Hospitality and Emerging Populations:

Toward a Theology of Migration in the Context of the Catholic Church

In the United States

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Theology
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Abstract

In Christian communities in the United States today, the reception of Latino/a immigrants is often influenced by the negative and dehumanizing rhetoric advanced in the public arena, creating marginalization, exclusion, and division within those communities. There is a dire need for an ethic of resistance and solidarity that rejects that rhetoric and the damage it leaves in its wake. This thesis thus proposes a theology of migration that employs hospitality as its entry point, and that speaks to the engagement between receiving communities and those migrating. An identification and analysis of the anti-immigrant rhetoric will serve as the context and point of departure for the remainder of the project. After calling for a metanoia from that which is contrary to God’s mission of healing, reconciliation, and justice, the search for solutions draws upon Catholic social teaching, scripture, and tradition, and proposes a recovery of the tradition and understanding of early Christian hospitality as the catalyst for a theology of migration.

Although hospitality was once an honored virtue and a moral imperative, for the people of God, whose formative experiences were marked by migration and exile, hospitality was also a sacred duty, a response to God’s own grace and hospitality, and a means of welcoming strangers and those who were marginalized into the community. Yet today’s receiving communities no longer have that shared remembrance of vulnerability and displacement, and our present understanding
of hospitality is too often operative within dynamics that reinforce divisions, power, and privilege. The thesis thus offers a critique of privilege and power, utilizing sources from missiology, and postcolonial and liberation theologies. *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* envisions hospitality and migration as the basis for sacramental unity, and the migrant as the co-builder of community. It also proposes that hospitality is practically marked by the vocation to be in exile. Using that capstone document as an orienting vision, this thesis argues that a theology of migration must seek solidarity across difference in a spirit of reconciliation, be rooted in vulnerability and grace, and embody the practices and virtues of hospitality.
Acknowledgements

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Thank you to my family, especially my children, Josh and Alyssa, and my friends who have been so supportive of my studies and this project, and so understanding about the time it consumed. Finally, and most of all, this thesis and my studies would not have been possible without the unwavering support and encouragement of my husband, Dan. His calm patience and generous love kept me going through many difficulties, and I am very grateful to him. It is a joy and honor to share the journey of life with him.
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<td>AE</td>
<td><em>Aetatis Novae</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td><em>Centisimus Annus</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>CST</td>
<td>Catholic Social Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFN</td>
<td><em>Exsul Familia Nazarethana</em></td>
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<td>EMCC</td>
<td><em>Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>GAO</td>
<td>Government Accounting Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>GS</td>
<td><em>Gaudium et Spes</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td><em>Lumen Gentium</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMP</td>
<td>The Minuteman Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>OFG</td>
<td><em>One Family Under God</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>PCMIP</td>
<td>Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCSC</td>
<td>Pontifical Council on Social Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>PJPC</td>
<td>Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td><em>Rerum Novarum</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>SNL</td>
<td><em>Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope</em></td>
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<td>SRS</td>
<td><em>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</em></td>
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<td>WSU</td>
<td><em>Welcoming the Stranger Among Us</em></td>
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Introduction

Hospitality is the language of the Bible – the language of radical relationality and dramatic reversals, of abundance in the face of scarcity, of weakness and vulnerability embodying strength, and of weary strangers welcomed as much anticipated guests. Indeed, we learn that the command to welcome the stranger, the widow, and the orphan is the second most repeated command in the entire Bible.1 Second only to the love of God, the command to “love the stranger” occurs no fewer than 36 times in the Hebrew Bible alone.2 Neither a minor motif nor a trivial nicety, hospitality is a profound and pervasive theme that undergirds Christianity’s self-understanding and ethos towards others. In light of its importance, one might think that it would be the guiding ethic for the treatment of vulnerable newcomers. Yet, that language is rarely heard in the immigration debate in the United States, whether it is in national public discourse or Christians in conversation.

Instead, debates are often centered on expediency and nationalism, leading to a utilitarian assessment of whether the immigrants will provide a benefit or a burden to the United States,3 thus fostering an attitude that treats those who migrate as just another commodity. Even worse, though, are the potent and persistent metaphors, often based on deeply embedded racial assumptions, found everywhere in public discourse and mass media that name the migrant as animal, criminal, pollutant, and invader—in effect, as other and enemy. Words do indeed have power, and the poisoned waters of the immigration debate have infiltrated policies and attitudes,

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leading to the militarization of the border and suggestions of electrified fences, to the conflation of the image of the migrant with terrorist, to rapes, mutilations, disappearances, and anguishing deaths in the desert that go unnoticed and unremarked. Because of the grave and deadly consequences, it is here that human rights activists, ethicists, theologians, and the church have rightly put their efforts.

However, this rhetoric also has a subtle and stealthy power that insinuates itself into communities and parishes, poisoning relationships between migrants and receiving communities, tempting them to accept the constructions as “natural,” even factual. Anti-immigrant rhetoric monopolizes the collective imagination, to the extent that dominant attitudes, despite being contrary to Christianity’s own beliefs, are left unexamined and uncontested, and are often even accepted and reinforced within parishes. I see the destructive consequences of anti-immigrant rhetoric played out regularly in the community where I live. In 2007, the national spotlight was aimed at my parish when a raid by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents caused 400 people to seek refuge in the basement of our parish church. That event served as a lightning rod that sparked public protests and heated debates, and brought to the surface deep-seated fears and resentments. Although the furor that surrounded that particular event has abated, the fears and resentments linger, and are now professed more openly and self-righteously. It is not

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4. Painesville, Ohio, is a city of approximately 20,000, and borders both suburban and agricultural areas. St. Mary’s Church is a Roman Catholic Church in Painesville. It was originally established as a mission outpost and later served the large Irish and Italian immigrant population. Many of their descendants the present day St. Mary’s parishioners. A growing number of Latino/a parishioners, most of whom emigrated to the United States from Leon, Mexico (some are also Guatemalan or Puerto Rican), now constitute approximately 50 percent of the St. Mary’s parishioners. I am co-president of the intercultural parish council.

uncommon to drive through the town square and see protestors waving anti-immigrant and anti-reform signs.6

Our parish is not immune to the turbulence. It finds itself at the epicenter of the debate locally as it attempts to care for all those who enter its doors. Often, thinly-veiled remarks from parishioners hint at a racial subtext, and a number of our Latina parishioners recount daily indignities and more overt threats, harassment, and racial slurs. Many of the same conversations held in the public square are repeated in the parish hall, with politics and prejudice often overriding a specifically Christian/Catholic context. In March of 2009, the parish began to advocate in a more concerted way for immigration reform and a better understanding of the many difficulties encountered by our Latina/o parishioners. It appears that these efforts have produced little change of heart or tone. Several months ago, our local city council met to consider a non-binding resolution in support of immigration reform. In attendance were many of our parishioners, with the loudest and most organized and vehement opposition to the resolution—which would do nothing more than indicate support for reform—coming from our parishioners, who used the same, time-honored and dehumanizing images to represent migrants.

Further, when we have attempted to enlist the help of our sister parishes, some have distanced themselves because they “don’t have an immigrant problem” at their parish, others because they do not want to attempt to navigate turbulent waters by bringing a politically-charged issue into church. Our experience does not appear to be atypical. Ethicist Kristin E. Heyer reports that this phenomenon plays out on the national stage as well. She writes, “Recent research on Catholic voting patterns suggests that . . . [i]n the privacy of the voting booth, one’s tax bracket, cultural assumptions, or party loyalty may take priority over religious or moral

6. The Grassroots Rally Team of Ohio, for example, formed as a result of the May 2007 event and has organized a number of public rallies against immigration and immigration reform.
formation on social issues.” Nationally, then, struggles for reform have similarly stalled, despite the best efforts of advocates. Hearts have indeed hardened over this issue, and not in a way that reflects Christianity’s own roots and formation in migration, nor the U.S. Catholic Church’s own proud heritage as an immigrant church, nor magisterial social teachings on the subject.

The troubling experiences of my fellow parishioners and friends, mirrored in so many experiences nationwide, the ambivalence of local parishes, and our own failed attempts to change hearts and minds, have encouraged my reflections on what it means to take seriously the biblical call to welcome the stranger, a call which was forged out of Christianity’s own searing experience of migration and exile and, thus, from “knowing the heart of a stranger.” This will be the focus of my project. Parishes are increasingly at the forefront of the engagement between diverse cultures and traditions. With a growing Latino/a population, the vast majority of whom self-identify as Roman Catholic, demographic changes are already a present reality for parishes all over the U.S. Further, one-half of U.S. Catholics under the age of 40 are Latino, making this a young and growing population. There is an urgent need for a more inclusive vision that reorients emerging and diverse communities to an empathic understanding of their own heritage of migration and vulnerability, and to solidarity across difference in a spirit of reconciliation.

Absent a considerable change of heart and serious intervention, the sinful divisions between us will continue to escalate and we may expect to find that Martin Luther King Jr.’s adage that

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11:00 on Sunday mornings is the most segregated hour in America\(^\text{11}\) will ring even more sadly true.

This project investigates the question by formulating the following research questions: Cognizant of the exercise of power between dominant and vulnerable peoples, how might Christian communities midwife the birth of new communities in light of emerging and vulnerable populations? What resources are there in the Catholic/Christian tradition that would offer a counter-narrative and different theological vision for how we might forge a path ahead together? How can the *kairos* of migration and a renewal of the ideal and practice of hospitality inform Christian communities’ practices, identity, and mission?

In addressing this problem, this project begins by foregrounding the discussion with a descriptive analysis of the anti-immigrant rhetoric that is so prevalent in public discourse. The church has thus far rightly placed its emphasis on immigrant lives lost, migrant rights, immigration reform, and the pastoral care of those in need, leaving this area relatively unexamined from a theological standpoint.\(^\text{12}\) Clarifying the ways in which anti-immigrant rhetoric is itself a form of dominative power and exclusion, and naming it as a significant impediment to welcome, inclusion, and unity—as well as a contributing factor to the malaise and disinterest towards and vehemence against immigration reform—will illuminate the need for a

\(^{11}\) This quote is widely attributed to Martin Luther King, Jr. It is contained in the transcript of a speech given at Western Michigan University on December 18, 1963. See “MLK at Western,” Western Michigan University Archives and Regional History Collections and University Libraries,” page 22, http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/MLK.pdf (accessed 1 March 2013).

\(^{12}\) While derogatory rhetoric language is referenced by a number of theologians and ethicists, it generally is in the context of problems encountered by immigrants (see, for example, M. Daniel Carroll, *Christians at the Border: Immigration, the Church, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 27; Donald Kerwin, “Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty in Service of the Human Person,” in *And You Welcomed Me: Migration and Catholic Social Teaching*, eds. Donald Kerwin and Jill Marie Gershutz (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Toronto, Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 93-121, at 99), thus does not itself receive sustained analysis. In her Christian ethic of immigration in the context of Latino/a immigration to the United States, Heyer makes note of the social constructs of immigrants as social sin and as contributing to the dehumanization of immigrants (see Heyer, *Kinship Across Borders*, 17, 36, 47-9, and 142), and remarks in her concluding chapter, “One of the contributions Christian theology can offer is to unmask these frames for what they are, and reveal what reigning motives sanctify” (135). In her conclusion, she proposes an ethic of civic kinship and subversive hospitality. To some extent, this project takes up where Heyer concludes.
theology of migration that specifically addresses divisiveness, asymmetries in power, marginalization, and exclusion. It will also serve as a call for metanoia from that which is contrary to God’s mission of healing, reconciliation, and justice. Further, analysis of the rhetoric will provide information and clarity about the forces mitigating against adherence to scriptural and ethical mandates to welcome the stranger, and will serve as the context and point of departure for the remainder of the project.

Next, the project will mine scriptural, anthropological, magisterial, and theological sources within the Catholic/Christian tradition for a counter-narrative and different theological vision for how we might forge a path ahead together. We will find that the body of Catholic Social Teaching [CST] offers a well-founded critique of the mistreatment of migrants and a defense of the right to migrate grounded in theological anthropology, natural law, and the common good. However, it is less forthcoming on imagining and presenting a unifying vision for the emergent communities being brought together as a result of migration, and it is not until recently that CST begins to present the migrant as partner, although not as its primary focus. While this is understandable given its placement within documents on social justice and pastoral care, it is also problematic in that it creates its own form of marginalization. When migrants are primarily or solely portrayed and treated as objects of pastoral care and not as principal actors and subjects in their own right—and indeed, as conversation partners, co-heirs, and kin—it inadvertently perpetuates a paternalistic pattern characterized by unidirectional benevolence. Further, it replicates societal divisions and reinforces the binary oppositions that it seeks to overcome. Thus, a more inclusive vision is needed that understands all Christians as vulnerable sojourners before God.
This project, therefore, will approach the subject of migration cognizant of the power differentials that exist between cultures, and the ways they have been reinforced, both intentionally and unintentionally. If the church is to be a witness to God’s intended wholeness and fullness of diversity, it is necessary to address how a people divided by ethnicity, race, or culture might move toward a non-dominative vision of human interrelatedness and community building. It is my contention that such a vision entails a renewal of the understanding, ethic, and praxis of Judeo-Christian hospitality, which emerges out of our own heritage and memories of having been strangers once ourselves, and is grounded in the spirit of Pentecost. A recovery of these forgotten memories—so integral to Christian self-identity—will begin the fundamental reorientation towards a vulnerable and empathic engagement with one another in hospitality and solidarity. The aim of this project is to undertake a theological analysis and reflection that considers migration and hospitality as a catalyst and our shared vulnerability and shared remembrance of being strangers as a foundation for building a different, grace-filled future together.

As theologian Gioacchino Campese notes, a Christian theology of migration is “still at a germinal stage both in terms of its methodology and contents.” He elsewhere notes that the field of systematic theology “has either totally ignored or found it difficult to include the issues related to human mobility in its agenda,” but points to a “growing involvement of Christian theology with the phenomenon.”


14. Gioacchino Campese, “The Irruption of Migrants: Theology of Migration in the 21st Century,” Theological Studies 73 (2012): 3-32, at 5. In his review of theological literature on migration over the last fifty years, Campese notes early reflections by the Scalabrinian missionaries on their pastoral care of Italian migrants; developing Hispanic/Latino/a contextual theologies on the reality of undocumented immigration; and reflections on the Sanctuary Movement to aid and defend refugees (8-9). In 2002, the first of a growing number of conferences was organized by the Scalabrinian missionaries and the Transborder Institute (9).
and timely trajectories: (1) ethical considerations, such as the deaths and injuries suffered by migrants, the right to migrate, and protection of immigrant rights in the U.S.; (2) the ministerial needs of migrants; and (3) the practical implications of a large influx of immigrants.\footnote{15} A
developing body of work has also begun to consider the phenomenon of immigration and/or the experience of the immigrant as a \textit{locus theologicus}, including Orlando Espín,\footnote{16} Peter C. Phan,\footnote{17} Daniel G. Groody,\footnote{18} Gemma Tulud Cruz,\footnote{19} Heyer, and others.\footnote{20} This project will build upon the

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20. See, for example, Jorge E. Castillo Guerra, “A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology,” in \textit{A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration}, ed. Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 243-70, who proposes a methodology that utilizes the migrants’ own experiences and reflections as the starting point, incorporates an intercultural perspective, and draws upon Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino’s methodology of compassionate reason; and Scalabrinian missionary Fabio Baggio, “Diversity in Trinitarian Communion: Pointers toward a ‘Theology of Migrations,’” in \textit{Migration in a Global World} (London: SCM Press, 2003), 74-85, who reflects on the communion of differences as expressions of the beauty of the Trinitarian life and calls for a theology of inclusiveness. Migration and theology have also been the topic of several recent dissertations: Christopher Gerard Llanos, \textit{Catholic Social Thought, Regional Economic Integration, and Migration Policy: Reconstructing Catholic Social Thinking Regarding the Right to Economic Freedom} (ThD diss., Harvard Divinity School, 2006), which considers how CST might incorporate regional economic integration and the structuring of transnational right to migrate; Elizabeth W. Collier, \“Why Is My Neighbor? Negotiating the Tension Between Local and Global in Catholic Social Teaching to More Adequately Address United
crucial work of these theologians and ethicists, furthering the inquiry in the direction of the communities that are already formed or are being created as a result of Latino/a migration to the U.S., and seeking common ground upon which to build solidarity across difference. That ground will be found in a theology of migration rooted in vulnerability and grace.

Thus, while keeping the important ethical and ministerial needs of migrants in mind, this project will develop a theology of migration that speaks to the encounter and engagement between the receiving communities and those migrating, as well as how the receiving community is shaped and transformed by the encounter. It must be recognized that the role of the receiving community, in the present context, must stretch far beyond—while still maintaining the importance of—ministerial care, advocacy, or emergency intervention. Just as presenting migrants as “objects” of concerns might serve to legitimate disparities, so too can presenting the receiving communities as the primary respondents and agents of care for those who are migrating. For parishes not situated at the borders, a complex and multi-dimensional picture has formed of migrants who may indeed need immediate pastoral care, but of many more who come bearing gifts and seeking a more sustained and permanent welcome. Those parish communities are challenged to welcome those who are different into a space over which they may have some prior claim, but which will also likely be stretched wide to include the newcomers not as guests, but eventually as fellow hosts. In my investigation, I consider the way in which Latino/a

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21. Jessica Wrobleski, The Limits of Hospitality (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 76, writes, in fact, that it would be a “sign that a community or place was somewhat inhospitable if newcomers were permanently regarded as guests rather than
migration to the U.S. might be considered a kairos for the North American church, a call to return to its own roots in marginality and migration, a revival of its present nature as pilgrim church, and leading to unity-in-diversity and the birth of communities of resistance and solidarity.

Hospitality has a vital role to play in this renewal, as crucial now as when it first developed in the milieu of migration and vulnerability. Thus, the ethic and praxis of hospitality will serve as a linchpin for a theology of migration in the present day. However, hospitality, which is premised upon the condition of a host who has space and resources to offer, and a guest in need of them, is subject to the same temptations to reinforce divisions and to fall into patronizing relationships. Theologian Letty M. Russell recognizes this possibility when she speaks of the “deformation” of hospitality practiced “as a way of caring for so-called ‘inferior people’ by those who are more advantaged and able to prove their superiority by being ‘generous,’ rather than using a model of partnership.”22 At the same time, those who are in positions of privilege exercise a kind of non-physical “violence” against others when they use their privilege to exploit economic or social systems, further exclusion and marginalization, or fail to act in cases where exploitation or exclusion is taking place.23 Hospitality, rightly understood, challenges them to use their resources in ways that are transformative, offering an

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22. Letty M. Russell, *Just Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference*, eds. J. Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 80. At the same time, however, ethicist Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 90, warns against “washing out” some of the crucial distinctions between socially situated persons and persons who are truly disconnected from social relations, wherein we can “reject the responsibility associated with being hosts,” and “squander opportunities to create hospitable environments and situations.”

alternative to places of divisiveness. Hospitality also requires a receptivity to the truth and experience of another.

In the last twenty years, a number of theologians and ethicists have explored hospitality as both a moral category and for its relevance as an ecclesial praxis, and advocated for its renewal. Although Latino/a migration to the U.S. is not their primary focus, they lay the theological groundwork and develop the distinctive nature and spirit of hospitality in ways that will prove fruitful for this investigation. Thus, I utilize and build upon these scholarly contributions in this work. Ethicist Christine Pohl, for example, recognizes hospitality’s countercultural dimension, in that it offers a critique of current practices and an ethical framework for the way in which to proceed. Theologian Thomas E. Reynolds reminds us that the roots of Christian hospitality are to be discovered in God’s initiative of love, and that hospitality is a response to that initiative. Further, because it is God’s hospitality that we embody and enact, love of neighbor has a “universal sweep,” affirming kinship with every other, a “shared remembrance” of being an outsider and subsequently welcomed; and a present condition of being a “vulnerable sojourner with God.”

24. Russell, Just Hospitality, 101. Russell defines hospitality as “reaching out across difference to participate in God’s actions bring justice and healing.”


Thus, the moral summons that comes to us via testimonies and evidence of objectification, marginalization, suffering, or abuse, comes to us from distant kin—made only more so by our common baptism—and from those who share with us the same memories of having been strangers and welcomed. This memory should elicit an acknowledgement of the shared fundamental human condition of vulnerability, or, as Reynolds puts it, “vulnerable personhood.”30 Further, a reorientation to understanding hospitality as God’s hospitality is a reminder of the centrality of grace, and of the economy of blessing, abundance, and giftedness that are operative in hospitality. We are all recipients of God’s blessings, and hospitality is founded upon that abundance. We see this logic of abundance manifested in the guest-host dynamism found in hospitality, wherein Christians, imitating Christ, both offer and receive hospitality. In so doing, new patterns of life emerge that transform and reorder lives, so that both are transfigured and may imagine life together.31

As we will see, hospitality was the means by which communities cared for vulnerable newcomers, the way in which newcomers were included in the community and its practices, and the foundation for encounters between cultures and peoples in the church’s early formation and missionary endeavors. The fluidity of the host-guest role so central in the early praxis of hospitality, lends itself particularly well to the present situation, as does the reminder that all are in some sense strangers, and pilgrims, guests of God and the recipients of God’s gracious welcome and hospitality.32

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Thus, this thesis will argue that, in light of the *kairos* of Latino/a migration to the U.S., a theology of migration must seek solidarity across difference in a spirit of reconciliation, be rooted in vulnerability and grace, and embody the practices and virtues of hospitality. The project employs an interdisciplinary approach and utilizes a critical expository methodology to analyze, discuss, and integrate the work of theologians, ethicists, social scientists, and Chicano/a studies scholars. While it will draw primarily from the Roman Catholic tradition, and references Roman Catholic parishes, it has much broader applications in light of the global prevalence of migration.

I identify my own social location as a Roman Catholic, a United States citizen, and a certified pastoral minister in the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. I am a lifelong Catholic, the daughter of working class parents who are descendants of white European immigrants. I registered at my current parish about twenty years ago. Over those years, I have seen the parish change from a predominantly white, Irish-Italian heritage parish, with a small, but active Hispanic ministry, to a parish whose demographics are evenly split between European-American Catholics and Catholics who were born in Mexico (primarily), Guatemala, and Puerto Rico, and now make their home in Ohio.³³ Last year, after a year of study and discernment, our parish council reorganized, with a makeup that more closely resembles our parish demographics, and with the goal of negotiating the troubled waters of becoming one parish family, rather than two distinct groups sharing space. I am helping to facilitate and lead that effort; thus, my inquiry also emerges out of this *praxis*, and the questions, discoveries, and search for a theological vision that have arisen.

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³³ For the past two years, the parish recorded the highest number of infant baptisms in the diocese, primarily due to the growing Latino/a population.
As stated earlier, our Social Justice Commission, of which I am a member, began advocating for compassionate immigration reform and for migrant rights in 2009, with only small successes despite considerable efforts. We have conducted a series of workshops and information nights in our parish as well as at diocesan events; catechized via columns in our parish bulletin; disseminated information from the U.S. bishops and their advocacy and education arm, Justice for Immigrants (JFI); organized a multi-parish justice-oriented study group on the topic; cooperated in the USCCB’s postcard campaign for immigration reform; advocated for reform and for individual parishioners facing deportation with our elected officials as well as in rallies; and organized and participated in prayer services and pilgrimages for reform. The deportations and deaths in the desert have also become personal, as they affect parish families who I have come to know. Yet, when I try to share something of their suffering to indicate the need for reform, the response from parishioners and others remains something like, “Then, they should just stay home.” While attending a JFI conference in Cincinnati in 2009, we were met by picketers vehemently protesting the conference. Last year, on a pilgrimage through our hometown to pray and raise awareness, drivers also stopped to yell insults as we journeyed, testimony to how little has changed, and how widespread is resistance to reform.

As a participant in and witness to these challenges, I do not claim the position of disinterested observer. Rather, this project emerges out of my own search for a theology that more adequately addresses the tensions, challenges, and joys of the phenomenon of immigration and the journey towards togetherness. It also stems from my frustration and dismay with the intractability encountered on this issue, despite it being both contrary to Christianity’s own nature and mission as well as contrary to church teachings—and my search for the reasons behind that intractability. Finally, this project grows out of my own failed search for resources
that speak to my parish’s particular circumstances, circumstances that are becoming more and more commonplace across the U.S.\textsuperscript{34}

Overview of Chapters

This project begins by identifying not the phenomenon of immigration itself, but the hostile reception of and attitude towards migrants and migration, as a significant problem. Thus, the thesis will not offer detailed statistics or demographics on migration, but turn instead to an analysis of the negative and dehumanizing rhetoric that surrounds immigration, and the way in which it contributes to divisiveness and hostility, and is contrary to Christianity’s own nature and mission. A search for solutions will thus draw upon sources from CST, scripture, and tradition, and will focus on hospitality as a key entry point for a theology of migration that addresses this problem. Thus, it will not develop a theology of migration at large, nor offer extensive systemic theological framings, but sketch a theology of migration in light of the \textit{kairos} of Latino/a immigration to the U.S., and aimed at offering a different and more fruitful theological vision for the birth of new and emerging communities. Important elements of this theology of migration will be rooted in vulnerability and grace and will include a spirit of reconciliation, solidarity across difference, and hospitality as the core vision, ethic, and praxis.

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to discourse theory in order to demonstrate the substantial power of anti-immigrant rhetoric to advance dominant ideologies and reinforce prejudices and cultural fears. It then utilizes rhetorical criticism and descriptive analysis to examine the primary forces at play in the national discourse, examining the content and

\textsuperscript{34} Last year, our parish council was excited when the U.S. bishops’ conference produced a workbook and training manual on “building synergism between communities within the Church by . . . embracing their multicultural similarities and differences in an effort to encourage a certain equality, facilitating the development of a more mutual framework . . .,” only to discover it was available only in English. See Committee on Cultural Diversity, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, \textit{Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers} (Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2012).
substance of that discourse, using specific examples and case studies, and integrating the work of social scientists, cognitive linguists, Chicano/a Studies scholars, discourse analysts, communication specialists, theologians, and ethicists, who report a widespread perception that Latino/a immigrants are dangerous, destructive, and problematic. The goal of the chapter is to expose the underlying ideology at play in order to undermine its influence, so that we may begin to imagine differently. Thus, it will serve as a point of departure for the project.

After providing an overview of the concept of social sin, Chapter 2 analyzes the rhetorical constructs of immigrants through the lens of social sin. It then utilizes the critical expository method to examine Catholic social teaching (CST) for the way in which social doctrine on immigration has developed and evolved. It delves more deeply into the capstone document, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi: The Love of Christ for Migrants* [EMCC], that begins to imagine the migrant as co-builder of community, and migration and hospitality as the basis for a new sacramental unity. That document will lay the groundwork for the direction of my project.

Chapter 3 builds upon the discussion of Chapter 2 by examining the rich scriptural history of migration and hospitality, and the link between them. Using scripture as a source, it begins with a narrative survey of migration as recounted through scripture, and draws out the relevant theological motifs. Turning to the hermeneutic of hospitality, a similar survey examines the foundations, understandings, and development of hospitality in Judaism and early Christianity. It discovers that the ethic of hospitality emerged out of the people of God’s own experiences of migration, exile, and diaspora, and that the praxis of hospitality held pride of place as a sacred duty that has the potentiality of welcoming Jesus in the stranger; models Jesus’
own inclusivity and solidarity; and as the way in which those united in God’s household conduct themselves and anticipate the Kingdom.

Chapter 4 begins to offer a constructive proposal, necessarily unfinished, for a theology of migration that more adequately addresses the way in which the birth of new communities, bringing together dominant and privileged cultures with emerging and vulnerable ones, might be midwifed. Building on the foundations laid in Chapters 2 and 3, it argues that a renewal of the sense of pilgrimage and marginality, so formative for the early church, will prove integral for this task. It establishes the importance of solidarity across difference in the present day context, and explores the capacity for parishes to offer the necessary public and communal space for welcoming people in, cultivating compassion, and moving toward vulnerability and relationality in the praxis of solidarity.\(^{35}\) It draws upon Phan’s border crossing spirituality, with its components of presence; kenotic spirituality; spirit of reconciliation and healing; and striving towards harmonious relationships, for a model for parish life that is “betwixt and between.”\(^{36}\)

Finally, it analyzes EMCC’s theme of communion, which is modeled upon the Pentecost vision of unity-in-diversity.

Chapter 5 continues the constructive proposal, using the hermeneutic of hospitality as a theological marker, as well as an entry point into the whole. Because hospitality is inconsistent

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\(^{36}\) Peter C. Phan, *In Our Own Tongues: Perspectives from Asia on Mission and Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 136-47.
with the exercise of dominant power, it begins by offering a critique of “thin” efforts that disguise themselves as hospitality but are in reality forms of benevolent paternalism or a way of reinforcing difference. It then situates hospitality and migration within God’s mission of reconciliation and healing and within a theology of grace, with God as Gift and Giver, and each of use as recipients of and participants in God’s hospitality. Key authors include Pohl, Reynolds, and Russell, mentioned above. With this reorientation in mind, it returns to the foundations laid in Chapter 3 to present a central image of hospitality as the welcome and embrace among strangers rooted in God’s own hospitality with each of us, and highlights the importance of the church’s own empathic memory of having once been strangers, of remaining vulnerable and open to the God-sent stranger, and of right relations and interdependence within God’s household. Understood through the abundance of God’s hospitality, these elements may be deepened in praxis to a voluntary movement to the margins, a stance of availability and readiness, and relationship through solidarity and mutuality.37

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by situating Latino/a immigration to the U.S. within the global phenomenon, and drawing attention to the changes that are imminent in parish life. Latino/s account for approximately seventy-one percent of the growth of the U.S. Catholic population since 1960.38 As a just-released report from Boston College’s School of Theology and Ministry39 makes clear, “[c]onsidering current demographic trends and the steady growth and

influence of Hispanic Catholicism,” what is happening at parishes with Hispanic ministry today “provide[s] us with a glimpse of what U.S. Catholicism will likely be in vast regions of the country—at least during the first half of the twenty-first century.”

While a theology of migration must, therefore, necessarily be tentative, it sets down theological markers that may serve as “cairns” or guideposts for the journey ahead.

Chapter 1

Rhetoric, Framing, and Immigration: A Critical Review

Introduction

As it is in many other places in the world, immigration in the United States is a deeply contentious issue, one marked by divisiveness and discord. Two iconic images are at war with each other: the Statue of Liberty, whose plaque proudly proclaims her the “Mother of Exiles,” extending a welcome to the tired, the poor, the huddled masses—even the “wretched refuse”; 1 and the costly and imposing wall erected at various points along the 1,950 miles of shared border between the United States and Mexico. For those desperate enough to try to cross this border at the remaining unfenced points, the treacherous and harsh terrain of the Sonoran Desert awaits, where an estimated 371 human lives—more than one per day—are lost each year2 in the increasingly dangerous crossing, lives which are considered collateral damage in the efforts to secure U.S. borders.3 The specter of porous and non-secure borders overrun by lawless

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1. The sonnet “The New Colossus” was written by Emma Lazarus in 1883, and engraved and mounted on the Statue of Liberty some time later.

2. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), “Southwest Border Sectors: Southwest Border Deaths by Fiscal Year (October 1st through September 30th),” http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/border_security/border_patrol/usbp_statistics/usbp_fy12_stats/border_patrol_fy12_stats/border_patrol_fy12_stats_web_table.pdf (accessed 15 October 2013). Because the CBP only counts bodies found under their authority, the number of deaths is understated, and represents a conservative estimate of deaths. The report counts deaths between 1998 and 2012. In 2012, there were 463 deaths, the second highest of the report.

immigrants from Mexico haunts public and political discourse,\textsuperscript{4} contributing to a rising tide of alarmist polemics, which only the perceived comfort of a militarized and fortified border and talks of mass deportations can quell.\textsuperscript{5} Despite being known as a nation of immigrants, it is increasingly apparent that a significant tension surrounds that deeply-ingrained image, resulting in distrust and ambivalence towards the nation’s most recent newcomers. More and more often, Latino/a residents—regardless of their citizenship or documented/undocumented status—suffer from the trifecta of racism, classism, and nativism.

It is not the story of the strength and resiliency displayed by the immigrants in the face of these challenges that captivates the American public’s attention; nor is there much public outrage about the human rights abuses, deaths, mutilations, and dangers that the immigrants encounter on a regular basis. Instead, the discussion is dominated by narratives that portray the immigrants as dangerous, destructive, and problematic, using metaphors of criminals, animals, floods, and pollutants. Often based on deeply-embedded racial assumptions, these representations construct a negative and dehumanizing portrayal of the immigrant, and place the immigrant in binary opposition to the citizenry. The ubiquitous moniker “illegal alien” stands as the most telling


example, with its connotations that the immigrant is hostile, opposed to the law, an outsider who is willfully criminal.  

What is sometimes lost are the subtler and more insidious ways in which this rhetoric weaves its way into the collective imagination, so as to produce an unthinking acceptance and reinforcement of the negative and dehumanizing attitudes towards immigrants. Representations take on a life of their own and seem somehow “natural,” with participants unconscious of the power and manipulation at play.  

Ironically, in the United States, such framing has functioned to cast the vulnerable immigrant as the aggressor and those in the dominant culture as victims. Increasingly, ethicists, theologians, cognitive linguists, and social scientists point to the impact of the powerful rhetoric on public consciousness and decision-making, and on the way it feeds a growing xenophobia. Heyer, for example, contends that conceptions about immigrants have been amplified and distorted towards fear and demonization; and ethicist Dana Wilbanks points out the virulent scapegoating and racist sentiments that surround immigrant discourse. Scapegoating and xenophobia, in turn, manifest themselves in an escalation of hate crimes; the clamorous

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6. It should be noted that, despite the fact that the word “illegal” refers to an action rather than a person, it was not until late spring, 2013, that the Associated Press (AP), with a number of major newspapers to follow, recommended against the use of the term, “illegal alien” in its style manual. See Sydney Smith, “People are not Illegal, Only Their Actions, Says New AP Style Book Entry,” April 4, 2013, Mediaethics, http://www.imediaethics.org/News/3853/People_are_not_illegal__only_their_actions__says_new_ap_style_book_entry.php (accessed 12 February 2014); see also Paul Colford, Associated Press, http://blog.ap.org/2013/04/02/illegal-immigrant-no-more/ (last accessed 12 February 2014). The even more divisive and reductive shorthand version of “illegals” for “illegal immigrants” or “illegal aliens” is used regularly by mainstream newscasters, senators, neighbors, and relatives.


9. As the immigration debate escalated, the Washington Post reported a 40 percent increase in anti-Hispanic hate crimes between 2003 and 2007. See Spencer S. Hsu, “Hate Crimes Rise as Immigration Debate Heats Up,” Washington Post (June 15,
calls for border fortification; a seeming complacency towards the mutilations, rapes, and frequent anguishing deaths that mark the journey northward;\textsuperscript{10} the easy talk of mass deportations; and a conflation of the image of immigrant with terrorist.

So powerful are these representations, and so pervasive their influence, that there is little to distinguish a specifically Christian or Catholic response to immigration from the more widespread American one. In fact, as stated above, Heyer reports that, when voting, one’s tax bracket, cultural assumptions, or party loyalty often takes priority over one’s faith or moral formation.\textsuperscript{11} This was proven true in the case of the anti-immigrant Proposition 187 in California, which contained “some of the most virulent racist discourse in the history of the United States.”\textsuperscript{12} Despite vocal opposition by the Pope and then Archbishop Roger Mahoney, white Roman Catholic voters in California resoundingly approved the proposition.\textsuperscript{13}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Heyer states, “The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled that the deaths of nearly 2,000 migrants from Mexico and Central America offer the strongest evidence that the United States continues to violate human rights by employing Operation Gatekeeper.” See Heyer, \textit{Kinship Across Borders}, 18.
\item See Introduction, n. 7, supra.
\item Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders: Rhetoric, Immigration, and California’s Proposition 187} (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 3. Proposition 187, formally entitled the “Save Our State” initiative, sought to make those in the U.S. without documentation ineligible for public services, such as social services, health care services, excluding emergencies, and public school education; to require various state and local agencies to report those suspected of being in the U.S. illegally; and to make it a felony to manufacture, distribute, or sell false citizenship or residence documents. See Ono and Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders}, Appendix, 169-84, for excerpts from the ballot, analysis of the proposition, and arguments in favor of and against the proposition. The proposition passed on November 8, 1994, by a 2-1 margin, with the support of then-governor Pete Wilson and a coalition of nativist Californians, but major provisions of it were overturned in District Court in 1998. In the fall of 2000, the proposition remained a well-publicized issue, this time receiving negative publicity for those who passed it six years earlier. For a more detailed explanation of the bill, see Hugh Mehan, “The Discourse of the Illegal Immigration Debate: A Case Study in the Politics of Representation,” \textit{Discourse & Society} 8, no. 2 (1997): 249-270, at 254-58.
\item Mehan, “The Politics of Representation,” 265. Mehan notes that, although Catholic voters overall opposed the proposal by a 51 to 49 percent margin, non-Latino white Catholics voted in favor of it by 59 to 41 percent, a margin almost identical to the statewide margin of 58 percent in favor, 42 percent opposed.
\end{enumerate}
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Why has the message of xenophobia proved so much more persuasive than Christianity’s own narrative and ethic of welcome? In this chapter, I want to accomplish three things: (1) to clearly demonstrate the power and persuasion of immigration rhetoric and identify the distortions and objectifications it creates and perpetuates; (2) to illustrate the way that an unthinking acceptance of them can serve to override or assuage the expected hue and cry against the mistreatment of immigrants; and (3) to unmask these constructions, thereby depriving them of their power and influence. Until this is done, even well-meaning Christians will unconsciously re-inscribe the notions of privilege and exclusion hidden within them, thereby serving as unwitting accomplices.

The chapter will be organized around two major discussions. First, it will provide a brief exposition of discourse theory, which studies the way that discourse and language function to make sense of the world and thus guide perceptions and understandings. The chapter begins here in order to demonstrate the vast influence of discourse over the way people imagine themselves, others, and their world, and consequently the way in which they respond and proceed. Second, the content and substance of that discourse will be examined using specific examples, case studies, and analysis provided by cognitive linguists, discourse analysts, and sociologists. As discourse analyst Teun A. van Dijk has demonstrated, and as Catholic social doctrine also

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14. Teun A. van Dijk, *Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Productions, 1987), 40-1. Van Dijk also argues that both racism and ideology are reproduced by social practices and especially by discourse (23-24, 30), and *idem*, “Ideologies, Racism, and Discourse: Debates on Immigration and Ethnic Issues,” in *Comparative Perspectives on Racism*, eds. Jessika Ter Wal and Maykel Verkuyten, European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Utrecht University (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2000), 91-115, at 92. In his study on the way in which ethnic prejudices are expressed, communicated, and shared within the dominant, White ingroup, and thus the way in which racism is reproduced in society, van Dijk offers these prevailing commonalities about the representation of race in the press: (a) ethnic minorities are also minorities in the press; (b) many of the dominant topics are directly or more subtly associated with problems, difficulties, or threats to the dominant values, interests, goals, or culture; (c) ethnic events are consistently described from a White, majority point of view, in which the authorities are given more space and credibility than minority spokespersons; (d) topics that are relevant for the ordinary life of ethnic groups are hardly discussed in the press, unless they lead to “problems” for society as a whole; and (e) racism is systematically underreported. See van Dijk, *Communicating Racism*, 44-5.
teaches, news media plays a primary—and probably unsurpassed—role in the construction of the dominant consensus. Therefore, the construals contained therein will be my focus. Here we will find an arsenal of dehumanizing and sinful rhetoric, reductive representations, and problematic social constructions.

As I will argue in later chapters, hospitality offers the capacity to create a place for each other, to bridge difference, and to serve as a challenge to the prevailing powers and principalities as well as a catalyst for transformation. Thus, it will be proposed as an antidote to the hegemonic “othering” process that constructs and fortifies binaries. First, however, it is necessary to clearly articulate and analyze the forces at play in this process, especially those that have received less attention. This chapter will therefore serve as a point of departure for the larger thesis. The goal of this chapter is to lay bare the way the rhetoric serves to advance dominant ideologies and reinforces prejudices and cultural fears. It will help to illustrate the importance of unmasking and undermining these constructs, and for the need to offer a prophetic intervention and counternarrative to them in ways that lead to solidarity, mutuality, and a more just and compassionate society.

I. Narrative, Metaphor, and Rhetoric in Public Discourse

Calling the world of communications “the first Areopagus of the modern age,” Pope John Paul II clearly recognized its power and potential when he wrote, “The means of social communications have become so important as to be for many the chief means of information and

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education, of guidance and inspiration in their behavior as individuals, families and within
society at large.”

To a large extent, this “discourse,” influenced by the broader context, history of ideas, laws, narratives, myths and knowledge production in which it is embedded, determines the appropriateness, “truth,” relevance, and usefulness of the knowledge that is constructed about a certain subject, as well as the practices and conduct associated with it.

Noting the “striking pastoral implications” associated with the media’s influence over and “conditioning” of human experience, the Pontifical Council on Social Communication’s [PCSC] pastoral instruction, Aetatis Novae [AN] goes on to say:

Indeed, the power of media extends to defining not only what people will think but even what they will think about. Reality, for many, is what the media recognize as real; what media do not acknowledge seems of little importance. Thus de facto silence can be imposed upon individuals and groups whom the media ignore; and even the voice of the Gospel can be muted, though not entirely stilled, in this way.

With this cautionary note in mind, they continue to emphasize media’s “fundamental reshaping” of the way that people understand, analyze, and express what they comprehend. From its intercontinental sweep, to the nonstop accessibility of images and ideas, media’s reach and scope is enormous. This has “profound consequences” for the psychological, moral, and social


18. Although discourse can have a number of different connotations, this study will consider the material content of the discourse, in that it will examine studies that concentrate on the quantifiable pieces of verbal text expressed in speech or print. See Otto Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 8. Such communication events may include conversation; newspaper genres such as news reports, editorials, etc.; legislative debating; novels; advertising; scientific expressions in journals and textbooks; and film. Language is also a subset of social practice; thus, Santa Ana observes that analysis also utilizes critical discourse theory, which draws on the work of Antonio Gramsci and the traditions of the Frankfurt School, and interweaves several interests, among them, the possibility of knowledge and an analysis of operations that conceal unjust social practices that reinforce inequalities and reproduce societal dominance. For a more detailed discussion, see Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 16-21.


20. AN, no. 4.

21. AN, no. 4.
development of individuals and society itself. Media has the potential to influence the “perception and transmission of values, world views, ideologies, and religious beliefs,” and can also be the vehicle of a “deformed outlook on life, . . . that does not respect the true dignity and destiny of the human person.”

In this section, I provide a more detailed and theoretical explanation of the way in which three elements of discourse—metaphor, narrative, and framing—help to construct our knowledge and worldview, producing taken-for-granted understandings that assume the force of truth. Because these constructed images/ideas are then invoked by media, commentators, informed sources, and in public opinion to support arguments and justify actions, it is important to make evident their constructed nature, the authority that surrounds them, and their consequent capacity to shape hearts and minds.

A. Metaphors and Narratives

Metaphors are among our principal vehicles for understanding. They are devices for seeing something in terms of something else, and humans utilize them to both grasp and articulate abstract or complex concepts. Metaphors, thus, give structure and coherence to our present reality. As professor of Chicano/a studies and sociologist Otto Santa Ana explains, metaphors are not merely rhetorical flourishes, but “the mental brick and mortar with which people build their understanding of the social world.” Once we begin to understand our reality

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22. AN, no. 4.
26. Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, 115. They provide the example of “time is money,” and the way humans speak of “spending” time together, “wasting” time on something, whether something is “worth” the time spent, etc.
27. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, xvi.
in terms of the metaphor, it alters our conceptual system and we act in accord with the new system.

Because they provide a basis for comprehension, however, people often forget that “the semantic associations created by metaphors are wholly contingent, not natural.”28 Acceptance of the metaphor compels someone to select some facets as “important,” thus emphasizing certain aspects of reality and obscuring others, which in turn reinforces those aspects of reality that are deemed to be “true.”29 As such, metaphors can become self-fulfilling prophecies, particularly when advanced by those in power, like political, business, or religious leaders, advertisers, or the media, in such a way that the metaphors take on the myth of objectivism, and with it the aura of truth.30 The representations assume a life of their own, and seem somehow natural and self-evident, and participants become unconscious of the power and manipulation at play. Thus, cognitive linguist J. David Cisneros emphasizes the metaphor’s power to shape society’s treatment of immigrants and the governmental policies designed to respond to them.31 He writes, “[a]s repositories of cultural understandings, [metaphors] are some of the principal tools with which dominant ideologies and prejudices are represented and reinforced.”32 One pertinent example to be discussed below is the fact that metaphors of criminal and illegality are evoked in

29. Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, 157.
30. Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, 156-160.
31. Cisneros, “Immigrant as Pollutant,” 569-70. There is ample related research on the way in which metaphors produce meaning via the interaction of two images. See, for example, Lakoff and Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, and Burke, A Grammar of Motives, 503. A significant body of work exists that concludes that mediated representations of immigrants have been influential in the shaping of attitudes, behaviors, and policies towards immigration. See, for example, Lisa Lowe, Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); C.R. Hofstetter and B. Loveman, “Media Exposure and Attitude Consistency about Immigration,” Journalism Quarterly 59 (1982): 293-302; and J. J. Miller, “Immigration, the Press, and the New Racism,” Media Studies Journal 8 (1994): 19-28. There is disagreement between scholars as to the extent that discourse explicitly impels practice; however, scholars do agree that the connection between them merits attention. On one side of the spectrum, Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 5, argue that rhetoric has the capacity to shift borders, “changing what they mean publicly, influencing public policy, altering the ways borders affect people, and circumscribing political responses.” Lisa A. Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders: Peons, Illegal Aliens, and Competing Narratives of Immigration,” Critical Studies in Media Communication 20, no. 4 (December 2003): 362-87, at 365, is more cautionary about making explicit causal connections, but nevertheless concludes that the connection merits our critical attention.
the vast majority of news stories about immigrants, while the same stories rarely mention the
political and economic forces that create the conditions for migration.

Narratives and stories function similarly to metaphors. We have long recognized that the
“narrative quality of human experience” gives it order and coherence. Narratives can, in fact,
serve as a kind of extended metaphor, and, like metaphors, they exercise a substantial power in
public discourse. Narrative is also linked closely to identity, which, as philosopher Richard
Kearney explains, is fundamentally narrative in nature. It is the stories we tell—about ourselves
and about our relationships with others—that form not only our individual but our collective
identities. Simply put, when someone asks you who you are, you tell them a story. Weaving
together archetypes and mythic elements, storytelling provides explanations for past events and
conveys the underlying ideology of a culture and its values. In fact, philosopher Stephen Crites
avers that story-telling is one of our most important cultural expressions.

As such, it is by no means an innocent process, for the narrative produces its own
selective ordering of events that informs that which is contained therein. It also establishes a
“public vocabulary” or social group ideology that provides the rationale for who we are, how we
are, and what we value. Thus, Communications and Ethnic Studies professor Lisa A. Flores
observes that one of the most compelling characteristics of a narrative is its seductiveness. It

33. Stephen Crites, “The Narrative Quality of Experience,” Journal of American Academy of Religion 39, no. 3 (September
creates a vision of a social world and invites others to participate in it.  Then, as stories are told and retold, they not only form and reform identity, but make a world and a future in which to live. As time passes, the public gives its assent to the narrative, and begins to take the underlying ideology for granted, developing a “narrative fidelity” to the social narratives and myths, and imbuing them with “social credibility.” So powerful is the narrative’s influence, Crites writes, that it requires an undermining of or traumatic change to one’s story, identification with a new story, and a reorientation to that story, to effect a conversion or social revolution.

Sociologist Robin Cohen, for example, notes that the language used to construct the argument against immigrants is evocative of “puritan Rome being overwhelmed by a mass of barbarians.” This creates a “demonology about alien migrants” that depends on the characterization that they constitute an “uncontrollable ‘invasion’ – a ‘horde.’” He writes, “Numbers are exaggerated and negative individual characteristics are attributed to all migrants. Migrants are supposed to exhibit criminal traits, evade taxes, yet make exorbitant claims on welfare medical services and housing, provide a cultural threat to mainstream North American values and deprive US workers of jobs that are rightfully theirs.” He continues that this stigmatization is widely shared in the press, in some sectors of organized labour, and is given legitimacy by the state and its agencies.

44. Crites, “Narrative Quality of Experience,” 307.
Narratives have a social force, which also extends to the narrative’s agents, acts, scenes, agencies, or purposes. Narratives therefore have the capacity to alter an audience’s perception of a series of events, and, in the case of competing cultural narratives, those who speak from positions of privilege can much more readily make their position appear to be the norm. In the U.S., for example, it is the dominant culture who hold the position of privilege; thus, immigration is most often analyzed through the lens of sovereignty, national security, or national interest. Because mass media can exacerbate social problems, the PCSC offers a reminder to bring a critical sense animated by a passion for the truth to an examination of the media, in line with the duty to respect the dignity of individuals and elevate the authentic culture of peoples.

B. Framing

That critical sense is particularly essential when it comes to framing, whose specific intention is to “mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists.” While metaphors and narratives may and certainly do exercise power and influence, it often happens more organically. Framing, on the other hand, exercises a strategic intentionality in choosing, refining, or developing metaphors, narratives, and models to organize, portray, or give structure and thematic meaning to a topic. In other words, knowing

51. AN, no. 13.
53. See W. Lance Bennett, News: The Politics of Illusion (New York: Pearson, 2007), 38, for a discussion on the way in which this contributes to a fragmented and confused understanding.
the power of metaphor and narrative, the process of framing deliberately utilizes them, triggering and reinforcing certain known and durable associations, to produce meaning and influence the public.\textsuperscript{54}

According to Professor of Journalism and Public Policy Roberto Suro, the media exercises considerable influence on the public in the area of framing,\textsuperscript{55} setting the agenda for what is important and how it is to be understood. He offers an example that helps to demonstrate the frequency, consistency, and persistence of negative framing about immigration. He notes that, in a content analysis study that examined 80,000 news stories or commentaries between 1980 and 2008, the narrative of illegality became the framework of choice over 80 percent of the time, and concludes that “the cumulative portrait drawn by nearly 30 years of journalism emphasizes illegal or uncontrolled migration rather than the much larger movement of people that has been legal and orderly.”\textsuperscript{56}

Framing is, therefore, “deeply embroiled” in the politics of meaning and signification.\textsuperscript{57} However, framing is also subject to significant influence from the cultural and political context in which it is embedded, fashioned, and interpreted, especially its meanings, beliefs, and ideologies. Framing must resonate with its audience to be effective; therefore, audiences consider its consistency and saliency, as well as the status and perceived expertise of those doing the communicating.\textsuperscript{58} They also consider the extent to which the framing is commensurate with their own personal experience, and how essential the beliefs, values, and ideas conveyed are to their

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\textsuperscript{54} For fuller explanations, see, FrameWorks Institute, “Changing the Public Conversation;” Gilliam, “Framing Immigration Reform;” and Reese, et al., Framing Public Life.


\textsuperscript{56} Suro, \textit{The Triumph of No}, 24.

\textsuperscript{57} Benford and Snow, “Framing Social Movements,” 625. Framing may be used to articulate certain ideas, but also to amplify them, to strategically link together previously unconnected ideas, to embellish or invigorate certain values or beliefs, to enlist more adherents, or to introduce counterframing or new understandings through contestations (623-27).

\textsuperscript{58} Benford and Snow, “Framing Social Movements,” 620-22.
own lives. Finally, following Fisher’s concept of narrative fidelity, above, target audiences question whether what they are being told coincides with their cultural narratives, myths, beliefs, and values.\textsuperscript{59} When it does, or when the framing agent is perceived as credible, the capacity for framing to achieve its objectives increases accordingly.

