identity in the world and the places of power that they may occupy. Postcolonial diasporic imagination in light of twenty-first century migration demands that theology and the church search for different spatial imagination and suspicion in light of changing circumstance and context.

²⁶³ Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, 43-44; italics original.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

Kwok further explores and questions how borders and boundaries are understood in migrants' continual border passage in the twenty-first century.²⁶⁵ Most plainly borders are physical and geographical for the thousands of persons who have had to leave home countries for a host of reasons and entered into new lands. As can be seen with the U.S.-Mexico border, for example, many must continue to criss-cross the geopolitical border for their livelihood. Additionally, borders may be cultural, linguistic, and political, dividing ways of life and people groups in potentially hidden but often very exploitative ways.²⁶⁶ Borders and boundaries are also religious and may divide civilizations, such as the "Islamic World" or "Hindu Civilization."²⁶⁷ Borders can likewise be bodily, as in sexual orientations, as the work of queer theorists and theologians demonstrate.²⁶⁸ Kwok also finds that borders may be imaginary as "in-between space," "third space," "imaginary homeland."²⁶⁹ She writes, "In our globalized world in which time and space have shrunk, many have argued that traditional borders do not hold anymore because the market economy and the information highway have linked so many people together in unprecedented ways."²⁷⁰ In light of the context of transnational migration, border imagery has been adopted and theorized by postcolonial theologians in a myriad of ways.

²⁶⁵ Kwok, "A Theology of Border Passage," 103-117.

²⁶⁶ Kwok, "A Theology of Border Passage," 104. Kwok talks about these borders in reference to Gloria Anzaldúa's work *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books, 2007).

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 104.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

Kwok explores what the theologians of Asian descent—who have criss-crossed multiple sociocultural boundaries—can contribute to the border passage conversation. She notes how, from the beginning, the cultural forms of theologies in Asia reflect a hybridity of Christian ideas, symbols, thought forms that were appropriated by other languages, cultural forms, and thought patterns.²⁷¹ Christian theologians from within the sociopolitical and religious contexts of Asia seek to liberate the gospel from the colonization imposed by the West, specifically reacting to a Christian history of homogenization in their context. Today, Kwok argues, a process of liberation from the West must embark upon encountering newer narratives. She draws upon Sugirtharajah's development of "hermeneutics in transit" to describe the journey of postcolonial and diasporic border passages undergone by Asian intellectuals. Seeking to recover one's authentic "roots" in a narrative history or return "home" to one's theological origin is an impossible task in diversity of a globalized world.²⁷² Such fluidity, however, creates the problem of how to understand theological identity that is always elusive and hard to grasp.

The theological reflection of Asian theologies evokes the experience of dislocation, displacement, and coping with the experience of living "in-between" two or more worlds. Japanese American theologian Fumitaka Matsuoka notes:

A liminal world is the "place of in-betweenness." It is at once the world of isolation and intimacy, dislocation and creativity. A person in a liminal world is poised in uncertainty and ambiguity between two or more social constructs,

²⁷¹ Kwok, "A Theology of Border Passage," 104-105.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 109.

reflecting in the soul the discords and harmonies, repulsions and attractions. One of the constructs is likely to be dominant, whether cultural or linguistic. Within such a dominant construct one strives to belong and yet find oneself to be a peripheral member, forced to remain in the world of inbetweenness.”²⁷³

To reflect the liminality of the world, Kwok suggests that theologians do theology *on the border*. Doing theology from the in-between space, as U.S. Hispanic social location between two worlds also indicates, always encompasses the difficult tension of isolation and intimacy, dislocation and creativity. Postcolonial theologians do not believe it is possible to “solve” this conflicted existence nor do they attempt to alleviate the complexities of identity. Rather, they acknowledge that identity arises from within the painful experience of racial or cultural prejudice and suggest that the possibility for creative resistance to cultural hegemony is expressed in more honest representations of the in-betweenness of identity, evidenced in *mestizaje/mulatez* or hybridity. In turn, *borderland* spaces and the presence of borders and boundaries represent this conflicted and in-between existence.

Empire and Postcolonial Imagination

Recent developments in postcolonial theology seek to address the relationship between theology and empire. Postcolonial theologians assert that no neat separation exists between the complexities of our global reality and theology. Joerg Rieger observes that empire signifies a massive concentration of power that cannot be controlled by any

²⁷³ Fumitaka Matsuoka, *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1995), 54. Cited in Kwok, “A Theology of Border Passage,” 112.

one actor alone.²⁷⁴ He adds that empire seeks to infiltrate all aspects of life—political, economic, geographic, as well as cultural, intellectual, religious, and spiritual.²⁷⁵ Because of the pervasiveness of empire in all of life, postcolonial theologians recognize that theology and the church cannot escape the power dynamics interwoven into this history and tradition and how the pervasiveness of empires continues to influence the church. In fact, empires have permeated the church’s existence throughout history. Postcolonial theologians seek to call into question the church’s tendency toward and complicity in assimilation to the dominant culture or status quo particularly in regard to diversity of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. They identify spatial imagery of borders, boundaries, margins, in-between spaces, and borderlands as sites that—despite their original purpose to exclude—are also spaces where something new can spring forth and resist the colonial grasp of empire. Postcolonial theologians look for creative ways to disrupt empire, and their strategies and tools become instructive for exposing positions of power in the church and hospitality practice in light of twenty-first century migration.

Kwok explores how the spaces of borderlands as interstices within borders in society become important spaces for challenging and resisting the pull of empire. She articulates a theology of “not quite” that seeks to resist imperial grasp and cultural hegemony within the church.²⁷⁶ For instance, while U.S. Homeland Security heavily

²⁷⁴ Joerg Rieger, *Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 2-3. Also see Rieger, “Christian Theology and Empires,” in *Empire and the Christian Tradition*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan, Don H. Compier, and Joerg Rieger, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 11.

²⁷⁵ Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 2-3.

²⁷⁶ Kwok, “A Theology of Border Passage,” 112.

policies the geopolitical borders of the United States, the existence of borders permits a passage that can never be fully controlled. Undocumented migrants still find ways through the border. Control of such spaces always remains “not quite.” Turning to the life of the church, which does not escape the influences of imperial control, I find that postcolonial theologians offer an important critical lens that demands that the church recognize its own complicity, complacency, and participation in abuse of power and suppression of particular voices. Postcolonial theology also discloses how persons’ lives and bodies are determined by the explosion of transnational market economy and its effect on geopolitical borders and citizenship. Postcolonial theology brings in a new set of voices that propose unique imagination for theology in the face of these forces.

The postcolonial theme of “not quite” originates in Homi Bhabha’s discussion of colonized persons’ mimicry of their colonizers as “almost the same, *but not quite*.”²⁷⁷ Even through diligent striving, there remained inevitable cultural, social, racial, and class ambiguity and differences that could not be overcome by persons who were colonized. Striving to be like the white master is always ultimately impossible. Colonized persons always remained “not quite” their colonizing master. Postcolonial theologians highlight the theme of colonial mimicry and draw parallels to contemporary efforts at assimilation that also remain “not quite.” While “not quite” has been interpreted within colonization as a lack or inability of the colonized to achieve the status of the colonizer, postcolonial theorists and theologians twist it so that “not quite” also becomes the possibility of

²⁷⁷ Kwok, “A Theology of Border Passage,” 113. Kwok draws this theme from Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 85-92; italics in original.

contesting the very nature of homogenization that is forced upon them by the dominant majority. “Not quite,” then, becomes a tool for resisting the colonial impulse toward creating homogenization or “sameness” in whatever contemporary shape or form it appears. Kwok finds that tensions, contradictions, and fragments characterize the border subject as a three-dimensional subject—not quite “Asian” and not quite “American.” While this reality is incredibly painful, it also creates space for resisting further domination because it escapes homogenization. Latina philosopher María Lugones describes this condition as, “the door to an untroubled identity always closed.”²⁷⁸

The experience of “not quite” echoes back to Segovia’s observation of a conflicted U.S. Latino/a existence standing in two places but still having no place to stand. Similarly, *mestizaje/mulatez* has become a socio-political strategy for resisting homogenization for U.S. Latino/a persons, identifying both the painful reality, and, though not without its problems, also the mechanism by which one does not fit within society’s false mold of the status quo. Hybrid identity is always “not quite” the status quo and presents an important position of resistance against even the church’s tendencies to mirror the status quo. As ecclesial communities may reflect the national dominant majority, they are always at risk of acting as shaping forces of culture and national identity that take precedence over alternative identity-forming features as the people of God. At the same time, postcolonial theologians note how features of the people of God have arisen precisely from forces of empire and hegemony throughout history. Kwok

²⁷⁸ María Lugones, “Boomerang Perception and the Colonial Gaze: Ginger Reflections of Horizontal Hostility,” in *Pilgrimages/Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions*, ed. María Lugones (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2003), 151.

relates this experience of “not quite” to how “the church has never been fully incorporated into world history.”²⁷⁹ According to Kwok, the time and space of “not quite” is internally transgressive because “it troubles the national, racial, ethnic, class, gendering, and ecclesial tales that homogenize difference, suppress the minorities, and coerce everyone to be the same.”²⁸⁰ In this sense, Kwok plays off of the temporal unknown of “not yet” in Christian eschatology and demands further suspicion in how the church is manifested “already” on earth. Because minority voices have been covered over and made to “fit within” (or be concealed beneath) the dominant majority, Kwok argues for the misfit of “not quite” to always persist in the church. Her spatio-temporal imagination resists assimilation and she challenges the church to reside always on the border and in-between, not seeking to grasp the holy.²⁸¹

Also seeking resistance and renewal in light of empire, Joerg Rieger describes postcolonial themes of “ambivalence” and “theological surplus” as tools for disrupting the imperial myth of singular unity and control. First, there is an ambivalence within empire that points to the existence of double-vision, the notion that there are certain aspects of life that do not fit within empire and thus escape its grasp.²⁸² In fact, they are a

²⁷⁹ For Kwok, theology reflects these tensions because it is “a story that is not finished, a body that is not fixed, and a story that resists final closure” Kwok, “A Theology of Border Passage,” 114, 115.

²⁸⁰ Kwok, “A Theology of Border Passage,” 115.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

²⁸² Rieger notes, “First, the empire needs us to believe that “there is no alternative” (Thatcher) and therefore no ambivalence...Second, the empire does not like the kinds of mirrors that reflect the realities of repression.” Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 9-11.

threat to normalized knowledge and disciplinary powers.²⁸³ Rieger connects ambivalence to the possibility of a “theological surplus,” that is, the possibility of something more residing in the in-between spaces of empire. It is a surplus because it does not fit within empire, thus exposing where empire does not have control and where there is room for alternative theological imagination. In light of the pervasive influences of empire in theology and the church, postcolonial theologians suggest mobile configurations of Christian identity negotiated in unlikely borderland spaces that escape empire’s grasp and expose its ambivalence.

The borderland is one such site and border passage one such existence that cannot be fully controlled by nation-state boundaries or global market economies, and thus represents an existence that cannot be fully controlled. Kwok suggests that borderland spaces allow for the possibility of hybrid identity within theology and the church in the midst of empire. Borderland spaces reflect the mixing of identities that weaves together of many experiences, influences, and narratives within ecclesial communities. Both postcolonial and U.S. Latino/a theologians attest to a Christian identity that is never pure or free from cultural influence, but it is always a hybrid interpretation, engagement, and identity formation. They draw attention to the many forces that influence Christianity, from empires throughout Christian history, to race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Hybridity brings to light the complex tension of the church, as a community that embodies a troubling identity and history shaped by colonialism and empire, yet at the

²⁸³ Here Rieger draws upon Homi Bhabha’s definitions of both ambivalence and *double* vision. He writes, the challenge, thus is a ‘*double* vision, which in disclosing the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority.’” Rieger, *Christ and Empire*, 11.

same time, also can manifest itself as a place of resistance to how personhood is determined by empire. Thus, for postcolonial theologians, the space of borderlands becomes an important location in which the church might dwell both literally and figuratively. Similarly, the themes of border passage, diasporic imagination, journey, and hybrid identity reveal the need for ongoing contextual engagement as well as Christian discernment, evaluation, and negotiation of identity. In order to escape the grasp of imperial forces, postcolonial theologians argue, Christian identity must remain ‘slippery’—always ongoing and on the move. This complex tension in which postcolonial theologians dwell, does not necessarily provide a clear path forward for the church and its hospitality practice in light of twenty-first century transnational migration. Their theology, however, poignantly demands that the church be more self-critical of its surroundings and the powers driving social and political influences. Their questioning invites a continual searching for where the church is happening on the borderlands and enacting concrete alternatives, though they may be but small glimpses of resistance and hope amidst ever-present colonial and imperial influences.

Reconsidering Hospitality in Church on and of the Borders

In the spirit of U.S. Latino/a problematizing of identity and power constructions in theology and the church, I turn to address the challenges and barriers within ecclesial communities’ hospitality practice in light of the context of transnational migration. Can careful attention to one’s place and how one offers welcome to the stranger in hospitality overcome tendencies toward homogenization in the church? Both postcolonial and U.S.

Hispanic theologians draw attention to how difference and diversity are understood and covered over in building relationships in the church. Though the church claims unity in Jesus Christ, this unity often manifests itself as uniformity achieved at the expense of marginalizing many voices and social locations in the community. In moving forward to examine both hospitality and ecclesiology, unity must be distinguished from uniformity. Many postcolonial theologians remain critical of Christian hospitality because it has been a force for assimilation into a particular homogeneous way of life that neglects to hear or see the contributions of the stranger, outsider, or other, and often inflicts harm upon them. Postcolonial critics of hospitality argue that the alterity of the Other will always be covered over or grasped in some sense by the host, and therefore true hospitality is impossible. Others, however remain critical of the practice, while they do not believe it should be abandoned altogether. I walk the fine line within this critical gaze and seek to uncover how hospitality is indeed possible, though perhaps an “impossible possibility” as Letty Russell suggests.²⁸⁴

In her article, “Beyond Hospitality: Implications of Im/migration for Teología y Pastoral de Conjunto,” U.S. Latino/a theologian Carmen M. Nanko-Fernández closes with the exclamation: “Hospitality is not enough!”²⁸⁵ What is not enough about hospitality is the hidden power differential when the Other is “invited” into

²⁸⁴ Russell discusses the “impossible possibility” of unity in hospitality in *Just Hospitality*, 68. I agree with her assessment that the impossibility of hospitality/unity is made possible because the church has hope in God’s promise to “mend the creation that has been so torn apart.” Hospitality must be re-imagined in light of context and reformed because of its abuses in the church, *and* this is made possible in God. The church is called to live into, albeit always inadequately, God’s restoration.

²⁸⁵ Carmen Nanko-Fernández, “Beyond Hospitality: Implications of (Im)migration for Teología y Pastoral de Conjunto,” in *Theologizing in EspanGLISH: Context, Community, and Ministry* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books: 2010), 119.

assimilation—when entrance into the community requires the stranger to be “like us.” The problem with hospitality is that it assumes one is welcoming the newcomer—the migrant—but does not also turn to see that the inhabitant also is encountered by the sojourner.²⁸⁶ Nanko-Fernández’s work builds upon the absence of a two-way exchange in hospitality. Her critique points to a necessary suspicion and critical engagement of the church where hospitality is not truly open to value the contribution of Others, but rather promotes assimilation to the dominant majority.²⁸⁷ Hospitality often overlooks the fact that both the host and guest are receiving one another as strangers. Not to mention, if the host is in a position of power or privilege within society, the host may cover over or exploit the guest even further.

Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas and French phenomenologist Jacques Derrida provide important challenges and restrictions to hospitality between two persons. Their work centers on the absolute differences between persons who encounter one another in a guest/host relationship. In turn, Levinas articulates how hospitality must always be marked by the alterity, exteriority, and infinity of the Other so much so that the guest is always the one who makes a demand on the host and the host is in fact prisoner to the demands of the guest. In fact, difference is preserved so greatly that relationship can never be achieved for Levinas. Building upon this impossibility of true hospitality, Derrida joins the conversation articulating an absolute hospitality by which the host gives the guest the keys to his or her house thus deeming himself or herself hostage of the

²⁸⁶ Nanko-Fernández, “Beyond Hospitality: Implications of (Im)migration for Teología y Pastoral de Conjunto,” 119.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

guest. Amos Yong and Mayra Rivera describe Levinas's and Derrida's problematizing of hospitality and also attempt to articulate a way forward for hospitality practice holding onto particular theological convictions. Their contributions build from U.S. Latino/a, two-thirds world, and postcolonial challenges to hospitality and ecclesiology and provides tools for re-imagining hospitality practice and ecclesiology in light of transnational migration. While Yong and Rivera admittedly have their own theological and ecclesiological commitments, their insights regarding hospitality provide further ecclesiological resources for re-conceiving hospitality and church in ways that have not been addressed.

Challenges in Guest/Host Relations

Amos Yong's 2008 publication *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* develops a pneumatological framework to explore Christian hospitality in a world of many faiths and how this practice can reframe a Christian theology of religions in the twenty-first century. In his fourth chapter, "Performing Hospitality," Yong identifies hospitality with the Luke-Acts narrative, as well as in the wider biblical narrative through the people of God's relationship with the alien and stranger. Additionally, he presents a pneumatological theology of guests and hosts in dialogue with the hospitality theories of Derrida and Levinas.²⁸⁸ Yong's major contribution to hospitality, however, is his pneumatological foundation as he explores

²⁸⁸ Amos Yong, *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), 100.

how many tongues and practices lead to openness in Christian hospitality with and among persons of other faith traditions. He writes:

the many tongues and many practices of the Spirit of God are the means through which divine hospitality is extended through the church to the world, including the worlds of the religions, and that it is precisely through such hospitable interactions that the church in turn experiences the redemptive work of God in anticipation of the coming Kingdom.²⁸⁹

As Yong develops this thesis, he also offers important insights into the theology of hospitality arising out of a Trinitarian logic of abundance, as well as challenges to contemporary practice in light of diversity in faith traditions.

Drawing on the Luke-Acts narrative, Yong draws attention to how the individual members of the church each participate reciprocally in hospitality: each member is both recipient of and conduit for the hospitality of God.²⁹⁰ He fittingly unveils the ever-shifting dynamics of human interrelationships in hospitality practice so that each person is both guest and host and sometimes simultaneously guest and host. This shifting is derived from how Jesus embodied the hospitality of God as guest and host through the Holy Spirit.²⁹¹ He continues this theme, noting, “on the one hand, we receive the hospitality of God through the welcome of others, but, on the other hand, we enact the hospitality of God to our hosts.”²⁹² Because this guest/host dynamic is complex and risks re-inscribing colonial tendencies and dangerous power dynamics between host and guest,

²⁸⁹ Yong, 100.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 106-107.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 101-103.

²⁹² Ibid., 107.

Yong details the challenges of guest/host relations in contemporary hospitality practice. Engaging Derrida's notion of "hospitality as a set of not merely interpersonal affairs but of political relations," Yong challenges current notions of Christian hospitality in light of contemporary economic and political exchanges and understandings of gift and debt.²⁹³ Derrida and Levinas both note the dangers of violence subscribed within hospitality and gift-giving and carefully detail the impossibility of hospitality. Yong describes how for Levinas the impossibility of hospitality necessitates the host's infinite obligation to the guest. Thus, hospitality becomes ethical responsibility in the face of the Other. The host who is infinitely obligated to the guest must divest of his or her own concerns so as to be made "hostage" to the guest. Yong notes that Levinas's responsibility to the Other is such that "the face of the Other 'orders' and 'ordains' me, placing me under (even infinite) obligation."²⁹⁴ For Derrida, the impossibility of hospitality also lies in the original violence of hospitality in which the stranger has to ask for hospitality from another and often in a language that is not her or his own. Additionally, a secondary violence arises when the stranger is made to receive hospitality, thus creating an obligation or debt to repay the host. Derrida wrestles with the impossibility of hospitality, because "what is owed or obligated cannot be freely given."²⁹⁵ In this economy of exchange, Yong

²⁹³ Yong, 119. Yong draws from Derrida's discussion of hospitality in chapter five of *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (New York: Verso, 1997).

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 119. Here Yong draws from Levinas's work, *Totality and Infinity*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: M. Nijoff, 1979). He also notes how Derrida calls Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* "an immense treatise of hospitality"; see Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naaz (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 21; italics in original.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

observes how hospitality perpetuates an endless cycle of indebtedness.²⁹⁶ In turn, to compensate for this, Yong draws from Derrida's distinguishing between the "conditional hospitality" of reciprocity that perpetuates the violence of indebtedness and "absolute hospitality" that is unconditional.²⁹⁷ Similarly to Levinas, Yong describes Derrida's reversal of guest/host obligation in "absolute hospitality" by which the host always must remain "unprepared, or prepared to be unprepared, for the unexpected arrival of *any* other."²⁹⁸ In reception of another, then, the guest must assume control and take the place of the host. In fact, the guest holds the keys to the house.²⁹⁹ For Derrida, the guest comes as liberator, freeing the host who was hostage in his own house.³⁰⁰ Yong describes the Derridean reversal as "the host is hostage even as the guest now hosts the host/age's salvation, redemption, and liberation."³⁰¹

Yong argues that Derrida's absolute hospitality presumes if not requires a Trinitarian logic of abundance.³⁰² The impossibility of hospitality and the impossibility of gift, lie within a logic of exchange, reciprocity, and scarcity.³⁰³ Yong, however, ties the

²⁹⁶ Yong, 120.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 120-121.

²⁹⁹ Ibid. Yong draws from Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Andijar (New York: Routledge, 2002), 362.

³⁰⁰ Yong, 120.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 121. To make this point Yong cites Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 124.

³⁰² Yong 121.

³⁰³ Ibid.

economics and politics of Christian hospitality and logic of God's abundance together and suggests the possibility of hospitality. Yong points to Paul's letter to the Romans in which he offers a new politics that stands in contrast to duty and obligation. This new politics, based on God's abundance, effaces present understandings of economic scarcity. Yong continues to draw from Derrida as he unpacks the conditions and boundaries of guest and host relationships within hospitality. In recognizing the Other as stranger, one must recognize that the Other is "not me." Boundaries are necessary for understanding difference, rather than assuming sameness and thus assimilation. There is no hospitality, no invitation, without boundaries. Yong asserts: "Hospitality needs to preserve the alterity of the other in at least two senses: in recognizing the distinctiveness with which the other represents the image of God and in rejecting the attempts of the unholy other to overwhelm and destroy the self."³⁰⁴ In this sense, Yong's development of guest/host relations also must preserve the boundary between the two individuals. This boundary is what allows for difference and distinctiveness that cannot be turned into "sameness."

At the same time, Yong sees how hospitality as it relates to Christian identity turns certain conceptions of borders and boundaries on its head. Christian hospitality practice is such that it demands the Christian to be both guest *and* host and the guest/host relationship takes place on the margins of society. Yong notes that "the Christian condition of being aliens and strangers in this world means both that we are perpetually guests, first of God and then of other, and that we should adopt postures appropriate to

³⁰⁴ Yong, 123.

receiving hospitality even when we find ourselves as hosts.³⁰⁵ The practice of hospitality, for Yong, must directly shape and form Christian identity as it relates to being a perpetual “guest” in the world and in the placing of the church on the margins.

On the Margins

Yong’s observations regarding margins return us to the earlier discussions of borders, boundaries and identity formation. Yong turns to the theology of exile as central to Christian identity and hospitality practice. Drawing from the broader biblical narrative, he points to how Israel’s nomadic, national, and exilic experiences in fact shape Israel’s identity as the People of God—always sojourners in the eyes of God—and their concomitant obedience to God’s continual reminder to care for the alien and stranger. This identity as a sojourning people continues in the Christian diaspora, in that “they were pilgrims on a journey, called to follow after Jesus their great high priest while living at peace with everyone (Heb 12:14).”³⁰⁶ The people of God are thus a journeying people, continually on pilgrimage in following Christ toward the Heavenly Kingdom. Yong adds, “If the first shall be last, and the follower of Christ is the servant of all, then a Christian theology of guests and hosts emerges out of and is shaped by a theology of exile.”³⁰⁷ As for the people of Israel in exile, Christian identity and hospitality practice are formed as

³⁰⁵ Yong, 124-5.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 115.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 124-5.

God's people discern how to live as aliens in a strange land.³⁰⁸ The dynamic between understanding a strange Christian identity coupled with learning from interactions with one's neighbors are central to ongoing Christian formation and negotiation.

Yong finds Christian identity and place *on the margin* necessary for Christian hospitality. Yong suggests that "hospitality is transformed, in effect taken out of the economy of exchange, when it is associated with hosts who are liminal, marginal, and on the underside of the social order."³⁰⁹ Yong's insights regarding the paradoxical state of being both guests and hosts in a strange land will become more valuable to my ecclesiological analysis in later chapters when I explore how different manifestations of hospitality are made possible in God's Trinitarian excessive hospitality and abundance. Alongside Yong, I argue that hospitality must be possible in light of how God reveals God's own hospitality to the world. It is out of the ecclesial experience and understanding of God's abundance that the host can continually give herself away without losing herself.³¹⁰ As one gives oneself to another, Yong notes that it is the neighbor or stranger who reveals the redemptive hospitality of God. Drawing from Karl Barth, he aptly

³⁰⁸ Yong, 125. Also see John Howard Yoder, "See How They Set their Face to the Sun," in *For the Nations: Essays Public and Evangelical* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997).

³⁰⁹ Yong, 125.

³¹⁰ Yong writes, "When set in a pneumatological perspective, such a theology of hospitality points to the dynamic rather than static aspect of our witness such that we can never be too comfortable in any one role. Rather, we are participants in the redemptive hospitality of God, even while we are conduits of this hospitality to the world, albeit from its margins as aliens and strangers. Hence, we find ourselves in a paradoxical state of being guests in a strange land on the one hand, even as we embody the divine hospitality on the other. But in either case, we are caught up in the excessive hospitality of God that has been revealed in his Son and poured out through his Spirit upon us and even upon all flesh." Yong, 128.

asserts, “my neighbor acquires for me a sacramental significance.”³¹¹

Irreducible Otherness in Community

Mayra Rivera in *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God* builds upon and challenges Levinas’s important insights regarding hospitality. Her analysis helps to thicken ecclesial communities’ encounters with the Other and move them toward a more complex inter-human transcendence by which the differences encountered in the Other are to be carefully received and preserved. Rivera uncovers the complexities of hospitality and encounter with the Other through postcolonial and U.S. Latino/a critical analysis. In fact, she argues that U.S. Latino/a theology, from its beginnings, resists being pulled into the “same” and instead recognizes and celebrates otherness because of its *mestizaje/mulatez* or mixture identity. She writes, “U.S. Hispanic theology is, by definition, a theology of the Others *within* the territory of hegemonic power, of the Others *within* the same.”³¹² Carefully preserving both otherness and transcendence between persons, Rivera seeks to nuance how Levinas emphasizes the totality of difference between persons and the necessity of spatial exteriority between them. While preserving this difference is of utmost importance in hospitality practice,

³¹¹ Yong, 151. For further detail on how this sacramental encounter fits within Yong’s overall project, also see p. 153. He writes, “I propose that Barth’s notion of our meeting with, loving, and being loved by strangers being sacramental moment of encountering God is a thoroughly pneumatological idea. If the love of God is poured out until our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), then not only is our loving our neighbors the means through which the love of God is given to them, but our being loved by our neighbors, including those of other faiths, is also the means through which the love of God is given to us. In this way, I suggest, the practices of hospitality—of being hosts as well as guests—become the concrete modalities through which the gifts of the Holy Spirit are poured out on all flesh.” Ibid.

³¹² Mayra Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence: A Postcolonial Theology of God*, 79.

Rivera draws from Enrique Dussel's liberation philosophy to understand difference and otherness from within a relational anthropology.³¹³ Levinas's focus on exteriority emphasizes separation rather than relation, and, in turn, Dussel focuses on how difference can be understood analogically.³¹⁴ Similarly to how God's transcendence is explored in Christian history, the Other is always inexhaustible and therefore can only be understood by analogy. Though the Other is never fully understood, communication and relationship are possible.³¹⁵ Rather than emphasize "absolutely Other," as in the philosophy of Levinas, Rivera qualifies otherness and mixture as "irreducibly Other."³¹⁶ The differences of the Other are inexhaustible and irreducible, though not absolute.³¹⁷ This signifies that the differences between persons do not alienate them from one another, making it impossible to truly encounter another. Rather, differences must be recognized as irreducible for true relationships to be possible.

Rivera challenges Levinas's exteriority in hospitality so as to emphasize the possibility of true community in which differences are not covered over.³¹⁸ U.S. Latino/a

³¹³ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 79. See the entirety of Rivera's fourth chapter, "Transcendence in the Face of the Other." Also see Enrique Dussel, *Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" and the Myth of Modernity*, trans. Michael D. Barber (New York: Continuum, 1995).

³¹⁴ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 72.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 79. Also see chapter 4 "Transcendence in the Face of the Other." Later, for example, Rivera writes, "Modifying Levinas's definition, I want to propose the following axiom: *Transcendence designates a relation with a reality irreducibly different from my own reality, without this difference destroying this relations and without the relation destroying this difference.*" *Ibid.*, 82.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 79.

³¹⁸ Here, Rivera adds, "A theology of interhuman transcendence incorporates Levinas's insight to define subjectivity in terms of 'welcoming the other, as hospitality,' but does not follow him in defining a

theological anthropology, which emphasizes connectedness in community across generations, helps her arrive at this. She writes,

Mestizaje/mulatez in contemporary Latina/o discourses not only embraces the complex and ambiguous product of a colonial past, but attempts to redeploy it as a critical tool for rethinking identity in/as mixture. Choosing mestizaje/mulatez as privileged metaphors for the articulations of identity implies that the singularity of an individual person becomes unthinkable outside a network of relations—sociopolitical as much as familial—that extends spatially through the continents and temporally through generations.³¹⁹

Weaving together both *mestizaje/mulatez* and spatio-temporal imagination, Rivera unites these concepts in a relational anthropology by which community is formed over time into a complex mixture of differences, rather than a uniform sameness. Uncovering the rich, yet painful history embodied within the complex *mestizaje/mulatez* identity mixture over centuries, as well as how this identity is still being shaped today, are central to her theological anthropology. She suggests *mestizaje/mulatez* identity as a model that links the subject to “the history of encounters from which it emerges.”³²⁰ Rivera nuances encounter with the Other, and thus hospitality, in the sense that

the encounter with the poor, the stranger, the migrant, or the Latina/o is not represented as a self-contained event, but as one that reopens past encounters and future possibilities. In the words of Ahmed, ‘What is required is a hospitality that *remembers* the encounters that are already implicated in such names (including

subject as ‘a *separated being* fixed in its identity, the same, the I.’ Instead subjectivity is described as constituted in relation, always unfinished: produced in relation to the transcendence of the Other.” Ibid., 82.

³¹⁹ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 80.

³²⁰ Rivera has developed this theme as a part of her larger argument in which she challenges Emmanuel Levinas’s encounter with the Other, claiming that his “failure to elucidate the sociopolitical specificities that mark a person as the excluded Other may lead to the interpretations of otherness as a characteristic of that person rather than as the historical product of modes of encounter.” Rather than ‘totality’ or ‘exteriority,’ one is always connected to others by the history of exclusion that has produced power dynamics that have organized today’s world. She notes how “a model of identity that takes mestizaje/mulatez as its main metaphor links the subject, and thus the self-Other encounter, to the history of encounters from which it emerges.” Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 80.

the name of the ‘the stranger’), and how they affect the movement and ‘arrival’ of others, in a way which opens out the possibility of these names being moved *from*.’ As it opens itself up to the multiple ramifications—past, present, and future—this model of encounter recognizes that it is in the particularity of a single encounter that we are called to respond.³²¹

Rivera’s attention to *irreducibility* in encounter with the Other and hospitality challenges traditional notions of hospitality that neglect power dynamics of guest and host roles and manifest themselves as initiations into sameness.

In recognizing how human lives and histories have been already intertwined in history, Kwok’s own invocation of imagination becomes central to my new imagination and re-shaping of hospitality praxis, which I argue is more aptly characterized as ongoing journeying and accompaniment in relationship with another. Hospitality re-imagined as journeying with another in relationship reflects not one single encounter but continual encounters. In relationship, new layers of mixed identity emerge and are discovered, but never mastered.

New Ecclesial Spatial Imagination

In order to challenge the impetus toward assimilation and homogenization in the church, I build upon Kwok’s turn to *borderlands* in constructing a new spatial imagination of hospitality practice and ecclesiology. I play with the notion that the identity of the church is continually explored and discovered anew at and on the borderlands. In fact, the provisional and contested space in geopolitical boundaries is exactly where the church must journey. Borderlands are spaces that represent the

³²¹ Rivera, *The Touch of Transcendence*, 80, italics original. She cites Sara Ahmed, *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*, New York: Routledge, 2000), 151.

encounter and coming together of differences, but differences that remain irreducible to one another. They are spaces in which differences can never be collapsed into sameness. In a sense, borderlands also are spaces in which everyone is encountered as a stranger.

Yong's and Segovia's intimations to a theology of exile—traditionally conceived as making a home in a strange land and journeying toward a homeland—together with postcolonial challenges of diaspora imagination when there is no home to which one can return, demand alternative constructions of ecclesial space that stand in contrast to the permanence of a church holding a powerful position in society. There is something important about the church's identity remaining on the margins, strange, and characterized by diaspora and borderlands that challenges it away from complicity in the status quo. In turn, I challenge ecclesiology toward different spatial conceptions of ecclesial gathering exploring themes of temporary residence and journeying patterns on the borders. Where the church locates itself and in whose company it resides has much to do with its grappling with its own identity as *strange* and as a community of *strangers* in the world. Postcolonial theologians present how the prevalence of borders and margins that divide and exclude have negatively shaped ecclesial identity to the detriment of minority voices. Borders and margins must also be understood and reclaimed as the spaces within which an ecclesial community continually negotiates identity. Through a U.S. Latino/a and *mujerista* emphasis on relationships, Isasi-Díaz describes the need and challenge to build partnership amidst differences, especially when society has created boundaries based on categories of difference that perpetuate social misunderstanding and prejudice. She writes,

The goal here is not to replace our perspective with that of another but rather to embrace the partiality of all human perspectives and to admit the point of view of others as a corrective lens to our own. We see that the present understanding of difference depends on a comparison between people with reference to a human-made norm that need not remain the way it is. It is a norm that must be challenged.³²²

It is only within relationship that one can be encountered by another and challenged to look inwardly in self-analysis as well as outwardly toward what the Other brings and offers. Persons' encounters with one another challenge them each toward change. In turn, they are together shaped into a new community. I propose, however, that this community may not look that same as Christians have thought about it.

Borderlands as spaces that encompass and represent many differences also are spaces in which new community is potentially born and reformed. Kathryn Tanner in *Theories of Culture* argues that Christian identity is not determined by sharp cultural boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Rather, borders and boundaries shape Christian identity, but they must be permeable and fluid. She writes,

The distinctiveness of a Christian way of life is not so much formed *by* the boundary as *at* it; Christian distinctiveness is something that emerges in the very cultural processes occurring at the boundary, processes that construct a distinctive identity for Christian social practices through the distinctive use of cultural materials shared with others.³²³

As Tanner as well as Kwok display, boundaries, margins, and borders are the spatial locations where Christian identity continually is worked out. At the same time, recognizing the unavoidable threat of borders and boundaries in continuing to divide and

³²² Isasi-Díaz, "A New Mestizaje/Mulatez," 212. Also see Martha Minow, *Making All the Difference* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1990), 9-10.

³²³ Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 115; italics in original.

exclude what has been united in the church, Tanner challenges the congregations of today to recognize the hard work it takes to build community that respects differences and resists uniformity. She instructs ecclesial communities of today to return to the spirit of the early church—

...to become *a genuine community of argument*, one marked by mutual hearing and criticism among those who disagree, by a common commitment to mutual correction and uplift, in keeping with the shared hope of good discipleship, proper faithfulness, and purity of witness.³²⁴

Becoming genuine communities of argument requires deep relationships and recognition of differences that strengthen the commitment of the church community rather than dividing it or seeking to make it all the same. Argument is not for the purposes of dividing, but for the purposes of genuinely seeking to understand differences and negotiate a way forward together. For precisely these reasons, both feminist and postcolonial theologians emphasize that churches are communities of faith *and* struggle. They caution against the church turning too hastily toward unity, because such unity can too easily become uniformity. Uniformity neglects the voices of margin and voices of opposition in community, which are necessary for a community of faith and struggle. At the same time, however, Tanner's imagery of communities of argument may over correct the issue and connote a more combative tone than I would like to display. Rather, I contend, new spatial imagery of the church in the spirit of Letty Russell's 1993 publication *Church in the Round* proves helpful for re-conceiving of hospitality and ecclesiology. I seek to propose new ecclesial imagination akin to Russell, but also press beyond her contributions in light of the further challenges to hospitality detailed above.

³²⁴ Tanner, 123-4.

Russell focuses on new possibilities of unity and difference through her ecclesiology of “church in the round.”³²⁵ An important symbol for Russell is the community gathered around a round table. She develops the notion of a table principle that challenges the church body toward back-and-forth movement and continual discernment between margin and center. Russell calls for ecclesial communities to reread tradition and scripture for new insight and in order to “talk back” to the tradition using the critical lens of marginality and power relationships.³²⁶ Russell’s understanding of hospitality derived from the “church in the round” concept builds upon what she terms “kitchen table solidarity,” which reflects living with and among Others and being drawn into a partnership of sharing and reflection amidst the sweaty tasks of daily living.³²⁷ This imagery is important because it highlights the fact that community, relationships, and partnerships are born in difficult and often mundane tasks. Ecclesial communities continue to be shaped as all members perform life together in the ordinary, not necessarily in a worship that seeks to separate out the chaos and difficulty of our lives.

³²⁵ See Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*. Russell arrives at “church in the round” based on the notion that all are welcome *in the reign or household of God* (23). The ecclesial image of a round table comes from C.S. Song’s description of Chinese culture and hospitality that has influenced Chinese paintings of Jesus and the disciples sharing a “last supper at the round table” (12). In this sense, based on the celebration of the eucharist and the church gathered together around the Lord’s Table, Russell notes that “the round table is a sign of the coming unity of humanity” (17). She continues, “If the table is spread by God and hosted by Christ, it must be a table with many connections. The primary connection for people gathered around is the connection to Christ. The church is the community of faith in Jesus Christ...Because Christ is present in the world, especially among those who are neglected, oppressed, both church and society, always welcoming the stranger to the feast to sharing the feast where the ‘others’ gather. Christ’s presence also connects us to one another as we share in a partnership of service...The round table itself emphasizes this connection, for when we gather around we are connected, in an association or relationship with one another” (18).

³²⁶ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 24-29.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 75.

Seeking to reform rather than discard hospitality, Russell draws upon hospitality as a way forward for the church in understanding how difference shapes the community in ways that resist uniformity. For Russell, hospitality describes the difficult and multilayered task of the church to live as a dynamic community of faith, compassion, and justice in the world.³²⁸ Hospitality practice reflects the complex human interaction of developing partnership and working together toward a common goal, which in this case is to extend this welcome of God's household to all people.³²⁹ New relationships born in hospitality, however, must result in persons being changed as they encounter the Other. The fullness of God's household only is revealed to the believer as he or she encounter and walk alongside Others. Taking into the account the complexity of human lives and relationships, Russell in no way seeks to present hospitality practice as easy or without conflict. The hospitality for which she advocates is that which continues to shape the church into a dynamic and diverse people of God. She writes,

Unity as interpreted by hospitality allows the radical openness to the stranger that is necessary for diversity and for racial justice work. Hospitality calls us to be a community of faith and struggle that connects with those at the margins and celebrates the way God has called a diverse people, so that we may all share together at God's welcome table!³³⁰

³²⁸ Russell writes, "The self understanding of the church as one body, united in one faith in Jesus Christ, would be interpreted in terms of the purpose of that unity in mission. The church is a community called to share in the passion and compassion for humankind shown by God in Jesus Christ. It is called as Christ's partner to live as a community of faith, compassion, and justice." *Church in the Round*, 173.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 161, 173. "Hospitality is an expression of unity without uniformity, because unity in Christ has as its purpose the sharing of God's hospitality with the stranger, the one who is 'other.'" Also see, Thomas W. Ogletree, *Hospitality to the Stranger: Dimensions of Moral Understanding* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1985), 1-2.

³³⁰ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 180-1.

In order for the church to embody God's welcome, it must take up the impossible possibility of unity and hospitality in the midst of a creation broken and torn apart. The church must address and overcome its sins of prejudice, racism, and complicity in the status quo that neglect and cover over the voices of differences in the Christian community. Russell challenges the church to become an antiracist community of faith by developing awareness of contradictions between how white persons (or persons of privilege) may understand reality and the way that social, economic, and ecclesial reality is experienced by persons of color.³³¹ She continues, "From the point of view of those of us who have benefited from unearned advantage and conferred dominance, imaginative and constructive repentance includes seeing the contradictions in our ways of life and taking steps for change."³³² Hospitality becomes the practice that penetrates beyond a simple encounter, but rather calls persons of faith toward deeper awareness, confession, and repentance of sins of exclusion, dominance, and oppression of Others in the body of Christ. In this way, even as hospitality arises from ecclesiology, hospitality practice also challenges and informs ecclesiology, transforming congregations toward deeper

³³¹ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 156-7. Russell's ecclesiology and her turning to hospitality practice are crucial to the church's awareness of repentance of "White racism." She defines this as "a social system of domination and subordination that assigns persons of color to subordinate roles and ensures that, all other things being equal, those persons of color will always come out in the subordinate position. Along with other structures of oppression that support a hierarchy of domination and subordination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, class, nationality, age, or physical ability, racism forms a web of oppression that operates to crush those caught in the web. The social structures that support this web include unfair distribution of political power, inadequate access to financial and material resources, inability to set cultural standards of behavior, and lack of power to name reality and define truth" (156-7). Additionally, she speaks out against forms of structural sin in which "dominant groups perpetuate structural sin because they have control of the political, economic, cultural, and educational forces that define the standard of life for the entire society and justify the status quo of that society to their own benefit" (156-7).

³³² *Ibid.*, 161-162.

faithfulness in light of the persons they encounter. Some postcolonial theologians object that unity, mutuality, and solidarity are impossible, and, thus, Russell's ecclesiology does not necessarily respond fully to their critiques. Russell, however, does not profess to be offering a solution, but instead articulates a way to begin to live into God's promise of restoration of creation.

The church as a sign or instrument of God's action is not to be understood as encompassing salvation; rather for Russell the church is "always provisional and is in constant need of renewal in order to make an authentic witness to God's love and justice in the changing historical, political, economic, and social contexts."³³³ In a similar fashion, Nicolas Healy describes the careful balance between the church's faithfulness to God's call and its appropriation of this call in a specific context as follows:

The concrete church, living in and for the world, performs its task of witness and discipleship within particular, ever-shifting contexts, and its performance is shaped by them. Critical theological analysis of those contexts, and the present shape and activity of the church within them, should therefore be one of the central tasks of ecclesiology.³³⁴

³³³ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 161-162. Also see page 89.

³³⁴ Healy, *Church, World, and the Christian Life: A Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*, 39. Healy notes that the church is not simply a repository of truth, but argues that the church is better conceived by theodramatic performance—"...it is the communal embodiment of the search for truthful witness and discipleship within the theodrama" (108). In order to live within the tension God's ultimate truth and human sin, Healy draws upon Hans Urs von Balthasar's theodramatic theory in conceiving of the relations between God, world, and church by something like a dramatic play performance (53). Healy points to ecclesiology as a social practice that reflects theodramatically upon the church's concrete *in via* identity. Healy writes, "A theodramatic horizon or metanarrative is particularly appropriate for reconfiguring ecclesiology as a practical prophetic discipline. This is because it can hold together in tension a number of elements that otherwise may be confused or separated or treated one-sidedly. These tensive elements include the following: the church's identity is *fully* constituted by *both* divine and human agency, permitting *theological* reflection upon the *concrete* church; the church's role includes the *formation* of the individual disciple's *distinctive* identity; the church's orientation renders it *superior* to other, yet it is *dependent* upon others and is always more or less *sinful*; the church claims to be orientated to *ultimate* truth, yet it must acknowledge that our view of that truth is *limited* by our location within the ongoing drama" (22). Healy seeks to hold together in tension the church's orientation toward ultimate truth in God,

For both Russell and Healy, the church's acknowledgement of sin and failure as well as dependence upon the challenges of voices both inside and outside of the church are central to ecclesiology. They point to the continual process of discernment ecclesial communities undergo in light of their occupying certain times and places within human life and history. Their observations insinuate the need for the church's reform of hospitality practice. Reflective of a theology of place and pilgrimage, I propose new conceptions of hospitality in light of how the church is continually making a provisional place from which to rest and extend refuge, but also is continually being uprooted to journey farther. A journeying ecclesiology is central for shaping the church's hospitality practice toward a radical accompaniment and *journeying with* persons who are migrating. I seek to uncover how hospitality practice arises out of the life of the journeying church and yet also shapes the life of the church toward further journeying. Russell's and Healy's insights into ecclesiology, together with the contextual analysis and constructive insights of U.S. Latino/a and postcolonial theology, become important in the next chapter where I further explore alternative spatial imagination and journeying patterns of hospitality and ecclesiology through lived examples of hospitality practice along U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

on the one hand, and the church's acknowledgement of sin and failure as well as dependence upon the challenges of voices outside of the church, on the other. See pp. 20-22.

***Conclusion: Toward a Journeying
Hospitality and a Journeying Church***

Mark Griffin and Theron Walker paint the church as both “an inn for weary travelers of the borderlands/frontiers, and an *outpost of hope* for exiles bound for the city of God.”³³⁵ The juxtaposition of these images illustrates the ecclesiological tension between theology of place and theology of pilgrimage embodied within a faith community living in the midst of global migration. Holding these two images together challenges a community of faith to ask: *What is the place we offer to persons on the move? How do we as a church provisionally reside and journey in the world? And, How do those we encounter with whom we build relationships challenge and change us?* The answers to these questions are rooted in the nature and mission of the church in the world and arise out of ecclesial communities’ appropriation of this vision in ever-shifting contexts. The place the church offers, I argue, is intimately tied to its provisional residing and journeying in the world. In turn, the church’s hospitality practice is intimately tied to its ecclesiology—as a journeying people pointing to the “already/not yet” reign of God, ecclesial communities manifest glimpses of this reign and continue to journey toward it.

The realities of twenty-first century migration, and specifically U.S. Latino/a migration in the United States, expose how hospitality perpetuates assimilation and occlusion of differences as well as uniformity and homogenization. U.S. Hispanic and postcolonial theologians challenge ecclesial identity and the church to recognize and take into account differences and the challenges they bring, and see these as gifts that uniquely

³³⁵ Mark Griffin and Theron Walker, *Living on the Borders: What the Church can Learn from Ethnic Immigrant Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004), 182.

shape the community in unity and diversity. This chapter has wrestled with U.S. Latino/a and postcolonial theologians' critical analysis and questions of whether hospitality is possible in light of the church's complicity in promoting homogeneity in identity, the covering over of differences, and seemingly insurmountable power dynamics within guest and host relations. At the same time, I have tried to show that these theologians' constructive insights also provide tools by which new discoveries in ecclesiology are possible. I build on the critical analysis and constructive insights of these theologians and point the church toward new spatial imagery and journeying patterns in the borderlands. The church resides in the tension between its cultural manifestation and its perpetual calling by God to something more. While this "something more" often is clouded and unidentifiable this side of the eschaton, it must be continually searched for and can only be discovered in small encounters with Others and glimpses of hope manifested *on the way*.

The following chapter begins the final section of this practical theological investigation in which I provide strategic practical suggestions in response to the challenges posed to the church and hospitality in light of the context of U.S. Latino/a migration in the United States. I further work toward re-conceiving ecclesiology and hospitality in response to the critiques introduced here. Central to my accomplishing this task, will be my analysis of several current manifestations of hospitality practice that embody concrete, creative expressions of hospitality with and among migrants. These lived examples are further proof that hospitality is possible, though differently than it has been traditionally conceived. These contemporary hospitality expressions uniquely arise

from within ecclesial liturgy and performance, simple ecclesial practices, and communal partnerships. They also exhibit the fostering of deeper relationships and the cultivating of friendships in community. I further investigate how ecclesial practices inform and shape alternative imagination in hospitality practice, and I offer constructive proposals that continue to challenge ecclesial communities toward new imagination of church and hospitality in light of twenty-first century migration.

CHAPTER FIVE

RE-IMAGINING HOSPITALITY AND ECCLESIOLOGY: PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL EMBODIMENTS

Introduction

In light of challenges posed in the previous chapter regarding hospitality practice and broader implications for ecclesiology, this chapter investigates more deeply the integration between practices of hospitality and the life of the church. I explore several contemporary embodiments of hospitality practice in ecclesial communities that specifically focus on welcoming Latino/a undocumented migrants. These embodiments provide a platform for further exploring practical strategies for re-imagining hospitality practice that are grounded in the contemporary life of the church while taking into account the challenges that undocumented migrants face in the United States context. These contemporary embodiments portray new imagination and expressions of ecclesiology and hospitality that are performative, reflective of early Christian communities, and collective and cooperative. Each of these expressions, I argue, challenges ecclesial communities' hospitality practice toward more robust and complex welcoming gestures and behaviors in relation to giving and receiving in community. At the same time, they challenge contemporary ecclesial communities toward deeper faithfulness in their understanding of place and pilgrimage in light of twenty-first century context.

The lived examples I present arise from ecclesial communities and theologians with various ecclesiological commitments. Some of the language that I employ and the

practices I highlight arise from these traditions.³³⁶ I seek to understand and interpret these practices through my own ecclesiological commitments that build upon the theological work of Nicholas Healy and Letty Russell, as well as William Cavanaugh and John Howard Yoder.³³⁷ My re-imagination of hospitality and ecclesiology, after all, do not arise from a placeless or rootless existence; they also reflect the complex journey of my own ecclesiology, which draws from various theological conversation partners. I begin the chapter by addressing the performative nature of hospitality practice that arises out of ecclesiology. I demonstrate how performative dimensions of ecclesiology, such as Roman Catholic-inspired liturgies and rituals, help to shape the church community's hospitality practice, not to mention its broader discernment of faithfulness amidst ever-changing contexts.³³⁸ In addition, I revisit house movements in hospitality introduced in chapter two and present how communities' simple expressions of hospitality practice reflective of early Christian communities are, in turn, adapted to new contexts of immigration. While there are limitations to this hospitality practice, one cannot ignore the contributions of these communities in responding to the dynamic needs of migrants over

³³⁶ It should be noted that feminist and postcolonial theologians have raised objections to certain language, such as "body of Christ" and "kingdom of God." Recognizing that these terms are contested, I allow them to remain visible in my project because they arise from particular theological convictions, histories, and traditions. I suspend the postcolonial critique on these terms, in order to focus more intently on how these practices are contextualized.

³³⁷ More of my own ecclesiological commitments to the projects of Cavanaugh and Yoder will become evident in the remaining two chapters. As will become evident in these chapters, I also am particularly indebted to the Roman Catholic theological and ecclesiological commitments of U.S. Hispanic theologian, Roberto Goizueta, as well as the theology of Daniel Groody.

³³⁸ Throughout this chapter, I will draw from Nicholas Healy's insights on the church as a theodramatic performance and ecclesiology as a practical-prophetic discipline that he developed in *Church, World, and the Christian Life: Practical-Prophetic Ecclesiology*. See my Chapter One: Introduction.

time. Finally, building on the dynamic work of congregations and non-profit organizations rooted in a specific geographical community, I draw attention to communal and corporate expressions of hospitality that demonstrate partnership in journeying with migrants. In summary, I intend to draw attention to performative, simple, and cooperative contemporary expressions of hospitality that display new contextual appropriation and imagination with regard to both hospitality practice and the shape of the church in the twenty-first century.

Performative Dimensions of Hospitality and Ecclesiology

U.S. Hispanic theologian Roberto Goizueta opens his book, *Caminemos Con Jesús: Toward a U.S. Hispanic Theology of Accompaniment*, with an important set of images that signify the complex identity and place with and through which migrants journey and the role of faith communities in helping migrants negotiate life and faith in a new country. He sets up a parallel between two experiences, illustrating how one faith community accompanies migrants and takes into account the contemporary realities of transmigratory existence. Reciting the poem taught to him by his father, a Cuban exile, Goizueta describes the migrant's existence through the words of Antonio Machado: “‘*Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar.*’ (Traveler, there is no path, the path is forged as one walks.)”³³⁹ Much insecurity, many unknowns, and many risks mark migration journeys. As a migrant lives between two places with no place to stand—as

³³⁹ In Roberto S. Goizueta, *Caminemos Con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment*, 1.

Fernando Segovia observes from his own social location as a migrant—forging the path as one walks becomes a necessary route of survival.³⁴⁰

Goizueta parallels the insecure and unknown journeys of migrants alongside the ecclesiological invitation, “‘*Caminemos con Jesús*’ (Let us walk with Jesus).”³⁴¹ He draws these words from a Holy Thursday liturgical procession performed by the Mexican-American parishioners of San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, Texas.³⁴² Goizueta describes his own life as living between these two statements: “*No hay camino*” and “‘*caminemos con Jesús*.”³⁴³ These are the cries of the exile who resides in the “solitude and loneliness of an alien country.”³⁴⁴ Yet, as Goizueta notes, the inviting words, “‘*caminemos con Jesús*,” arise from the same person—one who has discovered a new home in the midst of exile. This home may not exactly be a stable and secure physical place of welcome and refuge. Rather, the parishioners fashion these words into an ecclesiological invitation for dwelling-in-community, journeying together as a community of faith. They embody a new belonging and a new kind of home as “a community of persons, who as exiles themselves, are together ‘walking with Jesus.’”³⁴⁵

³⁴⁰ Fernando F. Segovia, “Two Places in Which to Stand: Mixture and Otherness in Hispanic American Theology,” in *Mestizo Christianity, A Pastoral Approach to Liturgical Ministry*, 35.