C. Discourse as Influence

As we have seen, these rhetorical constructs therefore have considerable bearing on society’s perceptions and actions, and exercise far-reaching influence over the way in which humans respond and proceed. When public discourse utilizes framing to evoke narrative communal identity and combines it with powerful metaphors, the results are potent indeed. That is how a small group like the Minuteman Project, discussed below, garnered so much attention. They publicized their citizen patrols using patriotic symbolism, then aroused national sentiment by portraying the nation as under attack by immigrants characterized as terrorists, criminals, and enemies, all to broadcast the ostensible need for border fortification.

There is a growing interest among theologians and ethicists concerning the way in which these rhetorical constructs have bearing on society’s perceptions of and actions towards immigrants. Heyer, for example, cautions that the “construals of migration that govern public discourse reductively limit and obscure the complex reality of migration.”\textsuperscript{60} Biblical scholar M. Daniel Carroll speaks of “red flag language” that causes discussions to degenerate into unfruitful diatribes\textsuperscript{61} and ethicist Donald Kerwin condemns arguments based on nativist fears or national interest.\textsuperscript{62} Indeed, by their pervasiveness and embeddedness, rhetorical constructs weave a web

\textsuperscript{59} See note 42, supra.
\textsuperscript{61} Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 27.
\textsuperscript{62} Kerwin, “Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty,” 93 and 99.
of understanding that coopts other understandings. The consistency in their construction, and the way in which they have been used to justify racial categorization and exclusion, among other sinful practices, merits further attention.\textsuperscript{63} Further, rhetorical theory, via its daily participation in civic and political life, offers opportunities to mediate relationships and meanings in a social world,\textsuperscript{64} a scope that has significant ramifications for theology in the public sphere. At stake is the power to shape the narrative, and so control the perceived truth.\textsuperscript{65}

A significant body of interdisciplinary research exists that investigates the mediated public discourse\textsuperscript{66} surrounding Latino/a immigration to the U.S., and analyzes its history, the ideological forces that produce it, and the embedded discourse of race that often fuels it. This chapter will turn now in more specificity to that research, utilizing rhetorical criticism and descriptive analysis to examine the primary forces at play in the national discourse, integrating the work of social scientists, Chicano/a Studies scholars, communication specialists, theologians, and ethicists. It will pay special attention to practices that dehumanize or objectify immigrants, that naturalize the dominant culture as normal, healthy and civilized, and estrange the migrant as dangerous, sick, or destructive,\textsuperscript{67} and that legitimate the role of prevailing society as judge and jury, with the power to decide the perception and fate of the immigrant.

\textsuperscript{63} Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders,” 381-2. Flores traces the consistency of the narrative portrayal of Mexican immigrants from the 1920s and 1930s first as docile peon laborers and later as dangerous and criminal aliens.

\textsuperscript{64} Ono and Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders}, 7.

\textsuperscript{65} Ono and Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders}, 2.

\textsuperscript{66} Ono and Sloop also refer to public discourse as “civic discourse” to signify discourses meant to provide information for a large population of people in general rather than “vernacular discourse” aimed at members of small, self-identified communities. Ono and Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders}, 12-13. Civic or public discourse includes newspaper or magazine articles, TV shows from major networks, and the content of public debates, advertisements, etc.

II. Analysis of Public Discourse on Latin American Immigration

Scholarly literature has examined the public shaping of immigration via public discourse on both the national stage, and through the well-publicized and acrimonious debate over California’s anti-immigrant Proposition 187. While this literature will be discussed in some detail below, a preliminary snapshot here will help to orient the discussion. The media studies identify the repetition of certain rhetorical tropes and powerful metaphors, which may be broadly categorized as “immigration as a problem or social ill” and “immigrants as either objects or threats.”

There is, for example, a “hauntingly consistent” uniformity in the vocabulary referring to immigrants as “illegal aliens,” so much so that scholars believe a comprehensive accounting of it would merit a project all its own. During the Proposition 187 campaign, the term was used within the proposition itself to invoke, in the words of Mehan, “images of foreign, repulsive, threatening, or even extra-terrestrial beings. The proposition was aimed, therefore, not at ‘people

68. This section will consider and integrate the findings of scholarly literature concerning the representations of immigration/immigrants in public discourse. The studies encompass both analysis of national media coverage of immigration, including news agencies, newspapers, and magazines; as well as analysis of news coverage, debates, and the rhetoric surrounding California’s Proposition 187. The studies differ in scope and aim; therefore, in some cases, they share similar data and conclusions, and in others, they have different trajectories. It is not my intention to reconcile their findings but to review these studies to illuminate the way in which these representations have shaped the national conversation.

69. This proposition, detailed in fn. 12, above, spurred widespread public debate about immigration. For this reason, as well as the fact that California has often served as the forerunner and source for other national activism and nativist rhetoric, scholars study the language and discourse used in the debate there to better understand its role in shaping the social climate and race relations. For a more detailed discussion, see Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 6, and Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 2-3. See also Keith Aoiki, “No Right to Own? The Early Twentieth-Century ‘Alien Land Laws’ as a Prelude to Internment,” Boston College Third World Law Journal 19, issue 1 (Dec. 1998):37-72, http://lawdigitalcommons.bc.edu/twlj/vol19/iss1/5 (last accessed 27 June 2014), on the virulent xenophobia and racial nativism that impacted the legal rights of Asian Americans; and George Lipsitz, “California: The Mississippi of the 1990s,” in The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), who draws parallels between the racism of Mississippi during the 1960s and California of the 1990s; and calls attention to California’s role in anti-Chinese lobbies, the denial of Native American rights, the denial of Mexicans and Mexicanos’ legal rights, limitation of labor options, and the promulgation of racial stereotypes; and the denial of African Americans’ right to vote, own property, hold public office, or testify against whites (see pp. 229-31).


71. Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders,” 363. As noted above, in fn. 6, it was not until April, 2013, that the Associated Press mandated in their Stylebook that the term “illegal” could not describe a person, only an action.

72. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 30.
like us’, who are ‘law abiding’ and ‘tax-paying citizens’. It was aimed at foreigners, people from outside our world, who are invading and threatening our lives, ‘the quality of our life’.”

Three studies analyzing the content of news stories, and looking at large samplings of content spanning at least twenty-five years, found illegality to be the theme of the story a minimum of seventy-nine percent of the time. Although Suro observes that institutional bias draws journalists to stories about breaking the law, he concludes that such a dominating pattern of coverage “would logically cause the public and policymakers to associate the influx of the foreign-born with violations of the law, disruption of social norms, and government failures.”

In a similar vein, anthropologist Leo R. Chavez observes that, “if there has been one constant in . . . public discourse on national security, it has been the alleged threat to the nation posed by Mexican and other Latin America immigration and the growing number of Americans of Mexican descent in the United States,” which he characterizes as the “Latino Threat Narrative,” and which will be discussed in more detail below. Social scientists report a widespread perception in the United States that immigrants, especially Latino/a immigrants—despite their apparent vulnerability—are dangerous, destructive to the nation’s social cohesion and identity, harmful to the economy, and threatening to the rule of law. Analyzing the

74. See Roberto Suro, “Introduction,” in Writing Immigration: Scholars and Journalists in Dialogue, eds. Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco, et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 1-18, at 10-11, who analyzed the content of 80,000 news stories between 1980 and 2008, and found illegality to be the frame for the story 80% of the time. Suro concludes that “the cumulative portrait drawn by nearly 30 years of journalism emphasizes illegal or uncontrolled migration rather than the much larger movement of people that has been legal and orderly.” A review of 1,848 Associated Press stories spanning over twenty-five (1980-2007) years found the framework 79% of the time. Suro describes as well the way in which the narrative of illegality gained popularity in the mid-2000s among conservative advocacy journalists, spurring a heightened media focus, as well as a host of inaccurate accusations levelled against immigrants, ranging from burglaries to leprosy, that went largely unchallenged by the mainstream media. See also Suro, The Triumph of No, 24. Finally, a third study reviewed 2,614 stories on immigration in the New York Times over the same period, which referenced illegality in 86% of the stories (Suro, “Introduction,” 10-11).
77. Cisneros, “Immigrant as Pollutant,” 573. The portrayal of immigrants as dangerous is not new. For an example of the way in which immigrants were negatively portrayed in the 1920s and 1930s, see Flores, “Constructing Rhetorical Borders.” Flores argues that the consistency in construction merits sustained attention in light of the way in which they have justified the racial categorization and exclusion of so many peoples (381-2).
specific nature of the threat as it pertains to the “ideograph”78 of “the nation,” and membership therein, American Studies and Asian Professor Kent A. Ono and Communications Studies Professor John M. Sloop find characterizations as economic units, criminals, and general health threats, using metaphors of pollution, infection, and infestation.79 Examining and cataloging the metaphorical language used to describe immigrants and immigration during the Proposition 187 debate, Santa Ana identifies “immigration as dangerous waters” as the dominant metaphor.80

Finally, two studies examine the visual images used. In a study of magazine covers spanning thirty-five years, Chavez notes that, while there is a general trend from positive to more alarming imagery, those that reference Mexican immigration have been and remain “overwhelmingly alarmist.”81 Cisneros studies the pictures that accompany news stories which, because of their association with news sources are understood to be authentic and objective “evidence.”82 These “visual metaphors” characterize immigration as crime waves, invasions, and as a dangerous pollutant.83

78. Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 189-90, n. 3. Following rhetorical theorist Michael McGee, they define “ideographs” as “culturally resonant terms that stand in for collective understandings because they are high order, abstract concepts that can be invoked (and filled with meaning) in public arguments.” Ideographs cannot be separated from their past, nor from the culture and discourses in which they are found; therefore, those factors always influence the present understanding of ideographs. See also Michael Calvin McGee, “The Ideograph: A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, issue 1 (1980): 1-16.


80. Santa Ana’s research team compiled a database from hundreds of *Los Angeles Times* articles that appeared between 1992 to 1998, believing that newspaper to be the most influential source of the public’s social climate. Articles were analyzed for nonliteral expressions, which were then labeled, cataloged, and interpreted in light of cognitive science theories on how humans understand the world. For a more detailed explanation of the methodology, see Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 49, 56-9. The *Los Angeles Times* was a major source of data on language surrounding Proposition 187. According to Ono and Sloop, who write that they believe the *Los Angeles Times* printed more articles about Proposition 187 than any other mainstream daily newspaper, it published 331 articles between 24 July 1994 and 29 September 1995 using 28 different reporters. See Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 44, fn. 2.

81. Leo R. Chavez, *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 2001), 215. The study examines covers spanning thirty-five years. Covers dealing more generally with immigration also show a trend away from affirmative presentations and towards alarmist imagery (23-4).


Before turning to a more detailed review of the findings, it should be recognized that racism has been and remains a significant but often unmentioned factor in conversations about immigration. As sociologist Joe R. Feagin observes, beginning in the seventeenth century, a “racialized framework of otherness has shaped Euro-American attempts to exclude or oppress” groups, including Chinese and Japanese immigrants and Mexican immigrants as they were brought in for cheap labor.\(^{84}\) However, in my analysis, I present neither a history nor a comprehensive analysis of racial formation in the United States, but understand it to undergird, either explicitly or implicitly, much of the public rhetoric described below.\(^{85}\)

A. The Latino Threat Narrative

The “Latino Threat Narrative” portrays Latinos/as as an invading force from the south determined to reclaim the U.S. Southwest, and applies to both Latino/a immigrants and Mexican Americans.\(^{86}\) According to Chavez, it began in the 1970s, amplifying the already existing association of Latinos/as with criminality and illegality.\(^{87}\) Chavez locates this narrative within the larger series of threat narratives that emerged to target immigrant groups when they arrived


\(^{85}\) For critical insights into this issue, see Michael Omi and Howard Winnat, Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s (New York: Routledge, 1992). Cf. Mehan, “The Politics of Representation,” 251-2, who makes the point that “[p]articipants in discourse seldom choose strategies from a roster of alternatives; they most often use discourse strategies quite unintentionally.” Thus, he notes that, while discourse strategies are neither inherently racist nor stratifying, they may serve those functions and often undergird non-discursive practices, such as discrimination or aggression, thus help us to understand structures of inequality in society.


\(^{87}\) Chavez, Latino Threat, 26.
in the U.S., and generated such actions as anti-immigrant rhetoric and protests, violence against immigrants, internment, and deportation.\(^8^8\) The Latino Threat Narrative, however, has a longevity and pervasiveness not shared by other anti-immigrant discourses, which marks Latinos as the “quintessential ‘illegal aliens,’” unwilling or unable to integrate. With its taken-for-granted truths and unquestioned motives, this narrative permeates discussions surrounding immigration, even when it is not specifically mentioned.

Another elaboration surfaced in the 1970s, called the “Quebec model,” which posits that, like the Quebeccois independence movement with its strong cultural cohesiveness, Mexican immigrants may insist upon maintaining their own linguistic and cultural conclaves, thereby creating national divisiveness.\(^8^9\) The Quebec model was often combined with the reconquest theme, which warned that the “staggering influx of foreign settlers,”\(^9^0\) together with separatist inclinations, would lead to a reconquest of the Southwest by those who “claim ancestral homelands in the Southwest.”\(^9^1\) Chavez reports that, beginning in the 1990s, the dual theme of Mexican invasion and conquest “were at the heart of a veritable publishing industry that emerged, playing on the public’s fears of immigration,”\(^9^2\) with books by both nationally

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\(^8^8\) Chavez, *Latino Threat*, 2-3.

\(^8^9\) Chavez, *Latino Threat*, 26-34. Chavez provides a number of examples to illustrate this theme; for example, in the *New Republic*, April 1, 1985, House majority leader Jim Wright expressed concern over “a Balkanization of American society into little subcultures,” (25) while Richard Lamm, the ex-governor of Colorado, worried that immigration would result in “a vast separatism” and that children of immigrants would “express their outrage at this country” via “secessionist” riots in the Southwest (25). See Chavez, *Latino Threat*, 30.

\(^9^0\) Chavez, *Latino Threat*, 29. Chavez cites a *Time* article of June 13, 1983, entitled “The New Ellis Island,” which warned that “Los Angeles is being invaded,” (18) causing a dramatic change in the ethnic composition of Los Angeles, and contending that Mexicans arrived feeling like a “reconquistador” rather than an illegal alien or immigrant.

\(^9^1\) Chavez, *Latino Threat*, 30. Here, Chavez cites the August 19, 1985, issue of *U.S. News and World Report*, whose cover questioned, “The Disappearing Border: Will the Mexican Migration Create a New Nation?” The corresponding article, entitled “The Disappearing Border,” begins, “Now sounds the march of new conquistadors in the American Southwest,” and continues, “The heirs of Cortés and Coronado are rising again in the land their forbears took from the Indians and lost to the Americans. . . . At the vanguard are those born here, whose roots are generations deep, who long endured Anglo dominance and rule and who are ascending within the U.S. system to take power they consider their birthright.”

recognized conservative politicians and respected academics. A recurring subtheme is the failure/inability/refusal of Mexican immigrants—unlike previous immigrants to the U.S.—to assimilate, which, because of their large numbers, will “change America.” Chavez observes that it “became an acceptable part of public discourse even among otherwise learned scholars” to portray Latinas/os as “alien-citizens, perpetual foreigners with divided allegiances,” a portrayal that became even more pronounced after the events of September 11, 2001, when the U.S.-Mexico border was presented as a potential entryway for possible terrorists.

Chavez speaks of the “mind-numbing repetition” in the unified representations of Latinos by pundits, authors, and scholars, as “a people who will not and cannot become part of U.S. society.” He does so in order to convey a “true sense of the degree to which the narratives of invasion, reconquest, and the Quebec model have become taken-for-granted assumptions about the threat posed by Mexican immigrants, by Mexican Americans with multiple generations in the United States, and at time all Latinos.” Once they are taken for granted, those assumptions become internalized as part of the hegemonic discourse that passively or actively supports the established order and the class interests that dominate it. As Benedict Anderson recognizes, members of a nation imagine themselves as a community, even though they cannot know the

93. Chavez details some of the many books that have been published since the early 1990s: Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Disuniting of America; Peter Brimelow’s Alien Nation; Georgie Anne Geyer’s Americans No More; Patrick J. Buchanan’s Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization and State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America; Victor Davis Hanson’s Mexifornia: A State of Becoming; Samuel Huntington’s Who We Are: The Challenges to America’s National Identity; Tom Tancredo’s In Mortal Danger; and Jerome R. Corsi’s The Minutemen: The Battle to Secure America’s Borders.


96. Chavez, Latino Threat, 40-1.

97. Chavez, Latino Threat, 41.
majority of the members, and in spite of the actual inequality or exploitation that might be present between them. The discursive construction described above effectively places Latinos/as outside of the “imagined” national community.

Other binaries follow the insider/outsider binary: citizen/foreigner, real Americans/“Mexicans” or real Americans/“Hispanics,” natives/enemies, us/them, legitimate/illegal. Because danger and impurity are often associated with outsiders or something or someone who is “out of place,” the construction of Latinas/os as threats is only reinforced. The one-dimensional binary oppositions continue to construct difference in ways that maintain or even further the power differentials in the dominant/subordinate equation, so that the citizen/foreigner, insider/outsider binary continues into other areas of “virtual identity”: potential victim/threat; normal/pathological; belonging/not belonging; deserving/undeserving; and positive/negative.

In an environment centered on threats, belonging, and citizenship, the U.S.-Mexico border becomes a crucial focal point. Increasing levels of border protection, security, and militarization have been put in place since the 1980s, impelled by the contributing factors of anti-immigrant rhetoric, the discourse of invasion, loss of U.S. sovereignty, the representation of Mexican immigrants as the “enemy,” and, I would argue, the advocacy of special interests.

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100. Chavez, Latino Threat, 42. Here, Chavez follows anthropologist Mary Douglas’ insights into cultural constructions in Purity and Danger.
101. See Chavez’ discussion concerning the privileges of citizenship in determining whether someone is eligible for (or “deserving of”) eligibility for) organ transplants, which he extends to other aspects of health care, as well as human rights issues. Among other case studies, he details the case of Jesica Santillan, whose (unsuccessful) transplant spurred a controversy regarding organ donation, the cost of health care, and the rewards of membership in a community or nation, Chavez, Latino Threat, 113-21, 128-30.
which benefit considerably from this militarization. In many ways, the border is a physical representation of the metaphorical distinction between insiders and outsiders, citizen and foreigner. This is made apparent when one examines the rhetoric surrounding the border and its security. Here, because of its high visibility, the Minuteman Project will serve as an example of a larger phenomenon.

In 2005, the Minuteman Project (MMP) began with a well-publicized “call to arms” in the Arizona desert. Using spectacle, “affect-charged language and images,” and media coverage to their advantage, while providing close-up photographs of broken and hole-ridden fencing, MMP hoped to elevate concern about border security by conveying a sense of an emergent and ominous threat of invasion. Although they purportedly wanted to establish citizen patrols to monitor the U.S.-Mexico border in order to prevent border crossing, Chavez contends that their larger purpose was to enlist the press as unwitting assistants in broadcasting the need

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103. For an analysis of the government’s increasing tendency to militarize the U.S.-Mexico border, its background, and the resulting problems, see Timothy J. Dunn, The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996); Timothy J. Dunn, Blockading the Border and Human Rights: The El Paso Operation that Remade Immigration Enforcement (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009); and Miguel Antonio Levario, Militarizing the Border: When Mexicans Became the Enemy (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2012). Although time and space did not permit me to explore it here, there is increasing attention being given to the way in which the debate around security has been driven by the financial interests of private security firms, privatized jails, and the senators and representatives they support through contributions. See, for example, Heyer, Kinship Across Borders, 140-41, who writes about record profits for the billion-dollar privatized industries of detention since 2003, accompanied by frequent abuses and egregious conditions; and Mark Dow, American Gulag: Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). See also radio journalist Deepa Fernandes, Targeted: Homeland Security and the Business of Immigrants (New York, Toronto: Seven Stories Press, 2007), 192-99. Fernandes reports that one of the largest companies in the corrections industry was over $1 billion in debt in 2000, with their stocks plummeting 93 percent. They now enjoy annual revenue in the millions, as do their counterparts, despite a long list of reported abuses.


for greater border security.\footnote{106} Using the “alchemy of numbers,” to construct a rhetoric of fear,\footnote{107} they focused attention on unauthorized border crossings, while doing little to shed light on economic and labor factors that create the demand for immigrant labor.\footnote{108} As stated above, they broadcast the message of a nation under siege as a result of an illegal invasion using national symbols, such as the bald eagle, Uncle Sam, and the American flag, and evoking the historical symbolism of the Minutemen of the American Revolution.\footnote{109} At the same time that they crafted a vision of a national community of involved citizens, they also sought to convey the ominous threat of an invasion already underway, “drawing an abstract figure of the dangerous, already suspect un-American other.”\footnote{110}

Communications Studies Professor D. R. DeChaine observes that the MMP uses “fence logic” to avoid the appearance of overt racism. Rather than speaking of invaders, they make the fence, and the government’s failure to secure it, the object of their concern, while at the same time alluding to and reinforcing common fears and constructing the image of a nation under

\footnotetext[106]{Although they anticipated 1,300 volunteers, only 200 showed up in the first days. Media coverage was a different story, and the Los Angeles Times reported, “The number of media members here Friday to cover the volunteer border patrols nearly outnumbered the Minutemen. Reporters from around the world descended on Tombstone, population 4,800. Along with journalists came some filmmakers working on documentaries about the U.S.-Mexico border.” Chavez notes that there were 46 newspaper stories about the Minuteman Project in February, 161 in March, and 592 in April. The spectacle created continued to garner news coverage for the remainder of the year. See Chavez, \textit{Latino Threat}, 146, Fig. 6.8. In response to the frenzied media coverage, Gilchrist stated that they had already accomplished their goal a hundredfold. See Chavez, \textit{Latino Threat}, 135. It is worth noting that, just days before their well-publicized start date, the government announced the deployment of 500 additional Border Patrol agents to the Arizona border and two days after, an additional 700 agents were sent to the area. Chavez, \textit{Latino Threat}, 142.}

\footnotetext[107]{Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, “Figuring Crime: Quantifacts and the Production of the Un/Real,” Public Culture 18 (2006): 209-46, at 212. See also van Dijk, “Ideologies, Racism, and Discourse,” 109, in which he writes, “Another well-known rhetorical ploy found in discourse on immigrants and minorities is the numbers game: the use of figures to speculate about the number of new people entering the country. Often used by the press, its further rhetorical function is usually the same as that of hyperbole, i.e., by emphasizing the numbers of immigrants (or what they cost) their threatening or problematic nature may be enhanced. . . .”}


\footnotetext[109]{Chavez, \textit{Latino Threat}, 135. See also DeChaine, “Bordering the Civic Imaginary,” 53.}

\footnotetext[110]{DeChaine, “Bordering the Civic Imaginary,” 55. To illustrate, DeChaine cites The Border Fence Project at “DIY Border Fence,” http://www.piratenews.org/newswire/html/: “Because illegal aliens murder 5,000 innocent Americans every year and we take a trillion dollar hit overall to our economy, illegal immigration rewards us with a 9/11 or worse every year.”}
threat. DeChaine cautions that, while one may attribute this deflection to “inferential racism,” it also supplies an “alibi” against charges of racism and scapegoating while simultaneously enacting the “alienization” of undocumented migrants. Thus, he writes, their “public advocacy of the border fence reflects an articulation of economic, racist, and nationalist narratives that together produce a border rhetoric in which the alienized subject becomes both figurally and literally fenced out of the sacrosanct space of U.S. citizenship.” Chavez concludes, “Although the Minuteman Project’s April offensive ended prematurely, it helped turn the public debate on immigration reform decidedly toward increased border enforcement, eclipsing guest worker programs, legalization programs, and other issues.”

Indeed, as Heyer notes, the representation of the foreigner as a political and social menace has been a fundamental element of American nationalism since the founding of the country. Although the nation loves to celebrate the narrative of immigrant America, she notes that the lofty ideas of hospitality, liberty, and democracy are often belied by pragmatic considerations, economic instrumentalism, and national security. Further, nativist discourse has historically created a sense of community by postulating a “fundamental difference between

113. DeChaine, “Bordering the Civic Imaginary,” 45. He defines “alienization” as “a bordering project that draws force from a variety of common linguistic and nonlinguistic resources to render individuals and groups abject and unassimilable—irredeemable others whose putative exclusion from the national body is absolute.” For a more detailed discussion, see pp. 46-9.
114. DeChaine, “Bordering the Civic Imaginary,” 46. For a fuller explication of borders and bordering practices in rhetoric and contemporary culture, see the full article.
115. Chavez, Latino Threat, 143.
117. See Behdad, A Forgetful Nation, 8-10.
the patriotic citizen and the menacing alien.”119 In its current configuration, which is characterized by militarization, surveillance, and discipline, xenophobia is transformed into an acceptable and powerful form of patriotism.120

Another key component of the Latino Threat Narrative concerns the fertility and reproduction of Latina women. Historically, Latinas have been portrayed as hyper-sexualized121 or as “breeders” with high fertility rates.122 Concern over immigrants’ reproduction, high fertility, and even morality have been consistent themes throughout much of U.S. history.123 Sociologist Elena Rebeca Gutiérrez observes that these constructs are embedded within the framework of racial domination and colonization, and have been used to justify the oppression of women of color.124 Indeed, concern over their fertility was one of the factors that prompted the

119. Behdad, A Forgetful Nation, 10-12. Behdad notes the early passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, empowering the government to exclude undesirable aliens and setting out citizenship requirements. He also recognizes that waves of newcomers have suffered anti-immigrant sentiment about their purported characteristics: Germans for the “clannishness,” Jews for their “parvenu spirit,” Irish for their “low and squalid” way of life, Italians and Poles for their Catholicism, and Chinese for their “criminality” and inability to assimilate. See also Aoiki, “No Right to Own,” and Feagin, “Old Poison in New Bottles.”

120. Behdad, A Forgetful Nation, 177.


122. There exists historically a racist, sexist construction of Mexicanas and Chicanas as “breeders,” as reported by sociologist Elena Rebeca Gutiérrez, who researched the 1978 case Madrigal v. Quilligan, concerning the coercive sterilization of hundreds of Mexican-origin women at Los Angeles County Hospital. Gutiérrez writes of the resiliency of public stereotypes, such as that women of Mexican origin are hyper-fertile and “breed like rabbits,” and chronicles an interest in their fertility and procreation beginning with the Spanish colonization of Mexico. She locates the discourse of the “hyper-fertility” of Mexican-origin women as a public concern in various places from 1970 to 1980, and argues that concern over the fertility and reproduction of women of Mexican origin was one of the driving forces of Proposition 187 in California in 1994, which denied prenatal care and social services to undocumented women, and specifically identified pregnant immigrants as a problem. See Elena R. Gutiérrez, Fertile Matters: The Politics of Mexican-Origin Women’s Reproduction (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008). Chavez also calls attention to the reported “unusually pronatalist cultural tradition” of Mexico, reinforced by the Catholic Church, that places an abnormally high cultural value on having children. Chavez, Latino Threat, 81-2.


sterilization of hundreds of Latina women under coercive conditions during the 1960s and 1970s. Thus, Gutiérrez argues that a generalized ideology of domination is made manifest in social institutions, actors, and policy and public attitudes.

Two factors converged to heighten the focus on Latina reproduction and fertility and a growing anti-immigrant sentiment: the post-1965 wave of Latino/a immigration and the fertility decline among U.S. women. The resulting demographic shift and racial subtext made Latina reproduction the subject of public discourse as well as social science investigation and discourse, with the fertility levels of Latinas represented as dangerous, “out of control,” and a threat to national security, especially in contrast to white women, who possessed “subject status.” While once again reinforcing the binaries between First World and Third World as modern/primitive, this construction of hyper-fertility also elicits fears of invading aliens who are


127. Chavez, *Latino Threat*, 72. Concerns over the population “explosion,” and the growth from nonwhite, Third World peoples, heightened in the 1960s (78-9). See also Paul R. Ehrlich seminal work, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), in which Ehrlich wrote of impending disaster and focused attention on the Mexican people. However, concern was already apparent in the 1920’s, as is evident from a *Saturday Evening Post* article entitled, “The Mexican Conquest,” in which the editor wrote, “The very high Mexican birth rate tends to depress still further then low white birth rate. Thus a race problem of the greatest magnitude is being allowed to develop for future generations to regret and in spite of the fact that the Mexican Indian is considered a most undesirable ethnic stock for the melting pot.” See George Horace Lorimer, “The Mexican Conquest,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 22 June 1929, p. 26; cited in Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows*, 28.

128. Chavez, *Latino Threat*, 84-6. Chavez details media articles reporting on the declining population of whites in the U.S. population, the decrease in European immigration, and the growth in Latino population, books by commentators typified by Samuel Huntington’s contention that the fertility rates of Latin American immigrants were the “single most immediate and most serious challenge to America’s traditional identity,” as well as a more inflammatory and widely-distributed article by John Tanton, former president of Zero Population Growth and founder of the Federation for American Immigration Reform.

reproducing themselves at alarming rates, multiplying the threat exponentially.\textsuperscript{130} When combined with Latino/a population growth, it heightens concerns that the category of citizenship has become permeable, that the racial/ethnic makeup of “the American people” will change, and that demographic changes will have a negative impact on education, welfare, medical care, and safety.\textsuperscript{131} Related to this is the topic of children born in the U.S. who become U.S. citizens automatically, and who are often pejoratively referred to as “anchor babies.”\textsuperscript{132} As Chavez notes, even though they have birthright citizenship, their legitimacy as members of society is undermined by the implication that their very existence is for the purpose of citizenship.\textsuperscript{133} It also portrays their parents as “scheming and conniving” in a “crass attempt to play the system.”\textsuperscript{134}

Images such as the July 4, 1977, cover of \textit{U.S. News and World Report}, carrying the headline: “Time Bomb in Mexico: Why There’ll Be No End to the Invasion of ‘Illegals,’” and its accompanying article on Mexico’s projected population growth and inadequate job creation, served to further heighten anxiety.\textsuperscript{135} Concern over the “browning” of America grew in the late 1980s and early 1990s, evidenced by a 1990 \textit{Time} magazine cover that states: “America’s Changing Colors: What Will the U.S. Be Like When Whites Are No Longer the Majority?” Chavez writes that the racial divisiveness of the headline “pales in comparison with the words of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{130} Ono and Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders}, 40.
\item \textsuperscript{131} Chavez, \textit{Latino Threat}, 72. Cf. Suro, \textit{The Triumph of No}, 28, who examined news reports following the 2000 census: a 2003 report showing that Hispanics were the nation’s largest minority; and a 2005 report projecting non-whites as the majority by 2050. Of a sample set of 71 stories from national and local press, radio, and broadcast networks, not one mentioned the decline in birthrates among whites and African-Americans, and only two cited birthrate statistics, while fifteen stories commented on the high birthrate of the newcomers. “The message,” for Suro, “is that immigration is changing the face of the nation and that ‘they’ are doing it to us.”
\item \textsuperscript{132} The principle of \textit{jus soli} is inscribed in section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. These children are often pejoratively called “anchor babies,” with the inference that, as direct relatives of those who are undocumented, they may “anchor” them to the U.S. and assist their relatives in obtaining legal status.
\item \textsuperscript{133} Chavez, \textit{Latino Threat}, 90.
\item \textsuperscript{134} Chavez, \textit{Latino Threat}, 90.
\item \textsuperscript{135} Chavez, \textit{Latino Threat}, 80-1.
\end{itemize}
the advertisement: ‘Hey, whitey, your turn at the back of the bus. Sometime soon white Americans will become a distinct minority in a largely brown cultural and racial mix.’”

The final threat concerns health, and constructs Latinos/as as bodies who might be carrying disease. According to historian David G. Gutiérrez, there is a long history of concern over Mexican immigrants’ poor health and hygiene which began in 1910 and reached a fever pitch during the 1920s, when a 1928 editorial voiced a typical position, writing that Mexicans were “diseased of body, subnormal intellectually, and moral morons of the hopeless types.” In fact, D. G. Gutiérrez argues that disease has been a consistent theme in anti-Mexican discourse for the past century. In the most recent configurations, metaphors of “pollution,” “infection,” and “infestation” were utilized to represent the threat to the nation and its citizens. Ono and Sloop note the racialized perspective that posits immigrants as infectious invaders, with the solution being expulsion. Even debates about the denial of services to undocumented immigrants centered on the health hazard a diseased body would pose to the citizenry with whom the body would come in contact, rather than on the threat to the health of the undocumented immigrant. For example, the director of a health care clinic warned that it is U.S. citizens who “will pay” when undocumented immigrants are not immunized.

136. Chavez, Latino Threat, 84-5; citing the advertisement for the April 9, 1990, issue of Time.
137. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 39.
140. D. G. Gutiérrez, Walls and Mirrors, 72.
141. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 28. Opponents of Prop. 187 argued that it would create an underclass of illiterate and impoverished residents, deprived of basic skills … [who] would create new risks to public health and new breeding grounds for crime and thereby threaten the welfare of all Californians. See Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 77-78, referencing Howard Chang, “Shame on Them, Picking on Children,” Los Angeles Times, B5, 6 September 1994.
142. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 78.
infectious disease cautioned about the threat of day-to-day contact, “Who’s your maid? Who’s busing the dishes at the table where you eat? Who’s around your children in day care?”144 For Ono and Sloop, this construct not only objectifies the bodies of undocumented immigrants, but positions them as a foil to U.S. citizens, and as intimate threats to “us” and “our children.”145

B. Immigration as Dangerous Waters

The debate over California’s Proposition 187 serves as another source for examining media and public rhetoric about immigration.146 The legislation sought to limit public services for undocumented immigrants, and contained “some of the most virulent racist discourse in the history of the United States.”147 In Santa Ana’s analysis, the dominant, or source, metaphor in the debate (occurring 58.2 percent of the time) was “immigration as dangerous waters,” and its corollaries of rough seas, treacherous tides, and surges.148 He describes clear subcategories, like volume, emphasizing the relative numbers of immigrants; movement, emphasizing direction; and control, describing the means by which the waters might be held back; as well as negative but vivid adjectives, like “relentless,” “overwhelming,” and “massive.” Thus, an article might speak of the relentless flow of immigrants (May 30, 1993, A5); the flood of illegal immigrants streaming into the country (September 7, 1993, A3); or compare an approach to stop immigration to “trying to dam the Mississippi with toothpicks” (September 7, 1993, A1).


145. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 34-5.

146. It should be noted that, because the scope of these studies are different, different metaphors are identified and analyzed. Except in cases where the studies appear to be in conflict with one another, I do not attempt to reconcile them. For a summary of Proposition 187, see fn. 12, supra.

147. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 3.

148. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 72. Examples include “awash under a brown tide,” (October 2, 1994, A3); “a sea of brown faces,” (October 17, 1994, A1); “the human surge,” (July 5, 1992, A3); and “the inexorable flow,” (September 22, 1993, A1). See fn. 81, supra, for Santa Ana’s methodology. Although Santa Ana’s study encompassed Propositions 187, 209, and 227, for the purpose of brevity, space, and clarity, this chapter will, for the most part, limit discussion to the language surrounding Proposition 187.
Santa Ana notes that the selection of metaphors invoked a sense of threat, or disparaged the motivation and character of immigrants.\(^{149}\) Nearly sixty percent of the metaphors referenced dangerous waters, and less than five percent were “burden” metaphors.\(^{150}\) Even more significantly, when “immigration as dangerous waters” metaphors were coupled with the “immigration as invasion” metaphor,\(^ {151}\) they constituted more than eighty percent of the metaphors in the scope of his study, eliciting cultural alarm. Santa Ana contends, “The fear is that the rising brown tide will wash away Anglo-American cultural dominance.”\(^ {152}\) Further, the dearth of productive and positive metaphors about immigrants and immigration—of Santa Ana’s metaphoric mappings, all but one were pejorative\(^ {153}\)—indicates the presence of deeply held beliefs and fears about immigrants and immigration. Finally, the metaphorical expressions relating to war imply violence and aggression, which are both contrary to the historical experience of unarmed persons seeking jobs and a better life for their families.\(^ {154}\)

The same water-flood imagery is found on the covers of popular national magazines, which used this representation in twenty-four percent of its covers about immigration.\(^ {155}\)

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\(^{149}\) Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 77, 81. Secondary metaphors, which occur less frequently and have less derivatives, include immigration as war, expressed as invasion and takeover; metaphors of animals, body/disease/burden; weeds, criminals; machines and fire. Cf. Ono and Sloop, who characterize immigrants as criminals as the second most frequent in national media. See Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 32.

\(^{150}\) Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 77. Santa Ana anticipated more “burden” metaphors because of the recession. Ono and Sloop, whose study considers national media coverage of the issue, offer a somewhat different analysis. They note that, during the Proposition 187 debate, numerous portrayals exist that image undocumented immigrants as drains on schools, hospitals, and welfare programs in California. However, when read in context, their point is to offer a critique that the economic argument was privileged over the human dimension, thus contributing to an overall rhetoric of inhumanity. See Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 39-40.

\(^{151}\) Examples include “Third World takeover” (September 17, 1994, B3); “alien invasion” (October 11, 1996, A3); and California as under a “state of siege” (September 6, 1993, A1). See Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 70.

\(^{152}\) Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 78.


\(^{154}\) Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 70. Cf. Chavez, *Covering Immigration*, 177, and Illustration 7.2, 178, who cites the February 1994 cover of the *Atlantic Monthly* showing a discarded and crumpled paper globe lying on the floor, its top in flames, with the end of the flame licking away at the U.S. The bold, uppercase text speaks of the “coming anarchy,” the “tidal flood of refugees,” crumbling borders, scarce resources, and a “wall of disease.” In the accompanying article, Robert D. Kaplan includes the influx of Latinos in the United States in his assessment of problematic areas.

\(^{155}\) Chavez, *Covering Immigration*, 73-5. Other ways of illustrating large-scale immigration include infinity lines of people, and masses of heads or bodies. When added to the water-flood imagery, this metaphorical imaging is found on 51 percent of the covers reviewed. Chavez’ study analyzed 76 popular national magazine covers published between 1965 and 1999 that were
Newsweek’s cover of 9 August 1993 utilized an iconic image to convey the ominous threat to the U.S.: it depicts the Statue of Liberty drowning, with only her outstretched arm holding the torch, the top half of her head and downcast eyes not yet covered by water. Dark-skinned people float in boats in the water around her. The text reads: “Immigration Backlash: A Newsweek poll: 60% of Americans say immigration is ‘bad for the country.’”

For Santa Ana, the implications of invoking the “immigration as dangerous waters” metaphor are extensive and damaging. It not only obscures the humanity and individuality of the immigrants’ lives, but transforms their lives into an undifferentiated mass quantity, one that is vested with potential kinetic energy released with movement. As Santa Ana observes, in the place of individual immigrants is “a frightening scenario of uncontrolled movements of water . . . played out with devastating floods and inundating surges of brown faces.” Because metaphors have an inherent logic, misleading associations and assumptions are made, then taken as a given. Thus, the impending flood is assumed to be flooding into the land or house of America, engulfing and dispossessing Anglo-Americans, and washing away something basic to and about Americans. It would appear to be no coincidence, then, that the title of Proposition 187, “Save

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156. Chavez, Covering Immigration, 161-2, and Illustration 6.7, referencing Newsweek, 9 August 1993. So iconic is the Statue of Liberty in relation to immigration that it is used in some fashion in 17 percent of the magazine covers depicting immigration. A number of covers, but not all, utilize the statue to symbolize a restrictive position on immigration: in one, she holds a stop sign; in another she directs immigrants away from the country, in another, the cover is quite specific. It reads: “Tired? Poor? Huddled? Tempest-Tossed? Try Australia. Rethinking Immigration.” See Chavez, Covering Immigration, 64-69.

157. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 76.

158. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 77. Emphasis is Santa Ana’s.


160. Santa Ana writes that the metaphor “nation as house” has been in use since the late fifteenth century. In the debate over Proposition 187, it was used with regularity as a correlate to immigration as dangerous water.

Our State,” shortened to “SOS,” also represents the international distress signal, often used when one is lost at sea.162

As Santa Ana explains, metaphors exist within an entire web of associations—sometimes called “mappings”—and presuppositions, and may therefore be drawn out or extended via corollaries or connotations, or linked with other foundational metaphors. As long as the metaphors meet the criteria of coherence and congruence,163 they are reinforced and fortified by these associations. Because of this, it is a simple process to employ metaphorical mappings in order to strategically frame issues in a certain way. Thus, for example, when the most prevalent metaphors for “nation,” “nation as body” and “nation as house,”164 are brought together with immigration metaphors, such as dangerous waters, invasion, animals, bodily disease, burdens, weeds, criminals, machines, and fire,165 inherent logic conveys the sense of threat and impending doom. Thus, even metaphors that appear relatively benign, like body and house, when framed in a certain manner, serve to bolster the negative and derogatory characterization of immigration, as well as strategically arouse nativist feelings in U.S. citizens. To illustrate, Santa Ana draws out the extended metaphor:

To put it graphically, Latinos have never been the heart or hands of the NATION AS BODY—even where they make up near-majority populations. This is also the case where they have been a very visible presence in their native land since the Anglo-Americans arrived as newcomers. Latinos are not customarily seen to be

162. See Mehan, “The Politics of Representation,” 258, who points out the SOS metaphor in his analysis of the discourse strategies used by proponents of Proposition 187.

163. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 79, 281-84. Coherence examines the adequacy and quality of the initial coupling, as well as other mappings that closely resemble it. Because other adequate metaphorical descriptions could be chosen, congruence considers whether the metaphor makes sense within the larger web of semantic relations. Santa Ana’s analysis largely follows George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

164. See Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 255-73, who observes that these metaphors appeared over 1,400 times between May 1992 and June 1998, and constitute 98 percent of all nation metaphors in his contemporary public discourse database. There is not adequate space to do justice to Santa Ana’s very detailed analysis of these metaphor. Santa Ana notes that there are various forms that the metaphor “nation as house” would take, including “nation as castle,” and “nation as ship.” See Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 77-9, and Chapter 7, for a fuller discussion.

165. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 70. These are secondary metaphors for immigration or immigrants.
legitimate inhabitants of the U.S. HOUSE, but rather foreign invaders, soldiers, or surging brown tides that threaten to inundate the home of Anglo-America. Nor are Latinos automatically considered to be first-class passengers on the U.S.S. Stars & Stripes, but are typically viewed as the lowly steerage-dwellers, the stowaways, or the crew members employed to swab the deck or change the linen on the beds of ‘real Americans.’

C. Immigrants as Animals and Alien Invaders

Having seen the way in which the notion of “immigration” was structured, we turn now to a more detailed examination of the metaphors used to describe immigrants. Immigrants, Santa Ana writes, were characterized with “decided aversion,” with derogatory metaphors used over ninety percent of the time. Here, the dominant metaphor was “immigrant as animal,” used 31.8 percent of the time, a metaphor that should also be categorized as racist discourse. Immigrants were portrayed as animals to be hunted, lured, pitted, and the newspaper articles used phrases such as: “Beaten-down agents, given only enough resources to catch a third of their quarry….” (July 5, 1992, A3). Heyer offers several pithy examples to illustrate this dynamism at work. Observing that the increasing tolerance for reductive epithets is no longer limited to fringe groups or extremist media personalities, she cites congressional representatives on the topic of immigrants. In a demonstration on the House chamber floor, U.S. Representative Steve King from Iowa held up a mock-up of a border fence with concrete walls and coiled wire on top. He

166. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 293.

167. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 82.

168. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 284. The one affirmative metaphor, “immigrant as angel,” was a biblical allusion to entertaining angels unaware from Hebrews 13:1, and was used by clergy, with then Archbishop Roger Mahony of Los Angeles citing it most frequently.

169. See van Dijk, Communicating Racism, 100. See also van Dijk, “Ideologies, Racism, and Discourse,” 109, in which he points out that comparisons of outgroups with threatening or disgusting animals is a standard metaphorical way to derogate minorities. Building on the work of Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter, Santa Ana writes, “Racist discourse, in our view, should be seen as discourse (of whatever content) which has the effect of establishing, sustaining and reinforcing oppressive power relations. . . . Racist discourse . . . justifies, sustains and legitimates those practices which maintain . . . power and dominance.” See Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter, Mapping the Language of Racism: Discourse and the Legitimation of Exploitation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 15-16. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 194, identifies a number of secondary metaphors, such as invaders, marauders, burdens, parasites, felons, and those having to do with water. In the interest of space, and because the argument is substantially developed under the discussion on immigration, they will not be detailed here.

suggested that they could electrify the wire, because, he reasoned, “We do that with livestock all
the time.”171 Similarly, State Representative Virgil Peck, while discussing the problem of feral
swine in Kansas, observed, “If shooting these immigrating feral hogs works, maybe we have
found a [solution] to our illegal immigration problem.”172

As Santa Ana critiques, the immigrant as animal metaphor “demotes human rights and
asserts civil privilege,”173 placing immigrants below citizens in the social and moral order, and
unjustly absolving “U.S. citizens of responsibility for attitudes and actions against Latinos and
immigrants, with the logic that nonhumans need not be accorded the same respect as human
beings.”174 Once the metaphor “permits” speakers to use the same frame of reference for
immigrants that they would use for animals, it is no leap to claim cultural deficits on the basis of
birthplace and ethnicity. One of its most profound implications, therefore, is its use to justify
continued dehumanization and racism on the basis of those purported deficits. Because civil
rights and human rights only pertain to humans, and the value of life is highest for humans,
considerations which would naturally be extended to immigrants are disregarded or
minimized.175 In fact, one California senator, while presiding over a 1993 meeting of the Special
Committee on U.S./Mexico Border Issues, and speaking on the official record, offered that
immigrants were “perhaps on the lower scale of our humanity.”176 Of particular concern to Santa

2010.
172. Heyer, Kinship Across Borders, 140. Heyer notes that Representative Peck later issued an apology. See Todd Fertig,
“Rep. Apologizes for Remark about Shooting Illegal Immigrants,” The Wichita Eagle, 16 March 2011,
174. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 286. In both Chapter 3 and in his concluding chapters, Santa Ana makes the important
point that the supremacy of property rights over human rights in society has been a principle that has been contested across the
centuries. See pp. 102-3, and 276.
175. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 84-6.
176. Senator W. A. Craven was disputing the right of children of undocumented immigrants to public education. When
asked to retract or clarify his remarks, he did not do so. See Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 86. See also Chavez, “Immigration
Reform and Nativism,” 63. Chavez references a San Diego Union-Tribune article, which quotes Craven at a senate hearing on
Ana is the root power of the metaphor and its accompanying discourse practices to uphold social practices and reinforce the semantic link between immigrant and animal without reflection or mindfulness on the part of the interlocutors.\textsuperscript{177} Equally problematic are the conceptual “mappings” that one can make to extend the metaphor; \textit{e.g.}, language regarding childbirth is altered from “giving birth” to “dropping” (June 10, 1993, J1).\textsuperscript{178} Most importantly, these representations reproduce a view that denigrates human beings.\textsuperscript{179}

For Sloop and Ono, the Cold War rhetoric of “alien invaders” that dominated the 1980s and 1990s laid the groundwork for a more generalized anxiety, uncertainty, and fear, projected onto a less coherent, alien, and mobile enemy in the present; contributing to an “us versus them” worldview.\textsuperscript{180} They write that “news media represent many different versions of enemies who threaten the moral, cultural, and political fabric of the nation-state and therefore must be evicted, eliminated, or otherwise controlled.”\textsuperscript{181} According to Chavez, this discourse cloaks a “neo-racism” by using phrasing that alludes to the threat of the end of a fictional national culture and singular American identity by way of a “nonwhite majority.”\textsuperscript{182} Fears that immigrants would drain the economy, were criminals and therefore prone to other illegal activities, or present a

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\textsuperscript{177} Santa Ana, \textit{Brown Tide Rising}, 100-1.
\textsuperscript{178} Santa Ana, \textit{Brown Tide Rising}, 88.
\textsuperscript{179} Santa Ana, \textit{Brown Tide Rising}, 101.
\textsuperscript{180} Ono and Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders}, 37. See also Lowe, \textit{Immigrant Acts}, 56, who writes that the construction of others as enemies is a fundamental logic of national identity, and Mehan, “The Politics of Representation,” 261, who observes that us vs. them arguments appeal to personal-self-interest while “we’re all in this together” arguments appeal to universal human rights or a higher authority.
\textsuperscript{181} Ono and Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders}, 35. See also Chavez, \textit{Covering Immigration}, 18. Chavez writes, “Beginning in the mid-1970s, a discourse develops based on images of Mexicans as an external threat. They are repeatedly represented as invading the nation and as occupying, or challenging, the sovereign territory of the United States. . . . [and] also become the ‘enemy within’ due to their growing numbers.” See also Suro, \textit{The Triumph of No}, 12, 27. After examining over 80,000 stories in print, radio, and broadcast news organizations, Suro concludes that the image of the immigrant as dominant actor and protagonist is one of three principal themes throughout the 27 years of narrative. Noting that employers are one of the principal actors/forces driving both immigration and policies (29), he points out their relative absence from media’s framing of the phenomenon.
\textsuperscript{182} Chavez, “Immigration Reform and Nativism,” 73. See also Ono and Sloop, \textit{Shifting Borders}, 41.
health threat all contribute to this sense of threat to the general population. Ono and Sloop conclude from their analysis that “an ambivalent, and therefore racist, collective rhetoric emerges that uses suspicion of the other as a strategy for the preservation of the self.”

Even opponents of Proposition 187 who appear to be defending the immigrant used arguments based upon the same binary racial fears. For example, they warned of “roving gangs of juveniles” who would turn to a life of crime and gang warfare if denied public education, thereby creating the assumption that it is only education that is keeping a tendency toward delinquency and violence at bay. News reports imply, further, that threats from immigrants are commonplace by showing footage of numerous men, presumably Mexicano, flagging down cars on street corners, running in the streets and across highways, or climbing fences, all while discussing immigration. One campaign ad included the narration, “Three hundred thousand illegal immigrant children in public schools . . . and they keep coming. It’s unfair when people like you are working hard.” Another campaign ad, in which a candidate criticized his opponent for not doing enough to halt the “brown tide,” similarly showed black and white footage of people dodging cars while running, while a rhythmic base “suitable for a horror film” played, and the narrator intoned, “They keep coming…”

183. Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 28. They describe the third representation as a “disease” or “infection” metaphor, and note that, in Hitler’s time, the logical conclusion of such a representation was the erasure of those who were the agents of infestation. See also Steven Perry, “Rhetorical Functions of the Infestation Metaphor in Hitler’s Rhetoric,” *Central States Speech Journal* 34 (1983): 229-35.

184. Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 41. For a discussion of the way in which fear of loss of comfort, power, or privilege contributes to racism, tribalism, and xenophobia, see Nothwehr, *That They May Be One*, 4-8.

185. See the examples provided by Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 32-34. In one telling example, the *San Jose Mercury News* reported that opponents of Proposition 187 warned of “roving gangs of juveniles, no longer allowed in schools, spraying graffiti and bullets,” should the bill be passed. See Ken McLaughlin, “‘SOS’ Initiative Is Not a Sure Bet,” *San Jose Mercury News*, 13 September 1994, Newsbank INT74, A9, cited by Ono and Sloop, *Shifting Borders*, 33.


As the well-publicized ads inflamed the public’s ire, Latino/a citizens of the U.S. expressed concern that all had become “potential targets,” as the public collapsed the distinction between Latino citizens and undocumented immigrants. Indeed, because there is no way to visually differentiate between a citizen and a non-citizen, race becomes a significant factor as the visual images are translated into verbal meaning. The result, Chavez observes, is a “new” nativism, in which even legal residents and citizens are reimagined as less deserving members of the community. These divisions were reinforced with the help of denotational deictic markers, such as “they” and “them” that established or maintained an “us vs. them” dichotomy. Noting the absence of scientific discourse to articulate arguments, sociologist Hugh Mehan writes, “By framing the debate is us v. them terms, presenting compelling anecdotes of illegal aliens taking jobs and abusing social services and appealing to the self-interest of disaffected citizens, proponents of Proposition 187 successfully countered universalistic appeals to the general good, a higher morality and universal human rights. In short, human rights lost in this election to self-interest.”


192. Santa Ana states that the term “deixis” refers to the use of contextual words such as that, this, them, those, here, and there, among others, to reinforce differences. See Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 94. Santa Ana (95) provides a typical example: “They should be taking care of themselves and not draining our pocketbooks” (August 22, 1993, A1).