³⁴¹ Goizueta, 1.

³⁴² For further information on the San Fernando parish and its activities, see Virgilio P. Elizondo and Timothy M. Matovina, *San Fernando Cathedral: Soul of the City* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993).

³⁴³ Goizueta, 1.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

This new dwelling incorporates the journey and performance of faith together in community. The Holy Thursday liturgy takes on the shape of the lives of journeying migrants as it is re-formed into a procession down the streets of San Antonio, Texas and incorporates language that speaks into the daily, lived experience of migrants. Here, accompaniment in the San Fernando parish means that the parishioners exit the comforts of their sanctuary building to enter the streets and walk with and among new and old migrants. The language of the liturgy and the bodily movement of the procession interweave being in exile and a stranger in a foreign land with the performative welcome of Jesus walking amongst the body of Christ. This section will focus on performative dimensions of hospitality demonstrated in ecclesial liturgies and rituals that are derived from scriptural narratives. Liturgies and rituals take on unique characteristics that arise out of the community's interpretation of scripture, its own experience, and its context. As the members of the church adapt liturgies and rituals according to the language, experiences, and narratives of migrants, these performative expressions embody a dynamic and journeying hospitality that displays how a faith community lives together with and walks with persons migrating. The contemporary expressions of performative hospitality I present below illustrate how hospitality practice can be embodied anew and transformed so that a theology of place and theology of pilgrimage are united within the life and witness of the church.

Unpacking Performance in Liturgy and Ritual

Ecclesial communities' liturgical performance shapes their understanding and embodiment of faithfulness joining both scripture and tradition and new ecclesial contexts.³⁴⁶ Eastern Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann notes how the original sense of *leitourgia* was “an action by which a group of people become something corporately which they had not been as a mere collection of individuals.”³⁴⁷ The corporate formation in *leitourgia* happens as a community gathers in particular times and places so that their life together is fashioned toward the way of the kingdom. In fact, Schmemmann goes on to say that the performance of liturgy shapes the community into church: “The Church itself is a Christian *leitourgia*, a ministry, a calling to act in this world after the fashion of Christ, to bear testimony to Him and His kingdom [*sic*].”³⁴⁸ Through liturgy God transforms the community, and the Spirit also guides the community's own creative and contextual witness as each gathers and follows in a specific time and place.³⁴⁹ Schmemmann writes,

The journey begins when Christians leave their home and beds. They leave, indeed, their life in this present and concrete world, and whether they have to drive fifteen miles or walk a few blocks, a sacramental act is already taking place,

³⁴⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre work is important here for understanding traditions; MacIntyre defines a living tradition as “an historically extended, socially embodied argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute that tradition. Within a tradition the pursuit of goods extends through generations, sometimes through many generations.” See *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theology*, 22.

³⁴⁷ Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988), 25.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 26. For Schmemmann, the eucharist is the sacrament and *leitourgia* by which the church becomes what it is. He describes the eucharist as a journey or procession into the way of the kingdom. I will devote more attention to the centrality of eucharistic liturgy as it relates to performance and journey in the next chapter.

³⁴⁹ See Healy, 22.

an act which is the very condition of everything else that is to happen. For they are now on their way to *constitute the Church*, or to be more exact, to be transformed into the Church of God. They have been individuals, some white, some black, some poor, some rich, they have been the “natural” world and a natural community. And now they have been called to “come together in one place,” to bring their lives, their very “world” with them and to be more than what they were: a *new* community with a new life.³⁵⁰

The community is transformed into God’s new life from within the particularity of a specific context.³⁵¹ Herein lies the good news breaking into the world in a time and place.³⁵² This process of transformation into the new life is ongoing. The church is continually made new, and the church’s vocation is always adapting and journeying.

The performative nature of liturgy in the church is central to my re-shaping of hospitality practice toward journeying patterns. As liturgy continually shapes the church for action and vocation in the world, I argue that reform of hospitality practice arises out of the church’s own calling to continually be made new, and this is particularly necessary in the context of U.S. Latino/a migration. Liturgical and ritual performances highlight the journeying movement of the church, which can guide and shape ecclesial communities’ hospitality practice in new ways.

Goizueta’s recounting of the Holy Thursday procession demonstrates how individual bodies are incorporated into a new way of journeying as the body of Christ. Though many of these bodies—marked by border passage—may continually be

³⁵⁰ Healy, 27.

³⁵¹ I am nuancing Schmemmann’s argument to draw attention to the importance of context in ecclesiology. I am drawing from Healy’s focus on context in practical prophetic ecclesiology.

³⁵² See Gerhard Lohfink, writes, “God’s new society, its arrival is not something that happens at just any time and everywhere; it is bound to a concrete place and time: to the people of the twelve tribes and its history.” *Does God Need the Church? Toward a Theology of the People of God* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999). 26.

journeying and migrating for various reasons, at this moment in time, they are gathered together in a particular place in the name of Christ. As they journey together through the liturgical procession, they find themselves enacting a new way of understanding human existence and how it is shaped toward God's working in the world. The journey of this new people no longer has to be forged in isolation. On Holy Thursday, good news arises as the community now journeys *together*, accompanied by Jesus. It is the embodiment of "*caminemos con Jesús*." Persons without proper documentation are often criminalized and dehumanized, stripped of their dignity. The trials and terrors migrating persons endured in their journeys may continue to fill them with pain and shame. The invitation to worship and walk with Jesus in the liturgy is a calling to restoration and a new journey of life. It is a calling to be human in relationship with God and in relationship with others.³⁵³ For those living in continual fear of rejection and deportation, a new way of life in the welcoming community of Christ may be good news indeed. In performing the liturgy, the San Fernando parish embodies a journeying hospitality that bears witness to God's good news in Christ.

Las Posadas

Often celebrated in Spanish-speaking Roman Catholic parish communities, *Las Posadas* rituals involve a specific performance of scripture: a communal reenactment of the Luke 2:1-9 account of Joseph and Mary looking for shelter. The Spanish word *posada*

³⁵³ James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 167.

means ‘shelter’ or what has been interpreted as an ‘inn’. Traditionally, the performance takes shape as a faith community journeys together for nine nights during Advent to reenact Joseph and Mary’s difficult and inhospitable journey searching for a place where Jesus could be born.³⁵⁴ The *peregrinos* (or pilgrims) travel from home to home singing hymns and prayers that speak toward following the Way of Jesus as well as engage in an interactive pilgrimage song that narrates Joseph and Mary’s journey of rejection and refusal by the households or sites they encounter. After the *peregrinos* have been rejected by at a number of homes, one site finally welcomes them in and extends gracious hospitality.

This Roman Catholic tradition of communal drama, street theatre, and public liturgy has been celebrated as a house-to-house procession for years in Latin America.³⁵⁵ In recent years, it also takes on new forms in the U.S. Hispanic context often uniting one or many faith communities at specific public spaces within cities, towns, and neighborhood communities, as well as church buildings.³⁵⁶ These rituals may be celebrated within an intimate community that travels between the homes of their neighbors, or it may take on a more visibly public manifestation in joining several or many faith communities within a city or town. Persons may travel between municipal

³⁵⁴ For more on *Posadas* see: Ana María Pineda, “Hospitality,” in *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997), 29-42.

³⁵⁵ See Jamie Gates, “Communion at Friendship Park: Liturgy and Politics at the U.S.-Mexican Border” (presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics, San Jose, CA, January 9, 2010). In his footnote on page 1, Gates notes, “Popular history has it that this tradition dates back to the sixteenth century Spanish missions in what became the Americas. Some say that it was St. Ignatius Loyola who used an Aztec festival to teach about the birth of Christ. What may have started out as a *novena* transformed into street theatre all across the former Spanish colonies.”

³⁵⁶ I use the term “public” loosely here to speak of municipal parks, monuments, government offices, and places visible on city streets.

buildings, specific public sites with significance such as monuments, government offices, and organized church buildings. *Posadas* rituals are, of course, one of many public performances of scripture, and one of many enacted by Roman Catholic parish communities. For example, similar liturgies are performed during Holy Week outside of church buildings, on streets, and in public spaces. Holy Thursday or Good Friday processions, as was seen above, involve enacting the last seven words of Christ, or the Way of the Cross, in and around a city or town. Often such rituals are specifically appropriated to the U.S. Hispanic context and relate to the difficult experience of migration for many followers of Christ. Rituals may enact scripture, for example, in relating harsh realities of migration to Israel's exile experience, the wandering of Jesus and his followers, or persecution in the early church.

Virgilio Elizondo and Timothy Matovina note *Posada* performances in a U.S. Hispanic context enact two gospel themes that coincide with the experience of being an immigrant in the United States: “the *rejection* of the poor, nameless couple from the ‘inferior’ region of Galilee and the *joy* that comes to those who open the door of their home and heart to shelter and welcome the rejects, because they recognize them for what they truly are, God’s chosen ones.”³⁵⁷ Such performative liturgies offer interesting insight into how faith communities embody and engage scripture in a visible way that is also meaningful to their context. Elizondo and Matovina describe the necessity for the church to inculturate the gospel among the peoples of diverse cultures so that it may be

³⁵⁷ Virgilio P. Elizondo and Timothy M. Matovina, *Mestizo Worship: A Pastoral Approach to Liturgical Ministry*, 11.

understood and lived by them.³⁵⁸ They note that without this “inculturation of the Gospel... into the natural substratum of a people’s life”—what they identify as *mestizaje*—the gospel will never truly be implanted and a truly local church will never emerge.³⁵⁹ In this sense, rituals and liturgies, as contextual embodiments of scripture, are formative in shaping Christian communities into the body of Christ. In the case of *Las Posadas*, the enactment of liturgy shapes the ecclesial community to be a hospitable people.

Elizondo’s and Matovinas’ observations highlight the identity-forming and identity-renewing aspect of ritual and liturgical performance for a faith community, noting the direct tie between the church’s identity in performing the narrative of scripture and the community’s experience in their context. The performance of scripture inwardly nurtures new life to the faith community and, at the same time, continually calls the church toward incarnating the gospel for Others. The enactment of Luke’s Gospel account is an enactment of good news breaking into a new time and space. In *Posadas*, the performance of good news in a migrant community offers comfort and accompaniment to a community that knows rejection and what it means to be a body marked by wandering. Additionally, themes of rejection and joy may speak prophetically back to the community as they continue to interpret and embody scripture in the coming years. For example, this ritual in collective memory will be fashioned and re-appropriated continually drawing the community back to the collective memory of the good news they

³⁵⁸ Elizondo and Matovina, *Mestizo Worship*, 20.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

have received in Christ and calling them forward to greet new immigrants with joy rather than rejection. In this sense, this ritual renews ecclesial identity and calls prophetically toward further faithfulness.³⁶⁰ Goizueta's recalling of the Holy Thursday procession re-interpreted through the U.S. Hispanic context similarly offers the good news, gathers the participants into the body of Christ, and shapes a collective memory toward walking with Christ into the future.

Place, Performance, and Prophetic Call

As the ecclesial community performs scripture and liturgy and appropriates them to the injustice and suffering migrants experience, an interesting relationship develops between the “place” or physical location and the participating “bodies” (both individually and corporately). Particularly when *Posadas* rituals or liturgical processions are brought out into the public community proceeding down streets, or in front of parks, monuments, or municipal buildings, the faith community enacts a specific ethic or scriptural way in that space that often manifests a prophetic outward witness. Christians in San Diego, for example, have celebrated a citywide *Posada* procession for the last 16 years called, *La Posada Sin Fronteras* (The Inn Without Borders).³⁶¹ This ritual highlights the plight of

³⁶⁰ Louis Marie Chauvet draws upon Biblical scholar P. Béguerie, “The Bible is born out of the ‘liturgical activity of the cultic centers where the Israelite tribes were able to fashion and reappropriate their collective memories and to identify the single eponymous ancestor, the ‘Wandering Aramean’ (Deut 26:5)—from whom they inherited their confession of faith in Yahweh, the one God, who was responsible for their unity.’” Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995), 191.

³⁶¹ Gates, 2-3. Gates describes: “*La Posada sin Fronteras* is a gathering of Christians on both sides of the Mexico/US border where the border meets the ocean, a breathtaking site named “Friendship Park” on the US side in 1971 by then First Lady Thelma ‘Pat’ Nixon. *Tijuanecos* refer to this area as *Playa de Tijuana* (Tijuana Beach). For generations residents of San Diego/Tijuana have come together at Friendship Park to be with friends and families at the one spot where they could see one another, talk to one another,

migrants (or pilgrims/*peregrinos*) who have died crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

Christians in Boston also celebrate several citywide *Posadas* processions, one of which also calls attention to immigrant rights within the United States. The ritual takes place as an immigrant tradition and is enacted in and around a centralized public park, known as the Boston Common. The group travels through the park, to the State House and to the Paulist Center, in each place engaging in a litany that calls these public places to justice, peace, and love particularly in their treatment and relationship to persons who have migrated to the United States. The performance speaks prophetically against rejection of immigrants by both state and church and calls for hospitality. The community of travelers ends their journey at an immigrant-rights non-profit organization that welcomes the travelers for a meal and celebration.

In these cases, the church's performance becomes heightened (or hyper-visible) in public spaces so that the *place* becomes symbolic to the faith community's prophetic call for change in society. The specific location has a role in the church's performance and witness and becomes central to the message they embody. The community's performance may claim the space as holy or sacred or a space in which the church resides. The community also may be calling to greater accountability that which a specific place *represents*. The performance may be an opportunity to speak prophetically into a public

and even touch one another. *La Posada Sin Fronteras* is an open air liturgical drama of lament for those who have died crossing the Mexico-US border. Conducted in both Spanish and English, celebrants sing migrant songs and Christmas carols, are often treated to a skit by local Catholic high school actors on the dangers of border crossings, receive a prophetic sermon from local clergy, declare '*presente*' as the names of the fallen are read out loud, and end the evening by lighting candles in *luminarias* artfully and lovingly decorated the night before in memory of those who have died on this border. Primarily a celebration of the hospitality, unity, and hope found in Christ and Christian fellowship, it is also a not-so-subtle critique of nationalism, border politics, and the theology/anthropology of the modern nation-state." Gates, 1-2.

issue that directly affects the ecclesial community. In Boston, for example, the *Posada* ritual enacted at each public site is strategic. In visiting the State House, the church is symbolically calling the state to greater responsibility and accountability in light of immigration issues. In this case, the *Posada* ritual seeks to witness to Christ, to advocate on behalf of migrants, and to speak prophetically to the agents of power and wealth within society.

When the community's performance assumes a more prophetic role with regard to place, there is an inherent risk involved. The ritual may be performed as a platform or spectacle. Additionally, other narratives and ideologies that are engrafted into the gospel narrative potentially subsume it for another purpose. In light of this risk, it is important to discern whether the performance itself is speaking back and calling Others to the present faithfulness of the Christian bodies (individual and corporate) involved. Liturgical performance is always an iconic encounter that points to God and, therefore, directs the Christian community toward faithfulness in its witness. Performances directed toward alternative agendas risk becoming static mirrors, turned in on themselves, rather than iconic encounters with the Word of scripture and the way of Christ found therein. Therefore, the ecclesial community must continue to question whether it is performing another narrative or ideology (i.e. using scripture for a certain agenda or end) or whether witness of Christ in the liturgy performs the church *into* the Christian narrative.³⁶²

³⁶² One cannot deny that a community's embodiment of scripture is always interpretive—seen through the present context and circumstances of the bodies involved. Yet, the church's performance traces the narrative movement of scripture in an active remembrance of the story of God that also calls the church forward in the faithfulness. The church's liturgical performance of scripture remains an iconic encounter “stretched between the past it recounts and the future it announces. It continually calls the church into existence.” Chauvet, 219.

At the same time, liturgical performance cannot be reduced to a product of human effort. The community always receives liturgy as a gift. The gift of God encountered in scripture, renews the church to become a gift for the world, a sacrament of the kingdom. That is to say, the church's response to the gift of God encountered in the Word and Table is to be made a gift for the world. The church's movement in the world is always in a spirit of God's hospitality, wherein we are all moving together in charity and love, as opposed to a posture of security and fear.

Returning to *Posadas* rituals, I find that such performances present an opportunity to encounter the spirit of Christian hospitality—the central Christian ethic of giving and receiving. Such performances habituate Christian bodies (individual and communal) in knowing both rejection and welcome, in being both guest and host, and in embodying postures of giving and receiving. Ana María Pineda notes,

In *Las Posadas*, [ecclesial communities] ritually participate in being rejected and being welcomed, in slamming the door on the needy and opening it wide. They are in this way renewed in the Christian practice of hospitality, the practicing of providing a space where the stranger is taken in and known as one who bears gifts.³⁶³

Just as participants encounter the Word anew in such a performance, so they must also encounter the stranger as a gift. The rhythm of giving and receiving shapes bodies as they perform scripture in unfamiliar and familiar places, and these actions perform the Christian community into a new way of being. Liturgical performance continually reminds ecclesial communities that interpretation and embodiment of scripture and faithful living is always being performed and encountered anew.

³⁶³ Pineda, "Hospitality," in *Practicing Our Faith*, 31.

Place and Pilgrimage in Performance

Understanding “place” and residence alongside the movement of journey, migration, and pilgrimage creates an important dynamic that I have been arguing is central to the identity and life of the church, as well as its hospitality practice. Followers of Jesus Christ are called to reside in the tension between place and pilgrimage, reflected in Judeo-Christian scripture as well as Christian history and tradition.

French philosopher Michel de Certeau notes how the spatial imagery of twenty-first century globalization arises out of a modern framework of maps.³⁶⁴ Certeau argues that from a flattened grid of a map one can view the entirety of space at once, allowing for operations and decisions to be made from a universalized center, for example. Such maps are what those who voluntarily travel for tourism may reference before making a decision about where to travel. In contrast, Certeau draws attention to the pre-modern spatial construction of “itineraries” reflective of the many destinations and meeting points along a pilgrim’s journey. In fact, pre-modern pilgrim itineraries trace paths of movement from destination to destination, and often from home to home, in which the pilgrim is continually received as guest. Point to point spatial construction results in the encounter of new and unknown persons, hospitality to be extended and received, relationships to be built, gifts and stories to be exchanged, and meaning and identity to be constructed in key places along the journey. Christian theologian John Inge notes how understanding of pre-

³⁶⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University California Press, 1988), 18-122. I draw upon William T. Cavanaugh’s insights regarding Certeau’s unpacking of maps is presented in his essay: “The Myth of Globalization as Catholicity,” in *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002), 97-122. Originally published as, “The World in a Wafer: A Geography of the Eucharist as Resistance to Globalization,” *Modern Theology*, Issue 15.

modern itineraries echoes back to the Judeo-Christian tradition of pilgrimage, which becomes a journey following a holy itinerary in sacred geography.³⁶⁵ Christian Posada rituals in which communities travel from home to home also mirror this itinerary construction of pilgrim identity. Certeau's reflection on itinerary travel notes the importance of home and place along the journey. Similarly, liturgies and rituals contextually appropriated foster deeper theological discernment and formation in ecclesial communities in light of understanding Christian place and pilgrimage in the context of global migration. Place and pilgrimage are not mutually exclusive, but are held together in Christian pilgrimage. I now turn to address the value of place within early Christian acts of welcome in the church that help sustain a pilgrim on his or her journey.

Early Christian Practices of Hospitality

The origins of hospitality depicted in the Hebrew and Judeo-Christian scriptures often arise as simple gestures of welcome, such as a place of rest and refuge for the weary and sharing of meals and resources to nourish wanderers. Despite the complexities of twenty-first century global migration and U.S. Latino/a immigration into the United States, one cannot neglect the necessity and impact of simple acts of welcome on behalf of persons migrating. Home, places of rest and refuge, provision, and care are often the most essential and immediate needs for many undocumented migrants as they enter the United States. Place, however temporary and difficult to find, can offer the most gracious welcome for those tired and in need of rest and refuge. Though I have challenged the

³⁶⁵ John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 91.

static notions of place as a shortcoming in contemporary hospitality practice and ecclesiology, one cannot neglect the value of place. In fact, the movement of pilgrimage does not dismiss, but rather relies upon the needs of home and house, places of refuge, rest, and safety at various points along the journey.

Uniting place and pilgrimage, Inge develops the notion of “storied place” out of the historical meaning, identity, and memory found in place in the Judeo-Christian tradition.³⁶⁶ Inge notes, “A place, as it is coupled with past, present, and future memories, identity, and hope is a *storied* place.”³⁶⁷ Storied place captures the perpetual movement of pilgrims or migrants, but does not neglect the value of place. While the value of place for Israel—seen in the symbols of holy land, temple, etc.—fade somewhat in the Christian scriptures, Inge observes how place is replaced by incarnation. God coming in the flesh established a new category of human and spiritual experience in which “the seat of relations or the place of meeting and activity is in the interaction between God and the world.”³⁶⁸ Here, the church becomes a primary place between the tension of particular place and (universal) placelessness. At the same time, the place of heavenly Jerusalem returns in the eschatological imagination of the Christian scriptures.

³⁶⁶ Inge, 57. Inge draws from Walter Brueggemann’s description of the Promised Land in the Hebrew scriptures in order to expand the biblical understanding of place. For example, in Genesis two paradigms of place are quickly established: in Genesis 1:11 with expulsion from place—the Garden—and in Genesis 12:50 when Yahweh promises possession of place to Abraham. In the latter example, God’s promise of dwelling overcomes the original expulsion from place. See Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002).

³⁶⁷ Inge, 36.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

The final promise of salvation and restoration is expressed in terms of place—the New Jerusalem. Thus, it becomes clear that “God relates *to* people *in* places.”³⁶⁹ The eschatological place of the New Jerusalem is understood through people in places as a sacramental encounter. Through storied place, Inge seeks to recover the value of place in Christianity in order to extend sacramental understanding to encompass “sacramental encounters” of particular places. Such sacramental encounters occur for and with particular people, thus making the earlier paradigm of God, people, place consistent in Judeo-Christian scripture. The sacramental encounters, of particular places in the scriptures, become storied places for the Christian community, and these places come to be designated as holy. In this sense, Inge further asserts salvation as not *from* places, but *in* and *through* places.³⁷⁰ Inge notes that the recovery of place helps the Christian community themselves speak a sacramental sign to the world. Such places in which ecclesial communities may reside and welcome Others are precisely where a new way of life—which is their salvation—may be experienced and encountered.

This articulation of storied place is not only valuable for reflecting on place and pilgrimage ecclesiologically, but for uncovering the importance of hospitality in continually opening the possibility for sacramental encounter. The value of place in such sacramental encounters reflects the teachings and ministry of Jesus and the primitive growth of the early church narrated in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts. John Koenig in *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission*

³⁶⁹ Inge, 58.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 92.

highlights the simple acts of sharing that take place in ordinary *places* by which Jesus extends the feast of the kingdom.³⁷¹ Koenig writes, “For Jesus, the kingdom is not so much the reigning activity of God itself as [it is] ‘a community, a house, an area where the goods of salvation are available and received.’”³⁷² The kingdom comes and salvation is offered through the unique acts in particular places, and Jesus presents them arriving in images of food, drink, and home.³⁷³ At the same time, Koenig continues,

the kingdom of God is like a movable feast, a roving banquet hall that seeks the people of Israel as guests and hosts. At this table they may find reconciliation with one another, as well as a true home and a plenty that fills them up and propels them toward sharing relationships with their neighbors.³⁷⁴

In this way, ecclesiology and manifestations of God’s reign are rooted in the simple acts and basic elements of hospitality—sharing food, drink, and home with neighbors and strangers. Likewise, place and home are important images of the kingdom, and the actions that take place within them are far from static and one-dimensional.

The Catholic Worker Contextualized: Casa Juan Diego

Out of this simple sharing in ordinary places indicative of scriptural images of the kingdom of God arises the simple mission of the Catholic Worker and, specifically, Casa Juan Diego in Houston, Texas. Casa Juan Diego, by virtue of its location in Texas, fulfills

³⁷¹ See Koenig’s Chapter 2, “Sharing the Feast of the Kingdom,” 15-51.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 43. Originally quoted from Sverre Aalen, “‘Reign’ and ‘House’ in the Kingdom of God in the Gospels,” *New Testament Studies* 8, no. 03 (1962), 223.

³⁷³ Koenig, 43-44.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

its particular mission in extending hospitality to migrants and refugees. The encounter with the poor migrant and refugee takes place in the simple acts of sharing meals and offering a place of rest and refuge. Since its foundation in 1980, Casa Juan Diego's founders Mark and Louise Zwick document:

more than seventy thousand refugees and migrants have passed through Casa Juan Diego, staying at least a night. Often some 150 guests have stayed the night in our Houses of Hospitality at a single time. It has not been unusual for 50 to 100 new homeless people to arrive each week. At the time we write, 500,000 meals are provided each year.³⁷⁵

Founded out of the same works of mercy and mission of Matthew 25:31-46 as the Catholic Worker movement, Casa Juan Diego highlights coming to know Christ—and the kingdom—in the encounter with the poor migrant.³⁷⁶ For Mark and Louise Zwick, as for Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, hospitality and voluntary poverty are held together in the household community. The Zwicks note that the commitment to works of mercy, voluntary poverty, and giving of one's self are evident in Christian scripture, particularly in Matthew's account of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. They write:

It is easier to do this work without compensation if we remember what Peter Maurin called the shock maxims of the Gospel: Going the extra mile, giving your extra shirt to the one who asks, loving your enemy, forgiving in the face of criticism and persecution, turning the other cheek, seeking first the Kingdom of God. The life of the Catholic Worker, of Casa Juan Diego, is a reversal of values seen in society. In the Kingdom, the greatest are not the most powerful, not the

³⁷⁵ Zwick and Zwick, 39.

³⁷⁶ The Zwicks write, "We try to keep the perspective that, as the Gospel of St. Matthew tells us in chapter 25, Jesus himself comes to us in the guise of the poor, who today are often refugees and immigrants, and it is by how we respond to him in that guise that we shall be judged. In that Bible passage, Jesus tell[s] us what it will be like when he comes again, how he will separate us into the sheep and the goats—sheep on the right and goats on the left." Mark and Louise Zwick, *Mercy Without Borders: The Catholic Worker and Immigration* (New York: Paulist Press, 2010), 34.

richest, not the strongest, not the smartest. The Lord tells us that he is present in the poor and weak.³⁷⁷

This commitment is difficult to live by, especially given the tiring work of hospitality. The Zwicks note difficulties they have endured over the years since the start of Casa Juan Diego in 1980—from fires, to safety issues, to the continual need for resources, to withstanding the demands in their human bodies.³⁷⁸ Despite the chaos of day-to-day challenges at Casa Juan Diego, their commitment to hospitality is primitive and sacrificial in direct response to the words of Jesus in the Gospels.

The waves of migrants and refugees they have welcomed over the years have changed over time—from Central American refugees of war to undocumented immigrants and refugees of global economic crises from Central America and Mexico.³⁷⁹ Regardless, Casa Juan Diego adapts its hospitality and continues to address the immediate needs of many traveling over the borders into the United States. The needs are complex and diverse—whether the house welcomes a woman who was raped during the journey and is now pregnant, a young man in his twenties who lost a limb on the train during the journey northward, or a migrant who is trying to find a brother in another U.S. city and simply needs a phone, a meal, and shelter for the night. Houses of primitive welcome like Casa Juan Diego remain the “first responders” of hospitality to migrants

³⁷⁷ Zwick and Zwick, 40.

³⁷⁸ For further detail on these challenges, see Zwick and Zwick, *Mercy Without Borders*, Chapter 5 “Casa Juan Diego Rises from the Ashes,” 78-99 and Chapter 6 “Oh, Freedom!,” 100-117.

³⁷⁹ Additionally, the socioeconomic makeup of the community surrounding Casa Juan Diego has changed over the course of 30 years. The Zwicks narrate the changes to Casa Juan Diego over time in *Mercy Without Borders: The Catholic Worker and Immigration*.

who may be in much need. As was referenced in Chapter 3, Casa Juan Diego is often in the middle of what Miguel de la Torre calls the “trails of hope and terror” of migrants.

The Zwicks note how some people comment on the primitive and radical nature of their work, but they see it as very ordinary and challenging. They report how, after a presentation on the work of Casa Juan Diego to another Christian group, someone commented, ““This is so radical, so primitive.”” In response, they reflected, “We were taken aback, but felt complimented. We did not feel radical or primitive. We felt very ordinary, with a lot of work to do.”³⁸⁰ Casa Juan Diego and the Catholic Worker respond every day to the needs of those they encounter. The house volunteers continually responding to the complex needs of the stranger, the migrant, the refugee, and the homeless, in turn, shapes the volunteers lives and service. Though ordinary, according to the Zwicks, this patterning of life through the sacrifices of welcome shapes those serving at Casa Juan Diego to be oriented toward the Other and toward the way of Christ in the most primitive and profound ways.

Sharing of Food and Meals in Community

Some of the most rudimentary ecclesial practices, such as sharing food and meals together, gave birth to the early church and continue today to shape people’s care for one another, ethics, and economic practices within ecclesial communities. In his exegesis of New Testament hospitality, Koenig describes how sharing meals in residences becomes

³⁸⁰ Zwick and Zwick, 45.

the central feature of the early church and shapes Jesus' followers into a new way: "*Koinonia* at the table becomes the socioreligious hallmark of the young Jerusalem church (Acts 2:42, 46)."³⁸¹ He notes the *koinonia* or fellowship fostered around the table that develops between itinerants and residents for the sake of the gospel. Their partnership between itinerants and residents identifies both place and pilgrimage as an important feature of the early church. Additionally, Koenig describes the Greek concept of *oikonomia*, or literally "management of a household," as a main focus of the early church.³⁸² Koenig's analyses of Paul's theology, as well as his unpacking of Luke's partnership in mission in Luke-Acts, highlight the importance of sharing meals together as economic acts of welcome, sharing, and *koinonia*. These acts point to the way of Jesus and become signs of the kingdom.³⁸³

Specifically, in the *koinonia* brought together through meal sharing, the early church is born. For Paul, it is at the table that God's new humanity "freed by Christ from divisions of class, race, and sex" is enacted.³⁸⁴ The *koinonia* and unity formed at the table, and specifically the Lord's Supper, are depicted in Luke's Gospel as signs of the

³⁸¹ Koenig, 89. He adds, "With good reason one modern interpreter names this first group of residential believers 'the Lukan banquet community'."

³⁸² Ibid., 130.

³⁸³ Koenig writes, "The Lord's Supper must be a special demonstration of equality and reciprocity. Why? Clearly Paul thought of this supper as a generative symbol. Jesus himself had instituted the meal. Here the body which had given itself up on the cross, but now lived, and the church-body created by that death and resurrection were displaying their "communion" in a singular way (1 Cor. 10:16). It was therefore here that the new humanity, freed by Christ from divisions of class, race, and sex, should be emerging most visibly from the present evil age. For Paul, the Lord's Supper had to be a real-life preview of the coming kingdom so that it could inspire other kinds of sharing in the church, both spiritual and material." Ibid., 68.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 68. More will be discussed in the following chapter with regard to Paul's language of "new humanity, freed by Christ from divisions of race, class, and sex" as it relates to baptism.

Way of the Kingdom. Here, the images of household and community gathering echo back to Letty Russell's ecclesiology and kitchen table solidarity.³⁸⁵ Interestingly, these scriptural images reflect welcome in the church both through place, in household, and in pilgrimage. Both the Pauline and Lukan images reflect the ongoing shaping of the early church through sharing meals and material resources and upholding one another's spiritual needs in ways that are reflective of a dynamic journeying together in community.

The new community develops a deeper formation of *oikonomia*— or a Christian economic way of life—as they both reside and journey together and specifically through the communal practice of sharing meals together. The meal of thanksgiving (*eucharistia*), which gathers and unites the church, remains central to the formation of a hospitable community of Christ followers provided that the eucharist also shapes them toward an intentional economic sharing. In the next chapter, I will discuss more fully how the centrality of food and sharing meals in the celebration of the eucharist, as well as the eucharistic elements themselves, uncover unique expressions of hospitality (and *oikonomia*) necessary within the context of U.S. Latino/a undocumented migration. Additionally, I will continue to investigate how guest and host roles are transformed and new gifts encountered in the unique partnership formed around the table in the Lord's Supper. Central to the formation of good hospitality and ecclesiological practice is not

³⁸⁵ See Russell, *Church in the Round*. Koenig notes that in Luke 15:1-2, “the marginal messiah welcomes other marginal people. He is God's traveling householder (*oikodespotes*), inviting every Israelite to the banquet of the kingdom (14:16-24).” Koenig, 91. Koenig's goes on to say that in the end God admits only those who repent (13:24-30; 23:43). This reveals that repentance as a requirement for entering the Christian community in full, but the larger point here is that Christ extends the welcome to any and all on the margins.

necessarily food, drink, or a home in and of themselves, but the formation that transpires around strangers made friends in community. The way of life nurtured in community, which may take place in a home or on the road, deeply shapes Christians in discipleship and in relationship with one another so as to offer the love of God to the world.³⁸⁶ What I have tried to emphasize with regard to both hospitality practice and ecclesiology is that faith formation and good practice arise out of a people following the way of Jesus.³⁸⁷ This following and faithfulness are intricately tied to the ecclesial community's performance, journey, and movement in its life together as the body of Christ. The way of salvation, I argue, is learned as the Christian community resides, journeys, and learns how to live together around radical yet simple practices such as eating together, welcoming one another and new friends, and performing life together, through which God's people are made a gift to the world. God's people are not hoping for the end in order to encounter this salvation; rather God is transforming the church through its journey together in community. God continually is shaping God's people "on the way" in this journey. By the relationships nurtured in *koinonia*, the church always is becoming and being made new. The simple elements of hospitality reflective of early Christian

³⁸⁶ Stone, 12.

³⁸⁷ Koenig notes several of the above mentioned practices of early church formation as derived both from missionary prophets and established in the residential life of early house churches in Luke/Acts. The gospel holds together the centrality of both ecclesial place and pilgrimage—placing emphasis upon the residential believers "disciples" while also referring to their community life as "the Way." Koenig draws attention to how the effect of the Way terminology gives residential Christianity a pilgrimage quality. The Gospel of Luke hold these two realities together as reflective of the kingdom seen in the person of Jesus. Koenig writes, "[Jesus], the archetypal wanderer, is also God's chief householder (13:25-30; 14:21-24; 23:42-43). His kingdom, the church, is like a table, that is, a physical place to which those hungering and thirsting for salvation can come (15:1-2; 22:30). At this table Jesus both presides ... and serves as waiter.... Therefore, his residential disciples, beginning with the Twelve, must do likewise (12:42-53; 22:27-30)." Koenig, 101-102. See the entirety of Koenig's chapter "Guests and Hosts, Together in Mission (Luke)," 85-123.

communities remain important because these are the ingredients that have comprised the church; yet, these elements also can be re-appropriated and juxtaposed with new elements that contribute to new embodiments of church today.

Collective and Cooperative Partnership in Hospitality

Hospitality also expands to new complex and unique territories as ecclesial communities develop communal and corporate partnerships in the context of twenty-first century migration. The wide array of needs and life challenges that migrants experience may outweigh the services and support one community can offer. Hospitality in today's context can be more expansively offered when communities join forces in assisting migrants, whether these communities are Christian or non-Christian. An ecclesial community's knowledge of other service agencies for migrants in a geographical community may allow it to provide a more holistic welcome to migrants. Additionally, as communities build relationships with one another, the spirit of partnership between them grows. In fact, this partnership, as it exhibits relationship-building, can become an exercise in hospitality itself.

Activist, author, and scholar in Chicano studies and queer theory, Gloria Anzaldúa, in *This Bridge Called My Back* plays with the poetic words of Antonio Machado described above. She writes, "Caminante no hay puente, se hace puente al andar."³⁸⁸ (Sojourner, there is no bridge, the bridge is made as one walks.) Rather than

³⁸⁸ Gloria Anzaldúa, foreword to the second edition *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* 2nd ed., ed. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983), *iv*.

using the word “way” she inserts “bridge.” Anzaldúa’s nuancing of these words insinuates an important aspect of how life is sustained and survival made possible in the borderlands. While borders and boundaries may be set up to divide, they are also points of crossing. Such crossing is made possible (and made safely passable) when bridges are constructed. Anzaldúa’s work encourages and challenges women in the hope and courage necessary for building bridges; she writes: “Mujeres, a no dejar que el peligro del viaje y la inmensidad del territorio nos asuste—a mirar hace adelante y a abrir paso en el monte (*Women, let’s not let the danger of the journey and the vastness of the territory scare us—let’s look forward an open paths in these woods*).”³⁸⁹ Many U.S. Latino/a and postcolonial theologians discuss bridge-building, for both individuals and communities, as a strategy for survival and human flourishing on borders and in the borderlands.³⁹⁰ For Goizueta, the words *camínemos con Jesús* creates a bridge that unites people in a new way of relating and coming together in the world through the Way of Christ. As a community builds bridges, it transcends borders that divide and transforms them into border passages by which differences continue to be encountered but in a two-way flow of traffic. That is, bridges do not erase differences, but they permit crossing so difference can be joined in relationship. Bridge-building also proves an important image for discussing ecumenical, interfaith, and other partnerships, which may cross the “divides” of faith and culture. Below, I explore bridge-building activities in reference to hospitality and migration in the Southwestern United States’ borderland town of El Paso, Texas.

³⁸⁹ Anzaldúa, *iv*.

³⁹⁰ For example see, Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*. Also see Letty M Russell, et al, *Inheriting Our Mothers’ Gardens* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1988).

Building Bridges in El Paso

“El Paso” which literally means “the pass” or “passage” in Spanish is located along the U.S.-Mexico border in West Texas. The international Bridge of the Americas that spans the Rio Grande (or Río Bravo), links El Paso to its southern neighbor, Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. An estimated two million persons live in the El Paso/Juárez metropolitan area, with two thirds estimated to be located in Juárez.³⁹¹ In El Paso, one can quickly encounter a network of Christian communities and non-profit organizations with no faith affiliation, each addressing aspects of undocumented immigrants rights, as well as welcome and care. Working with undocumented migrants is risky business, and various organizations as well as houses of hospitality intentionally focus their work toward accompanying migrants in the various situations they encounter in the United States.³⁹² Undocumented migrants, persons in need of immediate medical attention, women who have been abused, single men, families, etc. each require different sorts of immediate

³⁹¹See <http://www.elpasotexas.gov/demo.asp> (accessed September 26, 2011). See link to PDF “Fact Sheet El Paso/Ciudad Juárez,” which describes the challenges of identifying an accurate population for Ciudad Juarez. Also see PDF, “Historical Population of El Paso/Ciudad Juárez,” for a combined population figure from 2006. Also see, Bean, Frank D.; Chanove, Roland; Cushing, Robert G.; Garza, Rodolfo de la; Freeman, Gary P.; Haynes, Charles W.; Spener, David (July 1994).

³⁹² For example, the Annunciation House, which will be referenced below, describes the risk they undergo as follows: “Specifically, volunteers understand that their decision to live and work among these poorest of the poor—to offer hospitality to the undocumented stranger among us—carries with it a certain amount of risk. While the nature and consequence of that risk is not quantifiable, we recognize that efforts have been underway in the United States to make life unbearable for the undocumented and to penalize those of us who serve them. For example, legislation proposed in 2005 (HR 4437) threatened to criminalize groups and individuals who provide humanitarian assistance to the undocumented. In this punitive environment that generates such inhumane legislation, we at Annunciation House remain committed to serving our immigrant sisters and brothers regardless of their immigration status. Our decision to serve and to bear witness to their reality remains a choice of conscience. As Cardinal Roger Mahony, Archbishop of the Diocese of Los Angeles, poignantly reminded us, “Denying aid to a fellow human being violates a law with a higher authority than Congress—the law of God” <http://annunciationhouse.org/about-2/who-we-serve/> (accessed June 24, 2011).

assistance. Partnership is crucial in order to make sure immediate needs are met as quickly as possible.

El Paso is home to several Christian hospitality houses similar to the mission and work of Casa Juan Diego in Houston. Annunciation House is one such Christian hospitality house with Roman Catholic origins that opened in 1978. The hospitality house specifically services undocumented persons, who often are not eligible to receive social services available to the poor because of lack of *papeles*, meaning papers or documentation of citizenship or visa. More broadly speaking, Annunciation House's mission statement reads:

In a Gospel spirit of service and solidarity, we accompany the migrant, homeless, and economically vulnerable peoples of the border region through hospitality, advocacy, and education. We place ourselves among these poor so as to live our faith and transform our understanding of what constitutes more just relationships between peoples, countries, and economies.³⁹³

Annunciation House offers food, shelter, and connections to the community where persons migrating may be able to find assistance. Over the span of 34 years, Annunciation House has hosted close to 90,000 refugees, immigrants, and undocumented persons from over 40 countries.³⁹⁴

Located just 10 blocks from the U.S.-Mexico border, the house may be the first stop for a person who just crossed the border. A person migrating may have heard about Annunciation House on the journey or stayed at the house during prior arrivals to the United States. Interestingly, at times, he or she may have been directed to Annunciation

³⁹³ See <http://annunciationhouse.org/mission/> (accessed June 18, 2011).

³⁹⁴ See the Annunciation House Website: <http://annunciationhouse.org/voice-of-the-voiceless/> (accessed June 18, 2011).

House by border patrol or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). When the house is full or it is not advisable for families or single women to be housed there, the staff may recommend other services in the community. This is where the network of service agencies and ecclesial communities come into the picture, and partnerships become necessary for survival. The Opportunity Center homeless shelter a few blocks north may provide temporary shelter for single men, and families may arrange temporary refuge through a Roman Catholic parish. Additionally, women and men who have connections to work on farms in Texas and New Mexico may find refuge, food, and transportation assistance at Centro de Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizados, located close to the border bridge and, ironically, situated across the street from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).³⁹⁵ Others may find spiritual counseling at Sacred Heart Church³⁹⁶ or undocumented single mothers may join a cooperative at Mujer Obrera³⁹⁷ to get training and secure work to support their families. These organizations and the services they provide illustrate the partnerships or bridges built out of a common vision to walk alongside persons migrating in and through El Paso. Amidst the work of hospitality, the

³⁹⁵ See the Centro de Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizados Website: <http://www.farmworkers.org/centresp.html> (accessed June 18, 2011).

³⁹⁶ See the Sacred Heart parish Website: <http://www.sacredheartelpaso.org/> (accessed June 18, 2011). “Our church is located 3 blocks from the Mexican border where El Paso (population 750,000) meets her twin city Juárez (population 3,000,000). Our neighborhood, known as the “Segundo Barrio” or “Second Ward”, is one of the poorest neighborhoods in the US with a host of problems and social challenges.”

³⁹⁷ See the Mujer Obrera Website: <http://www.mujerobrera.org/mission.html> (accessed June 18, 2011).

“workers” or “hosts” themselves may encounter friendships and support in their unique alliances with strangers and partners.³⁹⁸

In *New Testament Hospitality*, Koenig closes with several practical examples of new frontiers of hospitality by which he challenges his readers toward forming partnerships and alliances with strangers today. In order to accomplish this, Christians must move “through the ordinary events of our days with a readiness for partnership.”³⁹⁹ Some of the most challenging aspects of this readiness are the courage to begin and the courage to open oneself to, what Koenig terms, a “ministry of introduction.” The organizations and ecclesial communities listed above demonstrate the value partnership with strangers, daring to build a bridge even amongst one another when the political climate for assisting undocumented persons is shaky at best. Koenig describes the risk of ministry of introduction as:

In the risky business of bringing alienated people together, introducers must see through the stereotypes and fears that prevent mutual welcoming so as to claim ground for the powerful exchange of gifts which happens when partnerships between strangers are actually forged.⁴⁰⁰

The bridge-building activities of El Paso illustrate how the challenges and fears of introduction and forging new relationships are overcome. Hospitality practice is strengthened through the matrix of communities welcoming and walking alongside individuals and families, and also forging relationships with other communities who do

³⁹⁸ See Koenig, 124.

³⁹⁹ Koenig, 125.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 128.

the same. The spirit of collaboration overcomes the fears and risks that pervade the borderlands, not to mention the competition for scarce resources.

Partnership in Advocacy, Awareness, and Education

A ministry of introduction and the development of partnership between the above communities begin by meeting the needs of migrants but also work toward advocacy, awareness, and education regarding the challenges migrants face. Many congregations, ecclesial groups, and non-profit groups in El Paso generate funding and support by hosting border experience trips in El Paso/Juarez. These trips may include college students, professors or professionals, church groups, or other parties interested in learning about the complex issues that affect life in the border areas and the persons that pass between them. The Annunciation House began offering a Border Awareness Experience in 1990.⁴⁰¹ The intention behind these trips is to facilitate face-to-face encounters between participants and persons and groups residing in the border region in hopes of raising participants' consciousness about issues of immigration, economic development, human rights, and social justice.⁴⁰² Because of recent violence and safety issues in Ciudad Juárez, many of the groups that facilitate border immersion experiences continue to practice partnership by arranging visits to organizations on the U.S. side of the border. The immersion experiences include visits to one another's organizations so that participants can learn the justice and hospitality work that each organization offers.

⁴⁰¹ See <http://annunciationhouse.org/baexperience/> (accessed June 18, 2011).

⁴⁰² <http://annunciationhouse.org/baexperience/> (accessed June 18, 2011).

Partnership in advocacy, awareness, and education is valuable for assessing how an ecclesial community's hospitality practice can be dynamically shaped toward *journeying with* persons who are migrating. Hospitality does not always end with the provision of a single night's shelter or a meal, but also includes addressing the daily challenges migrants face for survival. Because communities of hospitality may not journey with migrants in every aspect, communal partnerships and ministry of introduction can help fill in the gaps. The communities of hospitality at the border can also be mutually challenged by one another by their hospitality practice. I offer two snapshots of integral partnerships for a journeying hospitality drawing from the work of non-profit organizations in the El Paso area—La Mujer Obrera (The Woman Worker) and Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizados (Center for Border Farmworkers). These two organizations exemplify advocacy and accompaniment alongside migrants seeking to establish economic livelihoods north of the border. More specifically, they demonstrate advocacy through grassroots mobilization and community organizing. Additionally, they address the ongoing economic needs of migrants not only as they enter the United States, but also as they seek a living on that side of the border. Though these organizations are not faith-based, they have become invaluable partners for many ecclesial communities. They have taught these communities the economic realities migrants face and how to walk with and among persons migrating in and through El Paso. The journeying hospitality dynamics that I have been investigating throughout this chapter requires ecclesial communities to understand the various layers of complexity that surround immigration.

Community Organizing: La Mujer Obrera and Sin Fronteras

La Mujer Obrera began in 1981 to answer this question: “In the midst of globalization, how do we, as women and as workers, defend our rights and build sustainable communities rooted in justice and human dignity?”⁴⁰³ The organization focuses on women’s empowerment, economic development, and community development specifically for Mexican immigrant workers. Of the many programs offered at Mujer Obrera, El Puente (The Bridge) program specifically focuses on the economic and labor needs of women following the changes that ensued as a result of the 1997 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Mujer Obrera recognizes the displacement, trauma, and impact on women and workers that NAFTA caused, specifically for those women living and working in the South Central barrio, which is the former Garment District of El Paso.⁴⁰⁴ In chapter two, Miguel de la Torre’s insights helped me to unravel NAFTA’s negative consequences for vulnerable populations that were widespread on both sides of the border. El Paso’s Garment District and the agriculture industry of the Southwest were deeply affected by NAFTA. After 1997, the majority of the garment district factories moved to *maquiladores* south of the U.S.-Mexico border. As a result, 3,000 women in El Paso lost their jobs. In light of this

⁴⁰³ The Mujer Obrera Website describes these three focus areas as follows: “Women’s Empowerment: Secure the right and the capacity to develop as women, in community, and for our families, as a people with a history and a rich cultural heritage to affirm and share; Economic Development: “Generate women’s economic empowerment through social enterprises, small business support, and bilingual workforce development; and Community Development: Build community, while sustaining our roots through neighborhood revitalization, job creation, housing development, and educational projects that celebrate Mexican cultural heritage, as Mexican immigrant women workers.” See <http://www.mujerobrera.org/mission.html> (accessed June 19, 2011).

⁴⁰⁴ See <http://www.mujerobrera.org/elpuente.html> (accessed June 18, 2011).

tragedy, *Mujer Obrera's* El Puente program seeks to generate economic opportunity for women by offering training in job creation, micro-enterprise development, social enterprises, and small business support. To strengthen community members' skills and knowledge, El Puente offers entrepreneurial and workforce training, basic skills education, and access to technology. Finally, to build community development, El Puente seeks to build community capacity while also sustaining cultural roots. They do this through house and neighborhood revitalization, cultural enrichment and arts programs, and urban agriculture and healthy living initiatives.⁴⁰⁵

The Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos, located in an 8,000 square foot facility just over the U.S.-Mexico border on the Border Highway, is part of the Sin Fronteras (Without Borders) Organizing Project.⁴⁰⁶ The organization exists to meet the immediate needs of agricultural workers and their families and to organize workers to help bring changes to the agricultural system (both public and private) that sometimes perpetuates exploitation and poverty.⁴⁰⁷ The center offers services to farmworkers and

⁴⁰⁵ <http://www.mujerobrera.org/elpuente.html> (accessed June 18, 2011). "With these programs, in conjunction with its parent La Mujer Obrera, El Puente has achieved outstanding results and recognition for women's empowerment and community economic development including the conversion of four dilapidated buildings into a hub for dynamic neighborhood revitalization and seven social purpose businesses: Rayito del Sol Daycare, Café Mayapan, Uxmal Apartments, Lummetik Trading Company, Mercado Mayapan Festival Marketplace, CDBES, and PLAN MAYACHEN."

⁴⁰⁶ The Sin Fronteras Organizing Project: <http://www.farmworkers.org/sinfreng.html> (accessed June 19, 2011) is a non-profit organization in Texas that began in 1993 as part of a growing labor movement on the United States-Mexico border. The organizing and educational work of Sin Fronteras (meaning without borders) takes place in the border region that links Southern New Mexico, far West Texas, and Northern Chihuahua where 14,000 farm laborers live and work.

⁴⁰⁷ The history of migrant agricultural workers between Mexico and the United States runs deep, and one of the roles of the Centro and Sin Fronteras is to raise awareness about this history. For more information on this history and that of the Braceros program see:

low-income residents in the El Paso-Juárez area, which include English classes, arts and recreation for children and adults, a cafeteria, and a modest clinic. The center operates 24 hours a day: in the evening hours as a refuge for agricultural laborers needing safety and shelter and during business hours as a place of service to the general public.

It is estimated that 12,000 agricultural workers live or work in the New Mexico and Texas region, and 5,000 of them are *chile*-pickers.⁴⁰⁸ The Center draws attention to how these workers “suffer the most inhumane recruitment practices and the worst working conditions existing in the Southwest.”⁴⁰⁹ *Chile*-pickers are the lowest paid agricultural laborers. Many lack a place to live. Few have access to medical services and educational opportunities. Additionally, women who work in the fields—many of whom are single mothers and heads of household—often earn less, while they also suffer abuses and sexual harassment.⁴¹⁰ The typical workday of a *chile*-picker involves long hours, backbreaking labor, and little job security and protection against abuse. The workers often wait for two hours at the recruitment site and spend four hours traveling to and from the fields; then they work six to eight hours picking *chiles* and wait one to two

<http://www.farmworkers.org/bracerop.html>; <http://www.farmworkers.org/immigrat.html>; <http://www.farmworkers.org/usneedbp.html>; <http://www.farmworkers.org/bpaccord.html> (accessed June 27, 2011).

⁴⁰⁸ <http://www.farmworkers.org/bawpdsc.html> (accessed June 19, 2011). Also see <http://www.farmworkers.org/chileeng.html> (accessed October 24, 2011) for a description of the *chile* industry. *Chiles* are used in many products the most famous of which is “picante” sauce. The Website adds: “New Mexico produces two-thirds of all the chile peppers consumed in this country.”

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

hours more to get paid.⁴¹¹ When their potentially 16-hour workday is complete, the farmworkers may earn about \$30 USD each. To accommodate the needs of agricultural laborers Centro de los Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizos offers food and shelter for the farmworkers who have to meet the bus transportation to the fields at 2:00 am each morning. Each night, the center's multi-use room is converted into lodging at 9:00 pm. The floor is lined with wall to wall mats and farmworkers trying to get a few hours of sleep before the 16-hour day begins again.⁴¹²

Sin Fronteras and the Center collaborate on the Border Agricultural Workers Project, which seeks to improve the lives of the poor agricultural workers and their families. Specifically, the project promotes and protects the civil and human rights of both documented and undocumented agricultural workers. The project organizes the farmworker community into committees to raise consciousness among workers and to put collective pressure on employers in order to improve the working conditions and increase services offered for farmworkers.⁴¹³ The Sin Fronteras project notes how “the combination of poverty, lack of education, inability to speak English and fear of losing their jobs makes farmworkers vulnerable to unjust practices, low wages and hazardous

⁴¹¹ <http://www.farmworkers.org/bawpdesc.html> (accessed June 19, 2011).

⁴¹² There are two murals in the center; the multi-use room houses one. The second is located on the first floor level multi-use room. The mural “tells the story of a farm worker's day, but contains an overlaying tone of life and hope that farm workers experience as basic human beings. The story begins as a night-time scheme representing how the workers rise at 2 a.m. to wait for the buses that will take them to the fields. The moon and stars gradually turn to daylight showing a mountain range serving as a background for three children dancing around a tree. A blue river runs through the mural originating at the moon in the nighttime scheme and represents a river of dreams. This river passes through the head of one of the children representing the dreams we embrace as children.” <http://www.farmworkers.org/centreng.html> (accessed June 19, 2011).

⁴¹³ <http://www.farmworkers.org/bawpdesc.html> (accessed June 19, 2011).

working and living conditions.”⁴¹⁴ For these reasons, the advocacy role the Centro plays is crucial to many migrants’ survival and well-being.