D. Summary and Critical Analysis

Compiling the available research, Cisneros has analyzed it for guiding tropes, then helpfully catalogued the tropes into the following overarching taxonomies: (1) danger, criminality, and social deviance; (2) pollution, infection, or infestation; (3) invasion, flood, or other destructive forces; and (4) overwhelming burdens. Since the events of 9/11, it has also become more common to conflate the image of immigrant with terrorist, despite there being no reasonable evidence for doing so. While it was important in the prior sections to bring the individual constructs into clearer focus, with this summary we can begin to examine and critique the overall patterns and problems that emerge from these characterizations.

The first involves the problem of framing. Framing immigration within these taxonomies both constrains the discussion and pre-empts any broader discussion of social, economic, or moral concerns. There is also an understandable tendency to seek solutions within the same taxonomy, which we have seen played out repeatedly in the immigration debate. Solutions seem obvious. For example, using these taxonomies would lead one to conclude that danger and criminality should be addressed with constraint, legal enforcement, and punishment. Similarly, pollution, infection, and infestation require cleansing, expulsion, and extermination; invasive and destructive forces must be fortified against, fought, and rebuffed militarily; burdens must be summarily removed; and terrorists must be hunted down and stopped at all costs. Conversely, if militarizing the border does not keep people out, then the solution must be to increase the fortifications and efforts. As we have seen, above, if immigrants are perceived as animals, then

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196. See fn. 95, supra.

197. See fns. 3 and 103, supra, for reports of impacts of these policies.
it becomes simple logic to restrain them via electrified fences in the same way you would an animal.

Further, whenever persons too readily accept social and media construals and do not examine them thoroughly, nor interrogate their underlying assumptions, they run the risk of reifying those metaphors, turning the metaphor into an accepted statement of “fact,” as well as confining themselves to particular ways of understanding a complex phenomenon. Social scientists Mark Ellis and Richard Wright describe these concretized metaphors as “dead metaphors,” and argue that they impede scholarship and analysis. Like a dead virus, they make us immune in taken-for-granted ways, so that we assume that the claims advanced are not only plausible, but intuitively obvious. Far more than artistic tropes or descriptive instruments, “dead metaphors” can operate as “mental prisons” that confine analysis to particular ways of interpretation, since “they influence how we formulate our hypotheses about the impacts of immigration and ethnic group behavior—about how different immigrant groups fit into U.S. society.”

Bias is often operative in the way these construals are made, understood, and accepted. In decision-making, judgment, or understanding, bias occurs when data perceived as threatening to one’s well-being or understanding is excluded or overlooked. Bernard Lonergan asserts that egoism interferes with the development of intelligence in such a way that individuals may resist or exclude insights that are incompatible with their current understanding or that would open their own insights to questions or criticism. He names the resulting aberration of

198. Metaphors have a tensive quality that is nullified when a metaphor is concretized or reified, thereby precluding other ways of understanding.
understanding a “scotosis,” and the resultant blind spot a “scotoma.” Social groups are also prone to blind spots, which cause them to resist insights that are threatening to their well-being or purpose. Because more powerful groups are more readily able to make their ideas operative, society becomes increasingly more stratified and skewed towards those already in power, and reality and reason are distorted. As we will see in Chapter 2, bias contributes to social sin.

This bias is evident in the representations of immigrants and immigration, which is given almost entirely from the point of view of the dominant culture. Rather than presenting immigration as a phenomenon, or as a response to or indicator of underlying socio-economic factors, the construct focuses on immigrants/immigration as problems and/or threats. It is the prevailing power’s ideology that is most operative, although the bias is unacknowledged. Thus, the concerns of the migrants—indeed, their suffering, oppression, and even death—go unmentioned and remain invisible, as do the underlying factors that impel them to migrate. This results in a kind of disordered consciousness with inward-focused thinking. A recent AP article from the Bing newsfeed gives a concrete example. Entitled “Increase in Number of Deaths puts Burden on Texas County,” the article went on to report that the “mounting body count [of migrant deaths] . . . has overwhelmed sparsely populated Brooks County” and that the 129 bodies that the county had to handle last year “blew a hole in their budget.”


Bias is also operative when the grounds for the argument are based on the values on the dominant culture. As studies on the rhetorics of resistance have repeatedly demonstrated, “the materiality of governing discourses . . . is strengthened by any argument on its own ground.”

Therefore, for example, even if one is arguing that immigrants are economically beneficial to the country, the argument itself strengthens the acceptability of using the economy as a criterion over human rights, and those attempting to refute a claim can inadvertently bolster it. Thus, economic arguments privilege and reinforce the assumptions that the logics of capital and the language of the dominant power are and should be the driving forces of decisions. One priority, therefore, must be a movement beyond simple refutation towards making visible that which has remained invisible: the values and assumptions that undergird the current practices and arguments.

Heyer, for example, exposes the deficiencies of an immigration paradigm that is centered on national interest, expediency, or economic efficiency, and argues for a contextualized approach that begins instead with an analysis of the forces at play that have served to substantially increase inequality and thus contribute to dislocation. While it is impossible to detail those forces here, she draws attention to the US-Mexico border, which “bisects the

205. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 136.
206. See Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 29-32, especially 31. Those asserting the economic value of immigrants focus primarily on industries like agriculture, service, and manufacturing.
207. See Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 32.
208. See the discussion on complicity and resistance in Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 113-37. See also Hall, “The Whites of Their Eyes,” 9, on ideologies that “tend to disappear from view into the taken-for-granted ‘naturalised’ world of common sense.”
sharpest divide in average income on the planet,”\(^\text{210}\) the millions of Mexicans who lost their jobs in agriculture and who have been forced to abandon their lands after the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA),\(^\text{211}\) and the dominant modes of economic globalization that have served to increase inequality, environmental degradation, the disruption of cultural integrity and local markets, and the erosion of civil society.\(^\text{212}\)

Further, however, prioritizing the economy as a criterion also reduces the immigrant to a commodity status,\(^\text{213}\) but, because the focus is on the economy, those engaged in the debate have also unknowingly reified the “dead” metaphor “immigrant as commodity,” while leaving the values embedded within it unexamined but strengthened. Such objectification subordinates the claims of migrants, and fosters dehumanizing conditions as well as exploitation of those who migrate.\(^\text{214}\) Further, this disordered value system, which blinds persons to the authentic values of human life and dignity, and prioritizes other factors in their stead, represents what Bernard Häring calls “value-blindness.”\(^\text{215}\) And, as we consider the values and assumptions that undergird current rhetoric, we must also return to the fact that rhetoric is often embedded within and arises from patterns of racial domination and colonization, and therefore serves to stoke the fires of ethnocentrism and reinforce prevailing ideologies. Thus, as Santa Ana reminds us, it is critically important for those speaking about immigration to “mind their metaphors.”\(^\text{216}\)


\(^{212}\) Heyer, *Kinship Across Borders*, 100-105.

\(^{213}\) See Wilbanks, *Re-Creating America*, 94. One need only think of the nation’s tragic legacy of slavery, or even the way that, in the late nineteenth century, “Chinamen” were placed on the same grocery list with commodities like bonemeal, canvas, and macaroni, to understand the dangers of reducing human beings to commodities. See Ronald Takaki, *Strangers From a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Penguin, 1989), 24, who notes that “planters viewed laborers as commodities necessary for the operation of the plantation,” and describes grocery lists with Asian Pacific peoples itemized as if another supply.

\(^{214}\) Wilbanks, *Re-Creating America*, 94.


Conclusion and Looking Ahead

This chapter has explored the narrative of immigration as “told” through public discourse. In this narrative, the immigrant, shrouded in an aura of illegality and described with metaphorical allusions to pollution, infection, invasions, floods, and overwhelming burdens, plays the part of the aggressor, and U.S. citizens the seemingly passive and hapless victims. So effective has this framing been and so evocative of a national threat that the real immigrants are morphed into a “rising brown tide” ready to engulf the nation, and the multi-faceted and interacting social, political, demographic, economic, and environmental factors and forces that induce migration seem somehow inconsequential to the narrative, rather than the driving force of it.

As the research presented here has shown, framing and rhetoric are immensely powerful but unrecognized tools for shaping public consciousness and conditioning response. Whenever references to immigrants as commodities, criminals, invaders, or animals, are uncontested or met with silence, they have been tacitly accepted, as have the social agenda and worldview that they represent. It is only in unmasking them that we can begin to reveal and critique their underlying ideologies. One of the objectives of this chapter has been to bring to light their cumulative effect, and the way rhetoric serves to perpetuate dominant ideologies, and bolster prejudice, nativism, and xenophobia. The web of metaphors, many with racist undertones, have enmeshed immigrants into a snare of objectification and dehumanization, and the public into an unthinking acceptance of these characterizations. Because this language gains power and authority through repetition, it infiltrates the public’s understanding of an immensely complex phenomenon, confines solutions to the immigrant, obscures the role of the dominant culture, distracts from a deeper and more thorough analysis of root causes, and precludes alternative or positive framing. For Christians, to have either signaled a tacit acceptance of damaging constructs by failing to
explicitly reject them, or cooperated more actively via perpetuation of the ongoing narrative or support of anti-immigrant legislation runs counter to Christianity’s own narrative, values, and self-identity and presents ethical ramifications. Further, as we shall see in the upcoming chapter, it must also be understood as sinful, both in its own dehumanizing and objectifying representations, and in its tragic consequences.

There is a dire need for an ethic of resistance and solidarity that both rejects these dehumanizing and objectifying constructs, as well as reframes the conversation in a more positive way that respects the dignity and worth of the migrant, and proclaims different ways of knowing and acting. As we will see in future chapters, that ethic is to be found in a recovery of the tradition and understanding of hospitality, which is inconsistent with the dominant ideologies of prejudice, nativism, and xenophobia, and presents a counter-vision of those who were once strangers empathically sharing God’s hospitality with another. If the church is to be a witness to God’s kingdom, intended wholeness and fullness of diversity, then it must reject that which seeks to diminish and exclude others. Indeed, it already has a proud tradition of doing so through prophetic resistance and Catholic social teaching. In order to highlight this tradition as a resource, the following chapter will consider anti-immigrant rhetoric and its effects through the prism of social sin, consider the way in which “insurgent metaphors” and “outlaw discourses” might stimulate a more positive understanding, and examine immigration through the lens of Catholic social doctrine.
Chapter 2
Social Sin, Catholic Ecclesial Statements, and the Significance of Hospitality

Introduction

Chapter 1 provided a contextual analysis of immigration by examining its social construals by the dominant culture. Rather than focus on the immigrant or immigration as a problem, or even on the problems of immigrants, I chose instead to make the damaging and dehumanizing rhetoric employed by the dominant culture the object of my study in order to expose the way in which understandings of and responses to the phenomenon of immigration have been influenced by negative portrayals in public discourse. Because that influence impacts society’s treatment of its vulnerable newcomers and also infiltrates local congregations, it is important to unmask the powerful forces that are at play, and that often go unseen and unremarked.

Despite a long heritage of church teaching on immigration and a strong scriptural imperative to welcome the stranger, many Christians become coopted by negative rhetoric and thus contribute to the problem. Thus, it becomes necessary to situate the church’s teachings on immigration within a rich theological and scripturally based tradition of social justice and to clarify how the objectifying and dehumanizing rhetoric and its harmful consequences may be seen as sinful, and more, how Christian silence is complicit and cooperates in the sin. To be clear, immigration is not simply a political issue about which one can decide yea or nay. It is only in naming the situation and exposing the sin that we can begin the process of conversion, resistance, and imagining differently. Chapter 2, therefore, considers these social constructs through the lens of social sin and Catholic social teaching (CST).
The chapter emerges in two basic steps. In the first step, I will present an overview of the concept of social sin, then reconsider anti-immigrant rhetoric using the four levels of social sin. My aim is to both identify these rhetorical constructs, and any cooperation or implicit acquiescence with them, as sinful, and emphasize the need for conversion and prophetic dissent from these constructs and their byproducts. In the second step, I will examine the long tradition of Catholic social encyclicals for the way in which social doctrine on immigration has developed and evolved from within the broader current of social justice. This evolution culminates in the Pontifical Council Instruction for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, *The Love of Christ for Migrants*, which can be understood as both the capstone of the teachings and the introduction to a theology of migration that understands migration to be integral to the church’s identity, history, and mission; that recognizes the migrant as a providential builder of community; and that presents hospitality and migration as the basis for a new sacramental unity. That document will therefore lay the groundwork for the direction of my project.

I. Social Sin
   A. An Overview of Social Sin

   The roots for the concept of social sin are found in scripture. The reality of sin is understood to be a corporate breaking of the covenant between God and Israel.\(^1\) However, as Old Testament scholar Terence E. Freithem describes it, the world of the Hebrew Bible is a “spiderweb of a world,” in which each creature “is in symbiotic relationship with every other and in such a way that any act reverberates out and affects the whole, shaking the web with varying

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degrees of intensity.” Sin therefore is also a violation of right relation, a violation of God’s intentions for the way that human beings are to relate to others. Because of this relationality, sin is simultaneously personal and social, as Reynolds points out.

Noting that there are over fifty words for sin in the Hebrew scriptures, theologian Kenneth R. Himes identifies three principal images: *hatlah* (to miss the mark), *pesha* (to rebel), and *awon* (to be twisted or bent), all to be understood within the context of covenant. In the Hebrew scriptures, this concept is apparent in the prophetic denunciations against the injustices that permeated political, economic, and legal structures, as well as in the prophets’ condemnations of the prevailing patterns of behaviors and worldviews. That understanding was only deepened when Jesus made love of God and love of neighbor inseparable and called people to conversion to the Kingdom of God. In the New Testament, several phrases capture the understanding of the social forces at work in drawing people into sin. The Pauline letters, for example, describe the “principalities and powers” that negatively influence humanity, and sin as a power that pervades the human condition, and inhibits a person’s ability to follow God’s Word. The Gospel of John uses the word “world” for the hard-hearted and stiff-necked state of existence that leads humans to a life lived in darkness rather than the light.

Beginning with *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, the Roman Catholic Church has provided guidance and commentary on social issues, with specific references to “social sin” and the “social dimensions of sin” beginning around the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962--

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1965), and particularly since the pontificate of John Paul II (1978-2005). Magisterial documents and theological literature use that terminology to reflect a deepened understanding of the social nature of human development and the realities of an interdependent world. Because human beings are social beings who maintain multiple relationships within their society and culture, that social environment, or situatedness, exercises a powerful and decisive influence over them. It is there that they learn the norms and behaviors of society.

Social sin arises from within their social environment and the institutions which embody people’s collective lives. As theologian Mark O’Keefe avers, “[F]reedom is always exercised and indeed formed within the limits of physical and biological boundaries, but also within the cultural, social, economic, and religious environment in which the person develops.” Hence, although human beings act in freedom and knowledge, they are nevertheless fully enmeshed in—and therefore immensely influenced by—the institutions and communities that organize and dominate their lives.

A central problem exists, however, because the structures and institutions of society are not neutral in constitution nor operation and instead reflect the values of those who construct

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8. Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alienation: A Theological Reading of Sociology* (New York: Paulist, 1975), 200-1. See also Stephen J. Duffy, “Sin,” in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. Michael Downey (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 901. Duffy writes that social sin is embodied in (1) dehumanizing behavior; (2) cultural and religious symbols that ignite the heart and imagination to reinforce unjust institutional arrangements; (3) false consciousness “created by institutions and ideologies that allow people to participate in a network of oppression with self-righteousness;” and (4) resulting collective decisions and consent.

them.\textsuperscript{10} Thus, as Himes suggests, they are expressive of humanity in both its graced condition and its sinfulness.\textsuperscript{11} Sinful choices beget more sinful choices that eventually become patterns, which are then embodied in social structures and their ideology.\textsuperscript{12} After a time, the patterns seem to have a life of their own, with no direct agency from individual(s), in ways that seem inevitable. Human beings, who are bound together and in constant interaction with institutions, come to understand the institutions as facts of nature—“just the way it is”—and operating independently of human choice.\textsuperscript{13}

Thus, while human beings may, and most often do, learn and appropriate the values of their social environments, they may also appropriate uncritically those values that orient one away from God and a life of authenticity. They appropriate these values “even though from an objective standpoint an outsider may see quite readily that the prevailing hierarchy of values is seriously disordered.”\textsuperscript{14} The injustice, now enshrined as constituting reality, clouds perception, leading individuals to further sin and perpetuating injustice. Himes has thus characterized social sin as “the disvalue . . . embedded in a pattern of social organization and cultural understanding, such as systemic racism, sexism, or imperialism.”\textsuperscript{15}

In their 1979 pastoral letter on racism, the U.S. bishops describe this phenomenon when they write:

The structures of our society are subtly racist, for these structures reflect the values which society upholds. They are geared to the success of the majority and the failure of the minority. Members of both groups give unwitting approval by accepting things as they are. Perhaps no single individual is to blame. The


\textsuperscript{12} O’Keeffe, \textit{What Are They Saying}? 60.

\textsuperscript{13} O’Keeffe, \textit{What Are They Saying}? 49, 62.

\textsuperscript{14} O’Keeffe, “Social Sin and Fundamental Option,” 135. See also Heyer, \textit{Kinship Across Borders}, 36.

\textsuperscript{15} Himes, “Social Sin and the Role of the Individual,” 184.
sinfulness is often anonymous but nonetheless real. The sin is social in nature in that each of us, in varying degrees, is responsible. All of us in some measure are accomplices.\(^\text{16}\)

An examination of social sin, then, tries to identify and interpret structural and systemic injustices in society, which may take the form of structures that violate and oppress human dignity; situations that promote individual selfishness; or the complicity or silent acquiescence in social injustices.\(^\text{17}\)

In order to clarify the way in which social sin resides in a group, community, or people, theologian Gregory Baum recognizes four levels of social sin.\(^\text{18}\) The first level considers the institutions of society, and the injustices and dehumanizing trends that are deeply embedded within them, often hidden and unrecognized. The second level involves the cultural and religious symbols and ideologies that legitimate, reinforce, and intensify those trends and injustices by insinuating themselves into the human imagination, self-understanding, and worldview. As Baum notes, these symbols and their burgeoning ideologies also go largely unnoticed.\(^\text{19}\) At the third level, people involve themselves collectively in destructive action, having developed a false consciousness that persuades them that the embedded values and ideologies of the institutions and their accompanying symbols are right and appropriate. O'Keefe observes, “At this level one sees that an entire worldview has been created in which even people of good conscience base their decisions upon an inauthentic ordering of values.”\(^\text{20}\) At the fourth level, collective decisions are made from within this worldview and false consciousness, thereby perpetuating unjust and


\(^{18}\) See Baum, Religion and Alienation, 200-203; see also O'Keefe, “Social Sin and Fundamental Option,” 137.

\(^{19}\) Baum, Religion and Alienation, 200.

\(^{20}\) O'Keefe, “Social Sin and Fundamental Option,” 137.
dehumanizing trends and increasing the injustice. Both personal and social sin are operative at this level, as a person or persons with conscious intention magnifies the evil and increases the injustice.

In light of this more holistic and complex understanding of social sin, we return to a consideration of the rhetoric, framing, and narrative described in Chapter 1.

B. The Implications of Social Sin

Baum’s first level considers established institutions and trends that are so deeply embedded that they are taken for granted and not examined.21 It is clear that the social sins of racism, ethnocentrism, and xenophobia have a long history that precedes their current manifestation in the United States. As liberation theologians recognize, the U.S. has inherited as well cultural and political patterns from a colonial past22 that perpetuate structural inequality and construct an ideology that understands the poor countries as sources of raw material and cheap labor.23 These dynamics and this social context undergird many of the conditions that compel migration; the unjust practices towards and commodification of immigrants;24 and the dehumanizing and anti-immigrant sentiment that has been broadcast so widely in the United States (the focus of the preceding chapter). New social constructs in the same line thus find fertile soil in which to plant themselves, and sturdy supports on which to grow. In addition, the

24. For a more detailed analysis of factors that propel undocumented immigration, continue the unequal structures, and contribute to trends that violate human rights, see Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration,” especially pp. 426-31. Those factors include the wide gap between labor market demands for 500,000 unskilled labor jobs per year and the 5,000 low skilled permanent residence visa issued; the institutionalization of the U.S.’ economic interests in uneven trade agreements; the primacy of deterrence and security concerns over human rights concerns; the development of highly organized networks for human trafficking; and the rape and/or sexual abuse of the majority of females migrating north. See also Kristin Heyer, “A Christian Ethic of Immigration,” Lecture 3, 24 July 2013, given at the Joan and Ralph Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought at the University of San Francisco, http://www.usfca.edu/uploadedFiles/Destinations/Institutes_and_Centers/Lane/Events/Heyer%20Lecture%203.pdf (accessed 17 October 2013). For an exposition of social sin as it relates to immigration, see Chapter 2 of Heyer’s Kinship Across Borders, especially pp. 37-49.
analysis above has made clear that it is often the prevailing powers who determine the framework in which to consider immigration. As has been evident, human dignity and human rights have not been priorities, while economic interests, nativism, and an ongoing construct of “us vs. them” have been at the forefront. Moreover, amplification and distortion of concerns over undocumented immigration has led to fearmongering in even some mainstream media sources and an increase in scapegoating and hate crimes.  

Baum’s second level, the symbolic, calls attention to cultural symbols and their underlying and coalescing ideologies which, again, go largely unnoticed and unexamined by society. Here, as we saw in Chapter 1, a consumerist ideology even further sanctions the objectification of immigrants. Also, Heyer points out that buzzwords such as “national security” and “illegal alien” can serve as idols to conceal a sinful reality and provoke demonization. In fact, references to cultural symbols and ideological ideals can mask or hide other values, thereby perpetuating injustice and hindering authentic human development. This was the case when the MMP advanced an ethnocentric nativism under the guise of patriotism, using symbols like the flag and the narrative of the American Revolution. Similarly, symbols of a drowning or submerged Statue of Liberty, along with the onslaught of negative metaphors that explicitly or implicitly sketched the story of a nation under attack, or the victim of a rising tide, or burdened, give vivid imagery to the representations, while drawing a derogatory, dehumanizing, and often racist portrait of the immigrant. In this way, the metaphors and narratives discussed in Chapter 1 are not only unconsciously accepted, but associated with protecting one’s country. At the same time, references to cultural symbols and ideological ideals can mask or hide other values, thereby perpetuating injustice and hindering authentic human development.  

25. Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration,” 428. Although this chapter has not dealt with some of the more egregious claims made by some media outlets, Heyer points to a study that documents many of the common myths and urban legends reported there as news. See Media Matters Action Network’s “Fear and Loathing in Prime Time: Immigration Myths and Cable News” (May 28, 2008), at http://mediamattersaction.org/reports/fearandloathing/ (accessed 23 November 2013).  
27. Heyer, Kinship Across Borders, 47.  
time, by not examining them or their underlying assumptions, one is immersed all the more in social sin.

Thus, the metaphors, narratives, and framing described in the first chapter have immense importance. As *AN* cautions, the media exercises profound influence on the psychological, moral, and social development of individuals, as well as on the shaping of society by transmitting values, worldviews, ideologies, and religious beliefs.29 Heyer would seem to concur, remarking that the operative ideology in media portrayals “are at least as influential as religious rhetoric championing human rights of undocumented immigrants.”30 Heyer further offers that the church must look at its own religious symbols as another means of influence, and assess how individualistic penitential rituals reinforce limited conceptions of sin, and thereby produce a tendency to focus on a prescribed catalog of forbidden acts,31 despite an increase in understanding about social sin. In light of this tendency, I question the extent to which the similarities between the principal metaphors for sin—sin as crime and sin as defiling stain32 — and two of the primary metaphors for immigrants, having to do, first, with criminality and next, with pollution, infection, or infestation, contribute in a significant way to negative attitudes about immigrants because of the implied association with sinfulness.

Transitioning into Baum’s third level, the importance of “mapping,”33 the linkage between metaphors that forms a matrix of interrelated and reinforcing associations, becomes apparent, as the various metaphors are assembled into a more congruent and coherent whole.

Santa Ana’s extended metaphor of the United States as “house” or as the “U.S.S. Stars &

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29. *AN*, no. 4.
30. Heyer, *Social Sin and Immigration,* 428-29. Heyer also argues that, at this level, the power of Christianity’s adherence to limited conceptions of personal sin and insistence upon a narrow-issue political agenda, must also be assessed.
33. See Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 100-1, 281-84, as well as p. 55, above.
"Stripes," with immigrants postured as imminent threats to its stability and safety, serves as an example of the way in which metaphors can coalesce into social worlds. The prevailing ideology now governs understanding, and people, via silent acquiescence or active participation, accept that ideology as true.\(^{34}\)

It is at this stage that distorted consciousness so shapes understanding that bias and value-blindness occur, and that the construct of the world gains a false authenticity. Human beings may also create ruptures in their relationships with others through their own sin which can, in turn, foster systems of alienation and domination. As Himes explains it, as we are immersed in and surrounded by evil, “we suffer a loss of our moral sensitivity.”\(^{35}\) The failure to understand all human beings as Imago Dei, the unthinking acceptance and concretizations of metaphors, as though they are true, and the damaging decisions they invite, serve as examples of this. In the data examined in the above studies, false consciousness about Latino/a immigrants gave birth to social manifestations, such as the proposal of anti-immigrant and racist laws, and punitive ordinances, the construction of a wall, and consideration of countless other dehumanizing and objectifying actions. For Heyer, the scotosis produced by ideologically anchored structures of injustice lulls U.S. Catholics into “equating ‘law-abiding’ with ‘just’ or into apathetic acquiescence.”\(^{36}\) It is also a convenient and biased blindness, for it permits those who are comfortable to retain a privileged position while claiming to be unaware of the plight of the poor. However, in an age of globalized technology and media, to remain ignorant of the “plight of small farmers in Mexico, the fatal realities of the yet-unfortified stretches of the border, or the

\(^{34}\) Baum, Religion and Alienation, 201.


\(^{36}\) Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration,” 429. A good example of this would be the oft-repeated question, “What part of illegal don’t you understand?”
treatment of undocumented immigrants in detention centers” is, Heyer argues, to enter “the realm of culpable ignorance.”37

According to Baum, wrestling against social sin begins on the third level.38 Acceptance of the false consciousness varies by intensity, from total identification with the prevailing voices to a growing awareness of the injustices embedded within them. Thus, if one is open to the Spirit, one may come to understand and turn away from the dehumanizing trends and injustices of those structures. It is thus also on this level, Baum concludes, that conversion takes place.39

For the purposes of this project, then, it is critically important to expose this distorted consciousness for what it is, unmask its underlying ideologies, and prophetically dissent against and undermine the dehumanizing constructs, so that the slow work of conversion and reconciliation can begin.

Finally, at the fourth level, sin has so distorted institution(s) that individual and collective decisions now intensify sin’s power and increase the injustices. The social distortion becomes so comprehensive that it is expressed in the common parlance: e.g., the ubiquitous use of the word “illegal” to represent human beings as well as a host of other derogatory metaphors reified through repetition; the web of unthinking and unexamined associations they generate; the concrete manifestations in day-to-day treatment, policies, and laws; and finally, the callous disregard for or tacit acceptance of the daily loss of life, limb, and dignity, the human rights abuses, and the often permanent separation of families, all purportedly enacted in the name of

37. Heyer, “Social Sin and Immigration,” 429. See also Patrick Kerans, Sinful Social Structures (New York: Paulist Press, 1974), 68-69, who, following Lonergan, writes of the “scotosis” of being “knowingly ignorant,” i.e., knowingly choosing to remain ignorant, cherishing illusions, adopting one perspective while excluding another. On the subject of the church’s complicity with culture, see also Miroslav Volf, Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 36-7, who, writing in the context of ethnic cleansing, writes that “cultural identity insinuates itself with religious force” in such a way that parishioners and clergy adopt and even legitimate the claims of their own cultural or ethnic communities, and notes that “. . . the complicity—witting or unwitting—of Christian churches with the imperial process remains an undeniable fact.”

38. Baum, Religion and Alienation, 201.

nationalism or security. Myths are repeated as facts, then used to defend seriously flawed decisions.40

Thus, for example, once one can convincingly conflate “immigrant” with “terrorist,” and the United States as under threat, it becomes acceptable and even desirable to militarize the border, to count one death a day as “collateral damages,” to form militia groups to hunt down immigrants like “quarry,” to develop a billion dollar industry around immigrants’ incarceration,41 and to disregard mounting human rights violations. Similarly, once one tacitly accepts the metaphor “immigrant as animal,” forced sterilization seems reasonable42 and an electrified fence an option. At this level, Baum writes, “personal sin clearly enters into the creation and expansion of social sin. . . . [f]or here, out of conscious evil intention and greed, a person or a group of persons can magnify the evil done by institutional life and give a twist for the worse to human organization.”43 Baum also warns us that institutions can continue to be exploitative because they are made to appear legitimate to their participants.44 So legitimate do they appear, in fact, that Kerwin warns that it can extend to an internalization of blame and unworthiness on the part of the sinned-against, which he calls both “sad” and “sacreligious.”45 When blame is internalized, or the sinful agent is not clear, victims of the abuse or structural sin often accept responsibility

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41. Investigative radio journalist Deepa Fernandes traces the change in fortunes for the private corrections industry since 9/11/2001. See Fernandes, Targeted, 169-200. One example among many is Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) which, in 2000, carried more than $1 billion in debt, was in violation of its credit agreements, and was facing bankruptcy (194). Post 9/11, CCA has been awarded a number of government contracts. At a profit of $50.26 per inmate per day, the company posted a three percent increase in revenue in 2005, for a total of $295.8 million (195).

42. Especially in the case of Latinas who, in this construct, are reputed to be hyper-fertile and “breed like rabbits.” See p. 46, above, n. 126.


for their condition, or accept victimization as part of reality, or as unavoidable, or as an act of God.

It is clear that these layers of social sin are not silos, but instead overlap, intersect, flow from, and shape one another. Heyer emphasizes the complex manner in which these various levels interrelate:

Pervasive, internalized ideologies make us susceptible to myths; operative understandings influence our actions or inaction. When bias hides or skews values, it becomes more difficult to choose authentic values over those that prevail in society, a tendency already present because of original sin. . . . Whether in the form of nationalism, expediency, or profit, social inducements to personal sin in the immigration context abound.46

Therefore, engaging social sin will always necessitate both personal conversions and social and communal transformation. Like Freithem’s “spiderweb of a world,” discussed above, social sin presents its own tangled and interwoven web that can entrap one both personally and in wider relationships. Although morally accountable for their actions, human beings are also subject to sin and its distortions found in the principalities and powers that surround them, making it all the more necessary to carefully examine social sin in all its complexity.

The church, therefore, must specifically name the reality of social sin operative in the present treatment of and language about immigrants, bring to light the root causes and contributing factors of migration, and undermine any sense of complacency within the church or society until the jarring voices of the sinned-against are heard. Heyer observes that “churches are well poised not only to defend the rights and meet the needs of immigrants, but to name these entrenched, intertwined patterns of social sin. A pilgrim church calls for repentance from sustaining harmful myths out of fear or bias, from the greed of consumerism, and from the

globalization of indifference.” As I will argue later, the church is also ideally situated to present an alternative understanding of and vision for the world. Further, to the extent that individuals have been seduced by the prevailing ideologies of racism, nativism, xenophobia, and consumerism, they must also repent, and, with the church, also critique these ideologies and their present practices.

CST begins the process of naming these sins, as well as envisioning a future oriented towards the Kingdom. The next section will sketch a brief outline of the body of magisterial teaching on social doctrine, especially as it concerns migration, so as to examine the principles and theological tenets that undergird it.

II. Catholic Social Doctrine: A Brief Review

A. Introduction

CST refers to the corpus of papal and magisterial teachings that concern the conditions of life and society that promote and protect the dignity and worth of a human person. They are based on the beliefs that “God continues to speak in and through human history [and that] the Church has ‘the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel.’” As the U.S. bishops explain, it details the basic demands of justice in the human rights of every person. It is “[i]nspired by the great biblical injunctions of justice or

48. It is not my intention to provide an exhaustive analysis, but instead to draw out the foundations and consistent themes of CST as it refers to migration.
righteousness (*sedaqah*) and right judgment (*misphat*) marking the reign of God, now understood as human dignity and human rights.  

CST grounds its anthropology in *imago Dei*, and in the biblically-based emphasis on covenant, community, and relationality. It proclaims the human person as created by God in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1.26-27), who is loved by God, and made for and in relation with every other God-imaging human person. It imbues every human person with human dignity and the right to realize his/her full potential; but it further instills every human being with the responsibility to defend that dignity. As Kerwin puts it, “human beings are social by nature and realize their humanity in giving of themselves to others.” Thus, the fullest expression of human dignity occurs in solidarity with others. Further, there is an order to human existence, a rational, objective plan imprinted on the human heart (Rom 2.14-15), which serves as the basis for natural law.

In CST, human rights are a starting point by which to measure the common good, using the lens of what is good for others. When a person works for the common good of the community, it also preserves the dignity of the human person. CST also emerges out of a long tradition of and commitment to the foundational duty and virtue of hospitality and with the self-understanding of Christians as sojourners in but not of the world. These concepts were first

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55. Kerwin states that classic Augustinian and Thomist theology understands the common good ultimately in terms of communion with God; observing that it refers to the sum total of social conditions which permit human beings, collectively or individually, to reach their fulfillment. See Kerwin, “Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty,” 101; see also David Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 132. Kerwin adds that rights do not exhaust the common good, but espouse the minimum conditions for human dignity.

espoused biblically, then developed theologically as an integral aspect of Christian existence and self-understanding.\textsuperscript{57} Thus, the seeds were already sown and well rooted when the church took up the issue of migration, and, more generally, the economy and the social order, in the late nineteenth century.

B. The Era of the Immigrant Church

In the United States, pastoral concern to address the needs of a large, heterogeneous, migrating population preceded \textit{Rerum Novarum} and any modern CST. In the years 1815-1865, a period often called “the era of the immigrant church,” waves of German, Polish, Italian, and other immigrants, numbered in the millions, spurred the need to develop infrastructure to address their needs. This took the form of national parishes and parochial schools, as well as extra-parochial institutions such as hospitals, welfare agencies, settlement houses, port programs, and rural colonization programs.\textsuperscript{58} Although intended to be a “temporary concession,” the structures put in place continued to define the American Catholic Church for the next 100 years.\textsuperscript{59} By 1865, the Roman Catholic Church was the largest denomination in the U.S., justifying Silvano M. Tomasi’s contention that “[a] determining element in the character of American Catholicism has been the continued influx of immigrants.”\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{57} Chapter 3 will offer a more detailed examination of the way in which this tradition was understood biblically as well as in the writings of patristic period, which equated caring for the poor with caring for Jesus.

\textsuperscript{58} Jay P. Dolan, “A Critical Period in American Catholicism,” \textit{The Review of Politics} 35, issue 4 (October 1973): 523-36, at 525-29. In 1815, there were less than 200,000 Catholics living in the U.S., but by 1865, the Roman Catholic Church was the largest denomination in the U.S., with over three and one-half million members. See also Stephen M. DiGiovanni, “Historical and Canonical Aspects of the Pastoral Care of Immigrants in Late Nineteenth Century America,” in \textit{People on the Move: A Compendium of Church Documents on the Pastoral Concern for Migrants and Refugees} (United States Catholic Conference, 1988), 33-42.


Tomasi chronicles the many challenges and difficulties this presented for the receiving church, language being chief among them. Seminaries expanded their training to include the many languages a priest needed for pastoral care, and priests were encouraged to emigrate to the U.S. to help. There were debates as to the appropriate distance between national parishes, how much accommodation to make for newcomers, and the extent of authority in national parishes. Arriving immigrants were described as having a poor understanding of their faith, and were thus in need of catechesis. The receiving church complained that, with the rapid growth engulfing it, the American church was taking on a foreign sense. Tomasi summarizes the basic theme of the American Catholic experience as “a combination of real concern for the immigrants, constant conflict, and constant compromise.”

A pastoral letter of 1919 foreshadows some of the difficulties ahead. Noting the U.S.’ formation through and by immigrants, it calls on the nation to set aside its distrust, consider the possibilities for good, and extend the hand of charity. Bishops responded to the wave of anti-Catholic nativism that began in the mid-1800s, sometimes by offering armed protection, and they became involved in advocating against restrictive immigration policy as early as 1924, a tradition that continues to this day. The National Welfare Council, established in the 1920s, assigned sub-directors of immigration to greet and support arriving immigrants, meeting them at the ports of arrival. They provided interpretation, legal advice, acted as liaisons, and followed up

64. Scribner, “Immigration as a ‘Sign of the Times,’” 12.
with the destination diocese. Some of these activities continue to this day, and the (renamed) Office of Migration and Refugee Services has resettled more refugees than any other single agency.

C. The Right to Migrate and Migrant’s Rights

To a large extent, Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* [RN] (“Of New Things: On the Condition of Labor”), shaped CST and the relationship between persons, labor, and political society. Written in 1891 “partially as a response to the great European migration to the United States,” and commonly acknowledged as the first of the modern social encyclicals, the document articulated the dignity of human labor, denounced the exploitation of the poor as “little better than slavery,” affirmed the right to a living wage, and implied the right to migrate in order to sustain one’s family. As Himes observes, the pope “made the connection between economics, justice, and migration. . . . mak[ing] the point that the opportunity to participate in the economic life of a nation is a key factor in the decision to emigrate or not.”

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66. Scribner, “Immigration as a ‘Sign of the Times,’” 8. Ports included New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Providence, and, beginning in 1923, the Mexican border was added. See also Douglas J. Slawson, *The Foundation and First Decade of the National Welfare Conference* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1992), 46-8, referenced by Scribner. Originally, these responsibilities were given to the National Catholic Welfare Council, the first step in the creation of an Immigration department, which is now called the Department of Migration and Refugee Services at the USCCB.

67. See Coonan, “No Strangers Among Us,” 161. Coonan references the testimony of Bishop Nicholas DiMarzi before the Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Immigration, August 4, 1999, who reports that, since the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, the office has resettled some 650,000 refugees, which is nearly 32 percent of the total admitted to the U.S. at that time.


70. RN, nos. 20-24.

71. RN, no. 3.

72. RN, nos. 44-45.

73. RN, no. 47.

A 1948 letter from Pope Pius XII to the U.S. bishops, speaking of his grave concern for those displaced by revolutions, unemployment, or hunger, and a 1951 radio address commemorating *RN*, provided some of the theological underpinnings for the right to migrate, grounding them in natural law. They referenced that the abundant and fertile land was created by God for the good of all. They described the need for migration, as well as the inevitability of it, and the way it which it would advance the common good and benefit both the sending and receiving countries. The pope’s letter offered that “the sovereignty of the State, although it must be respected, cannot be exaggerated to the point that access to this land is, for inadequate or unjustified reasons, denied to needy and decent people,” provided that the public wealth does not forbid it.

Writing about *RN* 100 years later, Pope John Paul II writes that the guiding principle of the document, and of all social doctrine, is Christian anthropology, the correct view and worth of the human person:

> God has imprinted his own image and likeness on man (cf. Gen 1:26), conferring upon him an incomparable dignity... In effect, beyond the rights which man acquires by his own work, there exist rights which do not correspond to any work he performs, but which flow from his essential dignity as a person. He also concludes that, with *RN*, Pope Leo XIII established a kind of “citizenship status” for the church that gives the church standing to teach on social doctrine, since that doctrine “points out

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75. See Pope Pius XII, *Exsul Familia Nazarethana: Apostolic Constitution of Pius XII [EFN]*, August 1, 1952, which references both the letter and the radio address, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/p12exsul.htm (last accessed 24 November 2013). The letter was addressed to the American bishops and dated December 24, 1948. This radio address is referenced in *EFN*, “Title I: The Motherly Solicitude for Migrants.”

the direct consequences of [the Christian] message in the life of society and situates daily work and struggles for justice in the context of bearing witness to Christ.”

In response to the massive influx of refugees following the Second World War, Exsul Familia Nazarethana (The Family in Exile) [EFN], was issued on August 1, 1952. This apostolic constitution serves as a kind of “magna carta on migration,” discussing the challenges inherent in migration, and establishing principles for the care of migrants. Expressing the “grave concern” of a “worried father,” Pope Pius XII committed to caring for “pilgrims, aliens, exiles, and migrants of every kind.” Alluding to both the radio address discussed above, and to the teaching of RN, the pope asserts the right to migrate and argues that the sovereign rights of states are not absolute.

In 1959, the National Welfare Council issued “World Refugee Year and Migration” in honor of “World Refugee Year.” That statement, which largely followed EFN in affirming the right to migrate because of “absolute need,” also addressed the U.S. legal treatment of migrants and refugees, and raised questions meant to stimulate Christian thinking. A 1976 resolution and statement entitled, “The Pastoral Concern of the Church for People on the Move” was the first of a number of statements that offered more definitive analysis of U.S. immigration law.

CST continued to clarify its doctrine on migration. Pacem in Terris, for example, establishes a full set of social rights that included the right to migrate, given just reasons, but

77. CA, no. 5.
78. EFN, “Motherly Solicitude.”
80. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, The Pastoral Concern of the Church for People on the Move: A Resolution Approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, approved November 11, 1976 (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1976); cited by Coonans, “No Strangers Among Us,” 139-43. The resolution summarized and adopted the longer statement that followed, “The Church and the Immigrant Today,” prepared by the Committee of Migration and Tourism. That statement called for specific legislative remedies, including the need for increased visa quota numbers, a broader definition of the category “refugee,” expansion of the Civil Rights Act to include all residents; a statute of limitations on deportation; a visa review board; and more humane enforcement of immigration law, among much more. The bishops advocated for changes to immigration law again in 1985, 1987, and 1988.
also upholds the right not to migrate, and to make a living in one’s own country. Those rights were grounded in membership in the human family, and because the goods of the earth belong to all peoples. In Populorum Progressio, Pope Paul VI insisted upon the “duty of giving foreigners a hospitable reception,” explaining that it is a duty imposed by human solidarity and by Christian charity, and it is incumbent upon families and educational institutions in the host nations.”82 The apostolic letter Octogesima Adveniens called for a charter detailing a fuller range of rights for people who migrate.83 The Instruction on the Pastoral Care of People Who Migrate, issued in 1969, broadens the conditions under which one could rightfully migrate, while still balancing these against the requirements of the common good.84 Those conditions include poverty, especially when combined with the strain of large populations and limited resources, or where conditions which offend human dignity exist.

In 1978, the Congregation of Bishops issued the instruction De Pastorali Migratorum Cura (On the Pastoral Care of Migrants), which established the human rights of migrants as a relevant topic for theological reflection.85 Two church statements, while not directly related to

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83. Coonan, “No Strangers Among Us,” 126-7. The letter was issued by Pope Paul VI in 1971. Paul wanted assurances of the right to emigrate, favor their integration, facilitate their professional advancement, and give them access to decent housing where their families could join them. Coonan notes that, in an October 17, 1973, address to the European Congress on Pastoral Work for Migrants, he detailed additional rights: to respect their personality, security of work, vocational training, family life, and freedom of speech and association.

84. Sacred Congregation for Bishops, Instruction on the Pastoral Care of People Who Migrate, August 22, 1969, no. 7; cited by Kerwin, “Rights, the Common Good, and Sovereignty.” 97. Pope Paul IV issued an apostolic letter with the instruction, explaining that the pastoral care norms laid out in Exsul Familia required revision because of changes in the world’s migration. Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Letter in the Form of Motu Proprio Establishing the New Norms for the Care of Migrants 2-3 (1969); cited by Coonan, “There Are No Strangers Among Us,” 124.

85. In 1970, Pope Paul VI issued a motu proprio, Apostolicæ Caritatis, organizing the various entities dealing with migration and travel into the Pontifical Commission for Migrants and Tourism (later for Migrants and Itinerant Peoples), who published this and later documents.
migration, inform the discussion, since they develop social doctrine regarding factors that impel migration, such as war, poverty, oppression, the economy, the right to work and be paid a just wage, globalization, and industrialization. In his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* ("On Social Concern") [SRS], promulgated 30 December 1987, Pope John Paul II delineates authentic human development from the Christian perspective. If the necessary conditions to foster authentic human development are present, persons can realize their full potential and live in dignity in their homelands, and will have no need to emigrate. In *Centesimus Annus* [CA], which commemorates and updates RN, Pope John Paul II posits that the possibility to survive and make an active contribution to society is inextricably tied to human dignity, an important point in light of the critique that workers are so often reduced to the level of a commodity. Turning to the matter of ownership of private property, the teaching affirms its legitimacy, but offers the reminder that, by nature, private property also serves a social function, and that the original source of all that is good is the very act of God, who created and gave “the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favouring anyone. This is the foundation of the universal destination of the earth’s goods.” The document closes with a call to the Church and its members, in the face of the growing poverty in the world, to “offer the witness of actions” to those afflicted by it, including refugees and migrants, for love for others is made concrete in the promotion of justice.

Thus far, CST has affirmed the right to migrate, grounding it in *Imago Dei*, natural law, one human family, and the common good. It has insisted that all that impedes human dignity is

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87. CA, no. 34.
88. CA, no. 31. Emphasis present in original.
89. CA, no. 58.
subject to examination, including the factors that impel migration. Post-Vatican II documents deepen this understanding, especially when viewed through the lens of the landmark document *Gaudium et Spes*, which places the church and its members in relationship with the world.

D. Solidarity and Human Dignity

In the next documents under consideration, we find a growing sense of responsibility and relationality, focused on respect for human dignity and the common good, and advancing a vision of a civilization of love. *Gaudium et Spes* [GS], the Pastoral Constitution on the Church, while not generally categorized as CST, sets the tone for later documents. It strongly contends that “whatever is opposed to life itself, . . . whatever violates the integrity of the human person, . . . whatever insults human dignity, . . . all these things and others like them are infamies indeed” and “are supreme dishonor to the Creator.”  

It calls special attention to refugees and “foreign laborers”:

> In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of every person without exception and of actively helping him when he comes across our path, whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign laborer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord, "As long as you did it for one of these the least of my brethren, you did it for me" (Matt. 25:40).  

The opening lines of GS provide the interpretive framework for understanding the mandate to “make ourselves the neighbor of every person without exception.” They confirm the intimate relationality and solidarity between humankind and Christians:

> The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing genuinely human fails to find an echo

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91. GS, no. 27.
in their hearts. For theirs is a community of people united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit in their pilgrimage towards the Father’s kingdom, bearers of a message of salvation for all of humanity. That is why they cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history.92

Solidarity, which theologian Christine Firer Hinze writes, is like a “scarlet thread running through the pastoral constitution,”93 is also a key theme in SRS. Pope John Paul II defines solidarity, writing that it involves “not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”94 Authentic development in the world should be guided by solidarity in order to balance inequities. Solidarity is also a way to peace, and the pope calls for “an end to all division,” for the promotion of a “human society built on love and peace,” and for “justice and equality for every human being.”95

As we saw in the last chapter, the rhetoric constructing Mexican immigrants as invaders gained purchase in the 1970s, adding to the already existing associations with criminality. In their continuing efforts to provide pastoral care to new immigrants, the U.S. bishops released the pastoral letter, “The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment,” reflecting on the pastoral implications of the reality of the Hispanic presence in the U.S. in 1984.96 In 1986, the bishops issued the statement, “Together a New People,” calling upon the Church to offer a ministry of service and advocacy to the wave of immigrants from Central America and the Caribbean, and teaching that human rights take precedence over legal rights.97

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93. See Hinze, “Straining toward Solidarity,” 168-174. This is a theme to which we will return in some detail, below.
94. SRS, no. 38.
95. SRS, no. 49.
96. DeBerri and Hug, Catholic Social Teaching, 142.
As the prior chapter described, the 1990s were a time of highly charged public discourse positing threats of invasion and conquest from Mexican immigrants, producing a veritable publishing industry of books playing on the public’s fears about immigration, and resulting in xenophobic and racist legislation like Proposition 187. It was in this atmosphere, and in response to the “acrimony and hostility” permeating the immigration debate, that the U.S. bishops issued *One Family Under God* (OFG) in September 1995. In an attempt to elevate the discussion, they first identified the universality and visibility of human mobility as a “sign of the times,” then offered an exposition of biblical themes and Catholic social teaching. Writing that the “Judeo-Christian tradition is steeped in images of migration,” they abstract three trajectories for reflection. First, Israel’s repeated uprootedness resulted in a growing sensitivity to the plight of foreigners, which intensified with the later understanding that the face of Christ is reflected in each stranger. Second, the journeying imagery that so permeates both the Old and New Testament evolves into missionary activity leading to the growth of the early church, and that growth lead to the universality of the church. Finally, the pilgrim status so evident throughout the scriptures and life of the early church reminds the church that it belongs to a world beyond the temporal. The document also speaks of the need to be guided by insights from CST principles, such as the dignity of the human person, the common good, and solidarity, and to judge by a double criteria for analysis: solidarity and subsidiarity. The document then goes on to specify principles that should govern both immigrant and immigration policy.

98. *OFG*, no. 2.
100. *OFG*, no. 3.
101. *OFG*, no. 3.
102. *OFG*, no. 4.
103. *OFG*, no. 4.
104. For a fuller discussion of these principles, see Coonan, “No Strangers Among Us,” 147-50.
With the publication of *CA*, Pope John Paul II begins to speak of a “civilization of love” that comes about through solidarity.\(^\text{105}\) *CA* presents alienation, polarization, and exploitation as human deprivations, in that the humans do not receive the benefits of relationships of solidarity, for which they have been created, nor can they live fully authentic lives because they only find their truest self through the free gift of self.\(^\text{106}\) The pope cautions that polarization can and has obscured the awareness of a human dignity common to all, the recognition of the value and grandeur of the human person, and places the responsibility for the preservation and defense of human dignity on all Christians and people of good will.\(^\text{107}\)

In *The Church and Racism*, the magisterium calls attention to such polarization in its critique of the racism and ethnocentrism suffered by immigrants. Written in 1989, it calls the prejudice, exaggerated nationalism, and potential for xenophobia or even racial hatred that immigrants frequently encounter “deplorable,” and counters this with the Christian vision of the dignity of human persons and the unity of humankind, summarized in the teaching of respect for differences, fraternity, and solidarity.\(^\text{108}\) Further, echoing GS’s appeal to “make ourselves the neighbor of every person,” it calls upon Christians to recognize as neighbor “every person that I meet along the way,” to interiorize values to bring about a change of heart, to witness their convictions with their lives, and defend the victims of racism.\(^\text{109}\) Given the fact that, thirteen years after the publication of this statement, the situation regarding racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance had “regrettably not improved” and may have deteriorated,

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\(^{105}\) *CA*, no. 10. The vision of a “civilization of love” was first introduced by Pope Paul VI in a Christmas homily in 1975, and was later reiterated in the Message for the World Day of Peace on 1 January 1977.

\(^{106}\) *CA*, no. 41.

\(^{107}\) *CA*, no. 22.


the PJPC issued a contribution statement to the World Conference Against Racism, on the eve of its gathering.\footnote{110 PJPC, Contribution to World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, 2001, no. 4. \url{http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20010829_comunicato-razzismo_en.html} (accessed 7 December 2013).} They did so at a time when the movement of peoples and the intermingling of cultures and multi-ethnicity have become “social facts,” and called for individual conversion of hearts, as well as echoed the church’s own millennial requests for pardon for, among other faults, being “guilty of attitudes of rejection and exclusion, consenting to acts of discrimination on the basis of racial and ethnic difference.”\footnote{111 PJPC, Contribution, nos. 4, 7. \reffootnote{110}} It imposed the duty to educate for peace on everyone in order to promote the culture of human rights, calling special attention to the important role the media plays, and offering that their primary duty is truth, guided by charity.\footnote{112 PJPC, Contribution, no. 16.}

During the same time period, the U.S. Catholic bishops issued \textit{Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity [WSU]}, which built upon \textit{OFG} and incorporated a jubilee vision of gathering into one the dispersed children,\footnote{113 United States Catholic Conference, \textit{Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity} [hereinafter WSU] (Washington, D.C.: NCCB/USCC, 2000), 2, \url{http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/pastoral-care-of-migrants-refugees-and-travelers/resources/welcoming-the-stranger-among-us-unity-in-diversity.cfm} (last accessed 4 March 2014).} on November 15, 2000. Acknowledging and often celebrating the huge diversity present in the U.S., an immigrant nation, the bishops reject the “anti-immigrant stance that has become popular . . . and the nativism, ethnocentricity, and racism that continue to reassert themselves in our communities.”\footnote{114 WSU, no. 2.} They advance, instead, a vision of unity in diversity, grounded in the model of Trinitarian communion.

Positing that many Americans are forgetful of their heritage, the document attempts to reignite those memories, as well as empathy for the newest immigrants, by reminding Christians of their rich scriptural heritage of exile, oppression, and deliverance, as well as the common heritage of all Americans as immigrants. They speak also of the long history of the church in...
providing pastoral care to immigrants, many of whom are the ancestors of present day Americans. As we saw from the discussion above detailing some of those considerable efforts, that care provided a safe haven to great numbers of immigrants via a vast array of charitable organizations and national parishes, and also fought against the nativism originally directed against all Catholics. Thus, it seems to me both sad and ironic that the bishops have to now denounce the church for a “kind of nativism . . . when established members insist that there is just one way to worship, one set of familiar hymns, one small handful of familiar devotions, one way to organize a parish community, one language for all . . .”115 The bishops also “confess that today, as in the past, the treatment of the immigrant too often reflects failures of understanding and sinful patterns of chauvinism, prejudice, and discrimination that deny the unity of the human family, of which the one baptism is our enduring sign.”116 They confess, too, that recent immigrants have not always encountered welcome in the church and have faced prejudice there,117 and regret that “some parishes have found that their parishioners have imbibed the post-1960s societal attitude of exclusion of new immigrants.”118 Further, “[s]ome have been turned away by pastors or find their petition for a Mass in their own language and a share in parish facilities opposed by members of the parish community,” thus struggling to worship in a language not their own “while the deepest expressions of their spirit cry out silently in another language.”119

115. WSU, no. 10.
116. WSU, no. 9.
117. WSU, no. 9.
118. WSU, no. 11.
119. WSU, no. 9.
The bishops advance a call for “conversion, communion, and solidarity,” calling for a “conversion of mind and heart through which we are able to offer a genuine and suitable welcome, to share together as brother and sisters at the same table, and to work side by side.” They offer a reminder that negative images and derogatory jokes readily merge with America’s “original sin” of racism, so much so that it at times produces institutional racism. They instead propose a call to the communion that is the church’s destiny as children of God. This calls for authentic solidarity that hears the cry of those who are suffering, and advocates for laws that respect human dignity and for opportunities that advance their health and well-being.

*Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope* [SNL] is a pastoral letter issued jointly by the Mexican and United States Catholic bishops in 2003. It begins by naming the increase in migration as a sign of the times and as a manifestation of globalization. Specifically, it names as contrary to the Kingdom of God the human rights abuses, suffering and deaths, disunity of families, and racist and xenophobic attitudes that too often accompany this phenomenon. The letter itself is an effort to “awaken [their] 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.” Like many of the preceding church documents, the bishops reiterate the stories and themes of migration found in scripture. They call attention to the presence of God in the harshest of situations, and recognize the grace of God present in the midst of sin. Further, they recognize in Israel’s conduct with the stranger “both an imitation of God and

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120. This call was originally made by Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, Post-Synodal Exhortation to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious and All the Lay Faithful on the Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion, and Solidarity in America, no. 7, given at Mexico City on 22 January 1999.

121. *WSU*, no. 3.

122. *WSU*, no. 10.

the primary, specific Old Testament manifestation of the great commandments to love one’s
neighbor.”124

The bishops summarize the long and rich tradition of Catholic social teaching defending
human rights, the rights of a migrant to emigrate, and calling for an analysis of the root causes of
migration. They delineate five principles that emerge from these teachings: (1) persons have the
right to find opportunities in their homeland; (2) persons have the right to migrate to support
themselves and their families; (3) sovereign nations have the right to control their borders; (4)
refugees and asylum seekers should be afforded protection; and (5) the human dignity and
human rights of undocumented migrants should be respected.125 Like the earlier WSU, the
bishops frame their response to pastoral concerns around the three calls, the call to conversion, to
communion, and to solidarity, which they image as Christian hospitality.

E. Interim Summary and Critical Analysis

The documents offering ongoing critiques of racism, xenophobia, and nativism were
published at the same time as, and in response to, the highly charged and destructive atmosphere
surrounding immigration both in the U.S. and internationally. Because, as we saw in the first
chapter, language is so critically important to shaping human understanding, it seems a necessary
step to apply the critiques regarding language and constructs to the language of the magisterial
teachings, as timely and essential as they are, and to question the extent to which they may
unknowingly contribute to the logics of exclusion and othering by framing migrants primarily as
the objects of pastoral care, thereby inadvertently serving the interests of the status quo.

Whenever societal patterns are replicated, with the dominant culture at the center and
immigrants as quintessential outsiders, it perpetuates the same divisions and maintains patterns

124. SNL, no. 25.
125. SNL, nos. 34-9.
of cultural superiority. Thus, binary constructs, such as church/migrant, caregiver/receiver, insider/outsider, can foster the same polarization that it seeks to eliminate. A missionary stance towards migrants creates a one-way dependency rather than the mutuality inherent in hospitable communities. Indeed, theologian Carmen Lussi points out that the church’s “pauperistic understanding” of migrants creates its own form of marginalization by making immigrants objects of charity but not conversation partners.

The logics of othering are borne out at times in the paternalistic language that speaks, for example, of the “grave concern of a worried father,” but also in language that seems to speak from the standpoint of the dominant culture, which the majority of these documents do. The title of Pope John Paul II’s annual message for World Migration Day of 1996, “The Church and Illegal Immigration,” reflecting the narrative of illegality, serves as one example, as do the fourteen references to illegality in the short address, all but two of which uncritically employ the media’s term of “illegal immigrant” or “illegal migrant.” As the prior chapter discussed, arguments made using the terminology and grounds of the governing discourse, even when they are intended as resistance, nevertheless strengthen that discourse.¹²⁷

Further, as we have seen, the biases and constructs of the dominant culture exercise significant but often unnoticed influence. A sentence in the address, which reads, “Migration is assuming the features of a social emergency, above all because of the increase in illegal migrants which, despite the current restrictions, it seems impossible to halt,” serves as a prime example. Reflecting Cisneros’ taxonomies of danger (“social emergency”), and invasion/flood (“increase”/“impossible to halt”),¹²⁸ they unwittingly reinforce the same resilient framing found

¹²⁶. Lussi, “Human Mobility as a Theological Consideration,” 49.
¹²⁷. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 136.
¹²⁸. See discussion in prior chapter, page 61.
in the principal constructs. When, just two lines later, the pope speaks of how “the supply of foreign labor is becoming excessive in comparison to the needs of the economy, which already has difficulty in absorbing its domestic workers,” he has given credence to a third trope, overwhelming burden, as well as the argument that prioritizes the economy.¹²⁹

Even the language of solidarity can reinforce asymmetries and binary constructs. For example, in WSU, discussed above, the bishops urge solidarity with migrants, writing that it will take many forms, “from participating in efforts to ensure that the U.S. government respect the basic human rights of all immigrants, to providing direct assistance to immigrants through diocesan and parish programs.”¹³⁰ While direct assistance and letter writing are laudable, they can be done at a distance, or perpetuate a one-directional benevolence, and do little to create mutually enriching, reciprocal relationships that foster true solidarity. As we will see in Chapters 4 and 5, they are instead a pale substitute. Further, in reinforcing who has the power, and who does not, they in some sense maintain those same dynamics. Calling this an “ethic of control,” Sharon Welch critiques the way in which those in power assume that their good will is sufficient to ensure that solutions will work and that their agency and viewpoint is more important than the voices of those most impacted. They fail to consider the way in which structural imbalances of power thwart even genuine attempts at help, all the while maintaining the “privilege of leaving the fray” and return to life as usual.¹³¹

In light of these critiques, and the objective of this thesis to reframe migration and contribute to a broader vision, particular attention will be given to movements and developments that take up that task. EFN, written in 1952, offers an early glimpse into such a broader vision.

¹²⁹. The phrasings highlighted here do not reflect the overall tone of the pope’s message and are used only to illustrate the way in which language might unwittingly support the dominant narrative.
¹³⁰. WSU, no. 175.
With its correlation between the Holy Family’s flight to Egypt and today’s migrants,\(^{132}\) it serves to link a migrant/exilic existence with the Judeo-Christian identity. *Chiesa e mobilità umana* (*Church and Human Mobility*), a circular letter issued in 1978, makes another step in the right direction. It reflects on migration using the themes of “exodus” as a path of liberation, the ideal of universal fraternity, the commitment for a balanced world development, the search for the common good, and the duty of hospitality.\(^{133}\) In addition, it addresses parishes, asking them to “overcome habits rooted in the static,” and envision pastoral care as “without frontiers.”\(^{134}\) Receiving parishes are to understand that their welcome offers a profound opportunity to understand and appreciate others, and to affirm ways of living together calmly and in harmony, as part of its universality.\(^{135}\) The parish becomes the “privileged spot” to welcome emigrants, who are “not outsiders,” and where, “in the joy of universal charity,” the Eucharist, sacrament of unity, is celebrated.\(^{136}\) Again repeating that “no one can be considered a stranger or just a guest, or in any way on the fringe of things,” it offers that, when discrimination and marginalization takes place in the context of church, it deals a “mortal blow to the very notion of Church” and empties the concept of fraternity of its meaning.\(^{137}\) Finally, with its reminders of the rich scriptural heritage of exile, oppression, and deliverance, and of the shared immigrant background of most Americans, *WSU* also attempts to find common ground.

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133. Baggio, “Introduction,” *x. Church and Human Mobility* is a circular letter issued by the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants.
F. Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi

The instruction *Erga Migrante Caritas Christi* [EMCC], promulgated in 2004, gives birth to a much more comprehensive vision that integrally links migration with the church’s own nature. With this renewed understanding, the church does not stand outside of migration as an observer or conveyor of pastoral care, but as a fellow traveler. The instruction is the first to fully develop a biblical-theological frame of reference, situating migration within salvation history, the church’s mission, ecclesial self-identity, theological anthropology, and eschatology. Thus, while it stands in continuity with many of the past documents in urging pastoral care and denouncing injustices, and may be considered a capstone of the teachings, it also envisions hospitality and migration as the basis for a new and sacramental unity, thereby pointing the way for fruitful reflections on imagining a life together. It is therefore integral to my own project. Thus, I will present a more detailed review, highlighting areas that contribute to a theology of migration.

Theological reflection on migration yields a return to the understanding of migration as fundamental to the church’s own self-understanding. Salvation history has been marked by migration, deportation, exodus, and exile, and the “arduous journeys” of our faith ancestors are “towards the birth of a people without discrimination or frontiers,” a part of God’s plan of salvation until “all things are brought together in Christ (cf. Eph 1:10).” As theologian Fabio Baggio summarizes, migration is part of the “history of salvation; as a sign of the times and of God’s presence in history; and in the community of peoples, directed to universal

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138. Pontifical Council Instruction for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples [hereinafter PCPCMIP], Instruction, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* (The Love of Christ toward Migrants) [hereinafter EMCC], http://212.77.1.247/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/documents/rc_pc_migrants_doc_20040514_erga-migrantes-caritas-christi_en.html (last accessed 25 Nov 2013). While the document discusses the need and ways in which to respond to the spiritual and pastoral needs of migrants, to incorporate Canon law norms, and to consider the ecumenical and interfaith ramifications of migration, this analysis will be restricted primarily to the document’s biblico-theological frame of reference.

139. *EMCC*, no. 13.
In addition, the evocative memory of these hard tests and their fruits are fundamental to Christianity’s story. Christ, who sums up and repeats the experiences and plights of His people, serves as the archetype and living symbol of the emigrant, along with His mother, rightly known as Madonna of the Way.

Linking together theological anthropology and eschatology, *EMCC* declares that to follow Christ means to “walk behind Him and be in transit in the world because ‘there is no eternal city for us in this life’ (*Heb* 13:14).” Again referencing the church’s self-identity, and the identity of Christians who follow Christ everywhere, it writes, “The believer is always a pároikos, a temporary resident, a guest wherever he may be (cf. 1 Pt 1:1; 2:11; Jn 17:14-16).” Followers, then, understand migration and impermanence to be integral to who they are, and their pilgrimage together as church as a toiling toward the final goal of reconciliation and unity with God. Universality as a constituent element of the church serves and anticipates the final unity. The movement, migrations, and coming together of diverse peoples are understood and interpreted in light of the biblical visions of the *telos*, in which “all nations” come together from the corners of the earth to take their place at the feast of the kingdom of God. Migrations, therefore, are no less than a “call and prefiguration of that final meeting” and the migrant a living sign of the Christian’s “eternal vocation.” With an appeal for the fraternity, harmony, charity, and hospitality of Pentecost, this document reflects that “the experience of migration can

142. *EMCC*, no. 16.
143. *EMCC*, No. 16.
144. *EMCC*, no. 17.
145. *EMCC*, no. 18.
be the announcement of the paschal mystery, in which death and resurrection make for the creation of a new humanity in which there is no longer slave or foreigner (cf. Gal 3:28).”

Contemplating its own identity as a “church of Pentecost,” “born from Pentecost,” the document recognizes that, just as at Pentecost, the “real and symbolic meeting of peoples,” and the barriers that divide them, are reconciled through Christ (Eph. 2:14), so that “there is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew. . .” (Col. 3:11). Reviewing the Second Vatican Council’s understanding of ecclesiology, EMCC describes the vision of the Church as a “mystery of communion,” which models its unity on Trinitarian communion. Ethnic and cultural pluralism, then, are not simply to be tolerated, but a structural dimension of the church, and its unity given not by a common language or origin, but by the Spirit of Pentecost. Pentecost’s ideal of unity in diversity serves as a catalyst to explore and appreciate different cultural identities and the way in which they might serve humanity and advance the fullness of understanding. Plurality is a sign of the living presence of God in history and in the human community. Thus, the global and dynamic nature of migration today, and the fluidity of cultures represents a kairos for the People of God. Like Pentecost, it is an opportunity to overcome divisions and, through communion, to transform into new forms of life.

To accomplish this, the church, charged with forging this new creation in Christ, must learn ways that promote an authentic culture of welcome, which means that host communities must move beyond acts of fraternal assistance or even supporting legislation on their behalf.

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146. EMCC, no. 18.
147. EMCC, no. 16.
148. EMCC, no. 22.
149. EMCC, no. 103.
150. EMCC, no. 93.
151. EMCC, no. 19.
152. EMCC, no. 102.
153. EMCC, no. 39-40.
The church is called to be home for all, and a place of reconciliation, welcome, and authentic human development. The sacramental unity of the church thus has practical implications, and those concrete practices an ethical dimension. Rejecting all sentiments and manifestations of xenophobia and racism on the part of host communities, the instruction emphasizes the values and behaviours of hospitality, solidarity, and sharing, with listening, discernment, respect, and appreciation as necessary preludes, and dialogue a movement towards final unity. Dialogue, communion, and mission will thus characterize these engagements. The lay faithful are called to be builders of communion and living testimonies of welcome and love. Migrants are also the “hidden providential builders of such universal fraternity, and the foreigner described as God’s messenger “who surprises and interrupts the regularity and logic of daily life.” Even more, in the foreigner, the Church sees Christ who “pitches His tent among us” and knocks at our door. Together, then, hospitality and migration become the basis for a new sacramental unity, and the church’s witness of the new creation a sign of hope for the world.

Importantly, the document also integrates migration with the very mission of the church, stating that “the task entrusted by our Lord to His Church to proclaim the Word of God has been interwoven from the very beginning with the history of the emigration of Christians.” It also ties hospitality to that mission, stating that “hospitality was the Christians’ response to the needs of itinerant missionaries, of religious leaders in exile or on a journey, and of poor members in

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154. EMCC, no. 100.
155. EMCC, no. 37.
156. EMCC, no. 30.
157. EMCC, no. 36.
158. EMCC, no. 30.
159. EMCC, no. 100.
160. EMCC, no. 103.
161. EMCC, no. 101.
162. EMCC, no. 102.
163. EMCC, no. 3.
various communities.” The importance of hospitality and the vocation of an exilic and diasporic existence are both stressed as fundamental to the nature of the church:

Welcoming the stranger, a characteristic of the early Church, thus remains a permanent feature of the Church of God. It is practically marked by the vocation to be in exile, in diaspora, disperse among cultures and ethnic groups without ever identifying itself completely with any of these. Otherwise it would cease to be the first-fruit and sign, the leaven and prophecy of the universal Kingdom and community that welcomes every human being without preferences for persons or peoples. Welcoming the stranger is thus intrinsic to the nature of Church itself and bears witness to its fidelity to the gospel.  

With this document, the church begins to frame a much more robust theology of migration, and one that no longer presents the migrant as simply the object of the church’s pastoral care, which, as we have already seen, can convey a kind of benevolent paternalism and contribute to the logics of othering. This document is one of the first to mission migrants as co-builders of universal fraternity, and to use the word “with” when referencing pastoral care, acknowledging their central role as subjects in their own right. Dialogue, which by its very etymology conveys speech partners, is a subtheme running through the document, whether it be in interreligious encounters, intercultural engagement, or a meeting at a simple parish function. Faced with the Christ-imaged foreigner, dialogue takes on a sacramental character, and becomes a practical enactment of hospitality.

There is an intriguing line in this document and referenced above that bears further examination. It states that hospitality, or welcoming the stranger, a “permanent feature of the church” is “practically marked by the vocation to be in exile, in diaspora.” Without this, “it would cease to be first-fruit and sign, the leaven and prophecy of the universal Kingdom and

164. *EMCC*, no. 16.
165. *EMCC*, no. 22.
community. .”\textsuperscript{166} While the more recent documents have connected migration to Christianity’s roots and identity, this speaks of something a little different. It references a present day call and summons (vocation) and a future orientation (to be) towards marginality (in exile, in diaspora) as a defining mark of hospitality, and imbues the practical way that this is done with significance as both sign and leaven of the Kingdom.

Concluding Remarks and Looking Ahead

As this chapter draws to a conclusion, it might be helpful to step back look at the documents from a different perspective. Throughout these magisterial teachings, there has been an implied audience of Christians from receiving (and often more powerful) nations, and a considerable mustering of arguments, teaching, and scripture designed to, in effect, change their minds about migrants and immigration. However, there is still among mainstream Christians a certain stubborn adherence to the social constructs surrounding immigrants and an accompanying resistance to an ethic of solidarity with or hospitality towards the immigrant. With its self-evident history and composition as an immigrant church in the United States, the attitude of the descendants of those immigrants towards each successive wave of new immigrants appears amnesiatic, or at least myopic. Heyer speaks of encountering “significant displeasure in parish settings over the years” when speaking or teaching about immigration.\textsuperscript{167} In addition, Hinze speaks about the “moral torpor” toward the concept of solidarity among sincere Christians in comfortable circumstances. So inconsistent, superficial, or non-existent has been its reception in the affluent West and North, she writes, that the “lack of traction threatens to render Catholic

\textsuperscript{166} EMCC, no. 22.
\textsuperscript{167} Heyer, “A Christian Ethic of Immigration,” 2. In my own home parish, we have had parishioners walk out of Mass when a homily favors immigration reform, and our pastor has received numerous angry phone calls over his welcoming of Latino/a immigrants. A pastor from a neighboring parish, who regularly incorporates social justice issues into his homilies, remarks that the most vitriolic responses he has ever received to a homily have been about immigration reform. Although this is anecdotal evidence, it is borne out in the statistical and social analysis, some of which has been described in this chapter and the Introduction.
rhetoric on these matters as hypocritical, even perverse.” As theologian Carmen Nanko-
Fernandez notes, “The inability of ecclesial leadership to communicate this profound tradition of
social justice in a concrete manner that makes sense to the grassroots remains an obstacle to the
task of justice.”

The challenge, then, is how to resist and subvert the dominant narrative, stripping it of its
power and relevance, so that hospitable communities of resistance and solidarity might be born.
Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann writes about the tension between a “monopoly of
imagination” and “imagination at the margins” that helps to shed light on this challenge. With
the first, the dominant culture attempts to monopolize the imagination by ensuring that the
symbols, metaphors, and images by which a society experiences, understands, and responds to
reality convey the message that all is settled, stable, and correctly ordered. Monopolies thus
depend upon acceptance of this construct in order to maintain the monopoly. Brueggemann
contends that one of the key pathologies of our time is the reduction of imagination so that we
are too numbed, satiated, and co-opted to do serious imaginative work. Indeed, in recognizing
the inertia that develops around certain ideologies, Chavez likens it to a kind of religious faith
that does not require independent verification to be believed.

Imagination at the margin, on the other hand, refuses to submit to the reigning monopoly,
and places emphasis on the specific hurt and contrary experience that gives lie to it. In pointing

170. Walter Brueggemann, “Monopoly and Marginality in Imagination,” in Interpretation and Obedience: From Faithful
Reading to Faithful Living (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 184-204. Brueggemann attributes the phrase “monopoly on
imagination” to social theorist Robert Merton. See Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Ill.: Free
171. Brueggemann, “Monopoly and Marginality in Imagination,” 185-90. Lonergan’s idea of “bias” would likely
contribute to this construct.
out the dysfunction of the present system, imagination at the margin destabilizes the present order and prophetically insists that something can and must be done to change it. Sloop and Ono speak of something similar when they refer to the importance of “outlaw discourses,” which are “loosely shared logics of justice . . . different than . . . a culture’s dominant logics of judgment.” Outlaw discourses expose and challenge sedimented ways of thinking and changes the way that normative judgments are made. Because by definition they challenge dominant ways of thinking and acting, and operate using a logic incommensurate with the dominant logic, they create the potential for substantial social change by sparking the social imaginary to think or imagine “otherwise.” Similarly, Santa Ana speaks of the importance of elaborating a different context and worldview via “insurgent metaphors,” and offers that, each time an inaccurate or restricting metaphor is contested via an insurgent one, it compels the audience to, first, reconsider a concept taken to be obvious and natural, and next, compare the conventional view of the world with another point of view.

Where once Christians would have implicitly understood imagination at the margins because of their own marginal identity, this is no longer the case. And yet, Brueggemann, who associates imagination at the margin with lament, writes that “[o]ur theological tradition has a peculiar congeniality with these shrill voices at the margin because the biblical story is a

177. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 140-42.
179. Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 296. By way of illustration, Santa Ana uses the metaphor of “immigration as dangerous waters,” and offers the similar, but quite different, metaphor of “immigration as flowing water” as an insurgent discourse. Rather than contributing to the fear created by the thought of cultural inundation, the alternative conceptualization visualizes the benefits of growth and a fresh labor “pool.” See Santa Ana’s discussion on pp. 297-99. Regarding the metaphor “nation as house,” he offers the insurgent metaphor of “immigrants as rightful residents in the U.S. house,” using discourse like, “Today’s immigrants continue the task begun by your immigrant grandparents to build America’s future,” in order to establish a link between one’s family history and that of the current immigrants, as well as to neutralize the nativist theme. See p. 303.
tradition of marginality that begins in the slave labor camps of Egypt or among Canaanite peasants and culminates in the cross.\textsuperscript{180} Therefore, this project seeks to recover these voices, a marginal identity, and our own rich tradition of migration and hospitality so that we may begin to imagine a life together.

Thus, the “vocation to be in exile” advanced in \textit{EMCC} is a summons to hear the lament from the margins, to become companions in the wilderness, and to share in the vulnerability and unexpected grace to be found there. Further, a vocation to be in exile calls upon Christians to voluntarily divest themselves of power-over, and make an empathetic “we” where there once was a “self” and “other,” thereby creating the conditions for an engagement with difference, which Welch contends is a remedy to the ethic of control.\textsuperscript{181} Finally, just as Jesus took the “nature of a servant” (Phil. 2:6), this kenosis can serve as a kind of \textit{imitatio Christi}.

As a final point, if indeed a mark of hospitality is the vocation to be in exile, then this represents a return to the radical understanding of hospitality, which relativizes power, creates mutuality, and cultivates role reversals. It is this juxtaposition of hospitality and exile/migration/diaspora that I would like to explore in the remaining chapters for its capacity to address how a people divided by ethnicity, race, or culture might move toward a non-dominative vision of human interrelatedness and community building. Pohl, for example, recognizes hospitality’s countercultural dimension, in that it offers a critique of current practices and beliefs and an ethical framework for the way in which to proceed.\textsuperscript{182} Theologian George Newlands

\textsuperscript{180} Brueggemann, “Monopoly and Marginality in Imagination,” 199.

\textsuperscript{181} Welch, \textit{Ethic of Risk}, 17-18. Welch’s approach is from the perspective of communicative ethics, a discipline that, following Emilie Townes, looks at social structures, processes and communities as well as at socially shared patterns of moral judgments and behaviors. She questions, however, how to discern when the patterns are themselves immoral, and thereby masks for perpetuating power, alienation, and control, and proposes a remedy in a thorough and self-critical engagement with difference. Moving away from Jürgen Habermas’ understanding of communicative ethics, she offers that the goal of communicative ethics is community and solidarity. See pp. 17-18 for a fuller explanation.

\textsuperscript{182} Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 61-2.
speaks of its incompatibility with those practices of daily living that divide us, like violence, coercion, manipulation, systematic neglect of the marginalized, and triumphalistic ideologies. Brueggemann concurs, expanding the point: “It is clear that welcoming the stranger is not a pious, easy act of generosity which will be uniformly approved. To welcome the stranger is to challenge the social arrangements that exclude and include. Thus any serious welcome of a stranger is a gesture that ‘unsettles’ the power arrangements to which we have become accustomed.”

Hospitality and the vocation to be in exile might serve the function of an insurgent metaphor or outlaw discourse that subverts and disrupts the dominant discourse and monopoly, sparking the imagination to ponder if “something else might be the case.”

Therefore, two research questions will direct this inquiry. First, cognizant of the exercise of power between dominant and vulnerable peoples, how might Christian communities midwife the birth of new communities in light of emerging and vulnerable populations? Second, what resources are there in the Catholic/Christian tradition that would offer a counter-vision and different theological vision for how we might forge a path ahead together? Crucial to these questions will be the question of how to move from a missiology of power to one of relationship and vulnerability and how to create the conditions to value and negotiate difference.

After the setting the stage carefully in this and the previous chapter, and building upon Catholic teachings, the overall momentum of this project swings into focus: to undertake a theological analysis and reflection that considers hospitality as the catalyst for this vision and our

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shared vulnerability and shared remembrance and vocation of being strangers as a foundation for building a different, grace-filled future together. This thesis thus argues that, in light of the *kairos* of Latino/a immigration to the United States, a theology of migration must seek solidarity across differences in a spirit of reconciliation, be rooted in vulnerability and grace, and embody the virtues and practices of hospitality.

In its present understanding, hospitality has lost much of its capacity to undermine and subvert the dominant discourse. Reynolds reminds us, however, that the roots of Christian hospitality are to be discovered in God’s initiative of love, and that our hospitality is a response to that initiative.\(^{186}\) Thus, the practice of Christian hospitality is really a sharing of God’s hospitality, a passing along of that which has been given to us. Further, a focus on God as source is a reminder of the centrality and primacy of grace, and therefore on the economy of blessing, abundance, and giftedness, that are operative in hospitality. In this economy of grace and abundance, new and transformative patterns of life emerge.\(^{187}\) With these introductory elements in mind, we turn now to a more detailed examination of hospitality. In order to properly situate the understanding of hospitality that I am proposing, Chapter 3 will explore its biblical foundations, its integral link with migration, its understanding in early church history, and begin to sketch its theological underpinnings.

\(^{186}\) Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 178.
Chapter 3
The Deep Biblical Roots of Migration and Hospitality

Introduction
Chapter 2 suggested that Christianity’s own nature, history, and vocation of migration, exile, and hospitality could serve as a catalyst for a new shared vision of communal dwelling together. There are, however, several problems with putting this new vision into place. First, although the concepts of migration and hospitality are intrinsic to who Christians are and how they are to be, they have regrettably lost some of their richness and depth of meaning with the loss of memory and context that come with firsthand experience. Further, their yoked relationship—when migration and hospitality both marked the experience and identity of the people of God—has been severed in the present day.

As this chapter will demonstrate, hospitality held pride of place in church history from its beginnings, and was considered a recognizable marker of the church. It was important to the spread and credibility of the gospel, to transcending national and ethnic distinctions in the church, and to Christian care for the sick, strangers, and pilgrims, and gave rise to the development of hospitals, hospices, and hostels. However, as Pohl notes, over the years, these important, older understandings have disappeared, to be replaced with an understanding of hospitality absent a moral component and no longer viewed as a spiritual obligation or a dynamic expression of vibrant Christianity. Therefore, our current practices “are conducted without the benefit of a coherent theological framework,” with the result that “our stands on complex social and public policy concerns are little affected by our deepest Christian values and commitments.”

2. Pohl, Making Room, 4-6.
Chapter 3 will be the first of three chapters to analyze and reflect on these concepts with the aims of recovering some of their evocative potential for the present age, and of restoring the link between migration and hospitality. These aims are crucial at this time because migration has become a worldwide phenomenon and thus once again marks the experience of millions, but now is absent its corollary and partner, hospitality. Conversely, more and more local churches are, once again, called upon and challenged to welcome strangers and distant kin, but are now missing the searing memory of having been a stranger themselves.

The first two chapters of this thesis can be thought of as “clearing the ground” and “cultivating the soil” for my overall project. In this chapter, we examine the rich and interwoven scriptural heritage of migration and hospitality, and their pride of place in the early church. This heritage, and the biblical and theological motifs that emerge, “plants and fertilizes” the seeds for Chapters 4 and 5, which consider the way in which these “plantings” might mature and bear fruit in a more contemporary setting. The chapter will begin with a narrative survey of migration as recounted in scripture, then draw out relevant theological motifs to demonstrate migration’s importance in Judeo-Christian identity. A similar survey will examine the motivation for hospitality, its foundations, understanding, and development in Judaism and early Christianity. The survey is neither comprehensive nor a detailed study in biblical exegesis. Rather, it seeks to demonstrate the breadth and encompassing nature of pertinent material, and to draw out relevant themes and lessons. Chapters 4 and 5 draw upon and augment the material in this chapter, delving deeper into its theological import, before developing the way in which they might be reinvigorated within a theology of migration.
I. Narrative Survey: The Scriptural Heritage of Migration

Migration is woven into the very fabric of the Judeo-Christian faith. It is a central theme, and the biblical narrative is filled with a wide breadth of relevant and rich material from which to draw. The originating and founding narratives of the Bible underscore the importance of the theme of migration in the Judeo-Christian narrative identity. The mythic story of the creation of humankind, with its eviction of Adam and Eve from their homeland, makes them the first to migrate, followed by Cain, who is destined to wander the world as a perpetual sojourner. This nomadic and pastoral lifestyle is a reflection of the early history of Israel.

The theme of migration continues to serve as a setting for the biblical narration of salvation history, and it is a theme to which the church returns again and again throughout history. The founding narrative of Judeo-Christian history is the call of Abram out of the land of Ur (Gen. 12:1-9). Brueggemann characterizes this call as the beginning of a second history for the people of God. The first history, presented in Genesis 1-11, is “about people fully rooted in the land living toward expulsion,” who “do everything they can to lose the land,” and eventually do so. The “other history” is found in chapters twelve to fifty of Genesis, and focuses on “trusting toward a land not yet possessed, but empowered by anticipation of it.” Here, the first word from God to Abraham is about migration; it is situated in a command to leave: “Go from your country” (Gen 12:1). This call links migration with blessing for, despite leaving behind kin, tribe, and land, and in spite of their advanced ages, Abraham and Sarah will be given children and land. In response to this command, Abraham and Sarah enter a new history. The story of Abraham and Sarah introduces three pertinent themes to which we shall return later. First, the

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land itself is consistently referred to as a gift from God (Deut 1:8) or an inheritance (Num 35:2), one that can be freely given or taken back. Next, it emphasizes the importance of good will toward the sojourner. Finally, in Genesis 18, Abraham and Sarah establish a precedent *par excellence* regarding the proper way in which to extend hospitality to a stranger.

Abraham’s leave-taking in obedience to God’s command and subsequent nomadic life will become a cornerstone of the Judeo-Christian core identity, so much so that the proclamation, “My father was a wandering Aramean” (Deut 26:5) eventually became part of the creedal confession spoken by the head of household when presenting the first fruits of the harvest to the Lord (Deut. 26:5, 1 Chron. 29:15, Ps. 39:12). Israel’s confession was an acknowledgement that rootlessness and vulnerability were at the heart of its identity, and that its security lies with God. Biblical scholar Dianne Bergant summarizes the theological tenet of this identity: “Thus, the migrant is a metaphor of the true Israelite. Totally dependent upon the hospitality and generosity of others, she reminds them of God’s graciousness to them.” Such total dependence was also experienced by Abraham and Sarah’s slave, Hagar and her son Ishmael, after they were expelled into the desert with only “some bread and a skin of water” (Gen. 21:14). After their meager resources had run out and they were near death, God heard their plight, and showed Hagar a well (Gen. 21:18-19).

Indeed, the most profound experiences of Israel have migration as their backdrop. As biblical scholar Donald Senior observes, “The tortured journey of Jacob and his sons to Egypt in search of food in a time of famine is a migration experience, as is the defining experience of the

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Exodus—a migration of peoples seeking escape from oppression and the promise of a new land and a new future” (Gen 42-50). After Jacob and his sons migrated to Egypt, they settled in, and prospered for a time. While Israel had at first been given the best of the land (Gen. 47:6), by the time of the Exodus, they had been reduced to slavery (Exod 1:11-14), working on royal building projects and in agriculture.

The Exodus narrative unfolds with this experience as the setting. Israel must choose between their bleak and oppressive existence in Egypt and a precarious flight into the desert. The narrative itself is filled with images of border crossings. It begins with the story of Moses, who has been adopted into the pharaoh’s household, but in reality, is a member of the enslaved Hebrew people (Exod 2:6). He becomes an exile when he flees Egypt to the land of Midian. There he meets and marries Zipporah. When they have a son, they name him Gershom, a play on the word ger, or alien, for Moses says, “I am a stranger in a foreign land” (Exod 2:22). It is during this exile that Moses receives the call from God to lead his people (Exod 3:1-10).

Finally, the Hebrew people escape the tyranny of the pharaoh in a flight into the desert. There, they wander for forty years, sometimes in faith, but often with an uneasy “murmuring” (Exod 16:2, 7, 8) in their prolonged trek to the Promised Land. The Exodus experience represents the paradigmatic story of movement—from slavery to freedom, from strangers to a people with a land of their own. It is an arduous journey sustained by God who traveled with


12. Brueggemann notes that the verb is yashav, “to be settled in,” which carries a different connotation from the tentativeness of “sojourn.” See Brueggemann, The Land, 9.

13. As American Indian Studies Professor Robert Allen Warrior reminds us, however, power is always an issue in colonization. Reading the Exodus experience as a narrative that is ready to be “picked up and believed by anyone wondering what to do about the people already living in their promised land,” rather than through the lens of historical accuracy, he notes that the Exodus narrative is also a story of dispossession, conquest, and death for those occupying the land when the Hebrews arrive and “utterly destroy all that breath” (Deut. 7:1,2). Robert Allen Warrior, "A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians,” in R.S. Sugitharajah, ed., Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991), 235-41.
them. The Exodus story is so significant to Israel that it has become a part of their annual profession of faith when celebrating the Passover, a memory to be taught to their children and their children’s children.

Israel’s landedness did not last. Senior reminds us of other “equally searing” experiences of migration: the deportation of the northern tribes by Assyria in the seventh century, which ended the kingdom of Israel and forcibly scattered them (2 Kings 17:5-41), as well as the Babylonian exile, the violent destruction and transplantation of the people and institutions of Judah a century later. The song of lament found in Psalm 137 expresses the pain of sorrow and loss as the people struggle to find meaning in their situation. So significant is this exile that it is mentioned twice in the birth narrative chronicling Jesus’ genealogy (see Matt 1:12, 1.17).

Although in time many returned home, a large number never saw home again. The deportations and exiles eventually led to migratory expansions into the eastern Mediterranean during the Hellenistic period, and later to the west and Italy in the mid-second century BCE. By the fourth century BCE, there were already more Jews living outside than inside the land of Israel, and, by the first century CE, more than one million Jews in Alexandria.

The theme of migration and alien status continues in the Christian Testament. In the birth narrative in Matthew’s gospel, the notable presence of foreigners in Jesus’ genealogy points to their importance as agents of God’s plan. Tamar was an Aramean, Rahab an inhabitant of Canaanite Jericho, Ruth was from Moab, and Beersheba, the wife of Uriah, was a Hittite.

Bergant reminds us that it is through the Moabite foreigner Ruth that the Davidic line is

17. Giovanni Zevola, “‘What are you talking about to each other as you walk along?’ (Lk 24:17): Migration in the Bible and Our Journey of Faith,” in Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia, eds. Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 93-117, 109.
established. Israel had to first welcome and accept this foreign woman before God could work through her for its salvation. Bergant concludes, “The degree of Israel’s blessing by God was frequently determined by the measure of its openness to the dispossessed.”18 In the birth narratives, Jesus and his family are temporarily homeless, and it is the itinerant shepherds and the travelling magi who are the first to recognize the newborn messiah. Although foreign travelers greeted Jesus with gifts, he was threatened by local rulers, and so his family had to seek sanctuary as refugees in the foreign land of Egypt, in a recapitulation of the experience of Jesus’ ancestors.

The language of John’s gospel depicts Jesus as undertaking a cosmological migration, moving from the heavenly realm to the worldly, where he “tented” (eskēnōsen).19 Thus, according to biblical scholar Gilberto Ruiz, the prologue’s linked dual action of becoming human and tenting/dwelling establishes a central claim of Johannine Christology: that the Logos/Son is a migratory being who left his home to dwell elsewhere for a time.20 Ruiz also highlights the explicit and repeated echoes of Exodus/exile typology present in the gospel of John, beginning with that key verse and developed in John 6, where the connections between Jesus’ work and the Exodus experience are made explicit. These echoes evoke God’s instruction to Israel to make a tent/tabernacle (skēnē) so God may dwell in it, the Israelites’ use of tents while in the wilderness, and God’s promise to “dwell” in their midst as they flee Babylon,21 and their own pursuit of newly restored life, community, and stability. Chapter 6 depicts Jesus as a kind of God of the Exodus, linking Jesus to that liberative event using both the Passover holyday and Jesus’ own actions, such as feeding the people while they “murmur.”

Ruiz also notes that Jesus travels more in the gospel of John than in the synoptics, travelling back and forth between Galilee and Jerusalem. Further, he notes that Jesus not only uses travel language at John 14:2-3 when he tells his disciples that he is going to prepare a place for them, but explicitly makes himself the path/way (John 14:6) by which others can journey to the Father’s heavenly house.\textsuperscript{22} In that same passage, Jesus also links migration with hospitality in preparing a place for them at the completion of their journey, and stating that he will return to escort them.\textsuperscript{23} Commenting on the same gospel, Senior describes the “cosmic movement” made by the Divine Word, who “arcs down into the created world, taking flesh and becoming embodied in the human journey of Jesus (Jn 1:1-18),” with the endpoint of this migration not just the cross in Jerusalem, “but through that cross, a lifting up back through the cosmos into the bosom of God, a moment of ultimate return home, a communion in which all humanity can follow (Jn 17:20-21).”\textsuperscript{24}

Further, all of the gospels portray Jesus as an itinerant preacher who has no place to lay his head (Luke 9:58), and whose ministry is characterized as a journey to a homeland beyond Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).\textsuperscript{25} Although the Word became flesh and came to what was his own, he did not find a welcome there.\textsuperscript{26} Even at his crucifixion and death, Jesus remained an outcast. As the Letter to the Hebrews observes, Jesus died “outside the city gate and outside the camp” (Heb. 13:12-13). The journey motif continues after Jesus’ death. Travelling from Jerusalem to Emmaus and filled with disappointment and broken dreams, two disciples encounter a fellow traveler and foreigner (“Are you the only foreigner in Jerusalem who does not know what has happened?”

\textsuperscript{22} Ruiz, “A Migrant Being at Work,” 3-4.
\textsuperscript{23} See p. 145, below, on the specific terminology surrounding hospitality.
\textsuperscript{24} Senior, “Beloved Aliens and Exiles,” 23.
\textsuperscript{25} Senior, “Beloved Aliens and Exiles,” 23.
(Luke 24.18)). They offer the stranger hospitality (“Stay with us”), and it is not until that hospitality is enacted in a meal that Jesus is recognized as the stranger.

Theologian Virgilio Elizondo finds particular theological significance in the geographic-symbolic meaning of Jesus’ Galilean identity. Galilee’s geographical location made it both a crossroads of international travel routes and the site of multiple invasions by various groups. Its heterogeneous population reflected the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Egyptian, and Syrian rule, infiltration, and migration that had been a part of the region since 734 B.C.E. The mixture of races and peoples, combined with the distance of Galilee from the Temple in Jerusalem—and resulting diminishment of Jewish exclusivism—were signs of impurity and thus were a source of scorn and contempt for the more “pure-minded” Jews of Jerusalem. For Elizondo, it is precisely because Galilee was a site of “multiple rejections” that it assumed its all-important role in the historic eruption of God’s saving plan for humanity. Elizondo argues that the human scandal of God’s way begins not with the cross, but with the historico-cultural incarnation of God’s Son in Galilee, home of the despised and lowly of the world. In other words, Jesus did not merely minister to the rejected and marginalized, he was one of the rejected and marginalized. The parable of the separation of the sheep and goats, which concludes with Jesus identifying himself with the stranger and needing welcome (Matt 25:35), reiterates this notion clearly.

The experiences of the early Christian community echo the same refrain of displacement and mobility. In response to the violent persecutions in Jerusalem, the Book of Acts records the scattering of apostles and followers throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1-8), and the

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movement of Jewish Christians to Phoenicia and Cyprus (Acts 11:19-21). In addition, missionaries often traveled to new locations in order to spread the gospel. The Jewish revolt in 66 C.E., subsequent revolts in 115-17 and 132-35, and especially the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., precipitated a devastating massive diaspora out of Israel with radical changes to Judaism’s leadership, organization, and practices. The apostolic church with its Jewish Christian leadership would also have experienced the terror of forced expulsion in the face of the devastating loss of all that they held dear.

So significant were these events that they became integral to the core identity of Christians, who came to reflect on these experiences and glean new theological insights from them. In fact, Christians would first be known as the people of the Way (Acts 18:25-26, 19:23, 22:4, 24:14, 22), in acknowledgement of their dispersion, which they came to believe was a part of God’s mysterious plan to accomplish the “salvation of all flesh” (Luke 3:6). Through that dispersion, the Gospel was carried from Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

The letters in the Christian Testament reflect the significance of an alien self-understanding as well. The letter of James is addressed to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion (James 1:1), an appellation that connected their present day experience with symbolism from their Jewish tradition. The first letter of Peter is addressed to the resident aliens (paroikia) and exiles living in northern and central Asia Minor. Since they themselves were all resident aliens and transient strangers [paroikous kai parepidēmois diasporas] (1 Peter 2:11), they were strongly urged to “be hospitable to one another without complaining” (1 Peter 4:9). The letter reminded

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32. While this designation may be largely metaphorical, biblical scholar John H. Elliott argues that it is also reflective of their social status. See John H. Elliott, A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). For an alternate reading, see Donald Senior, 1 Peter, Sacra Pagina 15, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003), 8-10.
them that they are a chosen race, evoking the covenant and connecting them to their Jewish heritage, but then urged them “as aliens and exiles” to abstain from the desires of the flesh and live “honorably” among the Gentiles (1 Peter 2:11-12). Pohl offers that this self-consciousness does not disconnect the early church from community and concern for the world. Rather, it “helped them to hold on to such connections much more lightly, and allowed them the freedom to stand at a critical distance from the institutions and values that shaped the larger world.”

Finally, the Christian Testament ends with the author of Revelation visioning the people of God in a procession to the New Jerusalem (Rev. 7:1-12). We thus find the Bible “bookended” with migration, confirming its theological significance. From Adam and Eve’s eviction from the Garden of Eden, making them the first migrants; to Moses and the people of God wandering in the desert; to the holy family’s experience as refugees; to Jesus’ contention that the Son of Man has no place to lie his head; to the early church’s declaration that their citizenship is in heaven, the experience of migration has been normative.

A re-reading of scripture through the hermeneutic of migration provides new perspectives about human life and divine revelation. In the next section, we will turn to a more detailed discussion of the way that experience was interpreted through the prism of faith and incorporated into Judeo-Christian self-understanding.

A. Theological Identity as Sojourner, Alien, or Outsider

Pohl denotes the experience of being an alien or sojourner as “fundamental to Israel’s early identity.” God’s promises of land and offspring were accompanied by God’s statement that their “offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs” (Gen 15:3). In Genesis, the patriarchs are frequently either referred to as “sojourners” or they are said to “sojourn” in an area

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for a time: Abraham (17:8, 20:1, 21:34, 23:4), Isaac (35:27, 37:1), Jacob (28:4, 32:4), and Jacob’s sons (47:4, 9). After Israel, who had lived as aliens in Egypt (Gen 15:13, Exod 22:21, Deut. 10:19) reached the Promised Land, God nevertheless cautioned them, “with me you are but aliens and tenants” (Lev. 25:23).

Pohl notes that “the notion of being a sojourner or alien was actually embedded in the covenant and was part of what it meant to be the chosen ones of Yahweh.” It was in the process of movement that God revealed the covenant to God’s people. Pohl names this a “chosen-but-alien” status that emphasizes a complete dependence upon God’s grace. As Phan points out, it is also a reminder of God as generous host:

Throughout the Old Testament, God is depicted as entertaining Israel with abundant and endless banquets and as deeply concerned for the stranger, as the divine provisions of cities of refuge (Nm 35:9-35; Jo 20:1-9) make abundantly clear. Consequently, failure to provide for the stranger’s physical needs is a serious offence, equivalent to breaching the covenant with God, and brings about God’s punishment (Dt 23:3-4).

In its chosen-ness, Israel is expected to remember the brutality of their former oppression and the power of God’s rescue. It was this alien experience that shaped not only their attitude toward God, but the experiential framework out of which they cared for other powerless persons. All they had was a gift from God. This sense of giftedness was embedded within the commandments, with frequent exhortations to listen and remember. On the border of the Promised Land, Israel is cautioned,

When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, with great and goodly cities, which you did not build, and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and cisterns

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35. Carroll, *Christians at the Border*, 73.
hewn out, which you did not hew, and vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of slavery (Deut 6:10-12).

They were, thus, to live before God in humility and responsibility, deeply conscious of their gratitude to God and in honor of the covenant. Further, though, they were to remember the feeling of being alien, and love and provide for the aliens in the same way that they had been loved and cared for by God: “You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deut 10:12). Israel’s rituals and practices served to keep this remembrance alive in their hearts. At each harvest, farmers retold the story of their sojourn in Egypt and their journey to the Promised Land. They shared the fruits of their harvest with orphans, widows, and aliens residing in their land (Deut 26:5-15). During his kingly reign, David acknowledges in prayer, “All comes from you; what we have received from your own hand, we have given to you. For we are strangers before you, settlers only, as all our ancestors were; our days on earth pass like a shadow” (1 Chron. 29:14-15).

Graham Ward has identified a theological anthropology around the “fierce spirituality” of being a migrant. Ward observes that the “body which is marked by a wandering” is a part of Abrahamic and Christian history.41 In the Hebrew Testament and continuing into the Acts of the Apostles and the missionary church, Ward locates a narrative dialectic of migration and community-construction. Cain is a good example; although condemned to be a fugitive, it is also he who builds the first city. Further, Ward argues that, just as Augustine contended, as embodied creatures subject to time, by nature human beings are restless until they find their rest in God. Ward reasons, however, that, if this condition has indeed been fashioned by God into the nature

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of humankind, then it must be grace. Just as Abraham was commanded by faith to leave his homeland, and journeyed toward the future in hope, Jews and Christians remain called to places beyond themselves. As strangers, refugees, and pilgrims, they should recognize the fellow traveler when met. “Theologically, each of us made in the image of God are wanderers and migrants, and yet, given over continually to the grace of God, we are forever oscillating between being a host and being a guest.”

This same consciousness is found in the Christian Testament. Indeed, Senior notes that it is most often those that are found “in place” resting and complacent, who find their seemingly secure foundations shaken. Those reclining at table, calculating their harvest, seated in judgment, secure in their land, possession, and food, are the “fools” (see Luke 12:20) who have deluded themselves about the ultimate reality. Instead, it is the experience of the restless and the rootless, the desperately searching and sojourning, the vulnerable and those in need, that reveals a profound dimension of human existence.

Thus, in the early Christian writings, Phan finds an illuminating paradox: despite their new understanding that those who were “strangers and sojourners [xenoi kai paroikoi]” (Eph. 2:19) have been made “fellow citizens [sumpolitai] with the saints and the household of God [oikeioi tou theou]” (Eph. 2:19), “by far the early Christians’ favorite term to describe themselves was” “paroikoi—sojourners, displaced people without a home and nation.” As was noted above, it is found in the letter of James (James 1:1) and in the first letter of Peter (1 Peter 2:11-12). This self-consciousness as foreigners, strangers, and sojourners in found in Clement of Rome’s letter to the Christians in Corinth (c. 96), and in Polycarp of Smyrna’s (d. 155) letter to

44. Phan, “Migration in the Patristic Era,” 49.
the Christians in Philippi. The *Martyrium Polycarpi* makes this identity clear through repeated emphasis; it was sent “from the church of God which resides as a stranger [*paroikousa*] at Smyrna to the church of God residing as a stranger [*paroikousei*] at Philomelium and to all the communities residing in any place [*paroikias*].” Phan concludes that “for them migration was an essential part of the Christian’s permanent self-consciousness and theological—and not merely sociological—identity.”

There is little doubt of the Christians’ very real social and political marginality that made them actual strangers and migrants, with no permanent residence. As early church historian Amy G. Oden notes, a displaced identity marked much of Christian life in the Roman Empire and, for the first three centuries, Christians understood themselves to be aliens, pilgrims in this world, with citizenship in the next. When arrested, it was customary for Christians to refuse to give their name or nationality, but instead to offer the name of a prophet, or claim that Jerusalem was their country.” In this way, they rejected the powers of this world while claiming allegiance as citizens of another and as members of the household of God.

Abraham serves as an early example of a voluntary pilgrim. As the Letter to the Hebrews explains, “[I]f they had been thinking of the land they had left behind, they would have had the opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one” (Heb 11:13-15). Written in the second or third century BCE, the *Epistle to Diognetus* offers a fuller explanation. Christians, the anonymous author contends, cannot be distinguished by their country, language, or customs. Rather,

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They live in their own countries, but only as aliens \([\text{paroikoi}]\). They have a share in everything as citizens \([\text{politai}]\), and endure everything as foreigners \([\text{xenoi}]\) . . . They busy themselves on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, but in their own lives they go far beyond what the laws require. They love all, but by all are persecuted. They are unknown, and still they are condemned; they are put to death, and yet they are brought to life. . . . They are dishonored, and in their very dishonor are glorified; they are defamed, and are vindicated. They are reviled, yet they bless; when they are affronted, they still pay due respect. . . . What the soul is in the body, that Christians are in the world.⁴⁹

Thus, citizenship in the Kingdom of God transcended and diminished the significance of nationality, social group, and language.⁵⁰ Phan finds a rich and profound theology of migration in this letter. While Christians are free to adopt, and indeed, contribute to the welfare of their new homeland, Phan summarizes, they will remain to a certain extent strangers, particularly in their religious worldview and moral behavior. He goes on to conclude that the “theology of migration must therefore be not only transcultural, contextual, and cross-cultural, but also counter-cultural by which the migrants can both incorporate and critique the surrounding cultures. Thus, migrants are people living-in-between two cultures.”⁵¹

Further, Phan continues, because Christians are living as foreigners with a different set of beliefs and behaviors, they will face persecution. Even in the face of this persecution, however, they will seek to do good. In so doing, they act not only in eschatological hope, but with the desire to transform those situations of hatred and injustice. Like the markers of unity, catholicity, holiness, and apostolicity, Phan identifies “migrant-ness” as one of the features of the church, “because only a church that is conscious of being an institutional migrant and caring for all the

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⁵⁰. Pohl, “Hospitality from the Edge,” 129.

migrants of the world can truly practice faith, hope, and love, in obedience to Jesus’ command.”