The New Sanctuary Movement

Additionally, many faith based organizations throughout the United States stimulate ecumenical and interfaith partnership as they advocate in Congress for immigrants’ rights and more comprehensive services for immigrants, such as food, shelter, legal services, medical attention, etc. This type of advocacy is distinct from grassroots mobilization and often is led by persons who have U.S. citizenship and use their voice and vote to represent migrants.⁴¹⁵ One such partnership network is the New Sanctuary Movement, which has chapters throughout the United States to facilitate collaboration and partnership among faith communities, particularly in major metropolitan areas, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. The Sanctuary Movement, predecessor to the New Sanctuary Movement, began in the early 1980s as a result of the influx of Central American refugees entering the United States to flee the human rights violations of their governments. Many were denied refugee or asylum status because of the United States’ relationships with their countries of origin. In response to this, many Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish communities offered advocacy

⁴¹⁴ <http://www.farmworkers.org/bawpdsc.html> (accessed June 19, 2011).

⁴¹⁵ Words like “advocate” and “represent” raise immediate postcolonial objections because migrants’ voices are being interpreted by others and not heard in their own right. For this reason, there is an inherent danger in advocacy organizations and networks like the New Sanctuary Movement. Nonetheless, their work can still be extremely valuable. To overcome these dangers I argue that migrants must be instrumental in the gathering and actions set forth by these groups, even when they are unable to cast a vote or speak publicly because they are undocumented.

support, sanctuary, and social services to these migrants. The network also actively sought to change federal immigration policy. Beginning in 2005, religious leaders and faith communities united to form the New Sanctuary Movement, which specifically devoted attention to accompanying and protecting undocumented immigrant families at risk for discrimination, unjust working conditions, and deportation.⁴¹⁶

The efforts of ecclesial communities in immigration advocacy, awareness, and education have the potential to influence large groups of people to better understand the realities that cause persons to migrate, many of whom are often misunderstood, misrepresented, and marginalized within the United States and even many Christian congregations. Simple actions toward promoting awareness and better understanding can be instrumental in re-shaping ecclesial communities' understanding and practice of hospitality with and among persons migrating.⁴¹⁷ The New Sanctuary Movement advocates on behalf of immigrants and also continually challenges congregations and denominational structures to understand the broader context of migration and what is at

⁴¹⁶ See <http://www.newsanctuarymovement.org> (accessed June 18, 2011).

⁴¹⁷ For example, see 2006 Pew Hispanic Center study, "Attitudes Toward Immigration: In the Pulpit and the Pew," by Gregory A. Smith <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/20/attitudes-toward-immigration-in-the-pulpit-and-the-pew> (accessed February, 22, 2008). The study surveyed views of white evangelical Protestants, white mainline Protestants and white no-Hispanic Catholics (who together account for nearly 60% of the population)—as well as on the views of secular Americans, who comprise 11% of the public regarding the relationship between religion and attitudes on immigration. The study concludes: "Regardless of their religious background, Americans have serious concerns about immigration and favor a cautious approach to immigration policy. This is true even of Catholics and mainline Protestants, whose leaders have been quite outspoken in support of immigrants and a more hospitable immigration policy. But within each of the three largest religious groups in the U.S., the most religiously committed Americans tend to hold views that are more favorable toward immigrants. While church shepherds may not be getting through to all of their flock, they may be having better luck reaching their most attentive parishioners" (4). A companion piece focuses on the views of African Americans on the subject of immigration.

stake for the most vulnerable populations. It also seeks to clarify misunderstandings about immigration.

Partnership networks, such as Sin Fronteras or the New Sanctuary Movement, offer a multilayered response to issues surrounding immigration and new possibilities for shaping hospitality practice partnership. Parker Palmer, author of *Company of Strangers*, calls partnership in advocacy and awareness one of the major vocations of the church.⁴¹⁸

Palmer claims this vocation is:

to host dialogues between groups in the community who are, or may be, in conflict...[i.e.] such groups as teachers and school boards, teenagers and police, blacks and whites in “changing neighborhoods,” labor and management, “gays” and “straights.”⁴¹⁹

This vocation proves particularly important in reference to immigration because it is a politically heated issue in the United States. Much misunderstanding and a lack of knowledge surrounding why persons migrate, their life in the United States, and their effect on the nation pervades the U.S. national consciousness, including the church.⁴²⁰

Christian congregations, denominations, and para-church organizations are divided in their understandings of immigration.⁴²¹ In fact, immigration has come to be described as

⁴¹⁸ See Koenig, 128.

⁴¹⁹ Parker Palmer, *Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America's Public Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 131 quoted in Koenig, 128.

⁴²⁰ See Pew Research Center, “Attitudes Toward Immigration in the Pulpit and the Pew,” by Gregory A. Smith, April 26, 2006 <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/20/attitudes-toward-immigration-in-the-pulpit-and-the-pew> (accessed August 12, 2011).

⁴²¹ Ibid. The studies showed: “Overwhelming majorities across the religious spectrum see Hispanics in a favorable light and view immigrants from Latin America as a hard-working group with strong family values. But when asked about the impact of immigrants on American society and the U.S. economy, many more Americans (including members of each of the three largest religious groups) express negative views. Nearly half of the public, for instance, agrees with the statement that the growing number

an “issue” rather than a concern regarding the safety and security of the persons migrating. A central component of hospitality for congregations today is facilitating awareness and education as well as healthy conversation for Christians regarding immigration.⁴²²

Risks in Partnership and Hospitality

Partnerships with strangers always will come with some amount of risk, whether individually or corporately. The risk is necessary for forging genuine partnership and friendship just as it is for extending and receiving true hospitality. An encounter with a stranger is an encounter for both parties. As a relationship forms, intentional adjustments and changes must be made in order for each person to respond to the Other. An encounter entails a revealing of oneself and a receiving of the Other by which a careful process of making room happens between strangers. Interfaith partnerships and partnerships forged with secular organizations can often be interpreted as a great risk or threat for a Christian community. At the same time, however, hospitality extended to any stranger must involve risk. Missiologist Lesslie Newbigin describes such risk in reference to how Christians are called to dialogue and partnership with non-Christians as follows:

of newcomers threaten traditional American customs and values, compared with 45% who say that newcomers strengthen American society.” The study continues, “White non-Hispanic Catholics and white mainline Protestants closely resemble the public as a whole on this question. White evangelicals seem to be particularly wary of the impact of newcomers, with 63% of them seeing immigrants as a threat to U.S. customs and values.”

⁴²² I do want to caution churches against hosting some conversations within church buildings. It is important for congregations to ensure, as much as possible, that persons migrating feel safe and welcome within the walls of the church. Other spaces can be sought in which dialogue, education, and mutual understanding is sought between Christian communities and other groups which may oppose immigration. In fact, networks like the New Sanctuary Movement are instrumental in helping to facilitate such discussions in public venues.

But this does not mean that the purpose of dialogue is to persuade the non-Christian partner to accept the Christianity of the Christian partner. Its purpose is not that Christianity should acquire one more recruit. On the contrary, *obedient* witness to Christ means that whenever we come with another person (Christian or not) into the presence of the cross, we are prepared to receive judgment and correction, to find that our Christianity hides within its appearance of obedience the reality of disobedience. Each meeting with a non-Christian partner in dialogue therefore puts my own Christianity at risk.⁴²³

The risk in this scenario is that the Stranger and the Other simultaneously invite me into another way, and even stronger than invite, they *demand* that I see myself from a new perspective and demand that I change. The stranger may face me with my own shortcomings and sin and require my transformation in the spirit of repentance.⁴²⁴ In many respects, this relationship-building and partnership process ought to be seen in light of the accompaniment and journey required in all relationships, friendships, and partnerships. Though there may be different motivations underlying each community's welcome of migrants, each encounter with one another represents an opportunity to learn from one another. Naturally, there are limits to these partnerships that must be discerned and negotiated by ecclesial communities. At times, a congregation may discern that they cannot participate in another partner's activities because the activities do not reflect that to which they profess in Christ. At other times, the Christian community will be brought

⁴²³ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, rev ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 182. Also noted in Bryan P. Stone, *Evangelism After Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), 165.

⁴²⁴ In this spirit, Healy seeks to: "Maintain the tension between claims for the church's orientation to the ultimate truth on the one hand and, on the other, acknowledgement of ecclesial sin and of the church's dependence upon the challenges and insights of those religious and non-religious bodies that are orientated primarily to other truths." Healy, 19. Later he adds, "In all its forms, this practical-prophetic ecclesiology enables the church to engage self-critically with other religious and non-religious traditions of inquiry at the level of their respective concrete identities." Healy, 22.

to repentance and deeper faithfulness in light what is revealed to them through these relationships.⁴²⁵

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented contemporary ecclesial practices and expressions of hospitality that embody new ecclesial imagination in light of U.S. Latino/a migration. Performative and early Christian expressions of hospitality, along with collective and cooperative partnerships, are vital expressions of both hospitality and broader ecclesial life in the twenty-first century. The contemporary manifestations I explored in this chapter emphasize the dynamic nature of the gospel as it is lived among diverse communities of people in new contexts. Above, I first examine performative dimensions of hospitality possible within ecclesial liturgy and ritual. Performance of liturgy, as it involves an ecclesial community's bodily movement and can creatively be adapted to contexts or brought out into public spaces, reveals great potential as a practice that helps shape a journeying hospitality with and among migrants. Performance of scripture as liturgy, evidenced in *Posadas* rituals and Holy Thursday processions, can become contextualized liturgies of the Christian community that gather it into the body of Christ

⁴²⁵ Newbigin continues, "There is no substitute for the gift of discernment, no set of rules or institutional provisions by which we can be relieved of the responsibility for discernment. Dialogue cannot be 'made safe for all possible risks.' The Christian who enters into dialogue with people of other faiths and ideologies is accepting this risk. But to put *my* Christianity at risk is precisely the way by which I can confess Jesus Christ as Lord—Lord over all worlds and Lord over my faith. It is only as the church accepts the risk that the promise is fulfilled that the Holy Spirit will take all the treasures of Christ, scattered by the Father's bounty over all the people and cultures of mankind [*sic*], and declare them to the church as the possession of Jesus." Newbigin, 188. He adds: "The mystery of the gospel is not entrusted to the church to be buried in the ground. It is entrusted to the church to be risked in the change and interchange of the spiritual commerce of humanity." Newbigin, 189.

while simultaneously embodying the community's own experiences, character, and creativity. Liturgical performance encompasses patterns of pilgrimage and journey, which when appropriated in new contexts, take on new shapes and forms. *Las Posadas*, for example, draw an ecclesial community out of a building or place to enact and discover the rejection of place and home and the hardship of the pilgrimage journey. In this performance, an ecclesial community is drawn out of the comforts of place and confronted with the challenges of pilgrimage, all of which also allows the community to discover people and places anew in its community. As a result, ecclesial communities gain new perspectives, and new relationships are potentially formed when they go beyond the walls of a church building.

The expressions of hospitality I discuss in the second section recover the value of early Christian expressions of hospitality in light of the many challenges migrants face journeying and seeking livelihood north of the U.S.-Mexico border. Though the re-conceiving of hospitality I have been exploring, calls for further engagement and critical analysis beyond simple acts of welcome or provision of food in the context of migration, at the same time, some of the most basic acts of providing shelter, food, and care are still significant needs for vulnerable persons. Though the mission and services of Casa Juan Diego a Catholic Worker house in Houston are relatively simple, their actions demonstrate profound and difficult formation. By their acts of hospitality, they are formed into the body of Christ, which they understand through Jesus' sacrificial service. Additionally, the fact that Casa Juan Diego has opened its doors to migrants, refugees, and strangers for more than 30 years signifies that the "place" of their hospitality is of

extreme importance. Their being located in a specific community has helped them become known as a place of refuge and welcome. Additionally, as the socioeconomic status of the inhabitants of the geographical community around Casa Juan Diego has changed, the ministry has had to adapt as well. The place in which Casa Juan Diego resides reveals advantages and disadvantages for its mission and services. Hospitality work in this place will require discernment and negotiation for years to come. It is clear that the community's "placedness" does not mean that they have neglected to adapt, change, and adjust their welcome according to the persons who walk in their doors. Characteristic of the community's own journeying, Casa Juan Diego's simple hospitality remains dynamic, challenging, and flexible.

Finally, I investigated the value of communal and corporate partnerships in shaping hospitality through the relationships developed between agencies and ecclesial communities in El Paso, Texas. In order to sustain a journeying hospitality with and among migrants, it is essential to build bridges and develop partnerships between congregations, para-church organizations, non-profit social service agencies, or community organizing efforts. In this section, I explored partnership through the Annunciation House, Sacred Heart Roman Catholic parish, Mujer Obrera, and Centro de Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizado and addressed how they challenge one another toward a broader scope of welcome, services, and mutual learning. One organization could not address all of the complex factors and challenges migrants face, but a network of organizations offers a much more expansive welcome and response. Learning opportunities provided by a network of organizations also uncover the complex and

difficult situations migrants face that may have been previously overlooked, hidden, or neglected—such as the economic needs of migrants and the potential exploitation of farmworkers. Additionally, the interactions involved in developing communal partnerships can become expressions of hospitality. Often ecclesial communities may shy away from non-Christian agencies, but partnering with non-profits and community organizing efforts is an opportunity to learn about unseen issues migrants face, not to mention an opportunity to be challenged by new relationships to adapt, change, or even repent. In journeying with and among migrants, the challenge is not only beginning the work of hospitality, but also finding the courage for a ministry of introduction. New partnerships will come with the risk of change. In fact, any practice of hospitality always demands this risk.

Performative, simple, and cooperative expressions of hospitality and of what it means to be the church will continue to be explored in the next chapter alongside two central practices of ecclesiology—eucharist and baptism—that help to inform ecclesial communities' economic practices and political gathering into the body of Christ. I will examine how the practice of eucharist shapes and forms the ecclesial community toward new spatial imagination and journeying together in hospitality and ecclesiology.

Eucharistic practices also continually challenge the church beyond itself to be confronted anew by those it encounters. Grounding both ecclesiology and hospitality, the eucharist guides the church's discernment and action so that the community is continually directed toward the way of Jesus Christ and oriented to share God's gifts with the world.

Additionally, the eucharist is central to forming the Christian community's economic

ethic, which is vital to its hospitality practice in light of the economic challenges many migrants face as they reside in the United States. I also will explore how baptism—as a central practice that unites the church into a new humanity in Christ—complements eucharistic formation and deeply informs Christian hospitality practice, relationship-building, and *koinonia*. Christian identity learned in baptism is predicated upon the many differences of humanity being celebrated and united in Christ, rather than covered over or assimilated into the dominant majority of an ecclesial community.

CHAPTER SIX

EUCCHARISTIC FORMATION OF A HOSPITABLE COMMUNITY

Introduction

The previous chapter introduced several strategic, practical suggestions for the re-imagination of hospitality practice that revealed the dynamics of accompaniment and journey with and among migrants. I explored performative, simple, and collective expressions of hospitality drawing upon several contemporary manifestations of such hospitality in the United States ecclesial context in order to deepen hospitality *praxis* in light of twenty-first century migration. This chapter will continue to build on these insights and discuss further ecclesiological implications as hospitality is examined through the ecclesiological formation and practices of the eucharist. I will focus on the eucharist as a sustaining sacrament that continues to form and shape the church community socially and ethically. I discuss the eucharist as a socio-ethical practice drawing upon the theological commitments of John Howard Yoder, Stanley Hauerwas, and William Cavanaugh.⁴²⁶ I do not attempt to provide a full treatment of the liturgical and sacramental theology of eucharist or address how it takes on varying liturgical

⁴²⁶ In discussing these practices, I rely upon John Howard Yoder's explanation of the eucharist, as well as baptism, as two of "five sample ways in which the Christian church is called to operate as a *polis*. . . . Our model in each case will be the practice of the early church as reflected in the writings of the New Testament." See Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1992), *Introduction ix*. Additionally, I discuss marks or practices of the church more generally in what Yoder refers to as "ecumenical . . . in the simpler sense." He writes, "Our agenda is ecumenical, not in the modern organizational sense of arranging conversations among denominational agencies, or in the sense of comparing and contrasting the foundational documents of conflicting confessions, but in the simpler sense of being relevant to all kinds of Christians" (Ibid., *Introduction, x*).

meanings in different Christian traditions. Rather, I identify the significance of various eucharistic practices for ecclesial communities' practices of hospitality with and among migrants. I focus on ways eucharistic practices manifest themselves in sociohistorical contexts and help to shape Christian communal praxis in relation to transnational migration. I also briefly discuss baptism as an initiating sacrament that guides the church in its identity and calling to be a hospitable people.

In this chapter I explore ways that hospitality practice might best be understood as arising out of the practice of the eucharist and I likewise examine the ways, in turn, that a congregation's hospitality shapes and informs the life of the church. In particular, I explore how the eucharist influences and forms (and indeed *is*) the economic life and political formation of this community gathered to embody God's love for the world.⁴²⁷ I show how eucharist reorients hospitality practice economically and politically in relationship to the economic and political challenges transnational and undocumented migrants face. I examine two contemporary expressions of hospitality arising out of ecclesial communities' eucharistic formation in light of their seeking justice for undocumented migrants along the U.S.-Mexico border. The broader ties between hospitality practice and ecclesiology become more evident as I explore how the practice of the eucharist shapes the community to recognize the economic and political

⁴²⁷ I discuss the economic and political dimensions of ecclesiology arising from parallels drawn between early Christian communities and *oikos* (household) and *polis* (city) depicted in New Testament scripture. See M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1989), John Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality: Partnership with Strangers as Promise and Mission* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001), and William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination* (New York: T&T Clark, 2002).

implications in their gathering, temporarily residing, pilgrim journeying, and expressions of hospitality with and among migrants in Jesus' name.

Eucharist at the U.S.-Mexico Border

The eucharist can be practiced as an expression of hospitality, particularly when the community celebrates this meal outside of the walls of the church in new spaces. Below I present two expressions of hospitality found in sharing eucharistic meals across the U.S.-Mexico border. These two expressions each demonstrate a different eucharistic theology spanning both high and low sacramental traditions, though they both similarly challenge ecclesial communities toward new visions of hospitality across borders. In these expressions, the ecclesial images of household and table are extended to new symbols and traveling metaphors that arise from the eucharist performed at the border. The harvest and production of the eucharist grapes and grain together with the centrality of meals and the nourishment they provide, remain central to this eucharistic formation. Additionally, the eucharist performs the possibility of new relationships and the sharing of gifts across the many divisions that this border both symbolizes and enacts. These two expressions illustrate aspects of a journeying hospitality that foster deeper relationships and friendships, as well as eucharistic and economic formation for ecclesial communities. Additionally, the two expressions point to the previous chapters' insights regarding the value of corporate and communal partnerships in contemporary hospitality.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper across the U.S.-Mexico border is a formative and symbolic expression of the unity of the body of Christ across national

boundaries. It reminds the church that God's household is without walls and borders and God's feast is movable, and fashions the church accordingly. Additionally, the eucharistic meals provide sustenance for a church characterized by pilgrimage and journeying. Eucharistic practices direct the church toward alternative formation as it is gathered into a new community journeying toward the reign of God. Here, I begin with the borderland of El Paso/Ciudad Juárez and later in this chapter will turn to San Diego/Tijuana region.

The El Paso/Ciudad Juárez Borderland

In November 2003, bishops, priests, and lay people of the dioceses of El Paso, Ciudad Juarez, and Las Cruces, New Mexico joined to celebrate mass across the U.S.-Mexico border. Daniel Groody describes the liturgy as follows:

We celebrated mass outside, in the open air, in the dry rugged, and sun-scorched terrain where the United States meets Mexico. This liturgy was a time not only to remember all the saints and all the souls of history but also the thousands of Mexican immigrants who died crossing over the border in the last two years. Like other liturgies, a large crowd gathered to pray and worship together. Unlike other liturgies, however, a sixteen-foot iron fence divided this community in half, with one side in Mexico and the other side in the United States.

To give expression to our common solidarity as a people of God beyond political constructions, the two communities joined altars on both sides of the wall...Unable to touch my Mexican neighbor except through some small holes in the fence, I became painfully aware of the unity we celebrated but the divisions that we experienced. In the face of the wall between us, it struck me how we could experience concurrently our unity in Christ but our dividedness in our current reality, for no other reason than we were born on different sides of the fence. It brought to a new level the insight of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who said that "Sunday at 11:00 (is) the most segregated hour in America."⁴²⁸

⁴²⁸ Groody, "Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist," 299-300.

The mass united the church at the border in the presence of barriers representing geopolitical lines. The reality of the fence between them, however, remained looming. Two groups gathered and two altars stood on each side, yet a union formed as the two joined in performing the rituals of mass together. The mass was celebrated in both Spanish and English, the scriptural readings and liturgies alternating languages spoken across the border fence. The unity became more powerful as the two groups joined in the sharing of one table, though divided into two altars. The body and blood of Jesus “re-membered,” or gathered, them into one body.⁴²⁹ The passing of the peace, even through the small fence openings, reminded each of their common humanity in God. Those who gathered at mass under the heat of the sun sought to be transformed by Jesus Christ and to transform the borderland space into a bridge of unity rather than a symbol of division.⁴³⁰

The celebration of the eucharist, as the culmination of the Roman Catholic mass, was of particular importance for uniting the body of Christ across national lines. At the same time, the eucharist opened the possibilities of a new hope amidst the harsh realities of migration that many endured. Groody writes, “Like the Eucharist, the migrant journey

⁴²⁹ See William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 229. Cavanaugh describes the eucharist as re-membering the church into Christ’s body emphasizing the gathering of God’s people rather than a remembering of Christ’s sacrifice separated from bodies. He writes, “The Eucharist is an *anamnesis* of the past; Jesus commanded his followers, “Do this in remembrance of me” (Lk. 22:19). If we understand this command properly, however, the Eucharist is much more than a ritual repetition of the past. It is rather a literal re-membering of Christ’s body, a knitting together of the body of Christ by the participation of many in His sacrifice.” Cavanaugh had previously argued that “Christian resistance to state oppression depends on the church being the body of Christ capable of resisting the fragmenting discipline of the state.” Cavanaugh, 229.

⁴³⁰ See: *One Border One Body: Immigration and the Eucharist*, DVD, directed by John Carlos Frey (Notre Dame, IN: Gatekeeper Productions, 2008). The film presents the mass in this light, and includes several persons commenting on the transformation of the border space through the mass.

revolves around the basic elements of life, around bread, around death, around hope, and around the longing for a promised land.”⁴³¹ Recognizing the eucharist as the practice that provides sustenance for the people of God who journey after God as the body of Christ. The community’s celebration of the eucharist called out for God’s provision of migrants on their journey. Through the liturgy and practice of the mass the participants sought understanding and reconciliation across the border and on behalf of the migrants who have died or suffered in their journeys northward in search of economic survival. The community’s celebration of the eucharist called out for God’s justice for migrants. Additionally, it united God’s people in standing for justice with those who have endured injustices of the global economy and United States’ immigration policies. The eucharist celebrated at the border brought to light disunity in the body of Christ. Thus, the eucharist was an opportunity for repentance regarding the lines that divide the body—lines that often are perpetuated tragically in the church.⁴³² The eucharist prompted repentance for the divisions between the dioceses and parishes of the borderlands and united them in God’s spirit of reconciliation.

Grapes and Grain: Material Elements of the Eucharist

The migration of farmworkers to find work, migration caused by famine and drought, even the very migration of the food to U.S. grocery stores unearth the wide discrepancy between scarcity and abundance of food and those who have access to it as

⁴³¹ Groody, 306.

⁴³² See Los Angeles Bishop Mahony’s words in *One Border One Body*.

means of survival. Ecclesial formation through eucharistic ethics and journeying with and among migrants requires that ecclesial communities recognize how economic forces determine the lives of many migrants. The agricultural industry in the United States relies largely on immigrant labor.⁴³³ Groody notes that in many regions of the United States, this labor has been called “a modern form of slavery.”⁴³⁴ Within the eucharist elements themselves lie the evidence of migrants’ labor—the bread and wine are “the fruit of the vine and the work of human hands.”⁴³⁵ Recognition of the labor that goes into the production of grapes and grain, not to mention other food that provides daily sustenance, must not be overlooked in a joyous celebration of *eucharistia*, which means thanksgiving. Not only are Christians shaped by the eucharist toward an ethic of mutual love and sharing of socioeconomic resources, but the eucharist itself celebrates God’s abundant provision of good news and life that is continually offered to the world. Below, I will

⁴³³ Also see Daniel G. Groody, “Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist,” *A Promised Land a Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration*. Daniel Groody and Gioacchino Campese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 310.

⁴³⁴ See Groody, *Ibid.*, 301. Groody draws from John Bowe’s observations: “Modern Slavery exists not because today’s workers are immigrants or because some of them don’t have papers but because agriculture has always managed to sidestep the labor rules that are imposed upon other industries. When the federal minimum-wage law was enacted, in 1938, farmworkers were excluded from its provisions, and remained so for nearly thirty years. Even today, farmworkers, unlike other hourly workers, are denied the right to overtime pay. In many states, they’re excluded from workers’ compensation and unemployment benefits. Farmworkers receive no medical insurance or sick leave, and are denied the right to organize... [T]here’s no other industry in America where employers have as much power over their employees” (John Bowe, “Nobodies: Does Slavery Exist in America?” *The New Yorker*, April 23, 2003, 122).

⁴³⁵ Groody, “Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist,” 310. Naturally, there is much difference between how Daniel Groody, a Roman Catholic theologian, and Yoder, a Mennonite, understand the theology and practice of the eucharist. Though they would treat this sacrament differently, I draw upon their theology to explore how eucharistic practice takes shape in the context of migration. In this case, I focus on how they each describe the centrality of the grapes and grain elements of the eucharist.

continue to show how the eucharist table, as a reflection of God's table, requires that the church not to turn away those who are hungry and not ignore suffering in its midst.

Reflecting on the Roman Catholic mass celebration at the U.S. Mexico border, Groody describes the eucharist through the labor of the migrant:

On the altar, then, we see not only the body and the blood of Christ, but we see in the bread and the wine the hands, the feet, the labor, the sweat of those who worked in the fields. We see those who tilled the land so grain could be planted under the hot sun. We see those who fumigated the vines, even while their eyes turned red, their lungs filled with pesticides, and their children were born with birth defects because of it. We see those who harvested the grapes, even for less than minimum wage, so they could send what they earned to their families in Mexico. We see those who woke up at four o'clock in the morning to bake bread or work in the wineries, those who drove trucks and finally brought the bread and wine to our doors, to our altars. In the Eucharist, we see not only bread and wine but also the footprints of the migrants.⁴³⁶

Holding to a high sacramental liturgy and a eucharistic theology of transubstantiation, for Groody, the elements of the eucharist are the actual body and blood of Christ. The elements consumed actually shape the church into his body. At the same time, here one finds Groody going to great lengths to narrate the eucharistic liturgy as a framework through which to read the reality of immigration. He draws the parallel between, "the breaking of bread and the breaking of migrants' bodies, between the pouring out of Christ's blood for his people and the pouring out of migrants' lives for their families, between Christ's death and resurrection and migrants' own."⁴³⁷ Central to understanding

⁴³⁶ Groody, "Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist," 311.