Pohl similarly names a marginal self-identity as normative for the early church. It enabled early Christians to transcend significant ethnic distinctions and transform relationships that no longer made distinctions of Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female (Gal. 3:28). Christians were, instead, fellow citizens in the household of God (Eph 2:18-19), both strangers in need of welcome as well as missioned to welcome. This shared experience heightened their compassion for those in a similar situation and laid the foundations for later universalizing characteristics. So critical was this self-identity that, in the patristic period, when persecutions were past and Christianity became the religion of the empire, the church employed specific strategies designed to recreate that marginality. Chrysostom, for example, preached that “. . . seeing we are by nature sojourners, let us also be so by choice.” Their language of marginality and the notion of living as foreigners and exiles evolved into an identification with the poor and outcasts, and later into a self-understanding of pilgrims longing for a heavenly home. So compelling was that identification that Christians, especially women of means, often renounced their rank and possessions, giving all they had to the poor, in order to live in that state. Oden writes, in fact that in hagiography from that time, poverty was a standard-bearer of Christian identity.

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55. Pohl, “Hospitality from the Edge,” 123. Asceticism and monasticism are two of the better known practices. Here and elsewhere, Pohl notes periodic attempts to recover and reinstitute early practices of hospitality that recreated marginal identity.
57. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 39; Oden, “God’s Household of Grace,” 42.
B. Christ as Model

Phan offers Jesus as the paradigmatic migrant who dwelt between the borders of two worlds. Ontologically, he dwelt between humanity and divinity, embodying both through the incarnation. Socially, he experienced migration to Egypt. Politically, he lived between colony and empire; culturally, between Roman and barbarian; linguistically, between Aramaic and Greek; and religiously, between the Chosen People and the Gentiles.58

Phan interprets this mystery of the Word of God made flesh through the hermeneutic of border crossing. He writes,

Essentially, it is the culmination of that primordial border crossing by which the triune God steps out of self and eternity and crosses into existence by this very act of crossing. In the Incarnation, the border that was crossed is not only that which separates the eternal and the temporal, the invisible and the visible, spirit and matter, but more specifically, the divine and the human, with the latter’s reality of soul and body.59

Phan elaborates that the border functions to preserve the distinct identity “without confusion, without change,”60 while at the same time transforming what was a barrier into a frontier from which a totally new reality, Jesus of Nazareth, a mestizaje, emerges, in which the divine and human are united and reconciled with each other.61 As was mentioned above, Ruiz similarly utilizes a paradigm of migration to describe the experience of Jesus on a cosmological level, and also notes the same paradigm pervading the life of Jesus in the world. He “identifies Jesus as an agent of God that ‘comes down’ to give life to the world,” thereby articulating his soteriological mission in terms of migration.62

59. Phan, In Our Own Tongues, 147.
60. Here, Phan references the teaching of the Council of Chalcedon.
61. Phan, In Our Own Tongues, 147-8.
Finally, in Jesus’ last days, he was branded as a threat to the economic, political, and religious centers. Hung on the cross, suspended between “two cosmic borders,” heaven and earth, he remained a migrant until the end. Because of this, Jesus could truly affirm that whoever welcomes a stranger, welcomes Jesus (Matt 25:35). Christians’ adoption of marginality is thus an *imitatio Christi*. Theologian Anthony J. Gittins affirms that embracing a marginal and ambiguous status is a form of discipleship, as well as an acceptance that Christians are not the primary movers, but instead, servants of God’s mission:

To allow oneself to be a stranger is to allow oneself to be placed at the disposition of the God who calls. To embrace the status of stranger is to empower other people and to dare to infuse some trust into a world where self-interest and suspicion seem to walk unimpeded. To choose to be a stranger is, it might be argued, to be a willing disciple of Christ.

We have thus far examined the constellation of thought, imagery, and understanding that has the identity of sojourner and alien at its center. For the corporate Israel, it evoked the covenant, memories of oppression and exodus, and a complete dependence on God’s grace. As the full embodiment of God’s covenant and grace, Jesus served as the paradigmatic migrant who journeyed to the far country in obedience to God. His own migrant, mestizaje, and liminal existence transcended difference and universalized early believers’ understanding of God’s mission. Following Jesus’ model, early Christians embraced their own marginality as normative, understanding it to be an *imitatio Christi*, and a marker of their unity in the household and kingdom of God. As we move to a consideration of a key tenet of Judeo-Christian faith,

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welcoming the stranger, we will examine the way in which an identity as alien, in all of its manifestations, shaped hospitality as a way of life.

II. Hospitality’s Roots and Understandings in Antiquity

In antiquity, hospitality was generally defined as a kind welcome and treatment of strangers for a short period of time. It describes a duty, a process, and a quality during which an outsider is turned from a stranger into a guest. Basically, the custom of hospitality entails anything that takes place “from the moment a visitor approaches someone’s house until the moment he departs.”65 In the semi-nomadic desert cultures, hospitality ensured survival. Basic needs must be met lest one die of hunger or thirst, and a safe haven provided against the dangers one could encounter while traveling.66 In such cultures, everyone was at times a host, and at other times a guest; thus, it was necessary to develop shared conventions and appropriate customs of hospitality. Judeo-Christian hospitality developed within this larger milieu although, as we shall see, it also demonstrates some distinct differences.

Hospitality was highly regarded as a virtue and was considered the distinguishing mark of a civilized society.67 It was seen as “one of the pillars of morality upon which the universe stands.”68 Its meritorious practice reflected favorably on both the individual as well as the

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67. See, for example, Ladislaus J. Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Antiquity: Livy’s Concept of Its Humanizing Force* (Chicago: Ares Publishing Inc., 1977, 1995), 18, who notes the formulaic statement in Homer’s *Odyssey* that represents an “acid test” for hospitality: “Lawless and savage are they, with no regard for right, or are they kind to strangers and reverent toward the gods?”
68. Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality*, 2; see also Pohl, *Making Room*, 5, who explains that in a number of ancient civilizations, hospitality encompassed “the good.”
community. Conversely, when “guests or hosts violate their obligations to each other, the whole world shakes and retribution follows.”69 Only those considered “barbarians” and uncivilized did not know and practice the rules of hospitality.70 Those practices could include, but were not limited to, the provision of food, water, shelter, and shade. Only after these needs were met was it appropriate to inquire about a stranger’s identity or situation.71 There was a sacred bond between guests and hosts.72 The guest was under the protection of the host from the moment of crossing the threshold until the host left him or her. Finally, it was the custom of both Greek and Roman cultures to enter into more permanent relationships between guests and hosts, called guest-friendships, which were legally and morally binding, long term, hereditary, and had the character of a kinship relationship.73 In these situations, a guest of equal social status or someone who would benefit one strategically was sought in order to improve one’s own status.74

However, xenophobia also played a role in hospitality’s beginnings. Many cultures, including the Greco-Roman and Bedouin on which we are focusing here, believed that strangers possessed magico-religious powers that could be used against one.75 Strangers, then, needed to be disarmed, appeased, or avoided, or their power turned in another direction. Hospitality was also, therefore, a means by which a community could neutralize a threat.76 A related factor was the widespread belief that the stranger represents, carries a message from, or is identified with a

71. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 18, 33.
73. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 18. The discussion below is drawn largely from Arterbury’s discussion on pp. 16-34. Often, the relationship would be formalized via a gift to the host. Later in their development, these relationships became contractual, and the hosts also acted as emissaries, legal representatives, etc.
75. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 24, referencing Bolchazy’s analysis, Hospitality in Antiquity, 8-20. Medea hospitality is motivated by magico-religious xenophobia. That a stranger was considered powerful, and potentially dangerous is evident from the fact that “stranger” and “enemy” so often arise from the same root word etymologically.
god. Zeus, as the god of hospitality, was both the source and the protector of strangers. Homer writes, “All strangers and beggars come from Zeus.” Homer’s *Odyssey* is one of many stories of gods who disguise themselves in order to test the hospitality of those they met. Eventually, the ethical concept of *ius hospitii, ius Dei* coalesced: it is the gods’ will that strangers are treated hospitably and it is the sacred duty of hosts to care for guests. Strangers who had become friends often blessed the household upon their departure.

Because early Christian hospitality is situated within this larger early Mediterranean, Greco-Roman culture, but takes its primary theological formation from Judaism, we turn now to those roots.

### III. Narrative Survey: The Scriptural Heritage of Hospitality

#### A. Hospitality’s Roots in Judaism

Jewish hospitality is one expression of Greco-Roman hospitality and shared many of its characteristics. Just as in the larger Mediterranean culture, hospitality was a sacred duty, so much so that a visitor had a right to expect it. Jewish hosts were expected to address the physical needs, as well as the safety and comfort of their guest(s). This could include food, lodging, protection, and escort, and even the defense of the guest with one’s life. The general customs and vocabulary remained the same. The host approaches the guest, greets or receives him, brings the

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78. Bolchazy, *Hospitality in Antiquity*, 35-6. Cicero calls refers to hospitality as “most sacred” (hospitem quo sanctissimum est), and places it on a higher plan than friendship. Gellius established a hierarchy for moral and social responsibilities, which lists hospitality after only responsibility to parents, wards, and clients, and before relationships by blood and marriage (Bolchazy 35).


guest into the home, where the guest is seated, bathed or given water to wash, and fed.\textsuperscript{81} Guest-meals were the most prominent feature of hospitality, and often had both a festal and sacrificial nature, gathering together the larger community.\textsuperscript{82} Even in a more domestic meal, however, the \textit{milhat}, or “bond of salt” that came about with the sharing of bread and salt, constituted a bond of guest-kinship, at least temporarily.\textsuperscript{83} Jewish hosts also provided water to wash one’s feet, or bathed their guest’s feet themselves, rather than the full bath provided in Greco-Roman hospitality. Only after the initial customs were finished, could the host ask the guest’s identity and story. Because the basis for Jewish hospitality was grounded in their own desire to be faithful, there was less emphasis on giving gifts to one’s guests, and more on loyalty to the Law. Often, the relationship between guest and host was long term and reciprocal, with repeat visits.\textsuperscript{84} Visitors seeking hospitality generally began at the synagogue, which often had guest rooms to accommodate them, especially teachers.\textsuperscript{85} The synagogue was also a likely place to seek a host when it became more the custom for Jewish travelers to stay with distant relatives or fellow Israelites.\textsuperscript{86} In cities, visitors also went to the city gate or square and, in rural areas, the well served this purpose.\textsuperscript{87} Hospitality is extolled in narratives throughout the Hebrew Testament,\textsuperscript{88} with host and guest each experiencing some benefit. Strangers had the potential to be messengers or envoys

\textsuperscript{81} Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 51-4.


\textsuperscript{83} J. B. Mathews, “Hospitality and the New Testament Church,” 127-8. Also called “bread and salt” or the “covenant of salt,” this custom was widely practiced in the Arab culture of that time, and generally lasted as long as the food remained in one’s system, believed to be two days and two to three nights (128).

\textsuperscript{84} Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 57.


\textsuperscript{86} Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 183.

\textsuperscript{87} Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 80.

\textsuperscript{88} See, e.g., the story of Lot and the angels, Gen. 19:1-23, the numerous stories of meetings at the well; Job as exemplary host (Job 31:32); Rahab’s shelter of the Israelites (Joshua 2:1-22); the hospitality of the widow of Zaraephath (1 Kings 17:7-24); and the story of Elisha and the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:86). The role of women in some of these stories is notable.
from God.\textsuperscript{89} Two notable stories involve women, one who offers hospitality in the face of starvation. The prophet Elijah, traveling to a foreign town, asks a widow there for hospitality (1 Kings 17:7-24). In the middle of a drought, and on the brink of starvation, the widow of Zarephath shares the last of her meager resources with Elijah, and receives abundant blessings in return, for not only does the Lord provide sustenance throughout the drought, but Elijah is able to restore life to the widow’s son.\textsuperscript{90} Later, another foreigner, a wealthy Sunamite woman, provides hospitality to the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 4:9), going so far as to build a guest chamber for him. The woman and her husband are rewarded with the blessing of a son, and, when the son later dies, he is restored to life by Elisha. Hospitality is considered a virtue, used by Job to attest to his integrity (Job 31:32) and referenced as proof of true faith in God in Isaiah (Isa. 58:6-7).\textsuperscript{91}

Abraham’s narrative (Gen. 18), however, is the paradigmatic story of meritorious hospitality for both the Hebrew people and for early Christianity.\textsuperscript{92} This hospitality takes place as a part of Abraham and Sarah’s nomadic existence, adding to its significance.\textsuperscript{93} Also important is the notion of the divine visitor. Contrary to gods who test the host, here the understanding is that the divine visitor might bring blessing; hence it is with anticipation that Abraham runs to greet the three visitors, bows deeply before them, and exercises great haste in providing—not the promised “morsel”—but an extravagant feast. The language of “haste” is employed five different times.\textsuperscript{94} The feast becomes the occasion for the guests to announce the aged Sarah’s pregnancy, a remarkable blessing indeed.

\textsuperscript{89} Koenig, New Testament Hospitality, 3.
\textsuperscript{90} For a fuller exposition, see Pohl, Making Room, 25-6.
\textsuperscript{91} Carroll, Christians at the Border, 93.
\textsuperscript{92} Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 59. Abraham as archetype is used by Philo, Josephus, and Clement. Hebrews 13.2 speaks of some having entertained angels unaware. The Testament of Abraham, written around 100 CE, is a sequel to Genesis 18. See Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 64-67.
\textsuperscript{94} Terence E. Fretheim, “The Book of Genesis,” in General Articles on the Bible; General Articles on the Old Testament; Genesis; Exodus; Leviticus, Vol. 1 of The New Interpreter’s Bible, ed. Leander E. Keck, et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994),
Abraham became known as the “father of hospitality” and his narrative of hospitality became the paradigm for the hospitality that God expects. He gives honor to his visitors, rushes to serve them, and offers them the best that he has. He remains with them while they eat and offers to accompany them on their journey for protection. Different versions of the narrative extolling Abraham’s hospitality were produced by Philo, Josephus, Clement, the writer of the Testament of Abraham (ca. 100 C.E.), the author of the Apocalypse of Paul, Origen, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Rabbi Nathan (late third century C.E.), and are found in Genesis Rabbah (ca. 400 C.E.) and the Babylonian Talmud, Sotah. The narratives definitively associated hospitality with the presence of God, promise, and blessing. John Crysostom’s (fourth century C.E.) homily similarly praises Abraham and Sarah’s hospitality, who, in this telling, have three hundred and eighteen servants, but nevertheless see to the hospitality personally. Further, however, Chrysostom depicts Abraham as intentionally sitting outside of his tent in the heat of the day so as to anticipate the need for hospitality, and see and help any visitors who pass his tent. Rabbi Nathan produces even greater embellishments in ‘Abot R. Nat. 7.1-2. Commenting upon Joseph ben Johanan of Jerusalem’s statement to “Let thy house be opened wide, and let the poor be members of thy household,” Rabbi Nathan compares the hospitality of Job and Abraham, even criticizing Job for allowing wayfarers to come to him, rather than going to find them. Abraham, on the other hand, “would go forth and make the rounds everywhere” (7.3) to find guests, then provide poor guests with extravagant and expensive foods so that they could have something different. Abraham also “built stately

97. Arterbury, “Abraham’s Hospitality,” 370-72. This paragraph relies on Arterbury’s scholarship.
mansions on the highway and left there food and drink” (7.4). As biblical scholar Arthur Arterbury summarizes,

Abraham’s actions in Gen 18 function as a paradigm for meritorious hospitality beginning with the Hebrew people and continuing well past the writers of the New Testament. As a result, a survey of the tradition of Abraham’s hospitality among Jewish writers helps to demonstrate for us that hospitality was a highly valued social convention in the ancient world that was also considered to be a religious duty. Meritorious hosts were expected to welcome complete strangers into their homes. In fact, Philo goes so far as to lift up Abraham’s hospitable actions as a living law for later Jews.98

B. Developing Ethic and Theology of Hospitality in Jewish Law

For ancient Israel, the practice of hospitality is centered on God. Framed by the covenantal structure, it is a sacred duty that is codified into the Hebrew Testament. Its theological underpinnings include a theological anthropology that understands all of humanity as created in the image and likeness of God; a creation theology that emphasizes returning in gratitude what has been given to them; and a communal identity upon which the memory of having been strangers is indelibly etched. It is perhaps this indelible memory that most shapes the concept of hospitality, so that will be our next consideration.

For the people of God, the practice of hospitality was firmly embedded within their own experience of having been aliens or sojourners themselves99 [“The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19.34)], and God’s powerful deliverance that carried them from slavery to the Promised Land. This experience was also fundamental to their communal identity, and served as the basis for Israel’s treatment of those who were powerless themselves, including orphans, widows, and aliens. As we have seen, Abraham, called from his homeland, is the first of

a long line of sojourners and aliens in Israel’s history. They live as gērim, sojourners, near the bottom of the social hierarchy,\textsuperscript{100} and Abraham’s offspring are destined to be aliens (Gen. 15:13), although, even in this alien status, God has chosen to side with them. Finally, this experience also informed their theology: God loves the helpless, including sojourners; correspondingly, Israel is also to love them (Deut. 10:17-19; cf. Ps. 146:6-9) and it is sinful to ignore them (Deut. 24:14-15).\textsuperscript{101}

As we have seen, Israel lived by God’s grace, and their explicit identity of “chosen-yet-alien”\textsuperscript{102} defined them, and served as a continual reminder of the relationship of dependence and faithfulness, gratitude and obedience.\textsuperscript{103} It is God who has called this community into existence, and God who loves and sustains it. With their deliverance from Egypt comes the ethic to care for the sojourners in the same way they had been cared for. Remembrance of this momentous event is kept alive through recounting the story of slavery and deliverance, and by setting aside some of their harvest for aliens, orphans, and widows (Deuteronomy 26:5-15). The memory of their enslavement as aliens (gerim) in Egypt, and their exodus with God is renewed and re-enacted each year at Passover (when they leave a door ajar, in case a stranger should arrive). Thus, for Israel, the remembrance of being a sojourner, and God’s hospitality toward them, is inscribed into their collective memory, and provides the motivation to both empathize with the predicament of others, and to welcome others as they had been welcomed. It places them in right relation with God, and with those who are equally vulnerable and utterly dependent upon God. Their experience provides the framework out of which they care for the aliens and sojourners—as well as orphans, widows, and others in need—in their midst.

\textsuperscript{100} Yong, \textit{Hospitality and the Other}, 110.
\textsuperscript{101} Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 104-5.
\textsuperscript{102} Pohl, “Hospitality from the Edge,” 125.
\textsuperscript{103} Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 27-8.
For the aliens and sojourners who dwelled in Israel, this support was fundamental to their survival. In an agrarian society, ownership of the land was crucial. Even landowners depended upon kinship groups to help them during droughts, crop failures, disease, and death. The absence of this network, and the inability of aliens to own land because of the land tenure system, meant that they were dependent upon Israelites for work, provision, and protection.\textsuperscript{104} Israel’s response, in stark contrast to the silence in the laws of their Near Eastern neighbors, was to recognize their precarious situation, and to enact numerous gracious laws to protect and support them. Biblical scholar M. Daniel Carroll observes that, although there is an overlap between the law collections of the cultures that shared the same geographical area, Israelite law also could be distinguished from these collections in several important ways. First, its foundations are in the “character of the divine Lawgiver and in what he had done for his people.”\textsuperscript{105} These underpinnings bear fruit in other dissimilarities, such as the mercy shown to the poor, the political ideology of the monarchy, and in their treatment of the stranger. Carroll makes several other important points about the law as it was understood. First, when the law was given to the nation through Moses, it was directed to a redeemed people, with the purpose of showing them how to live as a redeemed people.\textsuperscript{106} Next, the law was designed to demonstrate God’s greatness as well as provide the people with a concrete model of what a life pleasing to God would look like.\textsuperscript{107} Finally, a society’s laws and the way they are structured, who they favor, and the institutions they establish are, Carroll writes, a window into a society’s soul. Thus, “Israel’s stance toward the foreigner

\textsuperscript{104} Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 103; see also Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 28.

\textsuperscript{105} Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 98.

\textsuperscript{106} Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 97.

\textsuperscript{107} Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 98. Carroll also references Christopher J. H. Wright, \textit{Old Testament Ethics for the People of God} (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 48-75, 182-211.
was part of the larger fabric of its ethical life. It was part of the ethos of what it meant to be the people of God.”

Thus, while it was a longstanding custom and sacred duty to welcome the stranger in the ancient world, explicit legislation regarding the protection and provision for the alien was distinctive to Israelite society. The exhortation to welcome the stranger occurs no less than thirty-six times in the Hebrew Testament, and is second only to the command to love and honor God. It is inscribed in the covenant code, the priestly laws, and the Deuteronomic law code. Stipulations included the ban against the mistreatment of aliens, widows, and orphans (Exodus 22.20-33; Deuteronomy 24.17-18; Jer. 7.6-7); tithing and gleaning laws; and laws regarding food and rest.

Because of Israel’s long history of dwelling with other cultures, they developed terminology to distinguish between foreigners. There are three biblical terms that can describe a migrant: stranger/alien, foreigner, and sojourner. Phan offers a succinct explanation of the differences:

A stranger (Hebrew zār, Greek xenos, Latin hospes) is one who does not belong to the house or community or nation in which he or she lives and is often considered an enemy (Is 1:7; Jer 5:19; 51:51; Ez 7:21; 28:7, 10; Ob 11). A foreigner (Hebrew nokri, Greek allotrios, Latin alienus) is one of another race, and because non-Jews were regarded as idolatrous, the term also designates someone worshiping idols. . . . A sojourner (Hebrew gēr, Greek paroikos, Latin peregrinus) is someone whose permanent residence is in another nation, in contrast to the foreigner whose stay is only temporary.

113. Phan, “Migration in the Patristic Era,” 48. Cf. Carroll, *Christians at the Border*, 100-1, who explains that foreigner may also include those not long in Israel, who have yet to be assimilated into Israelite, or those who have maintained their own faith. He cautions that word studies are not entirely clear regarding this terminology, so “tidy definitions are simply not possible.”
The primary focus of this survey will be attitudes towards and practices about *ger* or “sojourner,” which is also translated into English as “alien,” “resident alien,” and “stranger,” and occurs over ninety times in the Hebrew Testament.\(^{114}\)

Biblical scholar Frank Crüsemann explains that the Old Testament contains the model for a national and religious self-understanding which gains its own identity not in contempt and expulsion but conversely by the protection of others.\(^{115}\) Crüsemann goes on to affirm that it is reference to Israel’s own history and experience that shapes the whole future history of the rights of strangers within the Bible:

> The act of liberation and the preceding oppression mould both the national self-understanding and that of the individuals addressed. The commandment is the other side of freedom. It is on the basis of this self-understanding that there is awareness of the *nepesh*, the heart or soul (one can even say the ‘life’), of the stranger. No one can relate to this tradition of freedom without also psychologically getting involved with those who have still to attain such freedom.\(^{116}\)

Based upon this self-understanding, the rights of the aliens are codified into law, typified by Exodus 23.9: “You shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

These themes are more positively developed and find fuller expression in Deuteronomistic law. There, the basis is not only the memory of the brutality of their oppression in Egypt, but also God’s act of liberation: “You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this” (Deut 24:18). The focus expands from a remembrance of their own shared experience of suffering to the action and

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\(^{114}\) Carroll, *Christians at the Border*, 101, 168, n. 2. Its verbal root *gûr*, translated as “sojourn” or “live” occurs an additional eight-one times. I will use the words “stranger,” “alien,” and “sojourner” interchangeably in this section, unless it is in a quotation.


\(^{116}\) Crüsemann, “Heart of a Stranger,” 98.
nature of God. They are reminded that God “is not partial and takes no bribe, . . . executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and . . . loves the strangers providing them food and clothing” (Deut 10:17-18). In the same way, Israel is to love the stranger (Deut 10:19). In the Deuteronomic code, therefore, a virtual “social safety net” is constructed for problematic social groups like the widows, orphans, strangers, and the Levites.\textsuperscript{117} They are to be invited to the great banquets and festivals (Deut 16:11, 14); gleaning laws are established to ensure their sustenance (Deut 24:19, 21); their pledges are to be protected (Deut 24:17); and laws are put in place to dedicate the tithe to landless groups every third year (Deut 14:28). Work laws established timely payment of wages (Deut. 24:15) and rest on the Sabbath (Deut. 5:14). They were to receive fair treatment in court and laws cautioned against prejudice (Deut. 1:16-17) and taking advantage of those who were powerless (Deut. 24:17-18; 27:19). As Carroll summarizes, whether it is families, the community, workplaces, or elders at the city gate or at other legal gatherings, “[e]veryone in a sense was involved somehow in the care of the sojourner.”\textsuperscript{118}

Sojourners were also given access into parts of Israel’s religious life. They were permitted to participate in the Sabbath, the Day of Atonement, Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles.\textsuperscript{119} They were required to be present at the periodic reading of the Law which, Carroll notes, would publicly demonstrate their relationship with one another, as well as communicate an understanding of societal norms.\textsuperscript{120} They were also subject to many of the same laws as native-born Israelis, although they did not have to follow dietary laws, and Israelites were reluctant to permit foreigners participate at the sanctuary.\textsuperscript{121} The scriptures even inscribed a

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{117}{Crüsemann, “Heart of a Stranger,” 99.}
\footnotetext{118}{Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 105.}
\footnotetext{119}{Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 105.}
\footnotetext{120}{Carroll, \textit{Christians at the Border}, 105-6.}
\footnotetext{121}{It should be noted that the codes also recognize a number of duties and rights ascribed only to the Hebrews, such as the cancellation of debts after seven years and exemption from paying interest (Deut 15:3).}
\end{footnotes}
future hope that all could gather together to worship at the holy mountain of God, including the foreigner (*nokrî*).\(^{122}\)

In her comparative study of the covenantal, Deuteronomic, and priestly codes regarding *ger*, biblical scholar Christiana van Houten observes that there is a progression in understanding as the law evolved, from sojourners and aliens as objects of mercy and justice to efforts towards their full inclusion in Israel.\(^{123}\) She offers that, while the covenantal law dealt primarily with their protection, the Deuteronomic code and Priestly code both reinterpreted the covenantal law as well as expanded it; hence, she refers to them as “reform documents.”\(^{124}\) A more comprehensive approach began with the Deuteronomic Code, which set up more permanent support systems, and began to include aliens and sojourners in some cultic activities. The later Levitical codes permit full participation in some purity and cultic activities, advocate for equality, and portray them as members of Israel’s community of worship (See, *e.g.*, Lev. 16:29; 17:8, 10, 12, 13, 15; 18:26; 19:33, 34; 20:2; 22:18; 24:16, 22).

Finally, the priestly tradition adds another dimension to the treatment of strangers: love of strangers is motivated by the holiness of God, which Crüsemann writes, “governs everything.”\(^{125}\) In Leviticus, the passage dealing with the treatment of strangers begins with a definitive statement: “You shall be holy: for the Lord your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2). Later in the same chapter, there is an implicit reminder of Yahweh’s holiness in the command to love the stranger, which concludes with “I am Yahweh your God” (Lev 19:33). In the Exodus, God has set the Israelites apart and made them holy, and their conduct is to correspond to the holiness of God. Thus, Crüsemann concludes:

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\(^{122}\) Carroll, *Christians at the Border*, 106-7.


\(^{125}\) Crüsemann, “Heart of a Stranger,” 100.
The theological status of these rules for protection can hardly be surpassed. The love of God, the act of election in the Exodus, the gift of the land to Israel, the presence of the holy God in his people, the identity of the people of God itself—all this is presented as a reason for protecting strangers. Proximity to this God is incompatible with discrimination against strangers. Any breach of the right of strangers brings about separation from God.\textsuperscript{126}

Therefore, Israel is to act like God acts, love like God loves, and be holy just as God is holy. Israel must also know the heart of a stranger. Further, a failure to accept this responsibility was a breach of their faith in the Lord, and prophets railed against those who were disobedient (see e.g., Jer. 22:3; Ezek. 22:7, 29; Mal. 3:5).\textsuperscript{127} In fact, the prophet Malachi’s admonition at 3:5 are some of the closing words of the Hebrew Testament:

‘Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the hired workers in their wages, the widow, and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the alien, and do not fear me,’ says the Lord Almighty.

Closely tied to the concept of being a sojourner is a theology which gives thanks for the divine abundance of creation. Within the Hebrew Testament, images of God as Host Exemplar abound. In fact, God’s first words to humanity are an invitation to eat from what has been provided (Gen. 2:16). The Testament repeatedly marvels at God’s gracious character, and at the care with which God constructed the universe and made a place for humanity. Psalm 104 portrays all of creation as a dwelling place for God’s creatures, with springs to “give drink to every beast,” where all find food and refuge. Similarly, Psalm 23 portrays God as the ideal host-shepherd, anointing the guest’s head, and providing a dwelling, a table, an overflowing cup, and even protection on the journey. The wilderness experience is emblematic of God’s care: “He sustained him in a desert land. . . . he shielded him, cared for him, and guarded him as the apple

\textsuperscript{126} Crüsemann, “Heart of a Stranger,” 101.
\textsuperscript{127} Carroll, Christians at the Border, 102.
of his eye” (Deuteronomy 32:10). Such generosity, impossible to fathom, let alone repay, can only be met with thanksgiving and praise. Thus, it was an expression of gratitude and faithfulness to God who was Israel’s generous host. As beings who are made in the likeness of God, Israel is directed to imitate God, “who executes justice for the orphan and widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing” (Deut. 10:17-18; Ps. 146:9). Gratitude radiates outward, as Israel is reminded to give generously of what has previously been given to them, and the gifted become the givers. Remembering their own previous precarious situation, they strive now for the well-being, not just survival, of the sojourners and landless in their land (Deuteronomy 10:17-20; 24:14-15; Exodus 22:21-27). The gift of God’s hospitality gives birth to an ethic of welcoming others.

C. The Christian Testament

This, then, is the setting, context, and understanding as the Christian Testament opens, with the same protocols and imperatives in place. Christians viewed the stranger within the theological context of covenant, creation, remembrance, and thanksgiving, and welcoming the stranger was a moral imperative, as well as a way of praising and remembering God and God’s great works, and of remembering their own history. Identification with, and acceptance of, the stranger is thus similarly linked with Christian identity. Just as in the Hebrew Testament, hospitality is a central motif, and welcoming reflects and anticipates the hospitality of God’s kingdom. In fact, it is notable when hospitality is not practiced, such as when Mary and Joseph are unable to find a place to stay, or when Jesus criticizes his host for his failure to provide water

131. Cruz, An Intercultural Theology of Migration, 125.
to wash his feet (Luke 7:44), or when traveling disciples of Jesus shake the dust off their shoes to indicate the lack of hospitality they encountered. Biblical scholar John Bell Mathews describes a “technical vocabulary” for hospitality. \[133\] Thus, words such as “greet,” “welcome,” “receive,” “send on,” “come to you,” serve as semantic markers that have a common understanding based on conventional practices. Hospitality is now situated primarily in the home, although traveling teachers still approached synagogues for hospitality and lodging. Thus, words and phrases associated with a traveler entering a house commonly refer to hospitality. \[134\] Meals have a central place. Prayer is almost always incorporated into hospitality, and it was also customary to escort guests to their next destination, provide them with provisions, or send them on in peace. \[135\]

As narrative time passes, the notion of hospitality expands under Christian understanding. The directives for Israel are embodied and perfected in Jesus, who both loves and acts like God, but also knows and has the heart of a stranger. Pohl notes that, in Christianity, the practice of hospitality is always located within the larger picture of Jesus’ sacrificial welcome to all who come to him. \[136\] For early Christians, therefore, Jesus himself served as the most powerful example of the way in which to practice hospitality. He was stranger, guest, host, and meal (“bread of life” [John 5:34-51]). \[137\] Frequently illustrating the kingdom of God with images of food, drink, and banquet, Jesus practiced what he preached by feeding the hungry, befriending tax collectors and sinners, and sharing table fellowship. \[138\] Shared meals were a centerpiece for

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134. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 455; cited by Andrew E. Arterbury, “The Ancient Custom of Hospitality, The Greek Novels, and Acts 10:1-11:18,” *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 53-72, at 58. Arterbury goes on to list some examples: “I enter into the house” is associated with acceptance of hospitality, and “I turn aside into the house,” “I bring into the house,” and “I gather into the house,” are all associated with the onset of hospitality (58); and “I continue or remain” and “I send on” are similarly associated with the custom; see also Arterbury, *Entertaining Angels*, 97.
hospitality, and became the context in which believers developed a new understanding that transcended social, ethnic, and economic differences. Further, in his hospitality, Jesus broke free from an exclusivism that would delineate clean and unclean, pure and impure, righteous and sinner. “Nothing that comes from the outside contaminates,” he observes (Mark 7:15). Instead, Jesus introduces a new basis for relationships, the common parenthood of God, Abba-Father.\(^\text{139}\) Therefore, hospitality is central to the meaning of the gospel, and the experiences associated with hospitality enrich the Christian faith and bring Christians into closer alignment with the basic values of the Kingdom.\(^\text{140}\) God’s hospitality sets the character for Christian hospitality, and Christian hosts are to offer the same welcome to their table that God provides to the Kingdom.\(^\text{141}\)

Two key teachings, told as parables, inform the practice of hospitality and clearly illustrate the distinctions between the conventional Greco-Roman hospitality customs and Christian hospitality. The parable of the great banquet, told by Jesus (Luke 14) is an instruction that specifies a guest list of those who cannot possibly return the invitation, nor can they be used to enhance the status of the host, yet are to be welcomed to the great feast. The parable of the sheep and goats in Matthew’s Gospel (Mt. 25:34, 38, 43, 44), which Senior observes is “strongly attuned to the covenantal injunctions of the Torah,” makes the call to welcome the foreigner or stranger, a “criteria for righteousness.”\(^\text{142}\) There, the Son of Man is so closely identified with the stranger that neglect of the stranger is neglect of him, and care of the stranger and “the least” is care for him.

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In order to explicate the significance of such themes, we turn now to a brief survey of specific practices, teachings, and examples of hospitality, beginning with a review of the gospel according to Luke.


Filled with references to table fellowship, communal meals, and travel, the Gospel of Luke is perhaps the most descriptive in terms of the practices of hospitality.\(^{143}\) Biblical scholar John Koenig writes that hospitality may be considered a subtheme of this gospel. It serves as a kind of mini-primer of Jesus’ expectations about hospitality. Both the gospel and the Book of Acts are consistent in presenting hospitality as a way to participate in the ministry and message of Jesus.\(^{144}\) Thematically, it portrays Jesus as a wanderer, in need of hospitality, but also as the supreme host, welcoming strangers into the Kingdom of God.\(^{145}\) Within the first 25 verses, a divine stranger appears twice with messages of future births, setting the stage for the birth of Jesus, who is a stranger born in a strange land, and who must rely upon hospitality from the moment of his birth. At a synagogue in Nazareth, where visiting teachers often visited first to seek hospitality,\(^{146}\) Jesus declares his own mission of hospitality, healing, and liberation, announcing the time of Jubilee (Luke 4:18).\(^{147}\) Despite having “no place to lay his head” (Luke 9:58), Jesus is often the host, at once dependent upon hospitality and at the same time offering it. Jesus “welcomes, but needs welcome.”\(^{148}\) Throughout the gospel, but especially on Jesus’ journey toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:27), Jesus is portrayed as a traveler seeking


\(^{147}\) Here, Jesus also takes as his own mission the acts of loving-kindness/hospitality described in Isaiah 58, especially vss. 6-7: “This rather is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, not turning your back on your own.”

hospitality. Koenig observes that meals and “table talk” had “extraordinary prominence” in Luke-Acts. Indeed, New Testament scholar Eugene LaVerdiere describes the gospel as “a story of meals and journeys with Jesus.” He notes ten meals in all, beginning with the banquet at the home of Levi (5:27-39) and ending with a meal in Jerusalem prior to the ascension (24:36-49), and points out the symbolism in Mary placing Jesus in an eating trough, or manger (2:7), after they have been denied hospitality in David’s city. This is particularly significant in that, at Jesus’ last Passover, he who was denied hospitality at his birth would now offer hospitality on the eve of his rejection, passion, and death in Jerusalem, the city of David (22:1-38).

The gospel makes repeated references to elements of hospitality using customary language, with invitations to dine, to enter, to stay, and notice of whether or not water was provided to wash one’s feet. At Samaria, where Jesus is not “received,” James and John want to call down fire from heaven in response to the insult of inhospitality. Zacchaeus, on the other hand, is declared a “descendant of Abraham” when he runs to meet Jesus and attend to him with joy (Luke 19:1-19). When Jesus sends the apostles out, they are instructed to depend on the hospitality of others, be good guests, and protest inhospitality by shaking the dust from their feet (Luke 10:7), an action that would not have been necessary had they been offered the customary

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151. Eugene LaVerdiere, Dining in the Kingdom of God: The Origins of the Eucharist in the Gospel of Luke (Chicago: Archdiocese of Chicago, Liturgy Training Publications, 1994), 9. LaVerdiere (9-10) details the important journeys. In the prologue, we find the journey of Mary to Elizabeth (1:39-56); of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem (2:1-40); of Jesus and his parents to Jerusalem for Passover (2:41-52). As part of Jesus’ ministry and mission, there is the return from his baptism (3:21-22) and testing in the desert (4:1-13) to Galilee, then to where he had grown up in Nazareth (4:16-30); a journey to Capernaum (4:31-44), where, after an unsuccessful attempt to detain him, he declares the necessity to go to other towns to proclaim the good news of the kingdom (4:43). In the next section (5:1-9:50), the Twelve and others accompany Jesus from one town and village to another proclaiming the kingdom and preaching (8:1-3), then are sent out on their own to do the same (9:1-6). The final journey is to Jerusalem (9:51-19:44), but with an ultimate destination beyond earthly cities (24:50-53).
152. LaVerdiere, Dining in the Kingdom of God, 10.
153. For a detailed discussion, see Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 137-9.
water with which to wash them.\textsuperscript{155} Further, because they are emissaries for Jesus, refusal or extension of hospitality to them was synonymous with refusal or extension to Jesus.\textsuperscript{156} Jesus, who was so often dependent upon the hospitality of others, is also portrayed as gracious host in both words and deeds, and those who sought him found welcome, sustenance, and rest, as well as an emissary who travels ahead to prepare a place. In the final passages, Luke makes good use of the fluidity of roles and role reversals he favors.\textsuperscript{157} While hosting his own farewell dinner, Jesus re-defines the role of host to host-as-servant (“I am among you as one who serves” [Luke 22:27]). As the gospel closes, Jesus is once again a stranger on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:16). As evening approaches, he is offered hospitality (“stay with us”). Despite being the guest, Jesus performs the host’s function by blessing and breaking the bread (Luke 24:30).

2. Hospitality in Early Christian Communities

The birth of the next evolution of hospitality is evident in the Book of Acts and in the letters of the early church, and in the way that they “read back” and reflect on hospitality through Jesus’ life and the scriptures. Rather than a practice, hospitality is a central way of life, one that is both an \textit{imitatio Christi}, and essential to the ecclesial identity. All Christians are expected to be hosts and every Christian traveler can expect to be received.\textsuperscript{158} Now situated in the household, hospitality continues to claim its alien status in order to identify with the stranger and recall the covenant. Thus, shared meals and new understandings of households are both emblematic of hospitality, a topic to which we will return in the fifth chapter.


\textsuperscript{156} Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 143.

\textsuperscript{157} Koenig, \textit{New Testament Hospitality}, notes that Peter and Paul similarly shift their roles from guest to host and that, even as a prisoner, Paul still exercises the role of host (91).

\textsuperscript{158} Arterbury, “The Ancient Custom of Hospitality,” 57; Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 98. Arterbury writes that, according to the \textit{Didache} (11.5), the traditional length of time for a genuine missionary or prophet to stay was two days. See Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 117.
The relationship between the stranger and the divine is also clear, as exemplified by the author of Hebrews, who reminds his readers to practice hospitality, for thereby some have entertained angels unaware (Hebrews 13:2). The identification of Christ with the stranger also continues to motivate early Christians to live hospitably. Pohl writes that “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” is the most important passage for the entire tradition on Christian hospitality. The possibility that, in welcoming strangers, one might welcome Jesus or entertain angels, is found repeatedly throughout ancient texts, and will later become the basis for the corporal works of mercy.

Hospitality also played a prominent role in the spread of the gospel, and was a key element in the church’s missionary activities. Christian missionaries followed Jesus’ instructions to spread the gospel, while being dependent upon hospitality for provisions; therefore, there are many references to traveling missionaries in early Christian literature. In this regard, Arterbury notes the continued employment of hospitality terminology from the larger Mediterranean culture, and the addition of phrases such as “I come to you” and “I recommend” to anticipate a host’s future hospitality or to place a traveler into the hands of a potential host. Their hosts, the residential believers in house church communities, understood themselves as participating in the spread of the gospel, essential partners in its advancement.

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160. Pohl, Making Room, 22; cf. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 102, who notes that, in Galatians, Paul is welcomed like an angel of God or divine messenger. See also Arterbury, 123, in which he cites the Didache (11.3): “Let every apostle who comes to you be welcomed as if he were the Lord.” Chapter 11 of the Didache concerns the hospitality extended to missionaries, while Chapter 12 refers to the hospitality extended to all traveling Christians.


162. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 98.

163. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 97. Arterbury writes that letters of recommendation, in essence, extended the author’s status to the bearer of the letter, thereby securing him/her a kind reception (99).

relationships were established, often undergirded by the host’s own experience of marginality. Peter is described as receiving hospitality at the home of Simon the tanner (Acts 10:5-6), and later offering hospitality at the same home to Cornelius’ messengers (10:17-23), even though he is himself a guest there. As a missionary, Paul is often the recipient of hospitality, and also extends hospitality while in Rome (28:30-31). Mathews writes that it is “certainly not accidental” that the Book of Acts ends on an emphatic note of triumph and joy with the captive Paul in Rome preaching the gospel and welcoming all who came to partake of his—and thus God’s—hospitality (Acts 28:30-31).

In fact, Arterbury equates the custom of hospitality directly with the Christian mission to the Gentiles. The first public conversion of the Gentiles, the conversion of Cornelius and his household, unfolds in three scenes filled with acts of hospitality that bring together a Roman centurion from Caesarea and a Jewish Christian from Jerusalem, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The custom of hospitality provides the starting point and vehicle for the cross-cultural interaction, with emissaries and scenes of double hospitality within a dynamic of reciprocity. Further, in light of the Luke’s narrative, which includes reference to Cornelius’ relationship with God prior to meeting Peter and Peter’s vision and instructions from the Holy Spirit, Arterbury contends that “it is quite logical to surmise that, after reading Acts 10-11, Luke’s audience would have concluded that God had personally extended hospitality to the Gentiles gathered at Cornelius’ house,” with Peter as God’s representative. Further, Luke connects hospitality with

165. Pohl, “Hospitality from the Edge,” 121.
166. LaVerdiere, The Breaking of the Bread, 92; cf. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 104, for a discussion of Paul’s allusions to hospitality and use of hospitality vocabulary in the Letter to Romans.
169. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 158.
170. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 168. For a more detailed explanation, see pp. 168-74. At p. 190, Arterbury argues that, for Luke’s audience, the narrative would have actually subverted the more general Mediterranean hospitality tradition, and
the Gentile mission in particular, and portrays it as a means by which Christianity becomes open in an unprecedented way to the foreign stranger,\textsuperscript{171} incorporating them into the fellowship of the church,\textsuperscript{172} spreading salvation and establishing relationships, while transforming Jewish Christian believers’ theological framework for evaluating people and understanding God.\textsuperscript{173}

Pohl writes of the “distinctively Christian understanding” of hospitality that developed in the early centuries of the church. “Partly in continuity with Hebrew understandings of hospitality that associated it with God, covenant, and blessing, and partly in contrast to Hellenistic practices which associated it with benefit and reciprocity, Christian communities pressed hospitality outward toward the weakest, those least likely to reciprocate.”\textsuperscript{174} Pohl notes that hospitality remained crucial to the identity of the church for a number of centuries, and extraordinary hospitality was proof of the truth of Christianity.\textsuperscript{175} In Romans 15:7, Paul urges believers to welcome one another just as Christ has welcomed them.\textsuperscript{176} For Paul, this mutual welcoming is the expected behavior of those “at home” in Christ’s body, the church.\textsuperscript{177}

D. Hospitality Defined and Koinonia

The connection between love, love’s concrete expression, and hospitality is made more clear in the Greek word for hospitality, “\textit{philoxenia},” which translates roughly into “love of

\textsuperscript{171} Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 179.
\textsuperscript{172} Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 154.
\textsuperscript{174} Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 17. Cf. Gustav Stählin, “Hospitality,” in \textit{Theological Dictionary of the New Testament}, ed. Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), 5:21-23, who lists Christian love as the basic motive for hospitality, and four subsidiary motives: charismatic motive, in which hospitality is understood as a gift to be faithfully used; the eschatological motive, rooting hospitality in the Israelites’ distress as aliens in Egypt and the Christian self-understanding of being sojourners; the metaphysical motive, which understands the potential that guests could be divine messengers or the Divine Guest; and the missionary motive, sustaining the work of evangelists to further the gospel.
\textsuperscript{176} Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 25.
stranger.”178 “Xenizō” means to surprise or entertain. “Xenos” can mean guest, host, or stranger. Taken together, they allude to a larger dynamism at work in the encounter, one that may surprise both host and guest with an unexpected blessing. Pohl describes the power of the scriptural narrative and the way in which it shaped understandings of and commitments to hospitality.

“Many stories of hospitality,” she writes,

contain elements of mystery and surprise because God is so often present in unexpected ways. Needy strangers turn out to be angels, beggars are somehow Jesus in disguise. Resources are in short supply yet miraculously sufficient; sometimes there is even abundance when what is available is shared. Many stories have their roots in Scripture, but they are frequently contextualized and retold through the generations.179

The ambiguity and changing dimension of the guest-host role, combined with the belief in the connection between Christ and the stranger, further suggests that God may be the real host, and the stranger the bearer of blessings. Further, in the mingling between guest and host, there is a mutual vulnerability which undoes the distinction between insider and outsider, blurring the boundaries and creating a liminal space that encourages a kind of covenantal exchange.180

Koenig explains that philoxenia refers to a delight in the entire guest-host relationship, in the mystery and surprise of what may take place.181 Koenig thus sees hospitality as a catalyst for partnerships in community (koinonia).182 Each encounter is ripe with promise; each stranger welcomed as a fellow laborer full of spiritual gifts, waiting to be shared. Peter is describing this notion when he writes, “Above all hold unfailing your love for one another. . . . Practice hospitality ungrudgingly. . . . As each has received a gift, employ it for one another” (1 Peter 4.8-10). Unlike partnerships for advantage, the giving and receiving of spiritual gifts builds us

(oikodomein) the community and is intended for the benefit of the community and to participate in God’s mission.

Paul offers similar exhortations to practice hospitality. Christian believers were to regard hospitality as a fundamental expression of the gospel. In Chapter 12 of Romans, Paul draws a picture of what “love should look like” when it is lived out by transformed Christians. Different spiritual gifts are to be celebrated and exercised on behalf of one another and God. They should love one another with mutual affection and anticipate one another in showing affection. The passage on love culminates in the paraenesis to “pursue hospitality” (v. 13). Thus, hospitality will serve to establish and maintain unity within diversity, the means by which the fellowship and koinonia of the church is given concrete expression. It will also welcome strangers, as well as those in need, who should be treated with the “same regard” (v. 16). Finally, it will extend beyond even strangers to enemies, who are also to be treated hospitably, in order to “overcome evil with good” (vv. 20-21).

Mathews places particular significance on the association of hospitality with love in the passages from 1 Peter and Romans 12. Hospitality involves acts of personal service that embody and are motivated by love. Indeed, in rabbinic literature, they are designated as “loving-kindness” and distinguished from almsgiving and works of charity, and a characteristic mark of a true son of Abraham. Further, hospitality is uniquely associated with faith (1 Clem. 1.2, Polyc. 1.2, James 2:15-16). Thus, Mathews concludes that hospitality was not seen simply as an

185. Ibid., 108. Here, Arterbury draws attention to the proactive stance of the word “pursue,” from the Greek “diōkō,” suggesting a vigorous effort or striving. “Diōkō” is also found in other pursuits of other values (e.g., pursue righteousness (1 Timothy 6.11); pursue the good (1 Thess. 5.15); pursue peace (1 Peter 3.11); and pursue love (1 Cor. 14.1). Like Abraham, Christians should go out, actively seeking strangers to be guests rather than waiting for them.
eminent virtue, but related to the covenant community of God’s people. It was “understood
theologically as being related to the divine activity which called that community into existence
and sustained it; . . . [and] was viewed as a result of this gracious activity of God.”

The act of hospitality, then, is a response to, an imitation of, and the concrete manifestation of God’s
love. Just as a son manifests the character of the father through his actions, Christians are to
imitate God, the Host Exemplar, and be holy as the Lord is holy (Lev. 19:2) and to use Jesus as a
model, and “welcome one another as Christ has welcomed” them, for the glory of God (Romans
15:7).

Given this new model, Jesus’ disciples understood hospitality as fundamental to the
mission of the church, and a lack of hospitality would be construed as a powerful countersign to
the nature of church as koinonia. Hospitality was an early marker of the church, and Christians
were widely recognized for their exemplary care for those in need, establishing hospitals, hostels,
and orphanages, caring for widows, and feeding and caring for those who were in need.

Oden notes “a sense of solidarity with the stranger, the widow, and the sick” as palpable in many of the
erly Christian texts. This same solidarity was seen in an identification with the poor, exiles,
and refugees, which sometimes was the result of having given all that they had to the poor.