⁴³⁷ Groody writes, "In the Eucharist, we see in faith not only the body and blood of Christ. In the Eucharist, we also see the body and blood of the migrant, the body of the crucified, who also poured out their lives for their families so that they might eat and that we might eat, so that they might drink and we might drink, even if it cost them their lives. It is in this spirit that the bishops of the United States and Mexico write that we need to 'seek to awaken our peoples to the mysterious presence of the crucified and risen Lord in the person of the migrant and to renew in them the values of the Kingdom of God that he proclaimed.'" Groody, "Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist," 301.

these parallels is understanding migrants' suffering and the call for justice, particularly as one examines the perilous journey northward and the spheres to which migrants are relegated in order to make a living once in the United States. The work of organizations like *Mujer Obrera* and the *Centro de Trabajadores Agrícolas Fronterizados* described at the close of the previous chapter brings to light the economic hardships, daily struggles, and unjust working conditions endured by undocumented migrants in the United States.

Though embodying a specific theology of the eucharist, the above contemporary manifestation reveals how the practice of the eucharist breaks into the time and space of human lives to uncover the situatedness of the eucharistic elements. Groody's reflection on the eucharist celebration connects the lives of migrants to the production of the eucharist elements. Originating from grapes and grain, the bread and the wine have come from the toil of bodies and land. They have come from the hands that have prepared them and the backs that have been broken in the planting and harvest. The formation of the eucharist, as a spiritual and socioeconomic act, therefore extends to the human bodies and labor found within the eucharistic elements. The eucharist as the *Lord's Supper* enacting God's economy does not neglect the economic ethics involved in the provision of food and the elements. Roberto Goizueta calls attention to the necessary unity between the sacramental character of the eucharist and the economic and political justice which it also encompasses.⁴³⁸ While the eucharistic elements are understood as gifts of God in Christ (as well as gifts of seed, soil, sun, and water), they also are understood as economic

⁴³⁸ See Goizueta's Chapter 5: "Popular Catholicism as Human Action," in *Caminemos con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment*, 100-131.

products—as they are grown and produced by persons and socio-economic structures.

Goizueta writes,

Worship and celebration are always aesthetic and ethical-political relationships mediated by economic products and structures. Before the bread and the wine are the body and blood of Christ they are the body and blood of the poor persons; the bread was kneaded by some-*one* and the grapes were picked by some-*one*.⁴³⁹

In this sense, Goizueta calls attention to the fact that the church's witness to God's glory and beauty has everything to do with its witness to God's love and justice.⁴⁴⁰ The church's table manners learned in the eucharist meal cannot be neatly separated from the land and the hands that have provided the grapes and grain. Similarly, worship at the table is not separated, but intimately wedded to the socioeconomic lives of community members.

Goizueta makes these connections by drawing upon the sixteenth century historical example of Bartolomé de las Casas' conversion. Las Casas, a Spanish priest who came to 'the Indies' in 1502, also served the Spanish crown as an *encomendero* who owned indigenous persons. In 1517, however, his life was radically changed through the eucharist liturgy.⁴⁴¹ In preparing to celebrate mass, Las Casas came to realize that the bread of the eucharist was 'ill-gotten' through the exploitation of indigenous people. In this realization Las Casas began to see the problematic nature of his role as both priest and *encomendero*. Goizueta notes,

⁴³⁹ Goizueta, 131.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., 125.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., 123. For a fuller account of Las Casas' conversion, see Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 47-51.

The key to Las Casas' conversion was in his sudden recognition, in the light of the Scriptures, that the eucharistic bread is "the bread of the poor," and that, in turn, "the bread of the poor is their life." In light of this recognition, he is forced to reconsider "his position in the nascent colonial system," and "forsakes his condition as a member of an oppressive system, whose contrariety to all justice and to God's will he has not until now perceived."⁴⁴²

In the eucharistic meal, Las Casas came to recognize the bread as not just a symbol, but rather the everyday bread of someone's labor. Goizueta notes how this experience illustrates the connection between the mediation of worship in the eucharist and the economic production of bread. Las Casas also came to see that the bread was acquired unjustly. It was taken from the indigenous persons, while they often were left without bread. This led Las Casas to challenge his own participation in Spanish colonization through his *encomendero* economic function.⁴⁴³

In turn, Goizueta challenges Christians to recognize how eucharistic worship cannot neglect to recognize the church's complicity in economic systems that oppress the poor. Building upon this, I argue that the eucharist and meal sharing together as expressions of hospitality direct the church community to greater responsibility in its journeying with and among migrants. This is both a responsibility toward consciousness-raising regarding the economic struggles migrants face, and a call to actions of advocacy and justice with and among migrants. It is significant, as well, that a Christian hospitality that journeys with migrants calls the church to repentance and action. There are occasions, for example, when the eucharist requires abstinence from grapes and grain in

⁴⁴² Goizueta, 124. Also see Gutiérrez, *Las Casas*, 47-48.

⁴⁴³ See Goizueta, 124-125.

recognition of the inhumane working conditions many farmworkers endure daily. Being guests at God's table and recipients of God's continual provision demands that Christians are responsible stewards who cannot separate the political and economic realities of daily life from their worship of God and participation of God's work in the world. The eucharist challenges ecclesial communities to recognize and repent when such provision is gained by unjust means. Meal sharing in the church does not reflect God's eucharistic formation when the church turns a blind eye to suffering and to divisions in its midst.⁴⁴⁴

Groody warns against the church's eucharistic celebration that ignores the call for justice. He writes,

The memory of Christ is institutionalized in the Eucharist, and it tells the story of salvation, of freedom, and of liberation in ritual form... If our Eucharistic celebration is not intimately connected to the larger liturgy of life, to the larger search for justice, to fighting to free those who are enslaved, then it has no meaning, and singing "alleluia" has no significance... If Christians hunger to receive the bread of life at liturgy but have no hunger to feed those whose lives are threatened and who are in need of bread today, they ignore Christ.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁴ Also espousing a high sacramental theology of the eucharist, Eastern Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas echoes this sentiment. He writes, "The eucharist is the moment in the Church's life where the anticipation of the *eschaton* takes place. The *anamnesis* of Christ is realized not as a mere re-enactment of a past event but as an *anamnesis of the future*, as an eschatological event. In the eucharist the Church becomes a reflection of the eschatological community of Christ, the Messiah, an image of the Trinitarian life of God. In terms of human existence this mainly means one thing: the transcendence of all divisions, both natural and social, which keep the existence of the world in a state of disintegration, fragmentation, decomposition and hence of death. All cultures in one way or another share in this fallen and disintegrated world, and therefore all of them include elements which need to be transcended. If the Church in its localization fails to present and image of the Kingdom in this respect, it is not a Church. Equally, if the eucharistic gathering is not such an image, it is not the eucharist in a true sense." Zizioulas' footnote of this section reads: "A eucharist which discriminates between races, sexes, ages, professions, social classes etc. violates not certain ethical principles but its eschatological nature. For that reason such a eucharist is not a "bad"—i.e. morally deficient—eucharist but not eucharist at all. It cannot be said to be the body of the One who sums up all into Himself [*sic*]." John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 254-255. Also see the entirety of chapter 7 "The Local Church in a Perspective of Communion," 247-260.

⁴⁴⁵ Groody, "Fruit of the Vine and Work of Human Hands: Immigration and the Eucharist," 310-311.

Through the practice of the eucharist the church is challenged to welcome *in* those in need of bread and justice, as well as to go *out* and embody the good news of God's justice to the world. The bodily performance of the eucharist challenges ecclesial community to embody a journeying hospitality that accompanies migrants in their the daily needs and struggles.

John Inge draws the connection between daily sustenance, the eucharist elements, and a sacramental calling to the world. He writes, "Having been fed with the sacramental elements of bread and wine, through which Christ nourishes us with his body and blood, we are to go out to find Christ in the people and places of our everyday life."⁴⁴⁶ The eucharist forms the people of God into sacrament by which God's followers are given a new vision of seeing and acting in the world. The celebration of the eucharist, therefore, is a sign of the coming eschatological community of Christ, but also one that is wholly manifested in the everyday realities of peoples' lives and struggles. The relationships and community formed at the table and by the table give rise to material hope amidst these struggles.

Eucharist and Economic Life in the Church

The celebration of the eucharist by virtue of being a meal and performing an ethic of sharing, is a central act of hospitality. In fact, the eucharist continually transforms hospitality as strangers become friends in the welcome embodied in sharing meals

⁴⁴⁶ John Inge, *The Christian Theology of Place*, 62.

together. The above lived examples reveals how in and through the practice of the eucharist ecclesial communities that journey with migrants are particularly oriented to be attentive to the needs and toil migrants' undergo in their search for economic sustainability. I seek to unpack the economic formation of the church through the practice of the eucharist and discuss implications for the church's political gathering as God's people, sharing in God's table. I suggest that in eating together the eucharistic community learns how its witness to God's economy arises within the economic realities of a transnational migration context.

M. Douglas Meeks discusses the early church as household (*oikos*) patterned after the economy of God (*oikonomia tou theou*).⁴⁴⁷ He presents *oikos* as a metaphor for understanding who God is and God's redemptive working in the world through economics, and writes, "every Christian should be prepared to think about economics and to participate in economic life according to the criterion of God's righteousness in Jesus Christ."⁴⁴⁸ Unpacking the term *oikos*, Meeks expounds upon how the church critically

⁴⁴⁷ Meeks, *God the Economist*, 33. He notes: "Recent research has shown the pivotal theological, liturgical, and social implications of the concept of *oikos* for the primitive Christian communities." He cites numerous examples, which include, Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983); John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Sociological Exegesis of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1981); Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983). See footnote 9, page 33 of Meeks *God the Economist* for further sources. Meeks continues: "The *oikos* or household constituted for the Christian movement as well as for its environment a chief basis, paradigm and reference point for religious and moral as well as social, political, and economic organization, interaction, and ideology." Elliot, *Home for the Homeless* cited in Meeks, 33.

The language of God's household, in contrast to images of God's kingdom, is an important image in feminist ecclesiology because of how it evokes communal representations of God's eschatological restoration, not to mention drawing attention to often neglected everyday realms of household. For example, Letty Russell employs this household imagery in *Church in the Round*. Here, however, I focus specifically on the economic dimensions of household management in *oikos* rather than focus on the place of household.

⁴⁴⁸ Meeks, 3. He adds, "the faith in the God of the Bible has economic implications that derive from who God is and from God's own redemptive history with the world."

appropriates God's household and economy with other economies in the world.⁴⁴⁹ In addition to understanding *oikos* as both household and household management, Meeks describes it as access to livelihood. Translating *oikos* imagery into today's economic context, he elaborates:

The household living relationships of the *oikos* are the institutional relationships aimed at the survival of human beings in society. *Oikos* is the way persons dwell in the world toward viability in relation to family, state, market, nature, and God. *Oikos* is the heart of both ecclesiology and political economy.⁴⁵⁰

This description helps to expand the understanding of household beyond a *place* and its connotation as a static location. Rather, *oikos* incorporates the fluctuating means of survival, such as labor, upon which a community must rely. While the place of household is valuable, what I mean to highlight by drawing upon Meeks are the ethics, exchanges, relationships, and ways of life shaped therein. Russell's use of household imagery in her church in the round ecclesiology similarly reflects the dynamic nature of household economy. As discussed in earlier chapters, she incorporates "sweaty tasks" of daily living, relationships centered around a household table, and "kitchen table solidarity."

According to Meeks, God's economy is egalitarian and communal and is characterized by abundance or even superabundance.⁴⁵¹ Building upon Meeks' economic theological reflection, it is possible to see the eucharist as a central practice that guides the church in living toward God's economy amidst the world's economy. God's economy informs the church how to live and understand its place in the local and global

⁴⁴⁹ Meeks, 33.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁴⁵¹ See Meeks, 9-13.

economies, and this is instrumental to its witness in the world.⁴⁵² Meeks describes the important role the sacraments of baptism and eucharist play for the church in revealing and living into God's economy for the sake of the world:

Baptism is entrance into God's economic work through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those who are baptized receive prevently God's gracious promise of forgiveness and of power against death. In that promise they hear God's call to participate in God's own history of distributing righteousness...

God creates a new home for those who have heard this promise and this commission by calling a meal. Like all households, God's household is structured around a table. *The Eucharist is God's economic act par excellence in the household of Jesus Christ.* In it is made present God's own self-giving, God's own economy by which God intends to make the world into a home.⁴⁵³

As the community gathers to share in God's continual provision at the table, they learn what participation in God's abundant economy means for them and for the world. The eucharist is God's economic act par excellence as it demonstrates God's self-giving and provision of daily sustenance in bread and in salvation through Jesus Christ.⁴⁵⁴ This orientation to God's abundance stands in contrast to the fear of economic scarcity in the global market and how persons' lives are determined by this scarcity. While the world's economy is predicated upon competition for scarce resources, especially for poor and vulnerable populations, God's economy is abundance and characterized by love and sharing. The eucharistic imagery manifested in the above lived examples, together with Meek's discussion of economy and livelihood (*oikos*), suggest new ways in which the

⁴⁵² Meeks notes, "Because the church exists for the sake of God's love of the world (John 3:16), there can be no sound teaching about the church that does not include the relationship of the church to our society's economy and the world's economy." *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 44, 45; italics in original.

⁴⁵⁴ More will be addressed on Yoder's contribution to this point below. See Yoder, *Body Politics*, 21.

church manifests itself as good news in the world. Just as understandings of home and household have been stretched and even contested because of transnational migrants' border passage and perpetual displacement and movement, so too can household economic imagery be stretched to new provisional locations. Seeking to build relationships and community with persons whose bodies are marked by wandering means that ecclesial communities must venture out to new spaces and allow church to happen in new ways. Above we saw how the church can move outside of walls and pews and relocate its movable eucharistic feast to the borderlands. This relocation and the new spatial imagination born in eucharistic meals on the borderlands offer the possibility of God's good news breaking in again in new places and contexts.

It is important to observe that the church's ongoing practice of the eucharist originates in meal sharing in community, even as these meals take on new patterns and happen in new places. The eucharist is first and foremost patterned after Jesus' last supper with his disciples before his death. Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder relates Jesus' last supper with his disciples to sharing a common meal. He writes, "The meal Jesus blessed that evening and claimed as his memories was [the disciples] *ordinary* partaking together of food for the body... That direct connection with ordinary eating together is reinforced by the connection we see in the Gospels between food and the appearance of the risen Lord."⁴⁵⁵ The correlation between Jesus' last supper and a common meal is confirmed in Luke 24:30 when the Emmaus-bound disciples who had

⁴⁵⁵ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 16.

not recognized Jesus journeying with them, suddenly saw who he was when they sat together at the table and Jesus gave thanks for the bread.⁴⁵⁶

The eucharist encompasses actions around a table and meal sharing, practices which form the community toward a particular economic formation in the world. Yoder relates early Christian communities' sharing of meals in the post-Pentecost church with enacting a new economic way of life together as described in Acts 2:44-47a:

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all people. (NRSV)

How the eucharistic community shares material resources—like bread—is a sign of its trust in, faithfulness to, and worship of God who is the provider. Reflective of God's economy, the eucharistic community, in turn, cares about providing for one another's needs, not neglecting when this need surfaces as daily bread. Yoder describes ecclesial formation in the sharing of bread through sacramental realism. For Yoder, all bread and all acts of eating together are eucharistic. He writes, "It is that bread *is* daily sustenance. Bread eaten together *is* economic sharing. Not merely symbolically, but also in fact, eating together extends to a wider circle the economic solidarity normally obtained in the family."⁴⁵⁷ He continues, "In short, the Eucharist is an economic act. To do rightly the practice of breaking bread together is a matter of economic ethics."⁴⁵⁸ The formation that

⁴⁵⁶ Yoder notes the same correlation in Acts 1:4 and John 21:9-13. Yoder, *Body Politics*, 16.

⁴⁵⁷ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 20.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

happens in the breaking of bread and sharing of the cup together shapes communities to differently perceive economic systems and structures and particularly orient themselves to care for the persons who have grown, harvested, and produced this provision. As an economic ethic, the eucharist demands change and transformation of the community so that the church's meal of thanksgiving is not ill-gotten, but reflects the justice and love of God.

Revolving Guest-Host Relationships: Giving and Receiving

Not only are shared meals central to hospitality expression, but the formation of Christians through guest/host relationships within table fellowship is as well. The church learns its table manners through a eucharistic practice in which the community experiences being both guest and host. The eucharistic meal trains its participants to be both guests of God in Christ and hosts to Others. John Koenig develops how this eucharistic formation originates in Jesus actions in the Christian scriptures. By virtue of Jesus' continual serving of his disciples at the table, his followers first learn the most basic economic and relational acts—how to give and receive and participate as both guests and hosts at the table. Koenig describes how in Luke 22:24-30 Jesus requires his own disciples to be guests in his presence so they can learn to be servant hosts for others.⁴⁵⁹ Here, Koenig seeks to draw attention to the servant-ethic Jesus modeled for his disciples during his lifetime. I carry Koenig's development further to discuss how Jesus' disciples were also profoundly shaped by his own manner of being both a guest *and* host

⁴⁵⁹ Koenig, 118-119.

and his way of fluctuating between them. Below I explore the value of guest and host cycle of role reversals and giving and receiving in the church as instructive for re-shaping relationship-building and community through contemporary hospitality practice.

Koenig describes how the early Judeo-Christian communities in Acts and the Pauline epistles enact an alternative ethic of sharing so that material resources are fairly distributed and community members are treated with equality regardless of their socioeconomic status in society.⁴⁶⁰ The commitments demonstrated in caring for one another's socioeconomic and spiritual needs, especially the needs of those with less economic means in the community, involve the nurturing of relationships and growth together in community as followers of Christ. Koenig points to this commitment to giving and receiving in relationships when he writes,

Grace abounds because God multiplies both the giving and receiving (2 Cor. 9:8-11). From the perspective of New Testament hospitality the Spirit calls less for a "solidarity with victims" than for a commitment to work alongside those who suffer grace injury or injustice in the expectation that all of us will bring gifts to one another (Rom. 1:11-12).⁴⁶¹

Here, hospitality infiltrates far beyond the initial welcome exchanges that guest/host language insinuates, and it even extends beyond standing with the victim. Rather, reflective of journeying in relationship, hospitality embraces the ebb and flow of relationships born out of an initial meeting that extend into deeper friendships and imply long-term commitment. In order for these relationships to be shaped into Christian community, each person drawn together through acts of hospitality and friendship must

⁴⁶⁰ See Koenig, 110-111.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 134-135.

recognize the Other and receive from the Other. Each must perceive her or his own strangeness before the Other and move toward one another equally in hospitality. The relational journey progresses into friendship as the host and guest come to recognize the gifts the Other brings and the two continue to share gifts. In order for true relationship and community to be embodied, the guest and host habitually switch roles and extend the welcome in new directions. The commitment to work alongside one another requires a commitment to receive on behalf of another and to be willing to change on behalf of the Other. In summary, though the language of guest and host implies certain roles and tasks—and I have documented how these roles have been critiqued by philosophers, social theorists, and theologians—eucharistic formation transforms traditional guest and host roles to ongoing guest/host reversals exemplified in Christ, as well as the ongoing exchange of giving and receiving as the two become friends. In turn, as relationships are transformed into Christian *koinonia*, they contribute to the broader shaping of life together in the church.

Koenig discusses *philoxenia*, the Greek word for hospitality, not simply as meaning love of strangers but delight in the guest-host relationship. He points to the complexities within relationships of encounter found “in the mysterious reversals and gains for all parties which may take place.”⁴⁶² For Christians, Koenig continues, delight in the guest-host relationship is fueled by the expectation that God or Christ or the Holy Spirit will play a role in every hospitable encounter and action.⁴⁶³ Graham Ward also

⁴⁶² Koenig, 8. Also referenced in Russell, *Church in the Round*, 173.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 8. Koenig also cites Hebrews 13:2 and Romans 1:11-12 as examples.

makes note of new possibilities in hospitable encounters and defines hospitality through an economy of friendship built on the gracious and inexhaustible economy of God.

Encounters are transformed into relationships and economies of friendship, as two persons are not limited by guest-host roles but become intertwined in the gift and reception cycle that characterizes strong relationships. He writes,

In such an economy, to give hospitality also requires us to recognise how we are receiving hospitality: the reception of what is given is also a hosting in oneself of the other. There is no superiority between host and guest. For to host is to allow the guest to be as oneself; and to be a guest is to receive the host as oneself. True justice only operates in obedience to the economy of friendship that recognises the question in every encounter, “Who is the stranger?”, and realises the answer is: “Neither of us – while we have each other.”⁴⁶⁴

Thus, the practice of hospitality reflects shared engagement and reciprocal interaction between strangers who have become friends under God’s purposes.

For Ward, this economy of friendship is predicated upon the relationships of the Trinity, which demonstrate unending possibilities through God’s superabundant giving and receiving. This emphasis echoes back to Amos Yong’s Trinitarian logic of abundance that he deems necessary in order for Derrida’s absolute hospitality to function. Because of power dynamics and violence at play within any encounter with the Other, the Christian who welcomes another is continually opened to relinquish control to the Other and give herself or himself away—in effect, give the keys to the house—to the Other. In order to escape tendencies toward self-annihilation, it is important to reiterate that the Christian’s giving of the self originates in the abundance she or he continually receives in God. Ward writes that such giving,

⁴⁶⁴ Ward, “Hospitality and Justice toward ‘Strangers’: A Theological Reflection,” 7.

...can only come from that which is continually being given such that what I am being emptied of is that which I am being given. That is, such sociality, which moves beyond ourselves and into a permanent journeying towards the other, is only possible within an economy of the gift in which I am constituted in the transit of grace.⁴⁶⁵

In fact, God's continual gracious giving is enacted and Christian receiving renewed in the provision of the eucharist.

As new friendships are born in ecclesial communities, the community's life together and its ecclesiology continue to be shaped by these interactions shaped by the eucharist. When new persons are encountered, they become gifts to the community and potential agents of transformation. Hospitality practice in the church also demands the community to change and adapt in ways that are reflective of the journey of relationship-building and community formation. Journeying with new friends and strangers continually offers the church potential encounters with God's good news manifesting itself anew. Even as the practice of hospitality is informed and shaped by the church community and its meal sharing practices, the community's expressions of hospitality continue to inform and shape the church as well.

The ecclesial community shaped by the eucharist is continually prompted to give by virtue of what it has received in Jesus Christ. In fact, the practice of hospitality appropriated to context is a necessary outgrowth of a community's eucharistic practice, and one that must be intentionally nurtured continually. Hospitality draws the community

⁴⁶⁵ Ward, 6. He also writes, "Only then can my desire for the other not be an appetite—that having the other would satisfy, but an infinite generosity, beyond appetite and beyond even attraction. There are alternatives economies of the gift that do not figure mutuality in terms of a return to the same." Also see Ward, 6-8. Additionally, Ward notes this caution: "While we cannot handle Trinitarian relations and the eucharist as magic wands nevertheless these teaching structure the character of Christian hope." Ward, 4.

out to encounter, share, and receive from Others. Meeks aptly notes, “The economy of grace depends on who is invited to dinner. If we do not eat with the stranger, we will never be able to establish *oikic* relationships with the poor in any conceivable way that approximates the intention of the Triune Community’s righteousness/justice.”⁴⁶⁶ The welcome of the stranger, in fact, offers the mystery of salvation back to the church. Yong’s theological engagement of the Derridean reversal is not far off—the guest holds the host’s salvation, redemption, liberation. Ecclesial communities’ extending hospitality are thus transformed by the reception of the guest, and the continued giving and receiving that takes place as new friendships form. Similarly, Groody reminds the church that as the body of Christ it welcomes the other as Jesus Christ.⁴⁶⁷

Eucharist at the San Diego/Tijuana Borderland

Similarly to the group of Christians who gathered to celebrated mass at the U.S.-Mexico border near El Paso/Ciudad Juárez, in 2008 a Christian ecumenical group began gathering in San Diego and Tijuana to celebrate a eucharistic meal joining brothers and sisters in Mexico and the United States. The group gathered where the border fence meets

⁴⁶⁶ M. Douglas Meeks, “Peace and Justice: The Eucharistic Community of Gifting,” *Liturgy* 13:1 (1996): 20.

⁴⁶⁷ In this spirit, the Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops joined to write a pastoral letter concerning migration by which they “seek to awaken our peoples to the mysterious presence of the crucified and risen Lord in the person of the migrant and to renew in them the values of the Kingdom of God that he proclaimed” (Groody, *Ibid.*, 311). The entire pastoral letter is documented in *Strangers No longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., 2002.

the Pacific Ocean at Border Field State Park and *Playa de Tijuana* (Tijuana Beach). Each Sunday afternoon for two years following, Christians continued to gather and celebrate a Love Feast, a eucharistic practice representative of the Agape feasts of the early church (1 Corinthians 11:17-34).⁴⁶⁸ Not seeking to challenge many Christian communities' differing theologies and liturgies of the eucharist, the group decided to share a 'love feast' as a eucharistic meal but not claim to be practicing the sacrament of the eucharist itself. Through the wire fence, they passed tortilla and sometimes sweet bread, as well as tamarindo juice, which are foods representative of Mexican culture. The site in which the community gathered represented a historical place of meeting known as Friendship Park, in which only a thin iron fence marked the U.S.-Mexico border allowing families and

⁴⁶⁸ Jamie Gates, "Communion at Friendship Park: Liturgy and Politics at the U.S.-Mexican Border" (presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics, San Jose, CA, January 9, 2010). He writes,

On June 1, 2008 Methodist minister Rev. John Fanestil and I, a minister in the Church of the Nazarene, led a bi-national prayer vigil and a Lovefeast at Friendship Park. We planned to share a 'love feast,' rather than enter into the complicated liturgical issues of how to share Communion with the spectacularly ecumenical crowd that turns out for our border gatherings.' With its roots in the Agape feasts of the early church (1 Corinthians 11.17-34) and developed into a regular community practice by the German Moravians in the 18th century, a Lovefeast is a simple meal shared in a spirit of humility and peace that Christ is present in our lives. Although mostly practiced among the faithful, the Lovefeast often extended to all who gathered as a witness to the love found in Christ. Early Methodists and Nazarenes embraced this tradition and it was out of these deep roots that we shared sweetbread and tamarindo juice in prayer and Christian solidarity.

"After this initial Lovefeast, we decided to move to regular Sunday communion. For eight months Rev. Fanestil took the lead to continue to offer communion through the fence at the monument every Sunday. Rev. Fanestil committed to serving communion regularly at this site until physically prevented from doing so" (Gates, *Ibid.*, 5-6).