One can see hospitality’s continued significance in the pastoral epistles, where it is listed
as one of the virtues required for the office of episkopos (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8), and in its

191. Christians were so widely recognized for their exemplary hospitality, in fact, that leaders of rival religious groups
urged their followers to imitate the hospitality of Christians, “their benevolence to strangers, their care for the graves of the dead
and the pretended holiness of their lives,” and were directed to open hostels for needy strangers and to distribute food to the poor,
strangers, and beggars. The quote is from the Emperor Julian (CE 362), from The Works of the Emperor Julian, trans. by Wilmer
Cave Wright, Volume 3 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: W. Heinemann, 1980), 67-71; as referenced by Pohl,
Making Room, 44. See also Rowan Greer, Broken Lights and Mended Lives (University Park: Pennsylvania State University
Press, 1986), 132, for a further discussion.
192. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 109.
prominence in extra-canonical writings. A shift from the custom of private hospitality occurred in the third century, with the placement of hospitality under the authority of the bishops, and with the allocation of corporate funds set aside for that purpose. Oden locates repeated references to poor houses, orphanages, hospitals, xenones, and old age homes in the literature beginning in the mid-300s to the mid-500s. Ancient texts often described the prominent role of women in hospitable practices, founding hospitals, caring for the poor, and making so many sacrifices that some were left destitute. As the church gained political favor in the fourth century, bishops were given both power and financial resources, and expanded hospitality significantly, with a corresponding decline in private hospitality. Hospitality as connected to care for those in need gradually evolved into specialized organized social services according to the type needed. In fact, one of the great ironies of hospitality is that, although such organization allowed for greater efficiency and more proficient care, it was also more anonymous, impersonal, and distanced from the norm of personal Christian responsibility,

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194. See, for example, The Shepherd of Hermas and 1 Clement, cited by Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 134.
195. Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 128; cf. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 215-79. Basil, bishop of Caesarea (ca. 370) is recognized for founding a hospital for victims of famine, supplying food to the poor and sick, and opening a variety of institutions for assistance, and Chrysostom’s writings (ca. 400) describe numerous hospitals, as well as caring for widows and virgins, those in prison, the sick and disabled, those away from home, and the needy. See Pohl, Making Room, 44-5.
197. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 201-93. Pulcheria, for example, founded numerous houses of prayer, hostels, burial places for strangers (230); Magna, one of the “remarkable women” residing in Ancyra, gave money to hospitals, for the poor, for bishops on pilgrimage, and never ceased to work (225); Radegund, a queen and abbess of western Europe, was praised for her hospitality and generosity (238); Melania the Elder practiced hospitality for 37 years, making donations to churches, monasteries, guests, and prisons, leaving nothing for herself and “no one failed to benefit by her good works” (292); Melania the Younger was also recognized as a model of hospitality (293); see also Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 97, who concurs that the prominent role of women was a distinct characteristic.
198. Peter Brown, Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002), 26-44. See also Arterbury, “The Ancient Custom of Hospitality,” 57. Ancient customs distinguished between public hospitality, the public administration of certain functions and duties of hospitality, along with the contractual obligations and, at times, officials in charge of hospitality, and private hospitality by individuals. This study has dealt primarily with private hospitality. See also Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 216-42, on how hospices, hospitals, almshouses, and hostels were established by churches and shared authority with the state, with care regularized through sets of guidelines. Offices such as guest masters, guardians of the poor, orphanage directors, rural bishops who oversaw hospitals, and other administrators were established and made accountable to the bishop. According to Pohl, Making Room, 5, and Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 241, by the fourth century, clergy were being warned away from the increasingly frequent practice of using hospitality as a way to gain favor with the powerful, a practice that would continue to grow, and, by the fifth century, there were warnings against exploiting hospitality offices for financial gains.
removing it from the sphere of day-to-day living and Christian self-understanding. At this stage, hospitality began to be viewed as public service handled by public servants.\textsuperscript{199} Even then, however, monasteries and abbeys continued to honor the exercise and ethic of private hospitality with a “Christ room,” and rules of welcome, such as the \textit{Rule of Benedict},\textsuperscript{200} and hospitality’s importance was recognized until the seventeenth century, when interest in hospitality and its importance as a moral duty waned.

\textbf{Summary}

Hospitality was an honored virtue, widely accepted as a sign of a civilized society and a moral imperative. For the people of God, however, whose formative and defining experiences were marked by migration and exile, hospitality became a sacred duty. It was during these experiences that they came to know God as gracious Host, and to understand that it is God’s nature to accompany and love those in need. It was the etching memory of having been strangers themselves that impelled Israel to feel compassion for strangers and undergirded their codification of laws to welcome the stranger, and to model that welcome after the one they had received. Hospitality, therefore, was not only a virtue and essential practice, but a grateful response to God’s own gracious hospitality, and an expression and imitation of it. Because God was also the recipient of hospitality and had also sent blessings through strangers and fellow sojourners, there was also an element of anticipation, surprise, or delight embedded within hospitality itself. Thus, the experiences of migration and hospitality were fused together, essential components of Israel’s self-consciousness, theological identity, and daily practices.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{199} Arterbury, \textit{Entertaining Angels}, 128; Brown, \textit{Poverty and Leadership}, 31; Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 43.
\item \textsuperscript{200} Monasticism, a notable source of hospitality during the Middle Ages and beyond, will not be discussed in detail in this project, in light of its own rich and expansive history, and the limitations of scope, space, and time.
\end{itemize}
In the Christian Testament, Jesus became the embodiment of God’s hospitality while paradoxically also exemplifying the stranger. Thus, Christians, like their faith ancestors who confessed their “father was a wandering Aramean,” willingly sought a marginal identity in continuity with this tradition and in imitation of Christ, and generously extended hospitality to those most in need, who represented Christ. Shared meals, table fellowship, and households that transcended cultural, societal, and other differences were some of the emblematic expressions of hospitality for the early church, an anticipation of the kingdom of God, as well as the means by which new partnerships and communities were born. Hospitality was considered a concrete embodiment of Christians’ love and koinonia with each other, and supported and enabled an active missionary movement. Hospitality was an early marker of the church, and Christians were widely recognized for their exemplary care for those in need.

This exploration of the biblical foundations of hospitality, its integral link with migration, and its understanding in early church history, is fundamental to the understanding of hospitality that I am proposing. As we have seen, hospitality is at the heart of the scriptural witness and early church ethos, a response to God’s own hospitality and a means of inviting those who were marginalized into the community. Chapter 4 will draw upon and delve deeper into the understandings of migration and movement developed in this chapter, amplifying their theological import, in order to reflect on the ways in which they might bear fruit in a more contemporary setting, when migration and displacement are defining characteristics of the twenty-first century. It will begin to lay down the markers for a theology of migration that takes seriously the church’s own marginal roots and identity and its formative experience of migration and exile, as well as its continuing “vocation to be in exile,” and its understanding of being strangers and pilgrims in the world, of living between two worlds, in the world but not of it, on a journey together to their heavenly home.
Chapter 4
Toward a Theology of Migration:
Solidarity and Reconciliation

Introduction
As we saw in Chapter 3, migration has been at the roots of the Judeo-Christian faith, and has served as the backdrop—and often a vehicle—of salvation history and its narration. So intrinsic has migration been to the Judeo-Christian faith that God’s first word to Abraham was “Go,” Jesus’ invitation to his disciples was “Come,” the early church named themselves the people of “the Way,” and the Second Vatican Council affirmed the church as “the pilgrim people.” Movement, therefore, has been definitive for Christianity, and an alien and marginal identity accompanies that understanding. This, we found, was entirely in keeping with Jesus’ own ministry, which was characterized as the journey (Luke 9:51) of an itinerant preacher who had no place to lay his head (Luke 9:58), and, though he came to his own, they did not welcome him (John 1:10). Born homeless, Jesus remains the paradigmatic migrant and outsider who died “outside the city gate and outside the camp” (Heb. 13:12-13). For his disciples, who first encountered the risen Christ as a traveling stranger in need of hospitality (Luke 24:18), marginality and movement were embraced as both normative and as an imitatio Christi. Thus, Christians continued to address each other as “paroikoi—sojourners, displaced people without a home and nation,” even after coming to understand themselves as members of the household of God.¹

As the prior chapter demonstrated, the experience of migration and hospitality were inextricably linked, each essential and inseparable components of the Christian faith. Building

¹ Phan, “Migration in the Patristic Era,” 49.
upon this, the present chapter will concentrate on the first element of the migration-hospitality dyad, before returning to hospitality in the following chapter. My focus in this chapter will concern the way in which the guideposts set forth in *EMCC* and discussed in Chapter 2, and theological reflections of Chapter 3 regarding migration, when developed into a thicker register, might open into a theology of migration that seeks to more adequately address the birth of new and emerging communities in light of Latino/a migration to the U.S. How can movement through migration be understood theologically, and how can Jesus’ own marginality and itinerancy prove normative in situations where receiving parishes—the local church—are taking in immigrants, not as temporary “houseguests,” nor as objects of their pastoral care, but as partners, co-heirs through baptism, and as those called as well to build up the church?

As one corollary of the hospitality-migration dyad, it is essential to clarify the irreducible nature of migration and marginality for the church, not as a tangential situation to be dealt with, but as a constitutive dimension of both hospitality and what it means to be church, so that we may draw out and thicken the implications of this in a theology of migration that takes hospitality as its entry point. *EMCC* writes that the phenomenon of migration “makes the true face of the church visible,” and that “it is also through migration that God’s saving plan will be effected.”

Calling all to the missionary-dialogical task, it further states that it will be necessary “to build up the Church and make it grow in and with the migrants, to rediscover together and reveal Christian values and form an authentic sacramental community of faith, worship, love and hope.” This chapter will argue that a renewal of the sense of pilgrimage and marginality proves integral for this task.

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2. *EMCC*, no. 37.
This chapter will begin to offer a constructive proposal, albeit unfinished, for a theology of migration that more adequately addresses the sins of dominative power, exclusion, and marginalization operative in the coming together of dominant and privileged cultures with emerging and vulnerable communities. A theology of migration arises out of the intersection of voices, cultures, and claims surrounding this encounter, with North American pluralism and its ongoing conversation about race, culture, ethnicity, and national identity, and its legacy of colonization and conquest of indigenous peoples, as the larger backdrop. It will take as its focus the often conflictual reality of parish life, where the broader national issues surrounding migration frequently play out on a much smaller scale. Few populations have less voice and greater need than refugees, internally displaced persons, and impoverished migrants. Instead of finding places of welcome in local parishes, however, receiving congregations often mirror the same societal values, prejudices, and priorities as the dominant culture. In light of this coming together, there is a need to find new and more fruitful ways to address these changes, move toward a vision of human interrelatedness and community building, and envision a future more in keeping with the Christian understanding. In this chapter, I want to argue that a different

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6. See, for example, Giocchino Campese, “‘But I See that Somebody Is Missing’: Ecclesiology and Exclusion in the Context of Immigration,” in Ecclesiology and Exclusion: Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 71-91, at 76-7, wherein Campese references an unfortunate part of “Christian churches overcome by fear and prejudice,” (76) the “fact that among the nastiest letters that some Catholic bishops receive, the topic is what is thought to be a ‘too benevolent’ treatment of ‘illegal aliens,’” (77), and the “level of barbarism” in the public debate, and the “acceptable violent behaviors” against immigrants, about which there is “little or no reaction both from a human and a Christian viewpoint” from individual Christians and Christian communities (78). See also Chapter 1, above, pp. 23-24.

7. See, for example, Alex Stepick, “God Is Apparently Not Dead: The Obvious, the Emergent, and the Still Unknown in Immigration and Religion,” in Immigrant Faiths: Transforming Religious Life in America, eds. Karen I. Leonard, Alex Stepick, et al. (Lanham, New York, Toronto, Oxford: AltaMira Press, a division of Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 11-37, on immigrant religions. At one time, the U.S. Catholic Church created ethnic parishes to alleviate the sense of dislocation from homelands. While no longer the case, immigrant congregants are still attracted to places that reinforce their national or ethnic identity. At times, however, preservation of this identity overshadows the specifically religious aspects. Within multi-ethnic parishes, there is often conflict over the degree of accommodation, time slots for services, and preferred spaces, making a congregation’s linguistic and ethnic diversity a “highly charged issue.” (17)
vision is possible, and to begin to explore the contours of that vision in light of the *kairos* of Latino/a migration to the U.S. Thus, neither integration nor assimilation can be the goal, but the midwifing of a new community that seeks to be true to God’s mission of healing, reconciliation, and justice and the Pentecost vision of unity-in-diversity.

This chapter will be divided into two parts. Building upon the foundations laid out in Chapter 3, Part I will explore the themes of pilgrim church and marginal/alien self-identity, develop them into a thicker and more robust register, and examine their implications and contributions to a theology of migration in our more contemporary setting. Part II will begin the important task of “reimagining church” in light of the *kairos* of Latino/a immigration. It will argue for the importance of solidarity across difference in the present day context; introduce hermeneutics of border crossing spirituality as a model for parish life, grounded in a spirit of reconciliation and the Pentecost vision of unity-in-diversity. Building upon this, Chapter 5 will continue to develop such crucial revisioning, using the hermeneutic of hospitality as an essential corollary and partner to migration in both the past and present.

I. Foundations for a Theology of Migration

This section builds upon the scriptural foundations and understandings of migration established in Chapter 3. It delves deeper into the themes of pilgrim church and a marginal self-identity, examines the way these themes have been recovered and reinvigorated in contemporary times, then explores their significance for a theology of migration.

A. The Pilgrim Church

Christianity’s understanding of being the pilgrim church crystallized in the milieu of the brutal oppression in which Christianity was born, and their existence and identity is inextricably
tied to this experience. As theologian Eleazar S. Fernadez explains, there is “no pre-imperial Christianity, [for] Christian diaspora communities were born in the crucible of empire.”

Christians established themselves as “alternative communities” in radical opposition to the empire, and many times used the language and logic of empire to mimic and subvert it. *Ekklēsiai* is a good example of this. Already a part of Greek nomenclature, the word, translated as “assembly” or “congregation,” had political characteristics and referred to the full assembly of the *polis*, or city, who were “called out” (*ek-kaleo*) for decisions. As Richard Horsley points out, “Ironic as it may seem, precisely where [Paul] is borrowing from or alluding to ‘imperial’ language, we can discern that [his] gospel stands counter primarily to the Roman imperial order.”

Theologian William LaRousse traces the development of the missionary nature of the church to the concept of “pilgrim church.” He notes that, for the church, who appropriated the word *ekklesia*, it took on the meaning of having been called and gathered by God. Christians built upon this understanding, developing a missionary sensibility that believed that they would encounter God in the outward movement of the church into the world, while at the same time paradoxically bringing God to the world. “Pilgrim,” on the other hand, comes from the Latin

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8. See Phan, “Migration in the Patristic Period,” 41, who describes ongoing migrations in the face of violent persecutions and the martyrdom of Stephen (35 C.E.) and James (44 C.E.), and an exodus in the thousands after the execution of James in 62 C.E., the Jewish Revolt in 66 C.E., and Titus’ destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E.


12. William LaRousse, “‘Go . . . and make disciples of all nations’: Migration and Mission,” in *Faith on the Move: Toward a Theology of Migration in Asia*, eds. Fabio Baggio and Agnes M. Brazal (Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2008), 155-76, 167. See also Phan, “Migration in the Patristic Period,” 41-4, who identifies five principal destinations: Mesopotamia, and especially Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called “Christians” (Acts 11.26); Greece and Asia Minor; the western Mediterranean; Egypt; and East Asia.

peregrinus, meaning one who comes from foreign parts, and is derived from the Greek paroikia, meaning resident alien or foreigner. The church, then, is both ekklesia and paroikia, or, “as ekklesia it is also paroikia. The Church applies to itself two antithetical terms from political law, the one with reference to God, the other to the world.”

Thus, the way in which the early church described itself was always something of a paradox. Theologian Paul Minear provides an illustration: “Here exiles accepted one another as fellow citizens. Here the scattered were gathered. Here the prisoners became ambassadors and ambassadors were received by the poor. Here all were impoverished and all were enriched. Those sent were received by others who were also sent. Hospitality was the sign of the existence of a new kind of community where every image was destined for incarnation.”

It was these understandings that the church sought to renew and recover when, at the Second Vatican Council, it emphasized the “pilgrim church” as one of the themes of the council, imagining the church as a pilgrim people missioned to the world by God, on a journey to engage the world, but never to adopt the things of the world uncritically. There is a paradoxical tension inherent in this pilgrimage motif. While in some sense there is less certainty, safety, and surety in setting out, there is also the confidence that comes with having faithful companions on the journey, and the trust that comes with dependence upon God for guidance. Thus, the opening passage of the church’s pastoral constitution, Gaudium et Spes, depicts a


16. Theologian Richard Lennan, for example, in “A Continuing Pilgrimage: Ecclesiology Since Vatican II,” The Australasian Catholic Record 91, issue 1 (January 2014): 21-48, writes, “Through highlighting the church’s pilgrim identity and its call to eschatological fullness in Christ and the Holy Spirit, the council reminded the church that movement, not stasis, was its defining feature” (48). Earlier in the same article, Lennan writes that this theme also underscores the distinction between “the church” and “the kingdom, while also “amplifying the irreducible necessity of conducting that pilgrimage in the world” (45).
pilgrim church of vulnerable travelers bonded together on their journey, one community in 
Christ, with the Spirit as their guide.\textsuperscript{17}

This critical understanding was similarly reinvigorated in \textit{Lumen Gentium} [hereinafter \textit{LG}], the dogmatic constitution of the church, which dedicated an entire chapter to the theme of “pilgrim church.” Emphasizing the church’s eschatological nature, Chapter 7, “The Pilgrim Church,” develops a model of the church marked by four characteristics: (1) its imperfection; (2) its striving for perfection; (3) its sense of solidarity; and (4) its accountability to Christ.\textsuperscript{18} With a prophetic recognition of its own imperfect holiness and ultimate accountability to Christ, the image of the pilgrim church emphasizes the church’s “already-not yet” character. Although restoration and renewal have already begun, the church “will attain its full perfection only in the glory of heaven, when there will come the time of the restoration of all things” (Acts 3:21).\textsuperscript{19}

Thus, the church acknowledges its own imperfect form, and takes up its unfinished tasks, imaged as a journey.

The earthly pilgrimage, in fact, provides a means by which restoration and renewal might proceed. As the PCPCMIP explains, the image of “pilgrim,” as employed at the Second Vatican Council, “means a growing unity, an outreach by the Holy Spirit that draws all to Jesus Christ.”\textsuperscript{20}

The closer proximity of different peoples to each other created via migration can be understood

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\textsuperscript{17} GS, no. 1, which reads, ““For theirs is a community of humanity. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed news of salvation which is meant for all. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with all humanity and its history by the deepest of bonds.”


\end{flushright}
as both a first step and providential opportunity to gather those from the four corners of the earth, to break down the walls that divide them, and to bring them closer together in Christ.\textsuperscript{21} Despite the many difficulties associated with migration, it can also offer the privileged occasion to promote unity and understanding between peoples and cultures.\textsuperscript{22} Further, \textit{LG} teaches that communion among wayfarers not only brings them closer to Christ,\textsuperscript{23} but that through their communal praise when gathered as children of God and united as one family in Christ, they share a foretaste of the kingdom.\textsuperscript{24} Thus, the PCPCMIP continues, “The restoration of the world as a whole begins, in a certain way, in the interaction, reconciliation, and praise of God in the particular churches of the world that are theologically and factually pilgrims.”\textsuperscript{25}

As we saw in Chapter 2, this point was made clearly in \textit{EMCC}, which interpreted migration and the coming together of peoples in light of the \textit{telos} and saw in their search for unity and mutuality an anticipation of and first step toward the feast of the kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{26} Further, because the pilgrim church is also catholic, migration offers the “local Church the occasion to verify their catholicity.”\textsuperscript{27} The cultural pluralism that is often a result of migration, therefore is not a situation to be tolerated as transitory; rather, it is a structural dimension of the church that affirms its universal character. Unity is not accomplished through sameness, but through the Spirit of Pentecost.\textsuperscript{28} Further, an “essential trait” of the People of God is that of really having no fixed dwelling place on earth, of being on pilgrimage towards the Kingdom.”\textsuperscript{29}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Blume, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Migration,” no. 2.
\item \textit{LG}, no. 50.
\item \textit{LG}, no. 51.
\item Blume, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Migration,” no. 3.
\item \textit{EMCC}, no. 17.
\item Blume, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Migration,” no. 3, referencing Pope John Paul II’s Message of the Holy Father for the World Day for Migrants and Refugees 1987 (hereinafter Message of the Holy Father), 3; see also \textit{EMCC}, no. 98.
\item Blume, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Migration,” referencing Message of the Holy Father, 3.
\item Blume, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Migration,” no.3, referencing Message of the Holy Father, 3.
\end{enumerate}
Our hope for the future kingdom is thus linked inextricably with this time of displacement, transience, and contingency. With this understanding, migration and human mobility become “almost ‘sacramental’ phenomena,” in that they effectively put us in touch with an essential dimension of the Church.³⁰

As we have seen throughout this study, however, this is far from the understanding operative in most local churches. Therefore, for theologians like Fernandez, there is a need for the church to not just have a sense of pilgrimage, but also the sense of diaspora, which, he writes, “is about the experience of uprootedness, dispersion, displacement and dislocation, as well as the search for roots and connectedness.”³¹ While it can hardly compare, receiving churches also have a sense of displacement and dislocation, of no longer feeling at home in their parish as customs, language, worship, and even décor change with the influx of migrants. Diaspora thus challenges the settled church to first, think and imagine itself under the conditions of diaspora, and second, ethically and hospitably respond to the context.

Fernandez argues that, if the church is to be true to itself and have a future, “[w]e need to exhume and resurrect the diaspora-ekklēśia identity of the church . . . as a permanent posture or marker of the church’s identity.”³² For Fernandez, diaspora serves to remind us that, just as the early church’s identity could not be separated from its relation to empire, neither can the current church’s identity be understood apart from the empire in which it lives. Diaspora, however, has the capacity to undermine and subvert imperialist and oppressive tendencies. It alludes to a future not yet decided, and to an unsettled present. Diaspora transgresses the fixed, stable, pure, and ordered categories that often serve to mask hierarchical, exclusionary, and binary categories,

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³⁰ Blume, “Toward an Ecclesiology of Migration,” 116; see also EMCC, nos. 34, 37, and 38.
leading to an ambiguous status full of possibility. Fernandez, who considers himself “a person in diaspora,” recognizes the appeal of a settled life, but because a life of spiritual growth involves movement, vulnerability, uncertainty, and the pain of departures and arrivals, argues that the church must retain a sense of being in diaspora.

A diasporan heart that voluntarily chooses this identity and spirituality, then, seeks authentic solidarity with those experiencing sociological or physical diaspora, and to disregard the pull of wealth and possessions in favor of finding a home in the journey with each other. At one and the same time, a diasporan sensibility makes one more free to respond to God’s call wherever it is sent, but more dependent on the generous hospitality of others in order to do so. It converts diaspora from a “dreaded condition that must be overcome to a posture of life understood as a journey and characterized by the willingness to take risks and be open to new possibilities.” It proceeds with an openness and vulnerability to the future and to the risks and uncertainties to be found there, but with the understanding that God travels on the journey as well, and that we find a home in God just as God finds a home in us.

In fact, as Chapter 2’s overview of EMCC pointed out, the magisterium teaches that the church is “practically marked by the vocation to be in exile, in diaspora, dispersed among cultures and ethnic groups without every identifying completely with any of these.” As we saw, this vocation to be in exile was interwoven with hospitality as intrinsic to the nature of church itself, as faithful witness to the gospel, and as first-fruit and sign, leaven and prophecy of the kingdom to come.

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34. Fernandez, “Diaspora and the Stranger in Our Midst,” 234. Fernandez was born in the Philippines, has taught in Myanmar, Honduras, and Cameroon, and now makes his home in the U.S.
37. EMCC, no. 22.
B. A Marginal Way of Thinking

As Chapter 3 made clear, marginality was an integral part of the experience of migration, diaspora, and pilgrimage, and played a fundamental role in the church’s self-understanding. As we saw, Christians even employed strategies to recreate a marginal identity once their sociological circumstances changed.38 This memory and theological identity oriented them to God, each other, and strangers in an economy of grace, an important point to keep in mind as we turn to a discussion of migration and marginality in our contemporary time. Just as then, a marginal identity and way of thinking has immense significance for those who understand themselves to be a pilgrim people following the summons of solidarity. Indeed, theologians increasingly note the importance and acuity of a marginal viewpoint for its ability to see, analyze, and rectify the distortions of partial perspectives.39

Perhaps more than any other word, “marginality” best describes migrants who, by definition, live a marginal existence. In fact, theologian Anselm Kyongsuk Min describes the migrant as the “marginalized person par excellence” in light of his/her economic deprivation, political disenfranchisement, and cultural displacement; as well as his/her exposure to racism and xenophobia.40 Further, many Latino and mujerista theologians use marginality as an methodological starting point or as a way to describe the experience of Latinos/as living in the U.S., whether they are migrants or not.41 Theologian Virgilio Elizondo, for example, details the

38. Pohl, “Hospitality from the Edge,” 123. Asceticism and monasticism are two of the better known practices. Here and elsewhere, Pohl notes periodic attempts to recover and reinstitute early practices of hospitality that recreated marginal identity. See also Phan, “Migration in the Patristic Era,” 49, 54.
39. See, for example, Marilyn L. Legge, The Grace of Difference: A Canadian Theological Ethic, American Academy of Religion Academy Series No. 80, ed. Susan Thistlethwaite (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1992), 5-6, who writes of the way in which the clear-sightedness of those at the margins can offer critical interpretations of our society and culture that can help to rectify distortions in understanding.
way in which the dominant group understands themselves to be the paradigm of what is pure, superior, dignified, and civilized, while those who are conquered and colonized—along with their language, food, art, and wisdom—are considered to be impure, inferior, childish, and backwards. So ingrained are these behavioral patterns that, even when the dominant group is of service to the oppressed group, it is as if from a superior position.

Churches are not immune from adopting these patterns of inclusion/exclusion and purity/impurity. As theologian María Pilar Aquino makes clear, the disparities and asymmetries that serve the interests of the First World are often found as well in “theologies and theories that ultimately serve to perpetuate the anthropological reductionism that supports sexism, racism, homophobia, implicit or explicit colonialism, and a world fragmented in radically autonomous ‘monoculturalities.’” Therefore, how to more adequately address culture and marginality must be a consideration for a theology of migration. For those seeking solidarity and mutuality with migrants, a movement to the margins is an absolute imperative. Marginality has the capacity to subvert structures of privilege and destabilize the present system, thereby allowing one to see and understand differently, and paving the way for solidarity and mutuality. As Aquino notes, for

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those willing to acknowledge and examine the asymmetries between us, it is an opportunity for devising a new theological discourse.44

It is this clear-sighted and creative potential of marginality that I want to highlight for its potential to reimagine church and our relations with one another. Brueggemann speaks about the “new, inscrutable, strangely given power” that wells up out of the margins, and the “unsettling” that unnerves, threatens, and can sometimes undo the imperial system.45 As we have seen, one aspect of its power is to give resounding voice and public speech to the assertion that domination and oppression are not acceptable, and must be changed. Another and even more powerful aspect is that God hears, answers, and enters into solidarity with those on the margins. As Brueggemann explains, “The action of this God is portrayed and experienced as direct, powerful destabilization of the empire, . . . an action that questions its foundational presuppositions and claims.”46

Everyone is called into new life, but it is one with a different, and more inclusive ethic and a continuing vocation to be in exile, and one centered around the memory of having been strangers, and God’s redemptive deliverance into new life.

Because those who live on the margins exist between two worlds, they offer a unique and much-needed perspective to see with the insight of an insider, but analyze and assess from an outsider perspective, creatively synthesizing the two worlds.47 As Phan explains, those who are part of a marginalized minority are “betwixt and between . . . neither here nor there. . . .

Culturally, it means not being fully integrated into and accepted by either cultural system, being

a *mestizo*, a person of mixed race.” However, at the same time, he emphasizes that it also allows one to be both this and that, to fuse together different worlds and cultures, bringing about societal transformation and enrichment. Being “betwixt and between” allows one to “think from both sides of the border,” and to utilize the grounding memories of the past in imaginative new ways, reassembling the fragments into a pattern based upon the present with an eye toward empowering potentialities for human flourishing.” The focus will be on moments of change and movement, the small victories gained, and the way in which new identities are formed. This in-between-ness is imbued with the potentiality of imagining from an entirely different perspective, and offers the potentiality of a new vision.

In a similar manner, theologian Jung Young Lee emphasizes the creative nexus of marginality as the inclusive and open-ended point where various views and interpretations meet. Thus, while Brueggemann’s reference to imagination at the margins points to its unsettling and destabilizing capacity, Lee understands marginality’s potential to move toward harmony and reconciliation. Both, however, have as their end a transformation from dominant and exclusivist ways of thinking, and a more inclusive ethic. Lee therefore envisions a genuinely pluralistic society, with many intersecting and merging centers, and the presence of marginal persons who embody a state of being in-between and in-both at the same time, and who may connect different worlds together, inspiring the creation of a beautiful mosaic.

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Anthropologist Victor Turner’s seminal work on liminality and *communitas* sheds light on the creative potential of marginality, and its ability to facilitate new communities. Liminal people are “threshold” or “bridge” people, having an ambiguous status that connects them in some way to the larger society, but also keeps them distinct from it. They generally “1) fall in the interstices of social structure, 2) are on its margins, or 3) occupy its lowest rungs.”\(^{55}\) Turner associates the most potent form of community with liminality, marginality, and inferiority.\(^{56}\) “Community,” Turner writes, “emerges where social structure is not.”\(^{57}\) He explains that community and human interrelatedness is spontaneous, immediate, and concrete. It “breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority.”\(^{58}\) Thus, while liminality may also be lived by those in the dominant society, it is generally not to the same extent as the experience of the immigrant.

Times of liminality or marginality are filled with potentiality, and it is during these times that communities generate multivocal myths, symbols, rituals, systems, and works of art capable of both redefining reality and inspiring action. Although the overall process concludes with a stabilizing reintegration, it is the time of liminality that is most fruitful. Throughout history, Turner observes the efforts to recreate liminality through action, symbol, gesture, or ritual, seeking “a transformative experience that goes to the root of each person’s being and finds in that root something profoundly communal and shared.”\(^{59}\)

Lee offers Jesus as the perfect model of marginality in that he was both a stranger to his own people and a friend to the marginalized: the outcasts, tax collectors, Gentiles, women, the

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57. Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 126; see also 124, 128, and 130.
poor, and the oppressed. He lived in-between worlds as human and divine, as Jew and as world reconciler. At the same time, he was also beyond divisions, rejecting racial, cultural, gender, and class distinctions. Jesus’ death—as the negation of life—and resurrection—as the affirmation of life—also represent a marginal way of thinking. The notion of God as both imminent and transcendent is another example. Marginal thinking, being in the world but not of the world, thus defines Christianity. Lee cautions, however, that in the history of Christianity, followers have erred in making Jesus the “center of centrality,” promoting his power and majesty, and “forgetting that it was his weakness that made him powerful, and his humility that raised him to be the Lord of lords.” He points out that a re-reading of the gospel birth narratives through the hermeneutic of marginality will find much fruit. “Conceived by an unwed woman, born far from his hometown, sheltered in a manger, visited by Eastern wise men rather than by the elite of his nation, and flight into Egypt: these are all inklings of what would be his life-long marginality.”

He notes that the need for centrist groups to romanticize the story masks the far less glamorous reality, confirmed in Philippians, which describes the transition from God to the nature of a humble servant (Phil. 2.6-8), which Lee calls “divine marginalization.”

Theologian Roberto Goizueta affirms the theological significance of Jesus’ marginal identity. Goizueta builds upon Elizondo’s identification of the theological importance of Jesus as a Galilean Jew, and thus an outsider from the borderland. Jesus’ incarnation in the marginal town of Galilee, site of a mixture of ethnic and cultural heritages, is no mere accident, Goizueta writes. Rather, Jesus’ social location is at the very heart of the Christian faith, and a borderland

60. Lee, Marginality, 71.
61. Lee, Marginality, 72.
62. Lee, Marginality, 78.
64. Lee, Marginality, 81.
65. See Elizondo, Galilean Journey. See also Chapter 3, pp. 119-20.
existence is definitive for Christian revelation. As a theologically privileged locus theologicus, Galilee identifies with the margins, as well as with exclusion and rejection. Its soteriological significance privileges those who have been excluded: “insofar as the border functions to exclude, those persons who are excluded are in a privileged position to recognize the crucified and risen Christ, who himself was and continues to be excluded.” Such a privileging resonates with the marginal location of Latinas/os today, who view it as a kind of prophetic resistance, for in Jesus, those excluded do belong in the community as full participants.

A theology of migration must therefore have a marginal identity and perspective, be open-ended and inclusive, and seek not only the liberation of the poor and oppressed, but of those who need liberation from their dominant and exclusivist thinking. Lee makes an important point in rejecting the romanticism that might surround this movement, and in insisting on acceptance of its radical decentering and humble social reality, using Jesus’ “divine marginalization” as the paradigm. In this reorientation, “God is center to those who seek marginality, because the real center is the creative core, the margin of marginality.” This was exemplified at Pentecost, when people from every nation, and without a common language or common culture, found a common core and understanding, and formed a new life centered around Jesus. The unified and unifying core of the divine Trinity, in which the Father, Son, and Spirit both dwell in (John 14:11) and with each other, becomes the center. Thus, those drawn to

67. Goizueta, Christ Our Companion, 140.
68. Lee, Marginality, 74.
69. Lee, Marginality, 97.
70. Lee, Marginality, 96.
God at the margins are drawn into that dynamic and transforming core in such a way that
“marginality is overcome by marginality. The creative core invites reconciliation.”

The implications of marginality for reimagining church are manifold, which we shall shortly discuss. But before doing so, it may be helpful to take stock of where we are, and where we are going. The conclusion of Chapter 2, above, laid out the problematic of Christians who no longer understand imagination at the margins, nor the significance of a marginal identity for the church. It argued for the need to recover the church’s own rich tradition of migration, hospitality, and marginality so as to subvert dominative, exclusionary, or oppressive tendencies, and instead create the conditions for a hospitable engagement with and solidarity across difference, and to imagine and construct a life together. After exploring the historical and theological roots of migration and hospitality in Chapter 3, and underscoring the importance of their yoked relationship, this chapter honed in on two constitutive elements of early Christian self-understanding, that also clearly resonate with Latino/a migration and marginality in the U.S.: the church as pilgrim and marginal.

Drawing out the theological significance of the pilgrim church, we recognized that the church is defined by movement, and that our present time of displacement, transience, and contingency are linked to the future kingdom, towards which we journey. Migration and the bringing together of diverse peoples offers a *kairos*, an opportunity towards reconciliation and restoration, as well as to affirm the catholicity of the church. A reorientation to a marginal way of thinking is similarly fundamental to our identity. Modeled after Christ’s own marginality, this reorientation provides an important and much-needed perspective for those seeking solidarity, and a bridge and creative space for those seeking transformation. Together, they open to new

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possibilities for imagining church. While, as theologian Victorino A. Cueta reminds us, we can never set aside the differences between real immigrants and figurative ones—or, we can add, the real differences between those who are marginalized and those embracing a marginal identity—for the settled church to unite with immigrants as pioneers or voyagers who are collectively creating a socio-cultural space together, points the way forward towards a civilization founded on cultural pluralism that respects the dignity of difference.72

With this in view, the next section considers critical factors in reimagining church, beginning with the importance of solidarity in the context of difference. I conclude with an overview of the theme of communion and unity-in-diversity as presented in *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi [EMCC]*, which as the capstone of the teaching documents on migration lays important groundwork for this project as well as for understanding migration and hospitality as the basis for a new sacramental unity.

II. Reimagining Church

A. Solidarity Across Difference

As Fernandez pointed out, churches must be aware of power and privilege, and take steps to understand and subvert their influence. The way in which difference is constructed, and the way it is accorded or restricted from access and voice, are particularly important in a theology of migration where difference is a factor, whether it is based on race, culture, or societal status. In many cases, a moral judgment also accompanies identification of difference, leading to prejudice and discrimination.73 For Latinas and Latinos, difference has traditionally functioned to exclude,

73. See Isasi-Díaz, “Reconceptualizing Difference,” 211.
marginalize, or oppress them. As *mujerista* theologian Ada María Isasi-Díaz explains, they “suffer in [their] own flesh the negative understanding that [the label of being different] carries.”  

Further, for Latinos/as, their group identity is generally based not on a particular set of attributes, such as race, nationality, language, or religion, but on the affinities based on a shared history of colonization and its effects, and by the shared experience of being defined by the dominant society as not simply different, but lesser – having been seen as exploitable for menial labor and having their language, history, and culture denigrated and stereotyped.  

As political philosopher Iris Marion Young summarizes, “Whatever their legal citizenship status, and however many generations of American citizens they can trace in their ancestry, Hispanics/Latinos in the United States are likely to be treated as foreigners.”

In order to truly respect difference, the church should be critical of and resist the subtle ways the dominant group gains sway over and against others while otherwise intending to foster an engagement of differences. Power differentials, for example, are often presumed to be neutral, yet contain within them an implied norm, an assumed *status quo*, or an unstated point of reference that leads to evaluating and assigning social consequences to differences from the perspective of positions of power. Assimilation, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section, is a good example. It presents the dominant group as the norm and ideal, and all

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75. Iris Marion Young, “Structure, Difference and Hispanic/Latino Claims of Justice,” in *Hispanics/Latinos in the United States*, eds. Jorge J. E. Gracia and Pablo De Greiff (New York and London: Routledge, 2000), 148-65, at 153-4; see also Jorge J. E. Gracia, “The Nature of Ethnicity with Special Reference to Hispanic/Latino Identity,” *Public Affairs Quarterly* 13, no. 1 (1999): 25-42. For Hispanics/Latinos/as, the concept of identity and difference is enormously complicated and has a conflictive history begun in conquest and colonization, and includes factors like the naming of identity itself (i.e., “Hispanic,” “Latino,” “Latina,” “mestizaje,” “Mexican American,” “Chicano”) and how it is constructed, and the fact that very diverse peoples who have been grouped together to categorize them and the politics involved. It is far beyond the scope of this project. Here, I only point to some of the issues involved.

76. Young, “Structure, Difference and Hispanic/Latino Claims of Justice,” 158.

77. Guzman, “Imagined Communities,” 132.
others as deficient.\textsuperscript{78} Thus, it negates difference while posturing itself as inclusive. However, because the end result of assimilation protects the \textit{status quo}, it is inclusive only if one is willing and able to assimilate. A further problem ensues, notes theologian Emmanuel Serafica de Guzman, when communities seek to offer friendship and enjoyment, but are not predisposed to address political, economic, cultural, or gender issues, as they might fragment the unity of the group.\textsuperscript{79} A community that overvalues coherence and commonality may mistakenly equate community with unanimity and insist on shared beliefs, understandings, priorities, and values, resulting in the denial of difference.\textsuperscript{80} Focusing on unity can subvert issues of equality and justice while justifying exclusion, and deflecting attention from the need for political, societal, or structural change.\textsuperscript{81}

Multiculturalism, which recognizes the existence of different cultural groups and seeks to accommodate them as well as preserve their separate identities,\textsuperscript{82} can also be problematic. As theologian Clarence Williams notes, the term “multiculturalism” became the “umbrella to connote ‘nonwhite’ cultural realities,” which offered a “welcome digression” from the social discourse on racial otherness.\textsuperscript{83} Thus, while multiculturalism employs language of tolerance, this

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78} Isasi-Díaz, “Reconceptualizing Difference,” 209-10. See also Young, \textit{Justice and the Politics of Difference}, 165.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Guzman, “Imagined Communities,” 137.
\item \textsuperscript{80} See Young, \textit{Justice and the Politics of Difference}, 229-238.
\item \textsuperscript{81} Guzman, “Imagined Communities,” 137.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Clarence Williams, “Beyond Multiculturalism: Engaging Pluricultural Ministry,” \textit{Church Magazine} 24, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 1-7, at 2. Williams is senior director of Racial Equality and Diversity Initiatives for Catholic Charities USA. This work, and this same statement is cited on the USCCB’s page on intercultural competencies, under Module 4, Knowledge of the Obstacles that Impede Effective Intercultural Relations, http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/cultural-diversity/intercultural-competencies/intercultural-competencies-module-4.cfm (accessed 19 July 2014), which then continues, “Consequently, a conversation about diversity begins with the assumption that one’s social representation in the cultures of the Americas starts with racial framing in a U.S. culture that is strongly influenced by white privilege.” See also Clarence Williams, “Martin Luther King Jr.’s Legacy,” St. Anthony Messenger, https://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Apr2008/Feature1.asp (accessed 19 July 2014), April 2008, in which Williams is writing on the multiculturalism explains, “The term ‘multicultural’ provided a way to refer to new and old nonwhite groups. Race became a bad word, associated with anger, confrontation, and strife. Multiculturalism became associated with an appreciation for cultural differences. Celebrating cultural diversity symbolized by colorful flags, exotic foods and heritage festivals became a welcome distraction from the demands of social responsibility, justice and equality.”
\end{itemize}
“letting be” can also result in those from the dominant culture, once again, retaining their privileged place at the center, indirectly excluding those who are other, and failing to examine or address power differentials. Multiculturalism also fails to take into account the potentiality, mutuality, and transformation possible in the dynamic interaction and engagement between cultures.

Both Guzman and Isasi-Díaz advocate for an expanded understanding of difference as relational and characterized by mixes and permutations.84 This helpful approach, which generally follows Young’s work on inclusive participatory polity, allows for overlap, similarities, differences, and interdependence among groups, and understands a group based upon the relations in which they stand to one another.85 “Relationships,” as Isasi-Díaz explains, “make it possible to understand that differences are relative.”86 Because it is relationships that define groups, fixed, eternal boundaries no longer delineate migrants in an essentialist manner, and the potential exists for affinity, overlapping identities, shifting alliances, and flexible multiplicities. This, in turn, challenges a privileged position based on ethnicity, gender, class, etc., as well as the pervasive norms projected by the dominant group.87 Unlike assimilation, which offers only conditional acceptance into the group, or multiculturalism, which does not foster relationship or boundary crossing, understanding difference as relational affirms diversity while seeks affinity,

84. Guzman, “Imagined Communities,” 130, and Isasi-Díaz, “Reconceptualizing Differences,” 212. On reconceptualizing difference, Isasi-Díaz generally follows Martha Minow, Making All the Difference (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1990), and is also influenced by the work of Lugones, “Playfulness, ‘World-Traveling,’ and Loving Perception,” 390, as well as Young, noted above.

85. Young, “Structure, Difference and Hispanic/Latino Claims of Justice,” 153. See also Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, chapter 2. See also Larry May, Sharing Responsibility (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 75, for an account of groups as collections of individuals who are shaped by their relationships.


87. Young, Justice and the Politics of Difference, 158.
enriching the life of the church without negating difference.\textsuperscript{88} It serves as a prophetic call towards renunciation of privilege, and that which would exclude, alienate, or oppress others. Guzman offers, in fact, that the failure to assimilate or adapt may be understood as creative acts of resistance or assertion of positive difference.\textsuperscript{89}

The flexibility and ability to move between groups and maintain multiple alliances also creates the conditions for “decentralizing ourselves,” which Isasi-Díaz writes is one of the best ways to begin to overcome the tendency towards exclusion and misunderstanding.\textsuperscript{90} When we “stop making ourselves the point of reference,” we can enter 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.”\textsuperscript{91} While this tendency to move between worlds with flexibility has been a survival skill for Latinas/os who live a hybrid reality, it serves as a reorientation for those in the dominant culture who often tend to view the world in terms of themselves.\textsuperscript{92}

This open-ended process and willingness to engage and inhabit other worlds leads toward mutuality, and eventually solidarity.\textsuperscript{93} “Solidarity,” Isasi-Díaz concludes, “is made possible by mutuality and world-traveling, by intersubjectivity and an understanding of difference that is relational and determined to include rather than exclude.”\textsuperscript{94} Indeed, the willingness to traverse divisions is one of the first steps towards solidarity, and mutuality should be practiced from a non-hierarchical and radically inclusive place. Thus, a relational approach in solidarity focuses

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{88} Guzman, “Imagined Communities,” 131.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Guzman, “Imagined Communities,” 137.
\item \textsuperscript{90} Isasi-Díaz, “Reconceptualizing Difference,” 212.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Isasi-Díaz, “Reconceptualizing Difference,” 213.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Isasi-Díaz, “Reconceptualizing Difference,” 213.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Isasi-Díaz, “Reconceptualizing Difference,” 216.
\end{itemize}
upon the need for right relationships, in keeping with the Hebrew concept of righteousness (tzedeka in Hebrew), which is always relational and refers to the demands of one’s relationships with God, with others, and with the rest of creation. As she explains, a human being does not exist outside of the community, and justice is understood as the extent to which one fulfills the demands of those relationships. Thus, solidarity as it relates to justice seeks the fullness of life for all.

Thus, solidarity across difference is a critical and orientating component in a theology of migration that seeks to overcome marginalizing practices and our current divisions. This section has concentrated on the importance of engaging difference relationally. A more detailed discussion of solidarity itself will take place in Chapter 5. First, however, and with the orienting vision of solidarity across difference in mind, we turn to some of the specifics of effecting that vision in a spirit of reconciliation. The next section unfolds in a series of steps, arguing first for the need for a space within which to practice relational solidarity, resistance, and reconciliation, suggesting, second, that parishes be the site for these communal practices, and finally naming some of the problems with traditional approaches in light of the orientating vision. It introduces Phan’s concept of border crossing spirituality as a spirituality and in which to engage difference, and offers a concrete example of how this spirituality might be lived.

95. Isasi-Díaz, “Reconceptualizing Difference,” 216-17; see also Elizabeth R. Achtemeier, “Righteousness in the OT,” The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 4:80. She notes that the other word often paired with tzedeka is mispat, which is more closely related to legal rights. Mispat is the concept of justice most often used in contemporary times.
B. Reconciliation via Resistance, Compassion, Border Crossing Spirituality, and Covenantal Conversations

1. Parishes as Sites for Resistance and Cultivating Compassion

Latino theologian Edwin David Aponte speaks of the need in alternate communities for a public space to gather, negotiate, hear alternate discourse, and create identity.\(^{96}\) Such space, for Aponte, can be the place where the “little stories” can be told, grassroots stories that have their own power and have meaning and significance, as well as the place for resistance and creative action.\(^{97}\) Indeed, as we know from resistance movements and the history of oppressed peoples, it is often the stories, songs, dance, poetry, and myths that are sustaining, that maintain a sense of identity and keep the vision of a different world alive. Theologian Rebecca S. Chopp speaks of these expressions as a kind of testimony that exists outside of modern rational discourse that, like

\(^{96}\) Aponte, “Views from the Margins,” 89 and passim.

\(^{97}\) Aponte, “View from the Margins,” 89; see Alex García-Rivera, *St. Martin de Porres: The “Little Stories” and the Semiotics of Culture* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1995), 5. See also Chopp, “Reimagining Public Discourse,” 156-69, on the role of *poietis* and narrative identity in constructing and telling the story of people, especially those of alternative publics and resistance movements, and their importance in remembering differently towards new ways of understanding. Both Chopp and Aponte acknowledge the influence of Jürgen Habermas’ overall notion of the public sphere, although they attempt to reinterpret it. Both also find Nancy Fraser’s attempt to formulate a more inclusive heterogeneous public space helpful, especially her development of counterpublics, which she defines as “parallel discursive areas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs.” See Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 123; cited by Aponte, “Views from the Margins,” 90.

Within Latino/a and *mujerista* theology, there is a great deal written on the need to reclaim borders, marginality, and their *mestizaje* identity. Much of this is centered upon identity formation within and places of resistance for their own community. However, for theologians like Elizondo, these are also inclusive places. My focus is somewhat different, so I do not develop nor do justice to their very rich and diverse perspectives. For two examples of this development, see González, *Santa Biblia*, 86-87; Justo L. González, *The Changing Shape of Church History* (St Louis: Chalice, 2002), 153; and Virgilio Elizondo, “Transformation of Borders: *Mestizaje* and the Future of Humanity,” in *Beyond Borders: Writings of Virgilio Elizondo and Friends*, ed. Timothy Matovina (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 183. Church historian Daisy Machado has written extensively on borders, naming the area around northern Mexico, southwest U.S., and the politically-created boundary between them the “Borderlands,” and writing that it is the place “where the third world grates against the first world and bleeds.” See Daisy Machado, “Promoting Solidarity with Migrants,” in *Justice in a Global Economy: Strategies for Home, Community, and World*, eds. Pamela Brubaker, Rebecca Todd Peters, and Laura A. Stiver (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 115-26, at 117. She names elements of a Borderlands paradigm that marginalize Latinas/os as race, the myth of manifest destiny, and the metaphor of the melting pot. See Daisy L. Machado, “Kingdom Building in the Borderlands: The Church and Manifest Destiny,” in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise*, ed. Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Fernando F. Segovia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 63-72.
lament, challenge the dominant version of the truth and serve as a summons to move to the side of the oppressed.98

Thus, it is critically important that such public spaces exist so that these expressions and “little stories” might be openly articulated and heard. As testimony, they express something integral to and about the community, how they are to live together, and how they are to imagine a future together.99 As Chopp emphasizes, the space must also be a space for those in the dominant culture to “cultivate compassion,” by hearing, empathizing, and expressing solidarity in difference.100 Especially in the face of stories of suffering, compassion and empathy necessarily lead one to examine oneself and society from the standpoint of suffering, to challenge and resist the dominant narrative and ideologies, to move toward vulnerability and relationality, and to engage in the praxis of solidarity.101 Cultivating compassion, therefore, may be thought of as an ongoing process of conversion and envisioning new possibilities. In this way, “we” becomes understood in new ways, the possibilities for living together radically enlarged as compassionate regard for the other becomes primary.

I want to suggest that parishes can become these spaces where the “little stories” are told, places for cultivating compassion and sites for ongoing metanoia and reconciliation. Parishes are themselves “betwixt and between,” neither entirely public nor private. As we saw in the earlier discussion on the pilgrim church, the etymology for various terms for “church” suggests a certain fluidity, yet God-centeredness: as oikos, it is home and as ekklesiai, it is public. Even the word “parish” takes as its etymological roots “paroikia” or “resident alien.”

Thus, as “pilgrim people,” we occupy that liminal space that is so conducive to generating new myths, stories, and symbols based upon the group’s new unity.

Further, the Christ-shaped church, as the household of God, gathers locally at parishes. As Christian communities, we aspire to be communities defined by koinonia and hospitality, centered on compassion, transformation, and redemptive solidarity.102 Thus, parishes are places where we feel at home, and the sites for intimate conversations, building friendships and fellowship, worshipping as one family, and dining together in community. They are the places we come to be nourished by Word and Eucharist, and where we declare ourselves, through worship and practice, one body. Finally, although the people who gather there can be quite different from each other, they share a common faith and thus a common ancestry. EMCC, in fact, attributes particular importance to the sense of parish, as a place where the vision of the mystery of communion, derived from the Trinitarian unity of Father, Son, and Spirit, is lived out.103 Insofar as they are grounded in the Trinitarian communion of unity-in-difference, a perichorectic relationality, all members grow to make room for one another with respect and love.104

Pohl also speaks of the need for “threshold spaces,” accessible to strangers, in which people can safely and comfortably engage in initial encounters with one another.105 By nature of their function, of being the place where people assemble as well as the place where strangers may come when they are in need, parishes offer that setting. As communities formed in the image of Christ who take seriously their identity in Christ, they can be places of loving acceptance. By virtue of their mission, which is God’s mission, they are uniquely qualified to

102. Richard, Living the Hospitality of God, 70.
103. EMCC, no. 22.
105. Pohl, Making Room, 95.
practice what they preach. Through their intimate connection with God’s mission, therefore, and inspired by the loving community of the Trinity, they can be sites for cultivating compassion, hospitality, and reconciliation. Finally, the flexibility and nature of parish life means that opportunities can be made to carry on that mission in new and creative ways that will midwife the birth of new communities.

2. The Challenges of Traditional Models

For parishes welcoming new migrants, however, there are particular challenges and potential blessings in enacting this vision. The traditional models for addressing migration, *i.e.*, assimilation into an existing parish or the establishment of ethnic/national parishes, are being challenged on several different fronts. For Latinos/as and Hispanics, indeed for immigrants of color, the model of assimilation is quite problematic. On a national level, the idea of assimilation is generally coupled with myths of manifest destiny and the melting pot. Given that assimilation is based on what is essentially the dominant white European immigrant dream, it exerts a costly price for inclusion, and one that, as Lee notes, is not possible or desirable for all cultures, ethnicities, and races. Especially for indigenous peoples, to fully assimilate would require them to accept the Europeanized narratives as their own, and with it the inherent anti-indigenous ideology, and to strip themselves of their culture, language, and traditions to become more like European Americans. Machado argues that this concept of assimilation finds its way

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108. See Machado, “Borderlands,” and Hayes, “To Be the Bridge,” for a more detailed discussion.
into the nation’s churches, who push for a homogenized worshipping community that mirrors the melting pot nation of cultural invisibility.\textsuperscript{109} As womanist theologian Diana L. Hayes notes, in Christian churches, efforts at assimilation “continue to the present day as persons of color . . . still find themselves marginalized, misunderstood, and forced into invisibility and voicelessness that denies the teaching of the church at every level.”\textsuperscript{110}

The second model is that of a national parish, briefly discussed in Chapter 2, above. In order to alleviate the sense of dislocation suffered by waves of European immigrants, national parishes were established in the 1800s to minister specifically to those with the same national origin, ethnicity, or language. Originally a temporary measure, some can still be found in large cities throughout the U.S. and Canon Law still permits their establishment when expedient.\textsuperscript{111} While national parishes can provide an antidote to the cultural oppression or assimilation mentioned above, they can at times be a detriment to specific religious aspects or overall unity, especially when preservation of national, ethnic, or cultural unity overshadows all else.\textsuperscript{112} Further, today’s immigrants often join parishes already in existence, which would require that the present population be displaced in order to accommodate the newcomers. Finally, a separatist identity presumes the existence of a preserved cultural identity that is unaffected by outside influences. Such logic disintegrates in the face of an understanding of culture as fluid, with continual

\textsuperscript{109} Machado, “Borderlands,” 64.
\textsuperscript{110} Hayes, “To Be the Bridge,” 62.
\textsuperscript{111} Canon Law of 1983, Art. 518, states that, as a general rule, parishes are territorial, but permits the establishment of personal parishes based upon rite, language, or nationality, when expedient. See Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition: New English Translation (Washington, D.C.: Canon Law Society of America, 1983), 170. Those established based upon national origin, ethnicity, or language are commonly referred to as “national parishes.” EMCC, no. 91, still recognizes the need for personal “ethnic-linguistic” parishes, especially in places where the immigrant population is largely itinerant, or will continually have newcomers. Even in this cases, however, they state that “more and more emphasis will have to be laid on interethnic and intercultural relations.”
\textsuperscript{112} For a discussion of this problem, see Stepick, “God is Apparently Not Dead,” 17. Stepick is a cultural anthropologist and the director of the Immigration and Ethnicity Insitute at Florida International University.
interpenetration and intersection. An intersection of cultures is certainly the case for Latino/a Catholics living in the U.S. today. Although they come from such diverse areas as Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala, to name only the largest groups, Latino/a immigrants often live in close geographic vicinity to each other, or are drawn to the same parish that offers services in Spanish, thus are subject to a multitude of diverse influences.

A more recent development, briefly discussed above, has been the establishment of multi-ethnic or multicultural parishes, called “shared” parishes. Often, this manifests itself as parallel practices under one roof, whereby the immigrant congregations are “allowed” to use church spaces, albeit with conditions or limitations, a situation that theologian Gemma Tulud Cruz refers to as “token integration.” Within these parishes, there is often conflict over the degree of accommodation, time slots for services, and preferred spaces, making a congregation’s linguistic and ethnic diversity a “highly charged issue.” Sister Marcela Machicote, who has ministered with Latino/a immigrants in several different locations, speaks passionately about her own experience in a “shared” parish. She describes hauling water upstairs in the middle of the summer to a hot, stuffy, dusty, and unused classroom that had been allocated to the Catholic Latino community of the parish. There, the community gathered for the baptism of a young baby. The sacrament was celebrated with an itinerant priest rather than the parish priest. The classroom overlooked the beautiful, newly-remodeled church they were not permitted to use, since “they


might mess it up.” Unfortunately, examples like this are all too common, signifying a failure of the church to take seriously its own identity as a church of others and of diaspora.

New ways of being church must be scripted to correct these impoverishments, which will require of the dominant culture a *metanoia* from imperialism, and which entails cultivating a humility open to conversion and transformation amidst relations of solidarity. It is not my intention to adjudicate and select the best structures for parishes, but to point out the way in which certain models may inadvertently contribute to marginalization, exclusion, or dominative practices, and to advocate instead for practices of relational solidarity. Nevertheless, I would be remiss to not mention the most recent and positive development of intercultural or interethnic parishes that seek the more reciprocal engagement between cultures and peoples. My own home parish, in fact, is in the process of transitioning from a shared parish to an intercultural one.

A helpful approach toward generating communal spaces of interchange and reconciliation among differences comes from the field of mission studies, in which practitioners have discerned the need to and importance of moving from a missiology of power to one based on relationship.

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118. This is also reminiscent of Pope Francis’ renewal of the call to be a church of the poor, rather than a church for the poor.
119. *EMCC*, no. 93, discusses this option, which privileges the encounter between cultures. *EMCC*, no. 78, also speaks of the need for intercultural communication. The field of intercultural studies, especially as it impacts theology, is large and would require a project all its own. Because of space and time, I will provide only a brief explanation. Interculturality began to take its present form in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with scholars from Europe, India, and Latin America at the forefront of the movement. Raimón Pannikar and Raúl Fornet-Betancourt were major influences as interculturality began to dialogue with theology. Intercultural theology, then, attends to the “interaction and juxtaposition, as well as tension and resistance when two or more cultures are brought together.” See Kwok Pui-Lan, “Feminist Theology as Intercultural Discourse,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, ed. Susan Frank Parsons (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 23-29, at 25. Intercultural theology is important for Latino/a theology in the U.S.; indeed, theologian María Pilar Aquino writes that U.S./Latino/a theology has no route to theological knowledge except through interculturality. See Aquino, “Theological Method in U.S. Latino/a Theology,” 7. For a discussion of intercultural hermeneutics and a theology of culture, see Schreiter, *The New Catholicity*, 28-61. The term “intercultural” is proposed over “multicultural,” which may not sufficiently capture the active and dynamic process that transpires in the meetings of cultures and relations. It is similarly proposed as an alternative to “inculturation,” which, as Orlando Espín notes, first, presupposes that there is some pre-existing canonical proclamation, independent of culture that can be “poured” or transmitted into other cultures, and second, contains the likelihood of colonization when used. See Orlando O. Espín, *Grace and Humanness: Theological Reflections Because of Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 15. The prefix of “inter” in interculturality, on the other hand, infers a mutual meeting between, among, or with each other. An intercultural encounter, therefore, will probe the depths of the encounter in order to see what is borne out of the interaction. For an intercultural approach to a theology of migration, see Cruz, *An Intercultural Theology of Migration*. 
and vulnerability in the encounter between cultures.\(^{120}\) Once characterized by a conquering attitude and colonial mentality, and with vestiges of this mentality still remaining,\(^{121}\) the field of mission studies has made a movement away from neo-colonialism and towards reconciliation. Missiologists Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder, thus, speak of mission as genuine and deep encounter,\(^{122}\) and Donal Dorr aptly characterizes this as a gift exchange, “a matter of being with people, of \textit{listening} and \textit{sharing} with them.”\(^{123}\)

3. Border Crossing Spirituality

Building upon missiologist Robert Schreiter’s reconciliation-centered mission spirituality, Phan has developed a border crossing spirituality that may offer an elaboration of the way in which such “gift exchanges” might be effected.\(^{124}\) His focus is on the attitudes, practices, and dispositions most appropriate for mission in a “globalized, postmodern, and religiously plural context with multiple borders and unfamiliar situations,” and how to neither erase difference nor absolutize it.\(^{125}\) Writing out of his context of mission and life in Asia, and taking into account its history of colonization, poverty, and globalization, the co-existence of many


\(^{122}\) Bevans and Schroeder, “We Were Gentle Among You,” 20.


\(^{125}\) Phan, \textit{In Our Own Tongues}, 136-7.
cultures, races, and ethnicities, and its contested borders and asymmetrical relationships, Phan recognizes the need for a border crossing spirituality that dismantles barriers that protect privileges built upon marginalizing and excluding others, that respects and honors difference, and that “forge[s] a new, common identity in which the worst of each group is overcome and the best is combined to produce truly intercultural human beings in the image of the triune God.”  

This spirituality also demands solidarity with those on both sides of borders, but especially those who are marginalized or oppressed.

The four interwoven components of Phan’s border crossing spirituality, which are drawn from trajectories first identified by Schreiter, are: a spirituality of presence; a kenotic spirituality; a spirituality of reconciliation and healing; and a holistic spirituality. While Phan is referencing a spirituality for missionaries, there are many affinities between the context he describes and the situations being created in parishes and communities as a result of the phenomenon of migration. This spirituality, thus, seems to lend themselves to a broader application of encountering difference. In fact, some of his reflections echo and affirm earlier points of this chapter. At the same time, because Phan takes reconciliation as both a goal and a disposition that undergirds his approach, and because he addresses pluralism as a blessing and opportunity for mutual collaboration and enrichment, he helps to advance the conversation in a productive way.

The first trajectory, a spirituality of presence, seeks a genuine friendship with those on the other side of the border. While it begins with exposure, which brings one closer to the realities of poverty, globalization, racism, etc., it is immersion that helps one to experience those

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126. Phan, *In Our Own Tongues*, 137.
realities from the standpoint of those closest to it. The single most essential component to a spirituality of presence is dialogue, in which people share their joys, sorrows, and problems as they strive to live together as neighbors, collaborate together towards liberation, seek a deeper understanding of their own faith perspective as well as an appreciation of other’s faith perspectives, and share their spiritual riches with others.  

Here, Phan makes evident the slow and careful investment required on all sides, and the importance of trust, respect, and vulnerability in the process. Friendship is not immediate, but begins with exposure, then immersion. This approach, which emphasizes presence and dialogue, is uniquely different from the models for parishes critiqued above, and is critically important in light of the challenges of marginalization and exclusion outlined so far in this work. As we have seen, migrants often feel voiceless, and their stories minimized or disregarded. Thus, as parishes seek to provide a safe space for cultivating compassion, a spirituality of presence that emphasizes a dialogue of neighborly sharing is important to the process.

Within this dialogue—especially in light of the situations of conflict and injustice that one might encounter at the border—desire for dialogue must begin with those who are privileged intentionally choosing a position of powerlessness and vulnerability. Kenotic spirituality, therefore, which the Federation of the Asian Bishops’ Conference (FABC) explains involves the “risk [of] being wounded in the act of loving, [and seeks] understanding in a climate of misunderstanding,” is the second component of Phan’s border-crossing spirituality. The FABC links dialogue within kenotic spirituality to a Christ-like self-emptying so that, led by the Spirit,

128. Phan, In Our Own Tongues, 137-8.
129. Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference, For All the Peoples of Asia, 1:311; cited by Phan, In Our Own Tongues, 140.
we may be more effective instruments of God’s kingdom. They explain the potentiality of kenosis:

From a position of weakness, one can truly communicate his or her trust in the other. . . . To dialogue then means to open one’s heart and to speak one’s mind with courage and respect. But . . . the Spirit has often used powerlessness and vulnerability to effect mutual forgiveness and reconciliation among individuals, families, and communities.130

With this spirituality, we become collaborators, placing ourselves in the hands of God. Willingly giving up control and instead accepting a marginal and ambiguous status, one assumes the risk of the encounter with trust and faith.

While our earlier discussion on marginality, liminality, and a marginal way of thinking, above, demonstrated a marginal understanding’s importance for clear-sightedness, community-building, and envisioning differently, here Phan emphasizes a different dimension. In light of the legacy of colonialism, income disparities, and power differentials in the world, mission must be approached from a position of powerlessness and humility.131 There is a paradoxical strength that comes from divesting oneself of power, relying instead on God, and the generosity of others, and approaching each other “less with the attitude of givers than receivers.”132 This disposition will also prove important when we return to the topic of radical hospitality in the next chapter.

The third component to a border crossing spirituality is a spirituality of reconciliation and healing, which is practiced in concert with liberation, and as an essential part of the Christian mission and redeeming narrative. Phan, who understands reconciliation as a crucial part of Christian mission, equates it with a restoration of harmony, and finds within it an emphasis on

130. Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conference, For All the Peoples of Asia, 1:310-11; cited by Phan, In Our Own Tongues, 139.
131. Phan, In Our Own Tongues, 140.
132. Phan, In Our Own Tongues, 141.
the ethics of right relationships.\textsuperscript{133} In emphasizing harmony, Phan envisions a web of peaceful relationships—between and among oneself, individuals, the cosmos, and God, which both seeks communion and makes an active commitment to peacemaking and reconciliation with the community. Thus, harmony involves neither compromise nor complacency, but an active and prophetic engagement of situations of marginalization and exclusion, seeking transformation of the existing order.\textsuperscript{134}

As so many reconciliation processes have established around the world, the establishment of truth and justice is the first condition for reconciliation.\textsuperscript{135} Following Schreiter’s work on reconciliation, Phan emphasizes that reconciliation can never be a path to hasty peace, but instead the patient process of listening and waiting with attention and compassion so that wounds may be revealed and the memories of suffering may be retrieved surface for God’s healing.\textsuperscript{136} Another important element of a spirituality of reconciliation is a post-exilic existence, during which one begins to construct a new and harmonic society with chastened optimism and hope.\textsuperscript{137}

Once again, there are significant resonances with the phenomenon of Latino/a immigration to the U.S. and the resulting tensions. As we have seen, the dominant and dominating narrative has been one of established peoples under attack, and of the immigrants as dangerous aggressors. Even the Christian narrative of welcoming the stranger has been drowned out, let alone the “little stories” of which Aponte speaks, or Brueggemann’s shrill voices of lament. Propelled and emboldened by the hope of reconciliation, healing, and transformation,

\textsuperscript{133} Phan, \textit{In Our Own Tongues}, 142.
\textsuperscript{134} Phan, \textit{In Our Own Tongues}, 145. See FABC, \textit{For All the Peoples of Asia}, 1:290.
\textsuperscript{136} Phan, \textit{In Our Own Tongues}, 142. See also Schreiter, \textit{Reconciliation}, 18-27.
\textsuperscript{137} Phan, \textit{In Our Own Tongues}, 143; see also Schreiter, \textit{Reconciliation}, 42, 71-73.
Phan emphasizes that the way forward requires an engagement in solidarity with those who have been marginalized, characterized by humility, and a truthful accounting of the present situation.

An inherent element of this web of relationships is a holistic spirituality, the fourth dimension of a border crossing spirituality. Holistic spirituality advances an anthropology of harmony and connection between the self, fellow human beings, the cosmos, and God, as well as an integration of faith into every aspect of life.\textsuperscript{138} Phan concludes with the concept of \textit{mestizaje} as advanced by Elizondo, through which boundaries as seen as “the privileged meeting places where different persons and peoples will come together to form a new a most inclusive humanity.”\textsuperscript{139}

4. Covenantal Conversations

For a theology of migration within a parish setting, then, and keeping Phan’s border crossing spirituality in mind, we might envision dialogue involving presence and humble kenosis as a kind of covenantal conversation, one oriented by the vision of a harmonic future. Covenantal conversations thus have an already-not yet character. Out of desire to be together, and in trust that the Spirit will guide the process, one enters into conversation as though unity already exists, and as though all people in conversation are already faithful companions on the journey. As trust builds, and we enter more deeply into the conversation, a desire to know more about the person who stands before me emerges and an acknowledgement of the work still to be done occurs, an anticipatory acknowledgement of “not yet.” The acknowledgement of the work to be done, coupled with an active commitment to the truth in solidarity, draws one into the process of ongoing conversion fueled by a vision of the wholeness to come. Thus, the covenantal conversation becomes at one and the same time a sign of what is to come as well as a movement

\textsuperscript{138} Phan, \textit{In Our Own Tongues}, 145.
\textsuperscript{139} Elizondo, “Transforming of Borders,” 34.
toward it. EMCC says something similar, writing that “[p]lurality is a treasure, and dialogue is the as yet imperfect and ever evolving realization of that final unity to which humanity aspires and is called.”

Dialogue is thus a means to overcome barriers and divisions and face difference, an integral and crucial step toward communion. Communities must therefore ensure that hierarchy does not thoughtlessly privilege one voice or another, and promote instead a humble and reciprocal engagement with others in a spirit of hospitality and reconciliation. EMCC, as well, emphasizes that such a dialogue—because it is among Christians who claim to pattern their lives after a God who self-defines as limitless, compassionate love—will always have the ethical as an indispensable dimension and ground. Thus, they will exercise discernment and empathy, seek understanding over rebuttal, and emphasize embodied presence. Dialogue, characterized by mutual respect, thus becomes a living testimony of the love and welcome to be found in the church.

Using the context of ecumenism, Pope John Paul II also recognizes the link between dialogue, conversion, and communion, and similarly proposes that dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas, but a gift exchange. Importantly, and noting the close relationship between dialogue and prayer, he also writes that it can serve as an examination of conscience when

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140. EMCC, no. 30.
141. EMCC, no. 34.
142. For the characteristics of conversation conducted under the ethic of hospitality, see John B. Bennett, Academic Life: Hospitality, Ethics, and Spirituality (Bolton, MA: Anker, 2003), 98.
144. Bennett, Academic Life, 98.
145. EMCC, no. 99.
conducted within a spirit of conversion and unity. Here, he pays special attention to the sins of disunity, and those that contribute to and reinforce divisions. Thus, he concludes, dialogue also has a “vertical thrust” as we direct our thoughts to the One who is our reconciliation.

5. The Vision of EMCC: Toward Communion and Unity-in-Plurality

As stated in Chapter 2, EMCC serves as a kind of benchmark for this project. In that capstone document on migration, communion is a central theme, occurring fifty-three different times. Emphasizing that striving toward communion within the diversity of cultures is a call to build a church that is concretely catholic, the document continues, “In this way there is brought about a unity in plurality in the local Church, a unity that is not uniformity but harmony, in which every legitimate diversity plays its part in the common and unifying effort.” The church, which was “born from Pentecost,” now evokes the Spirit of Pentecost to advocate for the “foundation of a new society, in which the different languages and cultures no longer constitute inviolable confines, as after Babel, but in which this very diversity can realize a new manner of communication and communion.”

In this, this church then can become sign and instrument in the prospect for a renewed humanity. It is also a sign and prefiguration of the eschatological unity that is the goal of the church, when “people from the east and west, from north and south, will come to take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:29). In fact, as GS makes clear, the

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147. *Ut Unum Sint*, nos. 33 and 34.
148. *Ut Unum Sint*, no. 34. Although the context is ecumenism, the understanding can be applied more broadly to the differences that divide us.
149. *Ut Unum Sint*, no. 35.
150. *EMCC*, no. 89. See also *Church and Human Mobility*, 19.
151. *EMCC*, no. 16.
152. *EMCC*, no. 89.
153. *EMCC*, no. 17.
church’s “single intention” is “that God’s kingdom may come”\textsuperscript{154} and, as “citizens of two cities,” and witnesses to Christ in all things, Christians are missioned to permeate the world and “all earthly activities” with a Christian spirit, harmonizing them for God’s glory.\textsuperscript{155}

God has entrusted the church, “itself a pilgrim on earth, with the task of forging this new creation in Christ Jesus, recapitulating in Him (cf. Eph. 1:9-10) all the rich treasures of human diversity that sin has transformed into division and conflict.”\textsuperscript{156} Migrants make their “own contribution” to the construction of this church,\textsuperscript{157} and are “hidden providential builders of such a universal fraternity together with many other brothers and sisters.”\textsuperscript{158} Such communion is in “response to the Father’s plan of love, who, in building his Kingdom of peace – through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ – by the power of the Spirit, interweaves the historical, complex and often contradictory vicissitudes of humanity.”\textsuperscript{159} To the extent that this unity is witnessed in the church, it becomes a sign of hope for the world. But, even in the face of failures, Christians are nevertheless always and repeatedly called to be a sign of communion in the world, to respect differences and to practice solidarity in their ethic of meeting others.\textsuperscript{160}

To this end, the document stresses the importance of an “authentic culture of welcome . . . capable of accepting the truly human values of immigrants over and above any difficulties caused by living together with persons who are different.”\textsuperscript{161} Communities should “not think that they have completed their duty to migrants simply by performing acts of fraternal assistance or even by supporting legislation aimed at giving them their due place in society while respecting

\begin{footnotes}{
\textsuperscript{154} GS, no. 45.
\textsuperscript{155} GS, no. 43.
\textsuperscript{156} EMCC, no. 102.
\textsuperscript{157} EMCC, no. 89.
\textsuperscript{158} EMCC, no. 103.
\textsuperscript{159} EMCC, no. 93.
\textsuperscript{160} EMCC, no. 102.
\textsuperscript{161} EMCC, no. 39.
\end{footnotes}
their identity as foreigners.”\textsuperscript{162} While recognizing that an appeal to Christian hospitality based on Christ’s welcome (Rom. 15:7) does not provide an answer to the day-to-day questions and issues that arise in this effort, it will provide the proper atmosphere and understanding in which to undertake the effort at welcoming and integration with practical expression of love.\textsuperscript{163}

The following chapter, therefore, will return to the theme of Christian hospitality, and will use the “reimaginings” of this chapter as both a springboard and corrective for a deeper and richer understanding of hospitality and the way it might open into a theology of migration. \textit{EMCC} sums up nicely the vision for a welcoming and “concretely catholic” church, a church “for and with migrants, to become a significant expression of the universal Church and \textit{missio ad Gentes}, fraternal and peaceful meeting, house of everyone, school of communication that is received and shared, of reconciliation that is implored and granted, of mutual and fraternal welcome and solidarity, as well as authentic human and Christian promotion.”\textsuperscript{164} In the spirit of these words, the final section of this chapter offers a concrete example, based upon my own parish and its experiences. It details both the struggles and the joys inherent in this journey.

C. A Snapshot of St. Mary’s Parish and its Journey towards Intercultural Community

In my own parish, which discerned the need to transition from a “shared” parish to an intercultural one, we have adopted the importance of covenantal conversations as one of the principal means of moving towards unity. After a year of study and discernment, we assembled a new parish council who better represented the cultural composition of the parish. Discerning that honest conversations with one another in the spirit of trust and respect were critically important, we decided upon a dialogical model that took seriously both our desire for unity and the idea of

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\textsuperscript{162. EMCC, no. 39.}
\textsuperscript{163. EMCC, no. 40-42. The document stresses that “integration” is an aim to be pursued constantly over a long period of time and in the true sense of the word (no. 42).}
\textsuperscript{164. EMCC, introductory presentation.}
\end{flushright}
dialogue as gift exchange. When translations were required, as they often were given the
different levels of fluidity with languages, we thus understood the waiting and extra time as both
anticipatory and a true sign of respect for one another. At any time, anyone could stop the
meeting to ask for clarification, for the conversation to slow down, or for a translation.
Interestingly, it was often the people speaking in one language who became aware of dominating
the conversation, and stopped and themselves asked for a translation. Meetings then, became less
about accomplishing an agenda, and more about understanding and being understood, a time to
go through the birth pangs of becoming a new community.

We also sought out time for conversation and dialogue, in an atmosphere of hospitality,
settling on praying together, working together, and dining together as three ways to invite each
other into our lives. We chose occasions already occurring in the parish that naturally lent
themselves to intercultural encounter and hospitality, such as the Holy Thursday agape meal or
the Corpus Christi procession, and also developed extra-ecclesial activities to gather together,
such as a ministry breakfast, or bilingual workshops. National Migration Week, traditionally
begun at Epiphany, was celebrated with a social after Sunday liturgies. This year, we mounted a
world map and parishioners wrote their names on index cards, posting them to the place from
which their families migrated to the U.S., connecting them with yarn to our parish as hub, the
colorful starburst evidence of our shared migrant ancestry.

This has been a work in progress, with many challenges along the way. There are times,
for example, when our parish has unofficially signaled an activity as either “Anglo” or
“Hispanic,” and it was attended accordingly. Together, however, the parish council examined
these activities and searched for ways to be more inviting, incorporating “border crossing
signals” into the planning. The parish picnic, traditionally an “Anglo” activity, featured
piñatas—even one for adults—with an explanation of their history provided by the parish council co-president. There were also games for children, organized and led by our Hispanic Young Adult group, and a mariachi band. Once parishioners understood that this was not a “members only” event, they attended and participated gladly. The visual cues and actual event of people from different backgrounds working together, engaging one another, struggling with humor to communicate and finding ways to do so, did much to embody what it is that we hope to become, and to model that vision more broadly. Similarly, the Latina fiesta, which features traditional Latin American food and folk dances, was advertised in both languages, with explanations of the origins of the folk dances and their meaning. Again, the entire parish council staffed the event, making it clear that it was a parish event. People who came out of curiosity stayed out of enjoyment, indeed pride, at the talent of the dancers and to sample and learn about the delicious food. These events fostered communion among us, and widened our relationships to include more people. In the process, we began to understand ourselves as “letters of recommendation” for one another (2 Cor. 3:1-4, Romans 16:1-2) and as ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:20).

Like any journey, this one proceeds in fits and starts. A number of parishioners have left the parish, some over the changing culture, and some with no explanation. Others walk out during talks about immigration reform or are openly disruptive, or attend information events to interrupt in order “to give the other side.” As stated in the Introduction, at a recent city council event, parishioners spoke for and against a non-binding resolution in support of immigration reform, but it was those opposed who mounted the most vehement argument, which was resoundingly voted down. This was certainly reflective of our general experience in working
towards immigration reform, which has been unable to gain traction across the country and in our own parish neighborhood, despite the bishops’ clear support of it, nationally and locally.

One event in particular marked a turning point in the parish’s journey, and illustrates the experience of cultivating compassion. Several years ago, looking for a way to pray together, our parish began to develop a Way of the Cross (Via Crucis) reflecting on the experiences of our Latino/a parishioners who had migrated to the U.S. Over several months, our parishioners told their often harrowing and always faith-filled stories of their decision to come to the U.S., the journey north, and the impact on their lives and their families. When finished, each station began with a short scriptural reflection on Jesus’ journey to the cross, then in first person narrative told a short story that related the migrant’s experience to Jesus’ journey, ending with a communal prayer. On the night we gathered to pray the Via Crucis, we shared a simple supper of soup and bolillo, then processed to the church to pray. The precious gifts of our parishioners’ stories, the invitation into their lives and their suffering, and their witnesses of faith told through the sufferings of Christ broke down barriers that no amount of argumentation, no matter how persuasive, could ever do. As we prayed the Via Crucis together, people were moved to tears as they heard their own story, or the story of a relative or friend, or came to understand that it was the story of the person sitting behind them. Soon people were comforting and embracing one another—“suffering with”—compassionately drawn into the world of one another. While our Latino/a parishioners humbly thanked the group for providing a “space” in which their voices could finally be heard, it was those who had received the priceless gift of self from them, who were instead humbled and so very grateful. Parishioners mark that night as a pivotal moment in our unfinished journey to become one parish.

165. Great thanks are due to Sister Marcela Machicote, SND, who conducted many interviews and also painstakingly and lovingly translated the stories into English.
Ultimately, it will be in moments like this, and in the intimate and communal times that parishes spend together working, praying, and breaking bread together, that they will become one community. A border crossing spirituality based on embodied and engaged presence, a kenotic spirituality that is open and vulnerable to another, a spirit of reconciliation and an attitude of listening, attention, compassion, and solidarity, and finally a vision of the whole as interconnected and woven together by grace, all are means by which parishes can begin to realize the vision of unity-in-diversity.

Summary

In this chapter, we have drawn upon the theological insights of Christianity’s own migrant heritage to begin to formulate a theology of migration. In light of migration’s own characteristics of movement and marginality, specific focus was given to a how a renewal of the church’s own self-understanding as a pilgrim church, and of a marginal way of thinking, modeled on Jesus’ own itinerancy, marginality, and vulnerability, might prove fruitful. As pilgrim, the church is defined by movement, with its earthly journey directed by God’s vision of healing, reconciliation, and restoration. Because restoration begins with the coming together of peoples, migration can be understood as a privileged occasion for the breaking down of the walls of enmity and for the reconciliation of peoples. This will require, first, a metanoia from oppressive and marginalizing tendencies that which divide us, with a renewal of Christianity’s own marginal and alien self-identity as one way of facilitating this conversion.

Part II sought to reimagine church in light of these explorations, and to begin to lay out the groundwork for a theology of migration, which will be brought into conversation with hospitality in the next chapter. As was evident this chapter, and will become even more clear in our discussion of hospitality in the next, solidarity across difference is an essential component in
these reimaginings. Solidarity needs a “place” and parishes were suggested as the ideal site in which to enact practices. EMCC draws attention to a parish’s capacity to be the first place of welcome, but also its role in integrating—in the best sense of the word—migrants into parish life and the wider community. Parishes, though, will need to rethink some of their own practices and understandings in terms of ministry with migrants. Dialogue, imaged as both covenantal conversations and as an examination of conscience, and a border crossing spirituality were proposed as ways to approach this rethinking, and to move toward reconciliation and communion. Thus, the movement becomes a dual journey, away from sinful exclusion and toward a vision of harmonic interrelatedness. Finally, this communion was described using the Pentecost vision of unity-in-difference, and the forthcoming communion of diverse cultures serves as a sign of renewal and as anticipation of the final restoration.

Thus, an authentic welcome based upon Christ’s hospitality must be offered, and Christian hospitality should characterize the atmosphere within which day-to-day dealings, questions, and issues are negotiated. In Chapter 5, we turn to a more detailed examination of the hermeneutic, praxis, virtue, and understanding of hospitality needed for the kairos of Latino/a immigration to the U.S., and how that understanding of hospitality might serve as a catalyst, guide, and entry point for a theology of migration.
Chapter 5
Toward a Theology of Migration:
Hospitality as Resistance, Vision, and Praxis

Introduction

Chapter 4 began to develop the framework for a theology of migration using insights drawn from scripture, magisterial teachings, and the experience of migrants themselves. Recovering the image of pilgrim church, and with the Pentecost vision of unity-in-diversity as the goal and orientating vision for “reimagining church,” it began to examine the necessary components for this communion, laying the groundwork for this chapter. First, solidarity across difference proves crucial in light of the marginality experienced by migrants on the basis of their “difference,” and of the church’s own identity as a church born out of marginality. As we have seen throughout this thesis, the present situation of divisiveness and discord cries out for reconciliation, in accordance with God’s mission and towards the goal of eschatological unity. Thus, a spirit of reconciliation must also guide our steps. In order to dismantle or cross the barriers that divide us, this spirit is characterized by several features: exposure leading to immersion and friendship; open, vulnerable, and genuine dialogue, or covenantal conversations; a humble and kenotic presence that voluntarily renounces power in favor of vulnerability; and a harmonic vision of the whole, with a commitment to work towards it. As we will see in this chapter, these components are enriched and invigorated when understood through the entry point of hospitality.

This chapter continues the exploration of critical components for a theology of migration. At a time when displacement and cultural exile mark the experiences of so many Latino/a immigrants in the U.S., and stigmatization, rejection, and exclusion threaten to define them, there is a dire need for communities of hospitality and resistance to serve as a countermovement.
Indeed, as we saw in Chapter 3, hospitality, love of strangers, defined the way that strangers were met and incorporated into the community, and hospitable practices were the means by which early Christian communities transcended the differences between them. This chapter will thus “circle back” once more to hospitality in the early church so as to explore the way in which a recovery of the virtue, practices, and theological understandings of hospitality might be fruitful in the present time of migration, and how it might inform a theology of migration. It takes up and builds upon the material from Chapters 3 and 4, and argues that, in our present context, a theology of migration must seek solidarity across difference in a spirit of reconciliation, be rooted in vulnerability and grace, and embody the virtues and practices of hospitality.

A brief highlighting of the features of hospitality discussed in Chapter 3 will make evident its potential in the present time. First, hospitality was a crucial step in establishing kin-like relationships, the means by which someone who was vulnerable or in need could be included in the community. Because the people of God knew what it meant to be outsiders or marginalized, they practiced hospitality with humility, responsibility, and compassion, as a way of life, and with gratitude to God as the generous host who had provided for them in their need and accompanied them into the wilderness. Hospitality always emerges out of a rich theology of grace. Second, the expectation that a stranger might bring unexpected blessings from God took on profound meaning with the coming of Jesus who as stranger-guest-host-meal, embodied and preached the reciprocity and abundance of God’s hospitality. As the paradigmatic border dweller/border crosser, host-who-is-servant and guest-who-is-host, Jesus serves as the model for those who wish to participate in God’s hospitality, while his identification with the stranger at Matt. 25:35 has proved definitive for Christian hospitality. A marginal or alien identity, out of

historical remembrance and in *imitatio Christi*, became normative for Christian discipleship and hospitality. Finally, meals in which the entire community gathered together in thanksgiving and remembrance were a centerpiece of hospitality, and became an opportunity to transcend cultural, societal, and other differences and the means by which Jesus broke free from an exclusivism that would delineate clean and unclean, pure and impure, righteous and sinner. As we will see in a more detailed examination in this chapter, shared meals would continue to be central to hospitality in the early church, with the household as a principal site. In these settings, hospitality was also a catalyst for partnerships that would build up and benefit the church. A central element of hospitality was the reciprocity between guest and host, and the ever-changing dynamic between them.

In this chapter I want to argue that, in light of these fundamentals, and with a return to its fullness, depth, and richness, hospitality has the capacity to challenge the presumed adequacy of our current models and practices, nourish the solidarity, relationality, and reconciliation called for in our present situation, and serve as a key entry point to a theology of migration. I write from the conviction that radical hospitality—the welcome and embrace among strangers rooted in God’s own hospitality with each of us—is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian and live the Christian mission.

Chapter 3 described the “fused relationship” of migration and hospitality. Since both migration and hospitality are constitutive elements of Christian identity, we might use the imagery of DNA’s spiraling and interconnected helix to imagine the way that they weave their way through salvation history and the Christian faith, giving definition to who Christians are. When the integral connection between migration and hospitality is severed, however, it produces a different spiritual “DNA,” with a different character, meaning, and identity. This is the
situation we face today, when receiving communities no longer seem to acknowledge their own “vocation to be in exile,” nor their marginal self-identity, and do not seem to recognize the centrality of hospitality to their mission. Further, the power differentials between those seeking hospitality and those offering hospitality preclude a sense of reciprocity, and are not conducive to forming and nurturing relationships. As we will see, the first inklings of this began with the merging of Christian hospitality and public service in the fourth century, when the practice of hospitality became associated with power and status.

In addition, given that the whole enterprise and idea of hospitality has become commercialized and often equated with status, materiality, and privilege – understood as a commodity with an industry surrounding it – there is some work to be done to redeem the notion of hospitality itself. In its present configuration in the United States, hospitality can often “maintain or advance existing power hierarchies.” Ethicist Maurice Hamington exposes the “vacuous nature” of such hospitality, which pays “minimum-wage workers with little or no benefits . . . to put on cordial displays of affection for a public who has voted to cut social services and safety nets that would have benefited them.” Since jobs in the “hospitality” field or domestic area are often filled by those from foreign lands, there is also a deep irony in their own lack of welcome.

As has been demonstrated, however, there is a much deeper understanding of hospitality as *philoxenia*, love of strangers, that offers enormous potential for rethinking hospitality in terms of transcending difference and remaking communities, both essential for a theology of migration. Remembrance of having been vulnerable sojourners who were welcomed can serve as a kind of

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reorientation to a theology of grace and a return to right relations, with God as Gift and Giver, and each of us as recipients of and participants in God’s hospitality. It is that capacity that this chapter will explore, always with the need for solidarity across difference and a spirit of reconciliation in mind.

The chapter will unfold in three parts. Part I will examine some of the problems of hospitality, beginning with a critique of practices that perpetuate the power asymmetries between host and guest, and argue that we must resist forms of hospitality that are disempowering. Part II will enumerate and discuss the theological foundations and components of hospitality so that they may be understood in relation to a theology of migration. Part III will consider constitutive elements that lead to the hospitality among strangers envisioned for a theology of migration.

I. Critique: Tools of Domination and Power Differentials

A. The Dominant Gaze of Privilege and Power

Because Christian hospitality is inconsistent with, and even contrary to, dominative power, and yet has been so repeatedly joined together with it in contemporary settings, albeit often unintentionally, this section will begin with a specific critique of the often unacknowledged “dominant gaze” that keeps persons of privilege trapped in hollow gestures of hospitality. Such gestures remain oblivious to the damaging effect of continuing to speak and act from the dominative position, assuming it is normative.

Feminist and womanist theologies, as well as other theologies of liberation, have increasingly pointed to the once-overlooked role of power and its intersections with domination and oppression. They offer compelling insights that relativize power and insist on the

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5. See, for example, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, The Power of the Word: Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 57, on the need for a double analysis of power that considers the structural-pyramidal relations of domination via race, gender, sexuality, class, empire, age, and religion, and that exercise “power over;” as well as the ideological network that multiplies the effects. See also Chela Sandoval, Methodology of the Oppressed (Minneapolis, MN:
importance of relationality, mutuality, and an authentic engagement with difference. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, for example, speaks of the tools of domination, which include an ideology of entitlement on the part of the elite, stereotyping groups of people, scapegoating, and blaming the victim. As was demonstrated in the first two chapters, the rhetorical language used by the dominant and privileged culture to construct dehumanizing images of immigrants, and to portray them as alleged threats to the nation, is a prime example of this intersection of social power and domination.

Looking at the intersection of power and domination offers further insight into the border practices briefly discussed in the first two chapters, and suggests that territories and boundaries are key expressions of social power, and exposes public policies such as Proposition 187 as a tactic of psychological warfare meant to enforce who belongs and who should be excluded.6 Gilberto Rosas, for example, hones in on the “spectacular displays of state power” at the U.S.-Mexico border, finding in them a “diffused form of racial governance” directed precisely at those sites where migrants “could blend in with the local US-Mexican population.”7 Army training exercises, surveillance using Mohawk helicopters, military-Border Patrol collaborations, and other technologies of high intensity policing and low intensity warfare, along with a heightened vigilantism, all serve as examples. Even worse, however, is the power over life and death operative in what Rosas describes as the “calculated, brutal, managements of [Latin American
migrants]” via the establishment of “treacherous geographies” that channel those crossing the border into “contemporary killing deserts, where at least 3,600 immigrant corpses have been found.” Rosas concludes that these dynamics of power bear scrutiny for the way in which they use popular ontological signifiers of race to organize immigrants racially and deem them “worthy of dying, [as] subject to militarized policing, or vigilante actions, or daily forms of surveillance.”

While these examples speak to the specific experience of Latino/a immigrants to the U.S., and demonstrate the need for a subversive and hospitable ethic for dealing with identity and difference, there are also broader and far more subtle forces of power at play that need to be recognized before proceeding to the constitutive elements of such an ethic. In moral theologian Margaret Pfeil’s searing assessment of white privilege, for example, she writes of her “own formidable blindness to the structures of white supremacy from which [she] has benefited . . . [and the] race-based unearned advantages [which have] conferred a certain kind of power.” Left unexamined and unchallenged, she contends, the power conferred “continues to function as a form of social violence” that renders one incapable of truly opting for the margins. Like Brueggemann’s description of a “monopoly on imagination,” such a standpoint and social location of dominance co-opts other understandings so that all appears settled, stable, and correctly structured.

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Because unjust systems of privilege tend to replicate themselves in innumerable ways, going unnoticed and unremarked, they can damage and impoverish social relations while serving the interests of a small minority.\textsuperscript{12} It is not just those who are disadvantaged who suffer under such a system, however. Systems of privilege undermine even those it aims to serve by truncating social connections which are basic to human flourishing. As ethicist Mary Elizabeth Hobgood observes, since a fundamental characteristic of who we are as human beings is “selves-in-relation,” what is “adversely affected is not only our knowledge of the world, but also our fundamental humanity as communal beings created to live in interdependence with others and in accountability to them.”\textsuperscript{13} In fact, Pfeil argues that those who silently accept privilege contribute to the destruction of their own humanity.\textsuperscript{14}

Theologian M. Shawn Copeland exposes the “ocular epistemological illusion” that equates looking with knowing and that is so easily seduced to support the Eurocentric normative gaze with its attendant racist, sexist, and imperialist connotations.\textsuperscript{15} As such, it should be considered epistemologically compromised, and white U.S. Catholics must “consciously choos[e] a radically different standpoint” in order to opt for the poor, a standpoint from which


\textsuperscript{13} Hobgood, \textit{Dismantling Privilege}, 25.

\textsuperscript{14} Pfeil, “Transformative Power of the Periphery,” 130.

\textsuperscript{15} M. Shawn Copeland, “Foundations for Catholic Theology in an African American Context,” in \textit{Black and Catholic: The Challenge and Gift of Black Folk}, Contributions of African American Experience and Thought to Catholic Theology, ed. by Jamie T. Phelps, Marquette Studies in Theology No. 5 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1997), 107-47, at 112. Cf. Wendy Farley, \textit{Eros for the Other: Retaining Truth in a Pluralistic World} (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 18-35, on the absolutizing illusion of totality that only understands anything from its own perspective; the fiction of subhumanity that makes one oblivious to another’s personhood; and the way in which social worlds are thereby reshaped in ways that simultaneously conceal the guilt of the perpetrator and the humanity of its victims so that domination appears natural necessary, and good; and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, \textit{The Power of the Word}, 37, on the “tools of domination,” which include an ideology of entitlement on the part of the elite, stereotyping groups according to race, class, sexual identity, religion, and nation, scapegoating, and blaming the victim, the effects of which include internalized oppression, a public mentality that accepts public labeling and practicing of injustice as natural.
questions about power and privilege will likely emerge.\textsuperscript{16} Refusal to do so can “poison even genuine attempts to provide material help to oppressed people.”\textsuperscript{17}

B. The Temptations of Power and Privilege in Hospitality

In this context, there is a need to examine the practices and fundamentals of hospitality for their associations with power and privilege. This was, in fact, one of the problems that led to the loss of hospitality’s association with the “least of these” in the early centuries. Although once crucial to the identity of the church—indeed, extraordinary hospitality was proof of the truth of Christianity\textsuperscript{18}—hospitality increasingly was organized as public service and into specialized social services, especially after the church gained political favor in the fourth century,\textsuperscript{19} as was discussed in Chapter 3. However, as the differentiation of care became more institutionalized, albeit in an effort to provide better care and to deal with the great need, personal relations among Christians of all classes and those in need lapsed, making it harder to preserve the distinctive parts of hospitality that were of most value.\textsuperscript{20}

This institutionalization and commercialization of hospitality, which organized hospitality as a public service and paid individuals to administer it,\textsuperscript{21} had unintended, but significant and lasting consequences. First, the values, arrangements, and structures of society

\textsuperscript{16} Sandra Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is ‘Strong Objectivity’?” in Feminist Epistemologies, ed. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 49-82 at 54-56. Harding writes, “Knowledge claims are always socially situated, and the failure of dominant groups critically and systemically to interrogate their advantaged social situation and the effect of such advantages on their beliefs leaves their social situation a scientifically and epistemologically disadvantaged one for generating knowledge.” (54)

\textsuperscript{17} Welch, A Feminist Ethic of Risk, 134.


\textsuperscript{19} See Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 216-42, on how hospices, hospitals, almshouses, and hostels were established by churches and shared authority with the state, with care regularized through sets of guidelines. Offices such as guest masters, guardians of the poor, orphanage directors, rural bishops who oversaw hospitals, and other administrators were established and made accountable to the bishop.

\textsuperscript{20} Pohl, Making Room, 47.

\textsuperscript{21} Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 128; Brown, Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire, 31; Pohl, Making Room, 43.
became normative, and hospitality lost its subversive quality. Next, hospitality as a job with prescribed duties rendered the recipients of hospitality invisible, while also diminishing the potential of hospitality being a transformative encounter.\textsuperscript{22} Further, there is considerable power associated with the denial or granting of hospitality, power that intensifies the differences between giver and receiver, increases the vulnerability of the recipient, and even stretches to who is accepted by right or membership as part of the community.\textsuperscript{23} Finally, the movement away from churches as the sites for hospitality, meant that “the understanding of hospitality as a significant dimension of church practice nearly disappeared.”\textsuperscript{24}

In addition to hospitality no longer being identified with the identity and the mission of the church, the decline in private, personal hospitality also resulted in it being distanced from the norm of personal Christian responsibility. Hospitality also became associated with power and privilege. Increasingly, clergy utilized hospitality as a way to curry favor with the powerful. Despite church leaders issuing warnings to clergy against this practice, it continued to grow, such that by the fifth century the admonishments were expanded to include warnings against the practices of exploiting hospitality offices for financial gain.\textsuperscript{25} It is ironic indeed that a practice defined as welcoming the “least” instead reinforced the relationship between church and political authorities, losing its “most fundamental, personal dimensions” as people in need were increasingly cared for anonymously and at a distance.\textsuperscript{26}

Although impossible to document here, during the Middle Ages and onward to the present, church hospitality was increasingly aimed at those of a higher or honored position, and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} See Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 79.
\item \textsuperscript{23} See Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 80.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{25} See Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 5; and Oden, \textit{And You Welcomed Me}, 241.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 7, 45.
\end{itemize}
associated with gaining influence or privilege or with entertainment.\textsuperscript{27} The common table, which previously hosted people of different sexes, classes, and economic strata, lost its prominence to be replaced by distinctions that reflected one’s status.\textsuperscript{28} Lost, too, therefore, were the sense of mutual vulnerability and the dynamism of radical reversals that were originally operative in hospitality. There are, of course, notable and widely recognized movements that are exceptions to this overall trend, such as the Benedictine monasteries, which has made hospitality to strangers a part of its identity and practice for the past fifteen hundred years.\textsuperscript{29} The practice of hospitality was also revived—albeit often on a short term basis—by reformers like Luther, Calvin, the Anabaptists, and Wesley.\textsuperscript{30} And more recently, there are the examples of the Catholic Worker movement and L’Arche communities. Even during times of less emphasis, however, Christianity never rejected the ideal of hospitality, and it remained the normative commitment until the last several centuries, when its importance as a moral duty waned.\textsuperscript{31}

Despite this, the association of hospitality with privilege and power signaled an important loss for Christianity: the loss of its ability, through hospitality, to transcend social and cultural differences, to recognize the value of every human person and treat them with the dignity they deserve, and to be transformed by the encounter. Instead, many times religious institutions duplicate the existing societal and cultural hierarchies.\textsuperscript{32} In fact, current practices often have a tendency to perpetuate imbalances of power and create one-way dependencies, reflecting a paternalistic model that seems to give from a posture of superiority. The very

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 48-51.
\item Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 51.
\item Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 11. Benedict of Nursia (ca. 480-550) developed the \textit{Rule of Benedict} based on the identification of Christ with the stranger in Matthew 25:35.
\item See Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 52-6.
\item Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 35. Pohl writes that hospitality disappeared as a significant moral practice in the 1700s (36).
\item Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 62.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
dynamic of giver-receiver comes with the temptation to believe that those who are giving have some power over those who are receiving. As we have seen in this study, there is also the inclination to reduce those receiving hospitality solely to objects of pastoral care, or even the means by which Christians can demonstrate their generosity or faithfulness to the gospel. As Gittens recognizes, there is a basic inequality in these relationships whereby the host/provider acts from a structurally and socially “superior” position, and the guest/recipient from an “inferior one.”

Gittens also warns of the tendency of the dominant culture, when faced with the stranger/host dyad, to understand themselves as the provider, rather than recognize the mutuality inherent in the encounter. In this dynamism, no matter how kind or indulgent the provider is, there is nevertheless an inequality, with the provider holding the initiative and control. Hospitality also can take on a defensive or fortress approach in this setting, “ready to provide for others while simultaneously keeping them at a ‘safe’ distance.” These purportedly benign and well-intentioned attempts to help ironically instead thwart any genuine hospitality by assuming and even fostering the exclusion they seek to overcome.

There is a further problem with this asymmetrical dynamic. A “distortion” and “fundamental disrespect” is operative when the elite assume they can solve the problems of others, or maintain social distances, seeking to make changes without scrutinizing existing social roles or power dynamics. The “seemingly innocuous assumptions of the powerful” lead them to believe they are responsible to act for others, and can act alone and in the best interest of others.

At the same time, by maintaining social distances, they enjoy the “privilege of leaving the

fray,”\(^{37}\) a luxury not available to those most invested in and impacted by the solutions offered. Hence, as Welch contends, “Justice cannot be created for the poor by the rich, for it requires the transfer of power from the oppressors to the oppressed, the elimination of charity, and the enactment of justice.”\(^{38}\)

C. Resisting Power and Privilege

Theologian Letty M. Russell, who approaches hospitality from a postcolonial, feminist perspective, and thus with a keen awareness of power differentials, offers three imperatives for a hermeneutic of hospitality.\(^{39}\) It must, first, pay attention to the power quotient. Social location accords power and privilege, and with that, access. Paying attention to the power quotient means (a) understanding the ways that power is operative in the exclusion/inclusion of people and that the way we choose to use power affects the balance; (b) checking for who is missing; and (c) taking a “lower seat at the table” in humility and generosity.\(^{40}\) Second, a hermeneutic of hospitality must give priority to the perspective of the outsider. “When we begin from the outsider’s perspective,” she writes, “we develop the practice of listening to the pain of others and responding to their initiatives.”\(^{41}\) Listening, then, becomes the starting point in overcoming power differentials. Third, hospitality recognizes and rejoices in God’s unfolding promise. This approach recognizes that there is more than one way of understanding God’s call and promise, and that it is by mutual invitation to partner together that we can begin to imagine and work towards a different world.

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Theologian David Tracy, writing more broadly about theology in today’s unsettled, conflictive, and polycentric present, says something similar. Writing that the “memory of suffering of the oppressed . . . is the great Christian countermemory to all tales of triumph,” he writes that the aim of a theology that seeks to “write the history of the present in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ” must expose the false visions of the present, listen to the prophetic voices of those who are suffering and oppressed, and humbly join in the struggle in solidarity. Thus, the challenge “[f]or anyone in [the] troubled, quarreling center of privilege and power,” is to turn away from the “secret wish” to remain at the center, to resist even ourselves and our hard-earned power, to embrace the hope grounded in the promise of the Pentecost vision, and to trust God and act on that trust.

The challenge for a theology of migration, then, is how to proceed in ways that resist those forms of hospitality that re-inscribe power and privilege, and embrace a different understanding and way of being in the world. As we saw in the last chapter, the goal is for both society and local congregations to learn how to speak with one another in ways that invite genuine communion, to overcome estrangement so that cultures and races may break bread and tell stories together, so as to shape our mutual future. In the next section, we will consider how radical hospitality—a return to the radix (roots)—might assist with these challenges. Thus, it will prove instructive to return to the first two centuries of Christianity with a special interest in exploring the way hospitality was practiced as a form of resistance that was embodied in meals and households.

43. Tracy, On Naming the Present, 5.
44. Tracy, On Naming the Present, 5.
45. Tracy, On Naming the Present, 22.
II. Hospitality as Resistance in the Early Church

A. Banquets, Meals, and Table Solidarity

In the Eastern Mediterranean culture, any meal, even a simple one, was the primary expression of hospitality,\(^{46}\) and the welcome or banquet table one of the clearest symbols. Reading back into scripture about these meals, however, we do not always understand the subtle and even more overt distinctions that the author was making, nor is it apparent when the practice is countercultural or subversive. Thus, like the review of Mathews’ technical vocabulary for understanding the terminology of hospitality, described in Chapter 3, I begin with some of the “vocabulary” of meals to facilitate our more detailed examination.

Of the ten different meals recorded by the evangelist Luke, five contain details reflecting aspects of a Hellenistic symposium, a more elaborate, formal, and preplanned event with a guest list that reflected the status of the host, and which was more generally associated with people of means and who possessed large homes or country villas.\(^{47}\) At a symposium, after the banquet dinner itself, and while wine was being served, the host often engaged in conversation with the guests, and the guest of honor, generally a learned person, might discuss a particular area of expertise.\(^{48}\) The other five meals described in the gospel can be categorized as hospitality meals, which were more impromptu, and could be expected whenever a friend or relative arrived seeking hospitality, which the host was always expected to provide, no matter how meager the resources.\(^{49}\) These meals generally resembled a domestic meal, and therefore could be quite humble.

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46. LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God*, 19.
47. LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God*, 16-19. LaVerdiere identifies the banquet at the home of Levi (Luke 5:27-39), the three dinners at the home of a Pharisee (7:36-50; 11:37-54; and 14:1-35), and the Last Supper (22:14-38) as reflecting elements of a symposium meal.
48. LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God*, 17.
49. LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God*, 19-21. LaVerdiere lists the breaking of the bread in the city of Bethsaida (9:10-17), the hospitality at the home of Martha (10:38) and at the home of Zacchaeus (10:1-10), and the two meals after Jesus’
Although similar in appearance, meals with Jesus and, later, Christian meals were also different from the meals of the time, which often served to establish or emphasize distinctions between people based on purity laws. Instead, as can be seen from Jesus’ behavior, the meal itself offered a challenge to exclusivism and power inequities, and bridged the distinctions between people. Thus, Jesus’ diverse meal companions included tax collectors and sinners (Mark 2:16; Luke 19:1-10) and Pharisees (Luke 7:36-50); he is accused of being a drunkard and a glutton (Luke 7:33-34), and he hosts a meal for over 5000 people (Luke 9:1-10). In his parabolic teaching on hospitality, which revolves around the guest list for a banquet, Jesus advises that, instead of inviting those who can repay hospitality, or those whose status can increase one’s prestige, his followers should “invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind” (Luke 14:13). The guest list, which includes, as Pohl describes it, a “disconcerting number of poor and broken people,” serves to illustrate Jesus’ expansive inclusiveness.