Also see John Fanestil, "Border Crossing Communion at Friendship Park," *Christian Century*, October 7, 2008. http://www.christiancentury.org/article_print.lasso?id=5330_2/24/2009 (accessed August 20, 2011).

friends to gather on both sides of the border to talk, touch, or pass friendly exchanges.⁴⁶⁹

The park was especially important for families after family members had been deported or were unable to cross the border. The group joined these families to call for God's peace and provision, to gather in support of their brothers and sisters who were suffering from family separation, and to listen to the stories of those around them. The Love Feast symbolized the unity and reconciliation that the body of Christ seeks amidst national dividing lines, however, this group's continual gathering each Sunday afternoon soon became viewed as a controversial act in which the politics of the church challenged the politics of the nation-state.

Earlier in 2008, despite much dispute and opposition from San Diego residents, the U.S. government's Department of Homeland Security solidified its plans to close public access to Friendship Park and erect a triple-fence project between the United

⁴⁶⁹ The history of Friendship Park is described as follows on the Friends of Friendship Park Website: "Friendship Park is located within the Border Field State Park (http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=664) in San Diego California. Established in 1974, the park encompassed four hundred eighteen acres of land in the Tijuana Estuary to enhance public access to its natural and cultural features. Lying along the Pacific Coast and adjacent to Mexico, the new development allowed access to the beach and more importantly historic Monument Mesa. On top the Coastal Mesa rests border marker 258, originally marker 1, observing the U.S. Mexico boundary, established in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1849. Over one hundred fifty-nine years ago the Boundary Joint Commission met at that exact location in San Diego to survey the land and divide their countries. In the 1880's a monument was placed to commemorate the initial point of the boundary and celebrate a friendship between the two nations. In 1971 Pat Nixon, the wife of President Richard Nixon, commemorated this beautiful spot as friendship park or *parque de amistad*, a place where friends and family could meet, despite nationality" (<http://friendshippark.org/html/History/> (accessed August 9, 2011).

States and Mexico.⁴⁷⁰ This same year, concerned community members led by the American Friends Services Committee formed the Friends of Friendship Park coalition in hopes of preserving the park and out of concern for decisions made regarding the U.S.-Mexico border and immigration that adversely affect migrants. The coalition joins in partnership Border Angels, Border Encuentro/ Border Meetup, Center for Justice and Reconciliation (Point Loma Nazarene University), Ecclesia Collective, Foundation for Change, Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights, Peace Resource Center of San Diego, as well as other organizations, various individual members, and community residents.⁴⁷¹

The Friends of Friendship Park coalition offers another example of corporate and communal partnerships in advocating on behalf of immigrants and seeking to journey with migrants, as was discussed in the previous chapter. Additionally, many of the ecclesially affiliated groups had joined in the weekly Love Feast across the border fence as well as the annual celebration of *La Posada Sin Fronteras*.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ Gates details some of the longer history of this development: “As a response to increasing levels of immigration from Mexico and increasing fears about immigrants from Mexico, the US federal government launched Operation Gatekeeper in 1994, doubling the amount of funding and the number of Border Patrol agents patrolling the San Diego sector by 1997. US Border Patrol commissioned a study that claimed a ‘three-fence barrier system with vehicle patrol roads between the fences and lights would provide the necessary discouragement’. Funding for increased US-Mexico border security infrastructure doubled at least three times since the implementation of Operation Gatekeeper. The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (1996) provided a mandate for the completion of fourteen miles of triple layer fence, but the construction across Border Field State Park and the Tijuana Estuary was stalled by community resistance, principally the California Coastal Commission (2004).” Gates, 3.

⁴⁷¹ For a comprehensive list of a number of community members, organizations, foundations, businesses, and faith groups in San Diego County that are part of the coalition, see: <http://friendshipark.org/html/About.html> (accessed August 23, 2011).

⁴⁷² See chapter five’s discussion about *La Posada Sin Fronteras*.

In February of 2009, Friends of Friendship Park came together to worship on the U.S. side of the border in peaceful resistance to Homeland Security's closure of Friendship Park and start of the construction of the fence.⁴⁷³ The Friends of Friendship Park coalition extended a community-wide invitation to the gathering, open to anyone and publicized through local media and e-mail networks. Over 150 people gathered on the San Diego side and a couple of dozen on the Tijuana side of the border.⁴⁷⁴ The peaceful resistance comprised of a cross-border singing of Gabriel Faure's *Requiem* and prayer, as well as celebration of the Lord's Supper through the border fence as had been

⁴⁷³ Additionally, other Christian churches, immigrant advocacy organizations, professors, students, and immigrants joined in the peaceful resistance.

⁴⁷⁴ Gates writes:

Congregants included pastors; local "emergent church" leaders; choir members from various churches; self-identified "Minutemen;" American Friends Services Committee staff and volunteers; Friends of Friendship Park volunteers; professors from Point Loma Nazarene University; students from Point Loma Nazarene University, University of San Diego, University of California San Diego, San Diego State University and Mexican American Catholic College; Marcha Migrante participants; supporters of Border Angels; Veterans for Peace; Border Ambassadors; Sierra Club; Peace Resource Center of San Diego; San Diego Coastkeeper; Surfrider Foundation; WildCoast; No Border Wall; Border Yoga/Meet-up/Friendship Garden participants and a number of children.

"Congregants also included participant observers such as newspaper and television journalists and photographers from San Diego and Tijuana, as well as at least two documentary journalists and photographers. Many of the students who joined for this day were also more observers than participants, given that some were part of a culminating experience for PLNU undergraduates who were given a tour of the border by AFSC staff, some were on an optional "cross-cultural experience" assignment for a cultural anthropology class, some on extra credit assignments for their classes and some were graduate students researching border issues.

"... Those that gathered on the Tijuana side included local church members, students from both San Diego and Tijuana, Marcha Migrante participants, people recruited by Casa del Migrante of the Scalabrini order as well as members of the Tijuana Opera." Gates, 6-7.

done many Sundays before.⁴⁷⁵ The peaceful resistance expressed the unity that the church seeks despite nation-state, socio-economic, educational, and power divisions. Those who gathered sought to embody *one* church gathered *without borders*, which opposed the United States' political decisions that perpetuated division.

Countless disruptions arose during this act of peaceful resistance from persons seeking to challenge the group's gathering. First, the U.S. Border Patrol stopped the group 25 feet from the border fence prohibiting the physical sharing of the eucharistic elements with those on the Mexico-side of the border because of what they claimed was a violation of customs laws. Second, individuals claiming to be representatives of "the Minutemen," an anti-illegal immigration group, arrived seeking to disrupt the gathering by shouting racist insults, blaring whistles and bull horns during the group's singing, and trying to penetrate the circle the group formed to celebrate the eucharist.⁴⁷⁶ Despite these disturbances, the singing and performance of the liturgy continued—prayers were offered in both Spanish and English, and Holy Communion was celebrated, though some distance from the actual border itself. The clergy person who presided over the eucharist,

⁴⁷⁵ Providing background on Fraure's *Requiem*, Gates notes: "Gabriel Faure's *Requiem*. As perhaps the most famous music written for a "*Missa pro defunctis*" (Mass for the Deceased), the liturgical significance of this ½ hour masterpiece extends well beyond the life of this particular setting and event. Sung in Latin on this day, Christians on both sides of the border were mourning the loss of life and fellowship in neither Spanish nor English, but in the historic language of the (Catholic) Church. While there is much to critique about the colonial use of Latin as the medium of instruction in the history of the church (as you would expect a good Protestant to point out), in this setting the Latin seemed to serve a far more conciliatory function. It provided a common language that was the language of the faith, a language that united Spanish and English speaking Christians without ignoring, destroying or subordinating either. Lost in the use of Latin, of course, is the significance of the words for those who don't know this piece or understand Latin. Somehow, in this setting, the music communicated far more than enough." Gates, 7.

⁴⁷⁶ Gates describes, "Although there was no evidence that they were supported by Jim Gilchrist's Minuteman Project (<http://www.minutemanproject.com/>), some of them overtly identified themselves as Minutemen and as American patriots in the spirit of the Minuteman Project." Gates, 7.

however, was later detained by the Border Patrol as he attempted to approach the border fence to serve communion to those waiting on the Mexico side.

Quickly what was a Christian worship service (singing, prayer, and communion)—which also contested the United States’ decisions regarding the border—transformed into a political act of resistance. Jamie Gates, pastor, professor, and co-leader of the worship gathering, recounted:

As we neared the place where the border fence runs out into the ocean, for the first time in eight months of border communions, the Border Patrol prevented us from...coming right up to the fence. A heavily armed line of Border Patrol officers and 4x4 quads...halted the procession on the beach about 50 feet from the vertical iron beams that serve as part of the primary fence that runs into the ocean. They claimed that this was space now under federal control. We now stood at the border of state and federal government jurisdictions. This was a new line in the sand.⁴⁷⁷

As a result, the worship participants questioned the state’s right to disrupt the gathering of the church, which professes to be held in by no border. They questioned the geopolitical and socioeconomic lines of the nation-state in the name of the church.⁴⁷⁸ The group’s performance of worship in this space contested the political lines of citizenship and ownership of land, and the group laid claim upon a different politics. Despite all the actions of the day that reminded those gathered on both sides of the border of the differences between them, their gathering enacted a unity that cannot be divided by nation-state lines, borders, or boundaries.

⁴⁷⁷ Gates, 7. Also see the article: Penni Crabtree, “Meeting Place Sealed Off: Border Patrol Agents Prohibit Access to Friendship Park,” *San Diego Union Tribune*, February 22, 2009 <http://www3.signonsandiego.com/stories/2009/feb/22/1m22park23590-meeting-place-sealed/?metro> (accessed August 29, 2011).

⁴⁷⁸ See Gates, 22, Appendix 1: “A reflection emailed to friends the day after the border communion and requiem.”

The acts of worship formed a bridge that joined those who gathered on both sides of the border in the love of God. Though no church walls housed the group that afternoon, church happened *on the move*. While migrating persons' lives are marked by forced displacement and perpetual mobility dictated by outside forces, the community of believers enacted a different movement. Church *on the move* happened through the community's voluntarily relocation to the borderland and their searching to pattern their lives in the spirit of journeying with and alongside persons whose lives are marked by displacement and wandering. In turn, the celebration of Holy Communion gathered and united a group of strangers across borders in order to enact the way of Jesus and witness to God's coming reign. The group's gathering in eucharistic worship at the border embodied new ecclesial patterns of a journeying hospitality and a journeying ecclesiology. The church that extends beyond borders is fashioned together by such liturgies, performances, and partnerships—however simple or complex—that welcome, journey with, and gather people into followers of Jesus Christ who seek to offer a new way for the world.

Formation of a New Community

Building on Augustine's imagery of the City of God and its political implications for ecclesiology today, William Cavanaugh devotes much attention to the visible witness the church enacts in the world precisely through its gathering and performance of liturgy. Drawing from Cavanaugh, I argue that the acts of peaceful resistance and worship of the San Diego/Tijuana ecumenical community described above visibly performed an

alternative economics and politics in the public space of Friendship Park. Cavanaugh's larger argument is that the church itself—by virtue of its baptism and eucharistic formation—enacts an alternative. Drawing attention to the economic and political origins of the early church, he points to the unity between Greek images of *oikos* and *polis* in the Christian scriptures together with the Hebrew understanding of being gathered as God's people. Cavanaugh writes,

Ephesians 2.19 uses both 'public' and 'private' language simultaneously: 'you are citizens (*sympolitai*) with the saints and also members of the household (*oikeioi*) of God.' ... In using the term *ekklesia* the Church understood itself as the eschatological gathering of Israel. In this gathering those who are by definition excluded from being citizens of the *polis* and consigned to the *oikos* – women, children, slaves – are given full membership through baptism.⁴⁷⁹

The dimensions of *oikos* and *polis* enacted in the church are distinguished from the Greek cultural understanding of economic and political formation because the church is oriented toward God's eschatological gathering. In turn, Cavanaugh calls attention to how the church throughout history and still today also is called to God's vision even as it continually re-appropriates cultural understandings of citizenship, household, and gathering. The church is called into a distinct gathering and membership in the world in which all persons—especially those previously excluded in society—are now welcome. This new economic and political gathering, called *ekklesia*, manifests itself on earth always in response to the coming eschatological gathering in Christ. A new community, born in baptism and nurtured in the eucharist, continues to call the church to new manifestations of God's reign on earth.

⁴⁷⁹ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 86-87.

Ecclesial practices, such as hospitality, and central liturgies of the church, such as the eucharist, help to gather and direct the church to offer alternatives in the world. The lived examples described above enacted alternatives to the geopolitical and socio-economic divisions of national borders. Additionally, the church's continual celebration of God's abundance and love in the eucharist, enacts alternatives to scarcity, fear, competition in the world. The different alternatives in the church manifest themselves as good news particularly in light of how lives are displaced or forced into global migration as it relates to the political and economic forces of globalization. Through these practices the church is shaped into a community of refuge or welcome as well as accompaniment and friendship in journeying. That is, the church is shaped to be a hospitable community particularly for persons who are migrating. As Jesus Christ shaped the disciples by his service in the Last Supper, this supper continues to shape Jesus' followers into servants and hosts, though they are always guests at God's table. Sharing in the Lord's Supper shapes the community into the new humanity that to which it is called by virtue of baptism—citizens of God's reign on earth and in heaven.⁴⁸⁰

Cavanaugh's work builds on other scholars who direct distinct attention to the political formation of a new social body or new society initiated in baptism.⁴⁸¹ This new society unites a people amidst all of its difference into one body of Christ. Yoder notes,

⁴⁸⁰ Koenig, 70.

⁴⁸¹ Though Cavanaugh distinctly offers a Roman Catholic theology, his theological mentors Stanley Hauerwas and John Howard Yoder undoubtedly shape his work. While Cavanaugh's theology arises out of a high liturgy of the eucharist, and Yoder's could be said to reflect low understandings of liturgy, they each uniquely highlight the political formation that takes place in the gathering and practices of the church.

“the primary narrative meaning of baptism is the new society it creates, by inducting all kinds of people into the same people.”⁴⁸² Baptism builds relationships and community in the name of Christ that bridge the differences which previously separated people—whether those differences were gender, ethnicity, servitude, etc.⁴⁸³ Koenig describes Paul’s views on baptism and the new humanity as follows:

For him, life in the church is always a matter of becoming as well as being. Nevertheless, one dare not underestimate the being. Something transformative has happened to those who believe and are baptized. They have found themselves drawn into a new form of life where there is “neither Jew nor Greek, . . .neither slave nor free, . . .neither male nor female” (Gal 3:28). Out of diverse individuals one organism is being formed. Yet this is a corporate life that does not destroy the identities of its member but honors them, more than they have ever been honored before, as receivers and givers of divine gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14).⁴⁸⁴

The church is continually called to embody this new society that joins peoples into one in the name of Christ. In *Body Politics*, Yoder astutely observes that this joining of all kinds of people in baptism is not an individual change but specifically a communal change.⁴⁸⁵

Baptism enacts the merging of the Jews and Gentiles—representing many peoples, cultures, and histories—into one creation. Communally, baptism inaugurates a new inter-

⁴⁸² Yoder, *Body Politics*, 32.

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

⁴⁸⁴ Koenig, 57.

⁴⁸⁵ Yoder writes, “In all three epistles, then, in different language, the functional affirmation is the same: Baptism celebrates and effects the merging of Jewish and Gentile stories. A people with the law and a people without, a people walled off from the world and a people open to it, become a single community, melding the legacies of both. The several expressions “new humanity,” “peace,” and “new creation,” which we have noted, and the contrast between being and knowing “in Christ” (*en Christo*) and being and knowing “ethnically” (*kata sarka*) may well have figured in the baptismal ritual as equivalent ways of describing the changed status of one who becomes publically a confession believer. The new status is a new kind of social relationship, a unity that overarches the differences (Jew/Gentile, male/female, slave/free) that previously had separated people.” Yoder, *Body Politics*, 29-30.

ethnic social reality.⁴⁸⁶ This new social reality—a new creation—comes with a confession to Jesus Christ, new forms of relationship and new social practices in community. Reflecting on meal practices in early Christian communities, Koenig adds,

... the kingdom of God is like a movable feast, a roving banquet hall that seeks the people of Israel as guests and hosts. At this table they may find reconciliation with one another, as well as a true home and a plenty that fills them up and propels them toward sharing relationships with their neighbors....

By joining Jesus and his followers, especially at meals, one begins to live from the present blessings of the kingdom and offer up one's work to the final restoration of human community which is already underway.⁴⁸⁷

The formation of a new people is particularly important in reference to the church's relocation to celebrate the eucharist on the border. The church's gathering across borders and divisions to share in God's movable feast enacts a different communal and political formation than that perpetuated by national borders and divisions of race and class. The church, in turn, seeks to bridge border divisions and bring people together in unity. Hearing postcolonial theologians' objections, however, I argue that this new community does not form people into uniformity or sameness that destroys or covers over difference. Rather, carefully preserving irreducible otherness in human relationships is central to the formation of a hospitable community. Accompaniment and journeying with and among Others involves the risk of allowing oneself to be confronted and changed by the Other.

⁴⁸⁶ Yoder writes, "It is not enough to say that each of us is individually born again and baptized, with the result that all the born-again individuals are collected in one place, commanded by God to love one another and plant churches, with no more reason for discrimination. Paul says more than that; he says that two peoples, two cultures, two histories have come to flow into one new humanity, a new creation. The order is the reverse of our modern expectations. There is a new inter-ethnic social reality into which the individual is inducted rather than the social reality being the sum of the individuals. This new belonging provokes subjective faith, but it is not the product of the individual's inward believing. It will move history. It will create cultures and institutions. Yet its truth is not dependent upon those effects for its verification." Yoder, *Body Politics*, 30.

⁴⁸⁷ Koenig, 43-44.

By these relationships, ecclesial practices —like hospitality—must be critically examined and continually reformed. Through practices of sharing meals in new spaces, accompanying and journeying with one another and the stranger on the margins, as well as continually being challenged to be both guest and host despite different social locations, and giving and receiving from one another amidst economic differences the church continually learns how to live as a hospitable community amidst new contexts.

Conclusion

My intention in exploring eucharistic practice is to reveal dynamics of formation that instruct the ecclesial community in how to live with one another and in how the community is called to embody hospitality. Particularly in exploring eucharist, but also baptism as well as other performative, primitive, and partnership dimensions of hospitality in the church, I have tried to show that the re-conceiving of hospitality practice with and among migrants arises out ecclesial practice and new ecclesial spatial imagination. Practices of the early church continue to direct the church of today in how to welcome and journey with Others, though creative and intentional re-appropriation of these practices must take shape in new contexts. As Yoder examines five practices of the church in *Body Politics*, which include eucharist and baptism discussed above, he asserts upfront that his intention is not to create rules or procedural guidelines, and certainly not a set of beliefs. Rather, these practices shape the community toward unique ways of life together and new imagination in the name of Christ. He writes,

They have to do more with a style of approaching any question than with particular moral choices. They foster flexibility and readiness to approach any

new challenge. That frees them from bondage to any one cultural setting; it frees them for evangelical interaction into any new missionary context. They are all good news, all marks of the new world's having begun.⁴⁸⁸

Similarly, I draw upon baptismal and eucharistic practices as they inform ecclesial communities how to be and become the church in the world. Therefore, the practice of the eucharist, like other marks of the church, takes on new embodiments in different contexts and cultures. I seek to highlight that the ecclesial community's discernment and negotiation of faithfulness in its context gives rise to fresh practices and performances in the world. In turn, these practices manifest themselves as the church's witness to God's good news.

Here and in the previous chapter, I highlighted contemporary expressions of hospitality not in order to confine hospitality to a set of practices. Rather, I intended to present possibilities for the re-imagining of hospitality and ecclesiology and to discuss how both must be continually discerned and imagined anew amidst ever-changing circumstances and contexts. Hospitality and ecclesiology will always be characterized by journeying, though the ecclesial community does not neglect the value of place and taking up residence at times. I describe this process of discernment, negotiation, and contextual re-appropriation of hospitality and ecclesiology as a journey of faithfulness. It is a journey of coming to know when to take root and when to be uprooted to journey farther for the gospel.

The church, precisely in the context of migration, is called to embody what it means to be a hospitable interethnic community. I have attempted to address throughout

⁴⁸⁸ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 46.

this dissertation, however, that the church does not always live into that to which it is called by virtue of its baptism.⁴⁸⁹ In light of this, it is also important to note, along with Yoder, that baptism signifies repentance and cleansing, and it is always possible to begin again in the spirit and hope of baptism.⁴⁹⁰ Similarly, the eucharist presents the community with the opportunity to be confronted by its failures, to repent, and to fully give itself away for the sake of the world. This work is never done, and the church is always reforming its life and practices toward deeper faithfulness to God's vision in new contexts. In this vein, my investigation of hospitality is one example of challenging and reforming ecclesial communities' understandings and performance of hospitality in the complex contexts of migration in the twenty-first century.

The next chapter will draw together the questions and insights explored in this dissertation through the four moves I have undertaken: 1) exploring current hospitality literature and the practice of hospitality in ecclesial communities, 2) examining the complex context of twenty-first century migration, and particularly U.S. Latino/a migration in the United States, 3) critically analyzing hospitality practice in light of this context through U.S. Hispanic and postcolonial theologies with the aim of re-shaping hospitality practice, and finally 4) a constructive re-imagining of hospitality practice in light of U.S. Latino/a migration. This concluding chapter will summarize my findings

⁴⁸⁹ Healy emphasizes the limits of the church in its humanness even as it is constituted by God and oriented toward God's ultimate truth. He seeks to, "maintain the tension between claims for the church's orientation to the ultimate truth on the one hand and, on the other, acknowledgement of ecclesial sin and of the church's dependence upon the challenges and insights of those religious and non-religious bodies that are orientated primarily to other truths." Healy, 20. Additionally, on page 22 he notes that the church's response to ever-shifting contexts should be to reconstruct its concrete identity so as to embody its witness in truthful discipleship.

⁴⁹⁰ Yoder, *Body Politics*, 41.

and reflect on further ecclesiological implications in re-imagining hospitality in light of migration. I also offer final considerations regarding spatial and temporal ecclesial imagination and how the identity and mission of the church are shaped through hospitality practice re-conceived as journey and accompaniment with and among persons who migrate.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

JOURNEYING SOMEWHERE THROUGH HOSPITALITY PRACTICE: RENEWED IMAGINATION AND PRAXIS

This dissertation addresses what it might mean for the church to practice hospitality among persons displaced and forced to migrate for various reasons. Specifically, it explores ecclesial expressions of hospitality in light of fluctuating patterns of migration along borderlands and challenges posed to ecclesial communities' hospitality practice in light of twenty-first century transnational migration. I began by examining contemporary theological reflection on hospitality and current hospitality practice within congregations in the United States. I questioned how Christian hospitality practice might take shape in light of complex factors surrounding twenty-first century transnational migration and specifically the context of U.S. Latino/a migration. I began to challenge how hospitality practice manifests itself as one-way or static within ecclesial communities and I investigated correctives to contemporary hospitality practice in the context of the United States. In chapter three, I drew upon U.S. Hispanic and postcolonial theologians' reflections on their own experience of migration and hospitality in congregations in the United States. Many of these theological voices raise important objections to hospitality practice in light of ecclesial tendencies to cover over the contributions of minority voices. They further reveal tendencies toward uniformity in the church resulting in all voices assimilating into the dominant majority. Additionally, I explored how U.S. Hispanic and postcolonial theologies provide the tools to begin to

identify new hospitality imagination and praxis in light of twenty-first century global migration. I developed the notion of a journeying hospitality that directs ecclesial communities toward accompaniment and relationship-building with and alongside persons migrating. Exploring contemporary expressions of hospitality in ecclesial communities along the U.S.-Mexico border provided indicators of how the current context of migration has challenged and shaped those expressions. This led me to explore the integration of hospitality practice and ecclesiology in the ways congregations live out good news in the face of forced migration. I suggested that a journeying hospitality (and the ecclesiology enacted by it) demands new patterns for imagining space.

In this concluding chapter, I will summarize my findings and further reflect on how the challenges to hospitality examined in this dissertation deepen ecclesiology. This chapter expounds upon a larger ecclesiological understanding of space and time that underlies my investigation of hospitality and migration. That is, the people of God as resident aliens and pilgrim people are called to manifest a particular witness in the world that is directed toward the hope of Jesus Christ's resurrection and God's coming reign. I seek to show how the church's journeying arises out of different understandings of space and time from those of the world. Christians are sojourners, always journeying toward the heavenly kingdom, yet also making God's reign visible on earth. Hospitality practice re-conceived as journey and accompaniment with and among persons who migrate directs ecclesial communities toward deeper faithfulness in their identity and mission in the world. In the spirit of Letty Russell's spatial imagination of the church in the round, I suggest a new spatial imagination for a church that journeys with migrants. I conclude by

offering several strategic practical theological suggestions for congregations in reforming hospitality practice toward a journeying hospitality.

As suggested in the previous chapter, the practice of eucharist can play a central role in shaping ecclesial communities toward a journeying hospitality with and among migrants. Baptism and eucharist gather individuals into a community and mark their citizenship in heaven while they are simultaneously residents on earth. The imagery and language of ‘citizenship in heaven’ and ‘resident alien’ are held together in tension in the nature and mission of the church. This tension points to how the church must live in balance between the temporal spheres of the present and the eschatological reign of God in Christ. As citizens of heaven, Christian disciples look toward the hope of God’s coming reign while creating a space in the world where the reign of God can appear materially and bodily. I have tried to show how hospitality is a material and bodily manifestation of the church’s identity and witness before the world. Rooted in baptism and the eucharist, hospitality practice reminds the church of its identity and heritage as a pilgrim people and points it forward to go out and encounter and build relationships with Others along the way.

Attention to spatial and temporal imagination within a journeying hospitality with and among migrants provides new possibilities for critically analyzing Christian practices and formation in contemporary contexts of migration and globalization in the twenty-first century. Cavanaugh goes to great length to develop alternative understandings of ecclesiological space and time in eucharistic liturgy. Additionally, postcolonial theologians engage spatial and temporal imagination, as I noted in chapter four, with

reference to the prevalence of peoples on the move and mobile patterns of living in the twenty-first century. How, then, might the church's orientation to God's 'already/not yet' reign influence ecclesial hospitality practice?

In answering this question, I first return to Cavanaugh's spatial and temporal imagination that arises out of his eucharistic theology introduced in the previous chapter. I then texture this analysis by drawing from Kwok Pui-lan's postcolonial theological imagination before offering final reflections on hospitality and ecclesial praxis. Through creative performances of hospitality, the church enacts an alternative space and time that is distinctively oriented toward the space and time of God's eschatological reign. What makes the church's journeying unique and hopeful is that to which it is journeying. The church is journeying *somewhere*. In making this statement, however, my final analysis must show how the church comes to know and discern its praxis in light of that to which it is journeying.

Focusing on how the church forms bodies in the world, Cavanaugh describes the church as "a performance enacted liturgically in time."⁴⁹¹ The language of performance ties back to chapter five's description of expressions of a journeying hospitality with and alongside migrants through *Las Posadas* rituals and Holy Thursday liturgical processions. The performances of eucharist on the borderlands challenge the church toward unique manifestations of hospitality in new spaces and places. As ecclesial communities extend welcome in celebrating the eucharist across geopolitical borders,

⁴⁹¹ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 93.

these actions also join the church into one space despite border divisions. Cavanaugh ties these performances to the narrative of God that begins in the Judeo-Christian scriptures and continues into the present and future faithfulness of the church. In fact, he calls such performances of liturgy ‘spatial stories’ because they direct the church toward a life together in light of God’s revelation. For Cavanaugh, the preeminent ‘spatial story’ is found in the eucharistic forming of the body of Christ.⁴⁹² As the church gathers to continually remember Jesus’ last supper with his disciples before his death, the community’s sharing in this meal also ‘re-members,’ or gathers, them into one communal body in the name of Christ. Cavanaugh describes the eucharist as “an operation performed on matter and place—in this case by God, with human cooperation—which produces a different kind of space.”⁴⁹³ In celebrating the eucharist in a particular place, God transforms the community into a space for enacting God’s restoration on earth.

Similarly, the alternative formation of space in the eucharist enacts a different conception of time. The eucharist liturgy incorporates temporal acts of remembering, living in the present, and looking forward into the eschatological reign of God. Cavanaugh writes, “The Eucharist not only tells but *performs* a narrative of cosmic proportions, from the death and resurrection of Christ, to the new covenant formed in his

⁴⁹² Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 93.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, 92.

blood, to the future destiny of all creation.”⁴⁹⁴ The eucharistic community is not confined by the operations of space and time of the world, but rather this practice re-orientes Christian lives toward the space and time of God’s coming reign. Through the performance of the eucharist, the church is perpetually gathered in the name of Jesus to receive the gifts of God and to go out into the world by the power of the Holy Spirit to witness to God’s coming restoration of the world.

The eucharistic worship at the U.S.-Mexico border described in the previous chapter illustrated how the church comes into conflict with the space and stories of the world when it enacts an alternative politics in the world. Additionally, enacting the spatial story of the eucharist also shapes the community to be self-critical in new ways. Cavanaugh’s argument regarding the church enacting an alternative space is particularly pertinent to common misperceptions about immigration in the United States ecclesial landscape. The difference between nation-state political orientations and the Christian political orientation to God’s reign, however, is often not so easily distinguishable in the church as regards questions of citizenship surrounding immigration in the United States. Inexcusably, congregations can preoccupy themselves with national citizenship, as evidenced by church members who question an immigrant’s legal status before

⁴⁹⁴ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 118. Cavanaugh distinguishes between how the church understands space as opposed to the space created in the modern nation-state. He writes, “A space takes into account the vector of time, such that different spaces are created by the ensemble of movements and actions on them. Space is produced by people performing operations on places, using things in different ways for different ends. According to Certeau it is stories that ‘organize the play of changing relationships between spaces and places.’ ... In theological terms we can think of Certeau’s work here as a gloss on Augustine’s conception of the two cities. They do not exist beside each other on a territorial grid, but are formed by telling different stories about different ends, and by thus using matter and motion in different ways...The Eucharistic liturgy can be understood as what Certeau calls a ‘spatial story,’ an operation performed on matter and place—in this case by God, with human cooperation—which produces a different kind of space.” Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 92.

welcoming her or him into the community as a sister or brother in Christ. Cavanaugh connects these political orientations to opposing understandings of space and territory. Questions of territory and citizenship, as I have shown, are heightened in the geopolitical spaces of borderlands.

It is helpful to return to the earlier discussion drawing from Michel de Certeau's spatial distinction between maps and itineraries. Cavanaugh builds upon Certeau's delineation between how space is mapped in modernity and pre-modern conceptions of space marked by pilgrim itineraries. Cavanaugh seeks to show how the eucharist as a spatial story resembling a pilgrim itinerary stands in contrast to the spatial imagination of the modern nation-state. He describes Certeau's distinction as follows:

Pre-modern representations of space marked out itineraries which told 'spatial stories', for example, the illustration of the route of a pilgrimage which gave instructions on where to pray, where to stay the night, and so on. Rather than surveying them as a whole, the pilgrim moves through particular spaces, tracing a narrative through space and time by his or her movements and practices... By contrast, modernity gave rise to the mapping of space on a grid, a 'formal ensemble of abstract places' from which the itinerant was erased. A map is defined as a 'totalizing stage on which elements of diverse origin are brought together to form a tableau of a "state" of geographical knowledge.' Space itself is rationalized as homogeneous and divided into identical units. Each item on the map occupies its proper place, such that things are set beside one another, and no two things can occupy the same space. The point of view of the map user is detached and universal, allowing the entire space to be seen simultaneously.⁴⁹⁵

The spatial construction of the nation-state is relevant to common misperceptions regarding migration and treatment of immigrants in the United States. Interestingly, the modern nation-state's "dominant overcoding of the map" depends on "establishing its

⁴⁹⁵ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 110-111.

own place, its own territory to defend.”⁴⁹⁶ When national consciousness is predicated upon a need to defend territory against those who would overtake it, this sentiment can more easily materialize into fear and acts of hatred toward “foreign” immigrants, particularly undocumented immigrants. Additionally, the national map is predicated upon a homogenous unit so that difference and distinction are interpreted as threats. Often the differing histories, backgrounds, ethnicities, languages, and practices of migrants are interpreted as disrupting the whole. This understanding of space as both territory to defend and homogeneous unit also infiltrates the church in the United States.

In contrast, the ‘spatial story’ enacted in the eucharist resists such perceptions and actions. Cavanaugh notes how instead of the overarching map, a eucharistic spatial story “moves on pilgrimage through the places defined by the map and transforms them into alternative spaces through its practices.”⁴⁹⁷ This spatial formation challenges the church to understand territory and space differently. Space is more fragile, temporal, and even borrowed. Participating in the eucharistic spatial story can direct the community toward a different understanding of space embodying the welcome, justice, peace, and love of God. Rather than understanding space as a territory to defend, the church embodies God’s abundance and love for all. The Christian story is a perpetual bidding to God’s commonwealth that enacts an alternative economics and politics in the world. Members of the church develop relationships with migrants and journey with them as they make a living in the United States because as Christians they follow the story of Scripture and the

⁴⁹⁶ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 117.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

spatial story of the eucharist that teaches them the value of sharing the table with the stranger. In this vein, Cavanaugh challenges Christians not to reinforce the borders of the national territory defined by ‘citizenship’, but to build up the body of Christ. He maintains that the body of Christ transcends these borders, and in which all—Christian or not—have a share.⁴⁹⁸ In sum, the practices and performances of the church challenge the community’s understanding of citizenship, borders, economic responsibility, and ethics, shaping them alternatively to that of the world.

Additionally, Cavanaugh describes how the mapping of space in the modern nation-state is extended in globalization. The “territory” to defend still relates to national territory, but it is rooted in the less visible and less tangible control of money and power. Globalization enacts a universal mapping of space that perpetuates detachment from any particular localities.⁴⁹⁹ Detachment from particular times and places means that local concerns and interests are subordinated to global agendas. A result of the broad sweep of globalization, the exploitation of vulnerable persons is concealed under the false pretenses of global expansion and human progress.⁵⁰⁰ The phenomenon of forced economic migration suggests that persons’ lives are determined by the spatial story of globalization leaving them vulnerable to danger and exploitation as they seek economic means of survival. As was noted in earlier chapters, undocumented migrant farmworkers or factory workers, desperate for means of survival and without laws to protect them, are often victims of exploitation.

⁴⁹⁸ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 93-94.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

In contrast to the spatial story of globalization characterized by hypermobilization as well as detachment, Cavanaugh again points to the configuration of space and time for the church set out in the eucharist. The eucharist is celebrated in local communities scattered over the earth as they are simultaneously gathered up into one. Thus, the identity of each Christian community and each person in the local is not lost or subsumed in the overarching space of the global. In fact, the spatial story of the global church is not understood, except through the particular, valued place and time of the local congregation.⁵⁰¹ Cavanaugh writes,

The City of God makes use of this world as it moves through it on pilgrimage to its heavenly home. But this pilgrimage is not the detachment from any and all spaces, the sheer mobility of globalism. The Eucharist journeys by telling a story of cosmic proportions within the particular face-to-face encounter of neighbours and strangers in the local eucharistic gathering. In an economy of hypermobility, we resist not by fleeing, but by abiding.⁵⁰²

Cavanaugh qualifies that the eucharist is not an anecdote to globalization, but is the spatial story by which the eucharistic community participates in God's transforming of particular places, daily lives, and bodies into spaces where God's reign is revealed. Thus, he shows how God's eschatological hope is displayed in the material and concrete.

A journeying hospitality is one such manifestation of this alternative spatial story. As Christians build relationships with migrants and accompany them through the challenging situations they face, the community enacts a different way of journeying together in the name of Christ. God's eschatological story offers good news as it unfolds

⁵⁰¹ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 115. Cavanaugh describes the eucharistic community as not *part* but the *whole* Body of Christ, what he calls a true *Catholicity* on page 114. The eucharist is a spatial story in which the universal church resides *within* each local embodiment of the body of Christ.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, 117.

an alternative spatial story to the ways lives are dictated by globalization. The church orients its life toward the story of God begun in Israel, continuing in Christ, and leading to the eschaton. This is a story of God's provision, salvation, and restoration for the world. The Christian spatial story guides Christians not only for the future, but also presently as they are welcomed and journey with a community in Christ. The eucharistic community enacts God's hope for the world as it journeys toward the *telos* of its heavenly home. It is in this sense that the eucharist tells and performs a narrative of cosmic proportions.⁵⁰³ At the same time, this is not a journey of detachment or fleeing, but abiding and dwelling.⁵⁰⁴ New stories and lives merge and join as the church continually welcomes Others, all the while learning how to identify and pattern its life after God's story unfolding in the world.

The practice of the eucharist displays God's abundance in the world and nurtures eucharistic communities toward alternative ways of sharing life together. In effect, the spatial stories ecclesial communities perform in practices, such as baptism and eucharist, are maps or itineraries that teach Christians how to live. John Inge notes how stories organize and instruct people how to live in certain places. He notes, "the spatial story is not simply descriptive but prescriptive. *Stories give us a way to walk.*"⁵⁰⁵ Ecclesial communities whose hospitality practices are shaped by the eucharist and sharing meals together exude the abundance of God's *oikonomia* in their life together. As Cavanaugh

⁵⁰³ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 118.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁵⁰⁵ Inge, 107; italics mine.

notes above, when they continually gather and celebrate the feast of the Lord's Supper, they are tracing God's narrative through space and time by their movements and practices and manifesting God's story anew in concrete time and space.

"Not Quite" Objections

Kwok Pui-lan also picks up and retools the Augustinian imagery of city of God and city of humans, however, in quite a different sense than Cavanaugh. Her spatial and temporal imagination is important because it questions how the church interprets God's eschatological vision particularly in light of twenty-first century migration. Kwok writes,

The city of God and the city of humans are always in tension with one another. The true invisible church is always at odds with the church that wields so much power and cooperates with the crown. Throughout the ages, the pilgrims and the monks who have gone out to the desert to form communities on the border and other alternative base communities have created important sites of resistance and renewal.⁵⁰⁶

Kwok presents how theology tied to the history and destiny of a people – Israel and the church – is always about time and space, but a dialectical time and space. Kwok observes that journey, passage, and crossing always relativize and disrupt space (kingdom, nation, or temple). Israel as a people on a journey is “the foundation for providing spaces for others who are strangers, aliens, and immigrants.” She continues, “the church has never been fully incorporated into world history.”⁵⁰⁷ According to Kwok, the time and space of “not quite” is internally transgressive because “it troubles the national, racial, ethnic, class, gendering, and ecclesial tales that homogenize difference, suppress the minorities,

⁵⁰⁶ Kwok “A Theology of Border Passage,” in *Border Crossings*, 115.

⁵⁰⁷ For Kwok, theology reflects these tensions because it is “a story that is not finished, a body that is not fixed, and a story that resists final closure.” *Ibid.*, 114-115.

and coerce everyone to be the same.”⁵⁰⁸ In this sense, Kwok plays off of the temporal unknown of “not yet” in Christian eschatology, and asks for further suspicion of how the church is manifested “already” on earth. Because minority voices have been covered over and made to fit within the dominant majority, Kwok argues for the misfit of “not quite” to always persist in the church. Her spatio-temporal imagination resists assimilation and she challenges the church to always work out its theology on the border and in-between, not seeking to grasp the holy.⁵⁰⁹

Kwok also describes the necessity of a hope materialized in this world for vulnerable peoples, and therefore she resists the tendency to jump too quickly to an eschatology of “not yet.” In *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, Kwok articulates the concrete manifestation of hope on earth representing an immanent eschatology. Concrete hope is a necessary corrective to the abstract because of the harsh sufferings many migrating women endure:

The hope for some of the disenfranchised women may be a place to dry their fish on the beach, enough seeks for next spring, or money enough to send their children to school. The future is not a grand finale, a classless society, or even a kingdom of God, but more immediate, concrete, and touchable. It may be the pooling of communal resources, of living better than last year, or of seeing grandchildren grow up healthy and strong. It is a historical imagination of the concrete and not the abstract, a hope that is more practical and therefore not so easily disillusioned...⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁸ Kwok, “A Theology of Border Passage,” 115.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 115.

⁵¹⁰ Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, 37-38.

She suggests the need for new voices and particularly those whose lives are shaped by diaspora in order to challenge the church to always see itself as “not quite” and in order to find new forms of resistance and renewal in the concrete.⁵¹¹

Postcolonial theologians astutely question *how* the concrete church identifies God’s narrative, reign, and eschatological vision without risking perpetuating an image of itself. An image perpetuating sameness that suppresses and silences the voices of the margin has plagued the church throughout history. They demand that the church be confronted by new voices and perspectives. A necessary corrective for the “not yet” of eschatology and the “not quite” of its manifestation in the church, are the journeying patterns of church that I have been exploring. The church’s search is never-ending and always self-critical, resisting closure and uniformity. I hold that the ecclesiological tension of “already/not yet” exposes the church’s failures to live up to its calling and demands the church’s humility, self-critique, repentance and transformation. The church is always journeying toward God’s eschatological vision, but it never grasps, possesses, or fully knows what this vision is. I argue that God’s eschatological vision always propels the Christian community outward to journey farther and encounter Others in the material of everyday. The church comes to know and embody God’s vision through the concrete community and its practices, yet this is always incomplete. The people of God must continue to search for where church is happening anew, and often despite their best efforts.

⁵¹¹ Kwok writes, “A Diasporic consciousness, which is located from here and there, reads back metropolitan history and regimes of knowledge from multiple vantage points because people in diaspora are ‘outsiders’ from within.” Kwok, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology*, 49.

Postcolonial theological imagination is valuable in challenging the church to allow itself to be confronted by what happens in all the interstices and in-between places and the people encountered there. In the spirit of the church's perpetual searching for something more, Rivera writes,

What refuses enclosure? What *crosses* over? What revels and reveals itself in the many tongues of many peoples? What is dis/closed in the shifting borderlands?

Put in terms of ecclesiological practices: Postcolonial theory in theology will increase the church's capacity to speak meaningfully within an even more globalized and cosmopolitan environment.⁵¹²

Building upon postcolonial challenges, I find that the church's capacity to speak meaningfully depends on how it manifests itself and reads the signs in history. At the same time, however, I find Cavanaugh's detailing of space and time in the church also valuable in light of how peoples lives are determined and bound to perpetual wandering in globalization. The church does not offer hope or good news if it journeys aimlessly or is struck by paralysis; rather, it is the church's purpose and direction that makes the difference. Hope can be found in ecclesial communities' embodiment of alternatives that enact new possibilities in the face of the competition, scarcity, fear, and fragility of life determined by global market forces and empire power dynamics.

Hope lies in the church's journeying *somewhere*. Yet, ecclesial communities never arrive there all at once. Rather, the church comes to understand that to which it is headed eschatologically while it journeys on earth. Ecclesial communities journey from one concrete manifestation to another similarly to how a pilgrim journeys from place to place. The hospitality practice of the church and the new friends it encounters and is

⁵¹² Rivera, "Introduction: Alien/nation, Liberation, and the Postcolonial Underground," in *Postcolonial Theologies*, 14.

encountered by along the way form and direct the church in its journey. Thus, the material manifestation of the hope in the church—its spatial and bodily situatedness—is not detached from eschatological hope. Instead, I seek to show how signs of eschatological hope are made manifest in the material. It is of note that Kwok suggests how possibilities of resistance and renewal have arisen and continue to arise in smaller ecclesial communities that prophetically call the church back to its place of being “not quite” at home in human history. Additionally, the immediate, concrete, and touchable elements of hope manifested in stored seeds or the pooling of communal resources are hope for the living. These small moves of resistance and survival are hope, and they embody material glimpses of the hope to come. They guide and instruct the church in its movement forward.

The ongoing meal sharing practices in communities like the Open Door Community in Atlanta demonstrate this dynamic between the church’s historical and eschatological manifestation. Ed Loring writes: “We understand that every meal we eat is related to the Eucharist, to the eschatological banquet—that promise by which we live that there is enough for everybody, and that when we obey God’s Spirit who is moving across the earth there will be no hunger.”⁵¹³ The community enacts the eschatological hope of God’s abundant provision for all within its daily sharing of meals. Likewise, the church practicing hospitality through eucharistic meals enacts the ways of God’s eschatological restoration on earth. In this fashion, the cosmic proportions of the

⁵¹³ Ed Loring, *I Hear Hope Banging at My Back Door: Writings from “Hospitality”* (Atlanta, GA: The Open Door Community, 2000), 6 in Pohl, “A Community’s Practice of Hospitality” in *Practicing Theology*, 135.

eucharist are discovered within the particular face-to-face encounter of neighbors and strangers in the local eucharistic gathering.⁵¹⁴ In the local community, the people of God learn how to enact this cosmic story in the everyday. Likewise, ecclesial performances and practices continually instruct and challenge the church in how to embody a journeying hospitality with new friends. At the same time, new manifestations of hope in the world mean that the church community also will look and feel differently. The people of God must continually orient themselves to look for new signs of the reign of God breaking in through the concrete everyday.

Journeying Somewhere with Others

This dissertation intentionally focused on material and bodily manifestations of church extended through hospitality practice reconfigured on the borderlands. Material manifestations of hospitality, however, do not preclude the significance of eschatological time and space as the church is oriented by its story and by its core practices toward the reign of God. The fact that the church is directed toward its *telos* in God makes all the difference and provides a unique hope in light of the overwhelming consequences of globalization for vulnerable populations displaced and on the move. The church's proclamation and embodiment of this hope is the good news for the sake of the world. While hypermobility of globalization often leads a sense of aimlessness and rootlessness, the people of God profess to be going *somewhere*. Patterned by pilgrimage the people of God are journeying toward the hope of the resurrection and seeking to materially embody

⁵¹⁴ Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination*, 117.

this hope in the everyday. In turn, the actions of welcoming and journeying with and among migrants continue to challenge the church to live into its own pilgrimage heritage as well as to new territories and horizons with those it encounters. Acts of hospitality are opportunities for the church to learn and embody the good news anew.

In order for the gospel to be relevant and meaningful it demands always to be born anew as it is continually re-told, re-appropriated, re-created in ever-shifting contexts. Rivera's postcolonial challenge is again appropriate:

Within the imperial centers, a church ministering among recent immigrants and long-term diasporas—among people with an increasingly complex ethnic identity, with wildly varying combinations of traditional faith and plural, “syncretistic,” religious formations—cannot rely on inherited “rules of recognition.” It is challenged to ever greater flexibility in its community building. It hears again the ancient, underfulfilled command—corrective of any idolatry of identity—to love the alien/stranger/immigrant *as yourself*.⁵¹⁵

In an ironic twist, Rivera wrestles with challenging inherited “rules of recognition” and yet returning to ancient and underfulfilled commands to love the immigrant as yourself. I wrestle with the tension that Rivera exposes claiming that hospitality practice and ecclesiology may not look the same as they traditionally have been articulated. At the same time, though newly appropriated, there will be motivations and expressions of early Christian hospitality, such as meal sharing, that remain instructive. I do not believe the church can abandon its own history and roots, even when they are complicated and conflicted. The new and challenging context of transnational migration, however, does summon new forms of church not before seen.

⁵¹⁵ Rivera, “Introduction: Alien/nation, Liberation, and the Postcolonial Underground,” *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, 15.

Michael Nausner's postcolonial engagement of territory, itinerancy, homeland, and borderland is instructive for holding together this seemingly contradictory tension. Nausner wrestles with the tension between Christian identity and territoriality, insisting that Christian practice *takes place somewhere*, but that it also cannot be tied to a *fixed* territoriality.⁵¹⁶ Building upon Tanner's observation that "Christian social existence is...without a homeland in some territorially localizable society," he argues that territory and its relation to religious practice are important, but Christians must never understand territory as a fixed place.⁵¹⁷ Additionally, the church never has a stable occupation of this space. Rather, Nausner points toward Christians' continuous negotiation of spatiality.⁵¹⁸ This ongoing negotiation is what I have tried to wrestle with and work out in my investigation of alternative spatial imagination for the church and its practice of hospitality. Similar to Certeau's engaging pre-modern itineraries, Nausner draws from cultural anthropological themes of indigenous, nomadic itinerancy and its relationship to routes, space, and ancestors in order to highlight where "land is defined in accordance with journeys undertaken by ancestors. An intricate web of tracks as envisioned between the places these ancestors visited."⁵¹⁹ Much as I have argued in this dissertation, these observations lead him to challenge how institutionalized religion, and specifically

⁵¹⁶ Michael Nausner, "Homeland as Borderland: Territories of Christian Subjectivity," in *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*, 121.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 121-122. Also see Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, 103.

⁵¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁹ Nausner draws from Sam Gill, "Territory," in *Critical Lens for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998). He writes, "Inspired by his fieldwork among Aborigines in Australia, anthropologist Sam Gill gives an account of an understanding of territory that is not that of a solid plane but rather of tracks across the land. A net of tracks rather than a sealed territory becomes the identifying image of the land." *Ibid.*, 127.

Christianity, relies on sedentary culture.⁵²⁰ He points to re-imagining homeland and territory as dynamic borderland where itinerancy is a guiding theme. At the same time, his work reveals the value of ancestors and history, or what he identifies as “roots,” in shaping identity and subjectivity. “Roots,” however, do not solely shape Christian identity. Rather, the traces of these “roots” that remain are placed in dialogical relationship to the “routes” one is traveling. Thus, he postulates how stable cores are questioned and disrupted as one travels.

I suggest a similar dialogical engagement in the life of the church, even while I may engage some different theological and ecclesiological “root” commitments than many postcolonial theologians. Ecclesial “roots” are valuable and cannot be discarded, *and* they also must be challenged and disrupted by what is encountered in the journey. Thus, the “rules of recognition” that Rivera challenges—that I might rename as “roots of recognition”—remain important to the conversation, even while they are challenged to new flexibility.

What I propose for the church and its hospitality in this investigation is somewhat akin to the spatial imagination Russell develops in her church in the round ecclesiology

⁵²⁰ Nausner, 128. Here Nausner notes how Susan Stanford Friedman, “does not oppose *routes* to *roots* as privileged metaphor for the development of subjectivity. Rather, she talks about a ‘dialogic relationship’ between the two with ‘roots’ ‘signifying identity based on stable cores and continuities’ and ‘routes suggesting identity based on travel, change, and disruption.’” Friedman, *Mappings: Feminist and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 151 quoted in Nausner, 128. He continues, “In terms of boundaries, this means that a *dialogic* is ‘constituted by the bipolar pull between the erection of borders delineating difference and the dissolution of those boundaries in the formation of permeable borderlands of exchange, blending, and transformation.’” Friedman, 153 quoted in Nausner 129.

that was groundbreaking in its time. Russell narrates how the Presbyterian Church of the Ascension in East Harlem was transformed in the process of exchanging its rectangular eucharist table to a round one and relocating the eucharist from the front position of “high altar” to the center of the congregation.⁵²¹ Building upon Russell’s contribution, I have engaged the question: *How can ecclesial communities develop new patterns of journeying and embody new spatial imagination amidst the challenging context of twenty-first century migration?* I have referred to this process of negotiation as a journey of faithfulness amidst ever-changing circumstances. Clearly, like Russell, my re-imagination has centered on the formation of the eucharist and other ecclesial practices as “roots” that must be placed in dialogical relationship with new “routes.” Russell claimed that the “table community is a major image of the church that links the community of Christ to the breaking of bread as well as to sharing with the poor.”⁵²² Similarly to

⁵²¹ Russell narrates this transformation in her church as follows: “The Presbyterian Church of the Ascension in East Harlem is an old ‘brick Gothic’ structure built with arches of stucco and brick in a style that is supposed to be similar to some Waldensian churches in Italy. Its many floors provide spaces for persons of all ages to gather so that it can serve as a center for many community activities. One year in the early 1970s we decided to create a sanctuary that in itself symbolized our connection to one another as a family that gathered across racial lines. The opportunity came for this move when we decided to refinish the floor and took up the pews in time for a special Pentecost celebration that would begin in the basement and then move in procession to the ‘upper room’ as we waited for the Spirit. For this occasion we placed all of the benches in a square, with a large space in the center around the table where we could crowd together for the breaking of bread.” She continues, “That summer we decided to leave the benches ‘in the round’ and enjoyed the chance to worship while sitting only a few feet from one another. Having eliminated both the back pews and the ‘high altar and pulpit,’ we created a huge round table by cutting the largest piece of plywood we could find and placing this circle on the old rectangular table base. When fall arrived, people remembered their old tradition and wanted to move back to the customary separation of chancel, pews, and people. But I didn’t forget how wonderful it was to divide word and bread in the midst of the people, and I managed to talk the elders into moving around the table again the next summer. By the time the second fall had arrived, the new tradition stuck and was considerably reinforced when no one wanted to help move the pews back! Thus was born a round table that symbolized our table talk and table sharing as we gathered in community.” Russell, *Church in the Round*, 20.

⁵²² Ibid., 18.

Russell and other theologians, like Goizueta, Cavanaugh, and Yoder who have strong eucharistic and ecclesiological commitments, I have held tightly to the formative nature of the eucharist table and the meal sharing practices and postures it shapes in ecclesial communities, even as these communities manifest the table in a number of different ways. Russell adds, “Because Christ is present in the world, especially among those who are neglected, oppressed, and marginalized, the round table is also connected to the margins of both church and society, always welcoming the stranger to the feast or sharing the feast where the ‘others’ gather.”⁵²³ In the spirit of Russell, I carry ecclesial imagination further to invite, and at times demand, recognition of where church is happening and opened to new possibilities. I have shown evidence of these possibilities in the lived examples of hospitality detailed in the previous two chapters. New ways of being and doing church manifest themselves *in the borderlands, in interstitial and in-between places*, and in *bridge-building activities*. I also showed evidence of church happening *on the margins* and *on the move* in ways that stand in contrast to displacement, perpetual involuntary movement, and other negative consequences of forced migration. Additionally, I have shown how church happens and hospitality is extended in new places and territories through community organizing and networking, through eucharist celebrations in open air and through chain link fences, in liturgical performances in city streets, in communal enactments of migration and hospitality in scripture, in meal sharing, and in strangers coming to recognize one another as friends.

⁵²³ Russell, *Church in the Round*, 18.

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