This inclusion of the poor and neediest will become central to the core identity of Christians, especially as they take up hospitality as a primary task of the church in the first centuries, as evidenced in the Epistle of Clement to James, which writes of one way to fix love in your minds: “the common partaking of food,” then continues with instructions to be each other’s guests, to share everything in common, care for those who are hungry, thirsty, unclothed, sick, or in prison, and concludes with “receive strangers into your homes with all eagerness.” In this regard, transcending social and ethnic differences through these practices was proof of love and the truth of the Christian faith.

resurrection, first at Emmaus (24:13-35) and later in Jerusalem before the ascension (24:36-49), as fitting the style of the simple hospitality meals.

51. Pohl, Making Room, 16.
52. Pohl, Making Room, 6, 16.
53. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 200, referencing Pseudo-Clementine, “Epistle of Clement to James,” ca. 200-250 CE.
Jesus also imbued meals with a sense of servanthood associated with hospitality and communion. At the Last Supper, Jesus instructs his followers to remember him, emphasizing that hosts must make themselves servants, thus deepening the guest-host dialectic to one that is based on kenosis. He concretizes the relationship of love through the hospitable acts of sharing of bread and wine, the washing of feet, and the request that he be remembered by his disciples doing the same. LaVerdiere observes that, while the Book of Acts does not detail the meals that Jesus took with the apostles after the resurrection, Luke does use the expression “synalizomenos” (literally, “sharing salt with”), which symbolizes the bond of guest-kinship. In those meals, LaVerdiere writes, Jesus made himself intimately present to the apostles, laid the basis for their koinonia (Acts 2:42) with him and with one another, as well as the basis for their assembly for the breaking of the bread in memory of Jesus, in which Jesus would be present to them and act in and through them. Their hospitable sharing of bread and wine came to represent communion with Jesus and each other: “The bread which we break, is it not participation (koinonia) in the body of Christ?” (1 Cor. 16:16). LaVerdiere emphasizes the use of universal words, such as “all,” “many,” and “whole,” in the first portraits of the church, and the way in which their communal life and sharing with the needy flowed out of their koinonia.

In early Christian development, the remembrance of the Lord’s Supper will become an amalgamation of the two types of hospitality meals mentioned above, structured more like the

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55. LaVerdiere, The Breaking of the Bread, 68. On the bond of salt, see Chapter 3, p. 134.
56. LaVerdiere, The Breaking of the Bread, 68.
57. LaVerdiere, The Breaking of the Bread, 75-6. See also Wright, Old Testament Ethics for the People of God, 194, for a fuller explanation of koinonia. Wright notes that, although the word is generally translated as “fellowship,” the actual meaning is a “far cry from that watery ‘togetherness’” that passes for fellowship in our churches. Instead, it refers to actual social and economic relationships between Christians, and denotes a practical, often costly, sharing. He makes the point through several examples: at Acts 2:42, 44, the first consequence of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost was a new community who devoted themselves to koinonia, sharing everything in common, and ensuring that no one was in need (Acts 4:34). In 1 Timothy 6:18, the rich should be “generous” (koinōnikous), as are Christians in Hebrews 13:16.
formal symposium meal, but setting aside some of the strictures (and status) regarding the guest list. For example, because Christians thought of themselves as a family, women, children, and, later, slaves shared the meal.\textsuperscript{58} The meals were therefore the setting to embody transformed relations, where societal norms were transcendened and cultural boundaries crossed,\textsuperscript{59} and the composition of the assembly thus offered a living witness to Jesus’ inclusive ministry and instructions, and heralded the coming of the kingdom.

For early Christians, these common manifestations of hospitality were also a real and tangible expression that embodied God’s hospitality. According to Koenig, meals were “a critical arena for the revealing of God’s righteousness in Christ and humanity’s response to it.”\textsuperscript{60} He finds significance in the fact that the narrative of Jesus’ feeding of the 5000 is the only miracle story to appear in all four gospels, and reasons that, for the early church, it was foundational for the interpretation of Jesus’ mission, with Jesus’ group of followers functioning as a “network for sharing God’s eschatological abundance among themselves, and for inviting the broader population to join them in this new mutuality.”\textsuperscript{61} Koenig writes, in fact, that for Luke, the “table and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus are virtually synonymous.”\textsuperscript{62} In a like way, the kingdom of God is itself a central image for a life lived in hospitable love.\textsuperscript{63}

Thus, like our understanding of the Eucharist today, and like the covenantal conversations described in the last chapter, there was in every meal the suggestion, anticipation, and promise of the kingdom, and in every reference to the kingdom the reality of the not-yet, and

\textsuperscript{58} LaVerdiere, \textit{Dining in the Kingdom of God}, 192.
\textsuperscript{59} Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 32.
\textsuperscript{61} Koenig, “Hospitality,” 301.
\textsuperscript{63} Richard, \textit{Living the Hospitality of God} 43.
thus a striving toward greater love and hospitality. They were characterized by “joyful
repentance,”64 and “express[ed] reconciliation between the guests and the host, and between the
Heavenly Father who serves as Host at every such meal and those who enjoy his hospitality.”65

Meals, as well as the gathering of the church together, therefore, were occasions for
believers to devote themselves to the koinonia and for sharing with the poor.66 In the Epistle of
Clement to James, meals are corroborated as concrete expressions of love, and connected to care
for those in need: “. . . I know that you will do these things if you fix love into your minds. There
is only one fit way to accomplish this, namely, the common partaking of food. Therefore, see to
it that you are frequently one another’s guests . . . . All of you present your provisions in
common to all your brothers and sisters in God. . . . Much more feed the hungry, and give drink
to the thirsty, and clothing to the naked.”67 In writing about the agape meals early in the third
[W]ith the good things of the feast we benefit the needy.”68 LaVerdiere summarizes that the
demands of “table solidarity” would lead one to follow Jesus’ model of mission and ministry, to
embrace one’s own transformation through conversion and reconciliation, to seek a place of
honor for others over oneself, and to act with justice, hospitality, and generosity towards the
poor.69

66. LaVerdiere, The Breaking of the Bread, 85.
67. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 200.
68. Tertullian, “Apology,” Chapter 39, Fathers of the Church: Apology: Tertullian,
69. LaVerdiere, Dining in the Kingdom of God, 196-7.
B. Christian Households as Households of God

In the first two centuries C.E., the primary site for hospitality shifted to the household as the place from which missionary activity was supplied, house churches established, and *agape* meals celebrated. These sites, where household and church overlapped, were immensely important. They were the “basis for social, political, and religious identity and cohesion,” but fellowship and growth in the earliest churches also depended upon the hospitality found there. Koenig, in fact, describes house churches as “the creative hub of God’s redemptive work” for the evangelist Luke. Households were the axis for Christian life well into the third century, and hospitality a fundamental condition of the mission and expansion of the early church. As time passed, believers continued to gather frequently in order to build up the body of Christ, for “fellowship is a wellspring for mercy and hospitality.”

Biblical scholar John H. Elliott describes their theological significance, in that the church was God’s household, with believers as family to one another. Like meals, households were the sites in which social, economic, and cultural boundaries were transcended. At meals celebrated there, “formerly alienated persons could view themselves as brothers and sisters at God’s table.” “Household of God” becomes therefore a primary metaphor to symbolize the church’s new unity. Hospitality thus always began with God and God’s provisions for humanity, with

humankind’s hospitality as a response to God’s. United in Christ Jesus as a reconstituted family, the oikos included not only family households, but believers of different gender and from different political, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. This expanding vision of the human family, anticipated at Pentecost (Acts 2:11), will transcend bloodlines and national borders, and find expression in the “bedrock of Christian vision”: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, no longer slave or free, no longer male or female – all are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). Indeed, there are harbingers of this more expansive vision in the strangers and foreigners who populate the gospels, many of whom are the first to recognize and respond to Jesus. These include the stargazers from the east (Matt 2:1-12); the centurion in Capernaum (Matt 8:11); the centurion who makes a profession of faith on Jesus’ death (Mark 15); and the Canaanite woman, who Jesus proclaims an exemplar of authentic faith (Matt 15:21-28).

As children of the same God, united in Christ, humanity is given a new model of human existence. Elizondo observes that this new human group will have identifiable features:

[T]he ‘language’ of the group might best be summarized in the Our Father; the members are from all classes and all ethnic backgrounds; their lifestyle is best described in the life of radical love and forgiveness spelled out in the Sermon on the Mount; their most distinctive cultic rite is the festive and joyous banquet proclaiming the memory of the founder. By that which is most original to them—the newness and uniqueness of universal fellowship under God-Abba—they will shine forth and be a new light to all peoples and social structures.

The practices of the early church community served to embody God’s hospitable love, and were themselves models of the way to live out koinonia with one another. Both meals and households functioned as concrete expressions of ways in which to cross boundaries, affirm the

78. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 87.
80. Elizondo, Galilean Journey, 64.
bonds of guest-kinship, offer table solidarity, and embody transformed relations. There are clear links and resonances with the prior chapter, as well as clear potential in renewing these understandings in church communities today. Just as house churches and meals were the hub for God’s redemptive work of reconciliation and healing, so too should parishes, parish meals, and especially Eucharistic celebrations fill this role in a theology of migration. The next section will consider the strange logic of hospitality, and the way in which it sparks the imagination to further reimagine relationships with others in light of God’s hospitality.

C. The Strange Logic of Hospitality

As we saw in Chapter 3, the motif of hospitality courses through the biblical texts, setting the paradigm for how we are to relate to one another. The centrality of the root metaphor can hardly be disputed. Arising out of the witness of scripture; shaped, honed, and embodied by the Christ-event, hospitality has been foundational for how Christians are to understand themselves and relate to each other and their neighbors.

In this final section dealing with early church practices of hospitality, I want to speak of the capacity of hospitality—with its table and household solidarity—to function as an “outlaw discourse.” Such outlaw discourse, like Brueggeman’s imagination at the margins, emerges from those outside the center of power and represents shared logics of justice that are different from the culture’s dominant logic, but that provide the central orientation for how normative judgments are made. Outlaw discourses expose and challenge the sedimented logic of the dominant culture. To follow the dominant logic, when something else is so clearly the case,

81. Sloop and Ono, “Out-law Discourse,” 51; see also Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 139, and Santa Ana, Brown Tide Rising, 296, on the subject of insurgent metaphors and discourses which, when used to context an inaccurate or restricting metaphor, compels the audience to reconsider a thought taken to be obvious and natural, and next, compare the conventional view of the world with another point of view.

simply does not make sense. By their refusal to be governed by that sedminented logic, and by their adherence to their own logics of justice, those following an outlaw discourse strengthen and give witness to their own alternative discourse. Because by definition they challenge dominant ways of thinking and acting, and operate using a logic incommensurate with the dominant logic, they create the potential for substantial social change by sparking the social imaginary to think or imagine “otherwise.”

In the biblical witness, the outlaw discourse of hospitality, and its countercultural logic, is borne out in numerous ways, with its insistence upon abundance in the face of scarcity, widows offering hospitality to prophets, odd guest lists, strange dining partners, and hosts who are servants. In the paradigmatic story of hospitality from the Hebrew scriptures, Abraham and Sarah, in leaving their homeland become hosts with no home. Their story of hospitality is retold so many times that in final versions, Abraham’s tent has no sides so that he can better see those who are coming and is set up at a busy intersection so that he can offer hospitality to as many people as possible. Abraham himself, once called the wandering Aramean, now “makes the rounds,” to find poor guests. By his own witness and in his teachings, Jesus continues to proclaim this outlaw discourse. He fundamentally identifies himself with the least of these, practices table fellowship “with all the wrong people,” and produces a banquet for more than 5,000 by encouraging everyone there to become both host and guest. While the Hebrew

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83. Although Ono and Sloop do not use it, or any scripture as an example, I think of Jesus’ exchange with Pilate at John 18:35-38 as an example. Indeed, many of Jesus’ conversations with authorities and his adherence to his understanding and logic could serve as examples.

84. Ono and Sloop, Shifting Borders, 140-42.

85. Arterbury, “Abraham’s Hospitality,” 370-72. See also Arterbury, Entertaining Angels, 59. Different versions of the narrative extolling Abraham’s hospitality are found in Philo, Josephus, Clement, the Testament of Abraham, the Apocalypse of Paul, Origen, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Rabbi Nathan (late 3rd century CE), Genesis Rabbah, and the Babylonian Talmud, Sotah.

86. Pohl, Making Room, 22.

Testament sets out purity rituals to deal with exposure to those who are unclean, Jesus instead “relates hospitality to holiness by inverting their relations: hospitality becomes the means of holiness [and] it is in Jesus’ hospitality of pagans, the unclean, and sinners that his own holiness is shown forth.”

His own constantly changing role of guest/host and his illustration of host-who-is-servant serve as paradigmatic examples of hospitality, as does his parabolic teaching of the Great Banquet with its unexpected guest list of society’s outcasts (Luke 14:25-33). As we saw above, such a banquet would ordinarily demonstrate or enhance one’s status. In the parable, when the elites reject the invitation of the esteemed host, in what theologian Luke Bretherton refers to as “dramatic asymmetry,” and what early Christian historian Will Braun calls “the conversion of the host,” he opens the banquet instead to those who are normally excluded from participation in the life of the community. While they are from the nearby area, there could not be much more “distance” between these guests and the host. For the host, there is and can be no expectation of a return invitation, and no social, economic or political status will be accorded him, nor will his hospitality reflect honor upon him. Instead, there is something quite different going on. As Bretherton explains,

> . . . the host of this parable does not remain self-sufficient. He actively pursues relationships with others, and it is pursued in such a way that the host is rendered vulnerable to rejection, while the recipients are blessed by participation in the feast. The host does not simply give a gift (the meal), nor does he identify or show solidarity with the poor and outcast in some notional or distant manner, rather, the host parties with them. Moreover, his actions are expressive of his need for and dependence on these people: a party, by definition, requires others. Thus the fruit of this feast is a communion of giver and receiver.

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As has been clearly demonstrated, this pattern of hospitality and its odd and counter-cultural logic, with its feast of the excluded, its welcome to the vulnerable stranger by the vulnerable host, and its communion of giver and receiver, continued to characterize Christian hospitality and inform the practice of the church for centuries. As Bretherton describes it, Christians who seek to mirror Jesus’ pattern of hospitality will also “depart from the accepted conventions . . . so that the excluded might be included, . . . reconfiguring the existent order so that it becomes a feast, that is, a place of generative, fruitful relations . . .”

As we saw earlier, it is this aspect of personal, specified, embodied hospitality, the sense of availability to one another, and the joy and anticipation that comes from being both host and guest of God’s hospitality that has faded away, and that is needed so badly in today’s potentially divisive setting. It is evident that the institutionalization and commodification of hospitality in the present time, as well as its pale substitute, a benevolent paternalism, can obviate, if not militate against, the Christian witness of hospitality and its normative practice in early Christianity.

Thus, in order to reorient hospitality in ways that counter privilege and undo the power differential, it is important to clarify the essential theological components of hospitality needed for a better understanding of its role in a theology of migration. While time and space do not permit a full explication, highlighting key features will prove pivotal to underscore the

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93. Bretherton, Hospitality as Holiness, 135.

94. See Bretherton, Hospitality as Holiness, 140-41. On the institutionalization of hospitality, see Oden, And You Welcomed Me; Pohl, Making Room; Arterbury, Entertaining Angels and “The Ancient Custom of Hospitality;” and Brown, Poverty and Leadership. See also Ivan Illich, Tools for Conviviality (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), xxii-iii on the way in which service agencies, when industrialized, may grow to such an extent that it “frustrates the end for which it was originally designed, then rapidly becomes a threat to society itself.”
subversive and radical themes discussed above as they become salient aspects of a theology of migration.

III. Hospitality as the Entry Point to a Theology of Migration

A. Theological Components of Hospitality

As theologian Henri Nouwen states, if there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality.95 Having examined hospitality’s practices and underlying theology in its original setting and seen the pitfalls and dangers of misunderstandings and misuses, in this section we turn to an exploration of that evocative potential in the present time as the linchpin and catalyst for a theology of migration. Thus, while building upon prior discussions, it also raises the pitch and amplitude of the overall discussion.

This section focuses upon the theological dimensions of hospitality and how they might serve as an entry point into a theology of migration. As Chapter 3 described, hospitality is situated in the theological context of covenant, creation, remembrance, and thanksgiving; is undergirded by a theology of creation that understands God as Host Exemplar; and is always understood to be a response to the gracious activity of God. We begin with a deeper exploration of these themes, keeping in mind that, because hospitality and migration share the same DNA, provenance, and formative experiences, to speak of the foundations or dimensions of one flows naturally to the foundations and dimensions of the other.

Two premises undergird and impel the discussion to come: (1) God is the principal orientation and primary referent of hospitality, with hospitality always deeply embedded in a theology of grace; and (2) Humans respond to God’s initiative of love and self-giving in

gratitude and humility. The discussion that proceeds, then, will be structured around and guided by the themes of the divine initiative of grace and the human response of gratitude.

1. Grace as *Exitus*

The understanding of hospitality offered by theologians as participation in God’s life, God’s welcome, or God’s mission\(^\text{96}\) offers a much needed orientation and understanding for the present time and for a theology of migration. As participation, hospitality is embedded within God’s generosity and mission of reconciliation, and operates within an economy of blessing, abundance, and giftedness. The praxis of hospitality, therefore, must understand itself as hospitality *among* strangers, and must reflect God’s loving embrace of the world, resolve to stand with those in need, and exhibit a humble openness to and trust in God’s plan.

In this understanding, God is Source and Goal, and humankind responds to God’s initiative of self-giving love in gratitude and humility. The divine-human relationship is defined by this *exitus-reditus* schema. Creation begins with God’s free choice to love and communicate Godself in divine self-emptying (*exitus*), a movement that is recapitulated in and intertwined with the incarnation and Christ event. As Fretheim summarizes, the “divine way of creating, in choosing not to act alone [but enlisting creatures], is also revealing of a divine vulnerability, for in so involving those who are not God, room is given for the activity of finite creatures, with all of the attendant risks in allowing creatures to be themselves.”\(^\text{97}\) Theologian Gerard Mannion says something similar, writing that God’s act of creation is not an act of power but one of caring and self-emptying. It is an exercise of love and generosity, and an act of self-limitation and self-

\(^{96}\) See, for example, Reynolds, who defines hospitality as participation in God’s inclusive welcome (*Vulnerable Communion*, 20), Russell, who defines it as the practice of God’s welcome (*Just Hospitality*, 2), and Oden, who writes that it is participation in the life of God (*And You Welcomed Me*, 15).

humiliation on the part of God, and calls Christians to take the same risks.98 Those who participate in God’s hospitality, then, are called into the same posture of generosity, vulnerability, kenosis, and self-limitation, all of which is anathema to power over another. It therefore goes beyond being faithful stewards of God’s hospitality to reflecting qualities that are entirely in keeping with God’s nature.

Creation, therefore, is God’s act of welcome and caring, and similarly reflects these hospitable qualities. God, as Host Exemplar and Divine Homemaker, has made a dwelling place for God’s creatures, and invited them to live there with one another. God not only makes room for and welcomes difference, but also makes Godself available to humankind, seeking relationship and solidarity. Imitatio Dei, therefore, is an invitation to dwell together in relatedness and communion, just as in the perichoresis of the Trinitarian communion, the dynamic process of unity-in-difference that makes room for one another.99

The incarnation is directly related to God’s deep involvement in and with creation.100 If we begin with the premise that God created out of love, as theologian John Macquarrie explains, then we understand creation to be the object of God’s never-ceasing care and concern. Creation is also an act of God’s sharing and self-limiting, rather than an act of power. Given all that, he reasons that the incarnation can be regarded as God’s “working out the commitment” already made at the beginning, and nothing could be “more fitting or more germane” to God’s purpose than that God should “enter creation in the humble form of a servant, placing himself at the

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98. Gerard Mannion, “Response: Ecclesiology and the Humility of God: Embracing the Risk of Loving the World,” in Exclusion and Embrace: Boundaries of Being and Belonging in Postmodern Times, eds. Dennis M. Doyle, et al. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012), 24-50, at 36. See also John Macquarrie, The Humility of God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), 4, in which Macquarrie writes that “God gave a measure of independent reality to that which had hitherto existed only in his thought. This means that to some extent [God] was putting [Godself] into [God’s] creation; or, to put the matter in another way, [God’s] creation was also self-emptying. At the same time, by giving to creation a measure of independence, God was also limiting [Godself].


100. Macquarrie, Humility of God, 27.
disposal of [God’s] creatures so that they might experience” the concrete reality that God is love.101

That concrete reality is thus revealed in Jesus who, in mutuality and solidarity, shares humanity’s weakness and vulnerability (Phil. 2:7). Reynolds thus describes Jesus as the icon of the loving God102 who made Godself available to creation in a surplus of love, who is vulnerable and suffers in relationship with creation, and who cares for and desires the well-being of creation, seeking to bring about wholeness, mutuality, and salvation.103 As Reynolds puts it, “Christ embodies God’s self-emptying embrace of creaturely limitation and interdependence, making possible our active openness to God and others.”104 In other words, Jesus is God’s hospitality “made flesh,” who invites humanity into relationship with God. As the paradigmatic border-dwelling guest-host, and in his kenotic love for the world, Jesus makes himself available and vulnerable to creation, modeling both God’s hospitality and human response. He further embraces that vulnerability and marginality in his mission to and identification with the “least of these,” and in his extension of God’s inclusive welcome to them through table fellowship. The cross, “proof of weakness and vulnerability,”105 offers an even more pronounced embodiment of God’s kenotic love, and of Jesus’ commitment to suffer-with and participate in the finitude of humanity.

God’s loving generosity and availability to creation is evident as well in the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. In extending God’s hospitality to the world, the Spirit enables table fellowship and empowers relationships across language, cultural, ethnic, and religious

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102 Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 177.
103 Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 165, 197.
104 Reynolds, *Vulnerable Communion*, 197.
boundaries,\textsuperscript{106} while affirming God’s welcome of difference. The mission of inclusiveness lived by Jesus is thus sustained by the Spirit, who destroys or transforms the barriers that keep people from loving one another, and, by blowing where it will, crosses into new frontiers.\textsuperscript{107} It is the Spirit, Koenig contends, who enables the fluidity of guest-host roles, and the Spirit who creates ‘grace-grace’ situations, that is, communions or \textit{koinōnias} in which all parties ‘deny’ themselves but also receive, and \textit{expect} to receive, ‘good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over’ (Luke 6:38). Grace abounds because God multiplies both the giving and receiving (2 Cor. 9:8-11).

Thus, new and transformative patterns of live emerge that transfigure relationships and the way we imagine life together. Christians thus understood themselves as transformed and united into a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17), members of one body and sharers of the promise (Eph. 3:2), and fellow citizens in the household of God (Eph. 2:19). In this vision of new life, Christians are inspired to turn away from that which detracts from human flourishing and to respond with gratitude for what has been given to them.

2. Gratitude as \textit{Reditus}

All that humans do, and all that they are, is a response (\textit{reditus}) to God’s loving and self-giving initiative. As Tracy describes it, “[W]e are commanded because we are first enabled and empowered. We are gifted, in creation and redemption, in world and church, by a grace that is radical and universal. . . It invites and empowers us to decision.”\textsuperscript{108} He later continues that “[t]he very radicality and intensity of the Christian vision of all reality as graced by a loving God heightens a recognition of the giftedness and goodness of all creation. . .”\textsuperscript{109} Reflection of this
vision yields, in turn, a fundamental trust in the very meaningfulness of existence.\textsuperscript{110} While the recognition of sin is also necessarily intensified by this reflection, sin is understood through the prism of God’s grace. Belonging to this reality elicits the joy of being part of something genuinely good, and delight blossoms in relations of mutuality and love.\textsuperscript{111}

Overwhelmed by the power of God’s hospitable grace in our lives, humans can do nothing else but respond in humility and gratitude.\textsuperscript{112} As theologian Mary Jo Leddy explains, “In the awareness of having received something for free, there is a movement of wanting to acknowledge the giver.”\textsuperscript{113} Leddy writes of a wonderful prayer of gratitude sung by the Jewish people at Passover, recounting the way in which God has enacted salvation history. After each iteration of God’s help, framed around the Passover and Exodus, miracles, and God’s presence, they respond, “Dayenu,” which can be translated as “It would have been enough.”\textsuperscript{114}

An active remembering of salvation history, of having once been strangers in the land of Egypt, thus is intertwined with and a catalyst for a grateful response. To remember is to place oneself in right relation with God and with the past.\textsuperscript{115} Remembering is a religious act, a way of recognizing God, who names Godself as the God of history,\textsuperscript{116} and of remembering so that each successive generation so identifies with the events that it is as though they had been a part of

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{110} Tracy, \textit{Analogical Imagination}, 54.
\bibitem{111} Reynolds, \textit{Vulnerable Communion}, 140.
\bibitem{112} Oden, \textit{And You Welcomed Me}, 87, 100. See also Reynolds, “Toward a Wider Hospitality,” 181.
\bibitem{114} Leddy, \textit{Radical Gratitude}, 54.
\bibitem{116} See, for example, Exodus 20:2, where it is written, “I am the Lord thy God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,” or Exodus 3:16, in which Yahweh instructs Moses to assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, “the Lord the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has appeared to me and said: ‘I have surely remembered you. . . .’”, both referenced by Tauber, “Home and Zakhor—Remember!” 155-6.
\end{thebibliography}
Thus, remembering rightly becomes a kind of conversion that also shapes one’s innermost self. It is therefore no simple recollection, but is instead an ethical mandate to commit to those events, to remember that one is a vulnerable sojourner, and to renew the relationship with God and God’s people in humility and gratitude.

Christians therefore are encouraged to understand themselves as “good stewards of the manifold grace of God,” and therefore to “maintain constant love for one another” and be “hospitable without complaining.” Further, in *imitatio Dei*, they most embody their humanness in dependence, vulnerability, and in “genuinely inclusive communion that results from sharing [their] humanity with one another.” Their resources are not fully their own, but to be used for others to reflect the sufficiency, and even abundance of God’s economy. Thus, hospitality, in a certain sense, takes place among strangers. It takes places among vulnerable sojourners dependent upon divine grace, and upon each other, and is predicated upon trust, mutual giving and receiving, and mutual responsibility. Because communities embody God’s economy and a Trinitarian character, there is never a lack, but only an endless giving and receiving. Reflection on a graced existence yields as well a desire for metanoia, a turning away from that which makes us less than whole.

This theology presents a vision of a reality in which we can trust, and a future we can anticipate, indeed long for. As Ward puts it, human beings are “stretched out toward a future of

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121. Pohl, “Hospitality from the Edge,” 126.

hope in faith, which means that we are given over to the grace of God in radical dependency... This is our human condition as God has graciously fashioned it.” Hospitality, therefore, draws us into relationship with one another in anticipation of gift, opens us to one another in trust and vulnerability, and commits us to one another in compassion and reciprocal belonging. This theology will always draw us to those places where God may be found, places of pain, suffering, marginality, and exclusion, and bids us to proceed with the knowledge that we are in the presence of someone precious. It bids us, then, to make room for one another and to cultivate compassion, and, in so doing, to return to God (reditus) in praise and thanksgiving all that has been given to us. And this makes all the difference for considering migration.

In summary, Christian hospitality is embedded within a theology of grace, a theology of remembrance, and a theology of gratitude, and is always a response to God’s initiatives. That response remains keenly aware of having once been strangers, the goodness of God’s creation, and God’s saving works, culminating in the Christ-event, and affirmed in the sending of the Spirit. Hospitality, further, is modeled on Jesus’ own model of relationality, kenosis, vulnerability, and identification with the “least of these,” and takes as its vocation God’s mission of healing and reconciliation. It therefore presumes the interrelatedness and interdependency of all of creation, seeks right relations, and embodies God’s embrace of the world.

The next section will draw out some implications from these theological foundations. Cognizant of the power quotient and asymmetries that now exist between migrants as hospitality seekers and local congregations as hospitality givers, I will focus on three optics that are definitive for the present existence of migrants, but also are intrinsic to the Christian faith and

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theological anthropology: (1) vulnerability, (2) the memory of having been a stranger, and thus knowing the heart of a stranger, and (3) the need for relationality and interdependence.

B. Vulnerability, Knowing the Heart of a Stranger, and Relationality

Building from theological roots in grace and human response in gratitude, this section will argue that, in order to restore right relations and reciprocity between migrant and host communities, hospitality must be characterized by vulnerability, the memory of having been strangers, and relationality. While, as we have seen, they are central elements for Christian hospitality, they also define the conditions of being a migrant, thus they can serve as unifying elements that restore mutuality, reciprocity, and right relations between receiving and migrating communities, and serve to resist the divisive power differentials.

The discussion will proceed in three parts, based upon the following premises: (1) In order to follow the Christomorphic model of hospitality, to restore the guest-host dynamism of reciprocity, and to restore the creature-Creator relationship with God, host communities must embrace their own vulnerability in a spirit of openness. Under a theology of grace, this vulnerability becomes anticipation of gift, thus, it will be characterized by a stance of availability and readiness. (2) As has been amply demonstrated, the ethic of hospitality arose out of “knowing the heart of a stranger,” and the people of God were repeatedly reminded both scripturally and through liturgical practices to remember having been strangers. In a time when a comfortable settledness may obscure those memories, receiving parishes must seek to restore them through a movement to the margins. (3) Asymmetries abound between migrant and host communities, militating against any real engagement, relationships, or reciprocity. In order to restore the relationality that is inherent to being human, that restores our vocation of being made
in God’s image, and that is central to God’s mission of reconciliation, communities must practice both solidarity and mutuality.

1. Memories of Exile and a Movement to the Margins

As we have seen, migration was an essential part of the Christian’s self-identity, and the ethic of hospitality emerged out of the experience of migration, exile, and diaspora. One of the core statements about hospitality emerges out of the memory of having been strangers once in the land of Egypt.\(^\text{124}\) It was in the wilderness, as Richard observes, that Israel experienced the care, guidance, and compassion of God and knowledge of God often comes through wandering and movement.\(^\text{125}\) Writing that marginality has “normative significance” for hospitality, Pohl observes that the periods in church history when hospitality has been most vibrantly practiced have been times when hosts themselves were marginal to their larger society.\(^\text{126}\) In contemporary times, some communities continue to choose to intentionally distance themselves from more privileged positions and place themselves on the margins of society.\(^\text{127}\) In that way, they declare their allegiance to a different set of values, embrace the crucial ministry of presence, and recognize and embody a permeability and fluidity in roles between hosts and guests. Characterizing it as an “invitation to freedom,” and offering Jesus’ own peripheral stance as a guide, Pfeil contends that subverting social structures of white privilege and relinquishing dominant forms of power will mean “following Jesus to the social periphery, there to learn from him a different potency.”\(^\text{128}\) Such a stance also recognizes the weakness and vulnerability

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\(^\text{124}\) Deuteronomy 10:12 commands, “You shall love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt,” and Leviticus 19:34 similarly states, “You shall love the alien as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”


\(^\text{126}\) Pohl, “Hospitality from the Edge,” 122.


\(^\text{128}\) Pfeil, “Transformative Power of the Periphery,” 137.
inherent in being human, and the importance of recognizing God as the source of strength and sufficiency.\textsuperscript{129}

As Reynolds explains, in this liminal setting, things do not remain intact, for the centre of gravity shifts, creating a zone of mutuality and sharing, and creating a “kind of covenantal exchange.”\textsuperscript{130} In this exchange, the host is also gifted by the presence of the stranger, who is a source of blessing to the host and household. The very act of each opening to the other in mutual vulnerability enhances this giftedness for it decenters each and reorients them understanding themselves as participants in God’s hospitality. Both are transformed, and are opened to even greater transformation. “Hospitality,” Reynolds writes, “is a window into blessing opening into veritable traces of God’s presence. Not only is the stranger a neighbor; he or she is a cipher of the divine.”\textsuperscript{131}

As we saw in Chapters 2 and 4, a marginal identity is one particularly important for welcoming the stranger, especially those who are migrating. \textit{EMCC} writes that the characteristic of hospitality remains a “permanent feature of the Church of God,” one that is “practically marked by the vocation to be in exile, in diaspora, dispersed among cultures and ethnic groups without ever identifying itself completely with any of these.”\textsuperscript{132} It represents a call to the margins, a vocation to be a fellow sojourner and to voluntarily divest oneself of power and privilege. This is one of the reasons this thesis has stressed hospitality \textit{among} strangers over hospitality \textit{to} strangers, with its inclinations to reinforce paternalism and asymmetries, so repeatedly. However, a vocation to be in exile is also a call to live out our own vulnerable and interdependent identity. In the beckoning into the wilderness, it is a call to place ourselves once

\textsuperscript{129} Pohl, \textit{Making Room}, 117-18.
\textsuperscript{130} Reynolds, Towards a Wider Hospitality,” 182.
\textsuperscript{131} Reynolds, “Towards a Wider Hospitality,” 182.
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{EMCC}, no. 22.
again into God’s hands, and to become the recipients of God’s care, guidance, and hospitality. It is therefore a return to right relation and right understanding.

Movement to the margins enables and preconditions solidarity and mutuality, the last two features of a praxis of hospitality. At the same time, solidarity and mutuality draw one closer to the margins. Together, they represent a kind of perichorectic relationality, so that it is hard to determine precisely where one begins and the other ends.

2. Restoring Relationality through Solidarity and Mutuality

The by now classic definition of solidarity is found in the encyclical *SRS*, and reads, “[Solidarity is] a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”133 It is grounded in the inherent relationality and interdependence of all of creation and affirms the fundamental equality and dignity of each human being and their common eschatological destiny.134 Responsibility for one another further connects us in a kind of “reciprocal belonging.”135

There is always, therefore, a “we-ness” to solidarity, a “being with” that distinguishes it from individualistic morality.136 Thus, although we often speak of “being in solidarity” with someone, the reality, like the reality of hospitality, is quite costly, and involves one’s time and energies expended in “the midst of the blood, sweat, and tears of the real world, in practices of presence or service.”137 Hinze, in fact, highlights its incarnational nature, and argues that it must

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133. *SRS*, no. 38.
137. Hinze, “Straining toward Solidarity,” 174. A friend of mine, Fr. Mark Riley, is a former missionary in El Salvador. He tells me that there, they tell a fable to illustrate the commitment of real solidarity. The fable goes something like this: A chicken and pig decide to open a breakfast restaurant. The chicken suggests that they make ham and eggs their specialty, and is unable to understand why the pig should object. “This dish is easy for you,” the pig explains, “for you only have to make a contribution.
involve a humble, kenotic posture that seeks to traverse divisions towards the potential of mutuality and communion.¹³⁸ Like hospitality, solidarity becomes a kind of countermovement to the divisions, marginalizations, and alienations of the present.

The virtue of solidarity needs to be paired with concrete action in order to be true solidarity, for solidarity has a social character that is understood as hope and action.¹³⁹ Min makes the important distinction between a “solidarity of others” and “solidarity with others,” contending that solidarity with others still tends to accord privilege and power to those who are determining with whom to be in solidarity. Solidarity of others, on the other hand, affirms the solidarity of all humanity in grace, mutual dependence and participation in Christ, and the interdependence of human existence.¹⁴⁰ In this regard, he echoes the theology of solidarity that is affirmed in the opening passage of the church’s pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et Spes:*

> The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well. Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community of people united in Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit in their pilgrimage towards the Father’s kingdom, bearers of a message of salvation for all of humanity. That is why they cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history.¹⁴¹

Min writes that global human solidarity may be the most important virtue, individually and collectively, of our time.¹⁴² He grounds his understanding of solidarity in the balance

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¹³⁸ Hinze, “Straining toward Solidarity,” 175.
¹⁴⁰ Anselm Kyongsuk Min, “Liberating Political Theology Today: Elements of a New Paradigm,” Asian Christian Review 1:2 (Summer 2007), 32–44, and Min, *The Solidarity of Others in a Divided World.* This is something akin to Pope Francis’ emphasis on being both a church for the poor and of the poor.
¹⁴¹ *GS,* no. 1.
between God’s transcendence and God’s historical incarnation, writing that it is “imperative to do concrete justice to the transcendent dignity of the Other always on the verge of violation and oppression in a very determinate historical situation. It is . . . also imperative to listen to the historically concrete word of God, without which God would be reduced to silence and irrelevance.”

Ethicist Dawn Nothwehr reminds us that it is not only important to practice love and justice towards one’s neighbor, but “how once practices these virtues that makes the difference in the thriving of humankind.” She offers the norm of mutuality as a way to explore the dynamics of power, and argues that the powerful must fully relinquish their power and the poor and marginalized take it up, in order to have true mutuality. Jesus’ choice to become powerless is the model and ground for her approach. Nothwehr defines mutuality as “the sharing of ‘power-with’ by and among all parties in a relationship in a way that recognizes the wholeness and particular experience of each participant toward the end of optimum flourishing of all.”

Like solidarity, mutuality is grounded in relationality and the kinship and fundamental equality of all creation (Gal. 3:29). As bearers of the full Imago Dei (Gen. 1:27), humans are imbued with fundamental dignity, capable of full mature moral agency, and participate with one another in the “on-going co-creation and redemption of the world.” With the goal of the “optimal flourishing of all,” value of placed on the quality and reciprocity of relationships, and on the importance of reflection from a “radically inclusive place, where literally everyone and

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148. Nothwehr, Mutuality, 233; see also Nothwehr, “Mutuality and Mission,” 258.
everything is included.”149 By its very nature, then, mutuality disposes one towards a non-
hierarchical approach, and toward an attitude of “reflective listening to her/himself and another .
. . wrestle with questions of value and disvalue, costs and benefits, respect and disrespect. One
needs to reconsider what truly constitutes human flourishing and the flourishing of all involved
in the particular situation.”150

For Reynolds, there is a dynamism at work in the bonds formed by reciprocal mutuality.
In the back-and-forth of giving and receiving, both become more than they were as individuals,
for mutuality creates the grounds for self-transcendence and empowerment.151 The gift of
another’s presence, and the love that is borne in receiving that gift, draws an individual into
genuine relation, and releases them from the isolation of their existence into a “reciprocal
belonging.” Reynolds characterizes this relationship with a series of postures. Caring
attentiveness fosters a sympathetic attunement to the other’s own way of being.152 Respect
creates space for another, and acts out of desire to understand the other person better and on
his/her own terms. Fidelity commits one to another in a process of accompaniment. Finally,
compassion is the sympathetic attunement that grows out of involvement with another, creating a
desire for his/her well-being and that seeks to imagine and feel what the other is experiencing.153
It is, however, vulnerability that enables the possibility of genuine love. Without the openness
and availability that come with vulnerability, we “presume we are sufficient unto ourselves,” and
therefore cannot make the moral conversion to the other. With it, however, we come to

152. Reynolds, Vulnerable Communion, 123.
understand ourselves in relation to another, and to understand that through those relations of mutual dependency, we can become whole.

3. Vulnerability and the Habitus of Availability and Readiness

Placed as it is in an economy of blessing, abundance, and giftedness, hospitality proceeds with a faith and certainty that often defies common sense. We see this in the frequent miraculous abundance stories that populate scripture and church history. Even in present day ministries of hospitality, “miraculous” stories become the stuff of legends of “just enough,” and the mantra by which they keep going. In my parish’s meals ministry to the homeless, for example, we have numerous stories of people unexpectedly dropping off pans of food (already warm) just as we were running out, surprising donations from strangers just as our funds are depleted, and our own “multiplication of the chicken wings” as the meal planned for 100 amazingly stretched to feed double that number. Thus, the more one practices hospitality, and becomes in turn the gifted giver, the more one trusts that “give us this day our daily bread” will result in an elegant sufficiency and that “just enough” will be more than enough.

Thus, those wishing to practice hospitality do so with anticipation and trust in God. By extension, this anticipation and trust extends to the God-sent stranger who comes bearing blessings from God. Indeed, like Abraham’s setting up his tent at the intersection of busy crossroads, at times the arrival of a stranger is met with even expectancy or delight. The fourth century ascetic Jerome captures this sense when he writes about Paul’s instruction to “pursue hospitality” (Rom. 12:13): “It is not enough, he means, for us to invite guests with our lips. We

154. The widow of Zarephath’s sharing the last of her food only to have it replenished, Exodus’ story of manna from heaven, and the miracle of the loaves and fishes are three of the best-known biblical stories. Miraculous abundance stories are found in many different cultures. One of the best known from Greek myths is the tale of Baucis and Philemon in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, in which the mixing bowl of the impoverished couple offering hospitality kept filling itself back up. For an interpretation, see Helen M. Luke, “The Stranger Within,” *Parabola: The Magazine of Myth and Tradition*, “Hospitality” (Winter 1990): 17-23. In more contemporary times, Pohl, *Making Room*, 133, writes, “every community has wonderful stories of provision. . . . Interestingly, almost every practitioner said that there had always been enough food, no matter how many people they had welcomed.”
should be as eager to detain them as though they were robbers carrying off our savings.”

Philoxenia, love of strangers, as opposed to xenophobia, fear of strangers, assumes the best rather than the worst of those we will meet. This stance of openness and availability, therefore, presumes a certain vulnerability on the part of the host, a willingness to be changed by the experience. Oden characterizes this as a stance of “readiness,” and writes that both hosts and guests must be “ready to welcome, ready to enter another’s world, ready to be vulnerable.”

The stance of readiness arises out of trust based not so much on the expectation for human success, but because of God. Thus, it is really humble openness to God’s grace.

Readiness also has a moral component. By its very definition, indeed by the very physicality of its function, hospitality is most needed in the concrete places where hurt is to be found, in places of vulnerability and need, where there is hunger or thirst, isolation or desperation, illness or despair (Matt. 25: 35-40). Russell, in fact, defines hospitality as “the practice of God’s welcome, embodied in our actions as we reach across difference to participate with God in bringing justice and healing to the world in crisis.” But inherent within that call to hospitality must be the attunement and attentiveness that gives one the eyes to see and ears to hear, or what Pohl calls the “power of recognition,” and thus to first identify those concrete places of hurt in order to be present there. Like the rich man (traditionally named Dives) of the parable (Luke 16:19-31), one can far too easily maintain distance and never really “see” the

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156. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 15.
157. Oden, And You Welcomed Me, 15.
158. Russell, Just Hospitality, 2.
159. Pohl, Making Room, 62, and passim 61-84.
places of hurt. Thus, readiness also requires attentiveness to the wider context, so that one can identify those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or rendered invisible.\footnote{Luke Bretherton, “Tolerance, Education and Hospitality: A Theological Proposal,” Studies in Christian Ethics 17, issue 1 (April 2004): 80-103, at 100.}

We may think instead, therefore, of the parable of the Good Samaritan and his willingness to, first, see what no one else was acknowledging: the person in need who lay before him, and then to cross to the other side in order to care for him. Moral readiness, as a kind of spiritual \textit{habitus},\footnote{I use the word “habitus” to refer to a kind of regular and ongoing spiritual practice that becomes a disposition or orientation grounded in the intentionality of trying to live as God desires. See, for example, Edward Farley, \textit{Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education} (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 35-6, who defines it as a “cognitive discipline and orientation of the soul, a knowledge of God and what God reveals” and “an attitude of the soul . . . tied directly with faith, prayer, virtues, and yearning for God,” and Herbert Anderson, “Seeing the Other Whole: A Habitus for Globalisation,” in \textit{Globalisation and Difference: Practical Theology in a World Context}, ed. Paul Ballard and Pam Couture (Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press, 1999), 3-17, who understands it to be “a practically oriented disposition of the human soul formed from general spirituality, shaped by disciplined meditation and the study of Christian texts, informed by a careful reading of the signs of the times and the practical knowledge necessary for the work of ministry in this time” (5).} involves, first, attentiveness to the “panoramic view” that sees far beyond oneself, and understands that hospitality needs to embody justice. It therefore is attentive to what is happening at the margins, or outside of the dominant view. Second, it involves a readiness to not just receive a stranger from a place of relative safety, but a readiness to go to the places of vulnerability and need, and to make oneself available and a “neighbor” to those who dwell there. Here, the view becomes a “closeup” as attunement to the individual person in need becomes the focus.

The next aspect of moral readiness involves the crucial imperative of listening. Richard, in fact, writes that listening must be the basic attitude of hospitality, and that it presupposes the willingness to enter the world of others and hear their story.\footnote{Richard, \textit{Living the Hospitality of God}, 12.} This is particularly important for our present time, since, as we have seen throughout this study, the denial and usurpation of the voice and power of the migrant, and the critical agency that comes with them, have been consistent problems. Because listening places the frame of reference on another, it will always
open one to metanoia and transformation as one comes to understand the incompleteness and inadequacy of one’s point of view. Indeed, as Brueggemann has emphasized, the “shrill voices” of lament at the margins always give lie to satisfaction with the present order, and with one’s place in it. While too consumed with the immediacy and the concrete experience of pain to engage in social analysis, there is nevertheless in lament a latent and powerful sense of the need for urgent change. Ultimately, because laments refuse to accept the way things are, they are speeches of hope, and voice the “poetry of possibility” that there can be healing and newness.

Lament is instead served by a vocabulary that focuses on the concrete places of human existence where the hurt is, passionately insists that something must be done, and urgently pleads with God to move to that place of hurt. The words of lament are spoken, not in places of power, but within places in the community where they may be heard, affirming that healing is essentially a communal practice. Today’s lament is voiced by immigrants who come to the U.S., who bring with them their own customs, language, and understandings, and who seek a place to share their stories. Like the biblical witness of lament, their stories are told in times of exile and diaspora. As they arrive at parishes, their need is not only for a place to worship, but to feel at home. However, there are no short term, quasi-hospitable solutions that will suffice here. Their “hunger” is for community, their “thirst” for recognition, and, as strangers, they do not just need to be taken in, but to settle in, no longer guests but as fellow “homeowners.” Therefore, space in the basement—or in a dusty, unused classroom—will simply not do. In this case, it will require


“making space” in ways that are transformative or, as Nouwen writes about hospitality, it “requires the creation of friendly empty space where we can reach out to fellow human beings and invite them to a new relationship.”

Thus the final aspect of the *habitus* of moral readiness involves the readiness to truly make room for another, in ways that allow and invite God to transform what once were strangers into community and the household of God. As we saw in the last chapter, space and place have an integral role to play in this transformation, and parishes have the capacity to be a sign that God’s mission of reconciliation and healing is alive in the world, and a model of the ongoing process of conversion required. By way of example, I refer to the Way of the Cross/ *Via Crucis* described in the last chapter. The communal sharing led in a powerful way to both compassion and conversion.

There is, therefore, a special kind of dynamism that comes as a result of vulnerability towards, and a readiness to receive one another. Hospitality may be understood as a loving availability to others, especially those who are most vulnerable or in need. The *habitus* of readiness brings therefore an attentiveness for those places of suffering, an attunement to the cry of lament, and a readiness to draw near or “cross to the other side.” The corporeality and neighborliness of hospitality is a physical and concrete manifestation of presence and love that overcomes the distance between us. The graced proximity and presence leads one to understand all the more the value of the life before one, and the desire to see and understand her/him more clearly and to seek her/his well-being. Drawn into those places of pain and suffering, and isolation and fear, to those places where God is always drawn, we seek the healing and newness that God offers. This place of hospitality becomes then a privileged place for God to work. No

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longer numb to the suffering, and drawn together by the anguish of lament, we become all the
more available and vulnerable to one another, and all the more willing to suffer-with
(compassion), and resist those parts of ourselves and the society in which we live that would
divide us or harm us. The initial giver, who has, in effect made space for the other, finds that,
instead, she has been drawn into and transformed by the world of the other (metanoia). As the
relationship deepens, solidarity and justice emerge not as duty but as desire. This, in turn,
enhances the habitus of hospitality, the attunement to suffering, the readiness to drawn near, and
the desire for conversion. We begin to imagine a radically expanded and interdependent future
together and to long for—and work for—social transformation.

In summary, if hospitality is to serve as a resistance and countermovement to the current
situation, listening, characterized and conditioned by vulnerability, availability, and readiness,
becomes a crucial imperative. As we shall see in the next section, below, hospitality as resistance
necessitates a movement to the margins, from which one can better listen to and begin to
understand the pain of others.168 The next section will discuss both the necessity and the
fruitfulness of such a movement.

Conclusion

In this chapter, radical hospitality has served as the binding agent that draws a theology
of migration into a cohesive whole, one that is more than the sum of its parts. Because it is
situated within a theology of grace, and rooted in God’s own hospitality, however, radical
hospitality also raises the pitch, taking understanding to a different level. Hospitality, properly
understood, is hospitality among strangers, among vulnerable sojourners on a communal
pilgrimage with the final goal of reconciliation and unity with God and each other. At the same

time, we make our dwelling and home with each other, as kin who are brought together and serve as a sign and anticipation of the final telos.

All then have a vocation to be in exile, and the optics of vulnerability, knowing the heart of a stranger, and relationality emerge as a resistance to and counter-movement against the sins of domineering power, exclusion, and marginalization that, as we saw in Chapter 1, often define and mar relationships between migrants and the receiving parish communities. These optics also help to resist the tendency toward benevolent paternalism sometimes found in hospitality, to undermine efforts that reinforce the power differentials between host and guest, and to restore right relations between fellow sojourners who remember gratefully their own experience of having been strangers and God’s faithful accompaniment on the journey.

When situated properly within a theology of grace, however, the migration-hospitality dyad has the potential to point to joyful encounters, abundant blessings, and surprising transformations. In the strange economy of God’s household, and emboldened by the Spirit of Pentecost, there is a trust and anticipation that overcomes trepidations, so that there is a readiness to receive each other, and even a “pursuit” of hospitality. In this regard, then, those wishing to practice hospitality make room for each other, but are also willing to cross to the other side to go to the places of need. A movement to the margin, and a marginal imagination, restore something integral from Christianity’s roots, and spark the imagination to envision more expansively, shedding the vestiges of the dominant forces that would try to monopolize the imagination.

Finally, understanding the importance of the interconnectedness and interdependence of the world, we strive to restore the balance and to embrace God’s mission of reconciliation and wholeness through solidarity and mutuality. Today’s migrations call out for a praxis of
hospitality that is characterized by solidarity and mutuality practiced from the margins and with a *habitus* of moral readiness.

In stark contrast to the marginalizing stories and destructive metaphors described in Chapter 1, and unwittingly adopted by Christians, the narrative of hospitality and grace offers a powerful and definitive counter-pulse against domination and exclusion. If fact, hospitality is the very antithesis of and antidote to the hegemonic practices described in the first chapter, one entirely in keeping with Christianity’s own heritage, identity, and vocation. Home, then, becomes not a place staked out as territory, but the site where we gather gratefully as God’s family to give thanks, to break bread, and to tell our stories.
Chapter 6

Conclusion: A Journey Taken Together

Implications: A Global Phenomenon with a Human Face

There are few places in the world unaffected by migration. An estimated 232 million people are international migrants,¹ a number that is larger than the population of the world’s fifth largest country. The number of internal migrants is more than three times that of international migrants, surpassing 740 million.² With one in every seven people in the world a migrant, it is thus a world profoundly defined by movement and loss. Last year, 2013, is believed to be the deadliest on record for migrants around the world.³ Globally, reception continues to be “frosty,” if not “harsh,” as migrants face death, danger, and disappointment as they search for a new life.⁴ At a time when migration and displacement are so prevalent, this study has highlighted the pressing need to renew the ethic of welcoming strangers, made more so by the hostile reception offered to so many—and in light of the tragic consequences of failing to do so—and to return to right relation. This study has also shown how within communities receiving migrants there is critical need for a theology of migration that is a reorientation to God’s mission of healing, hospitality, and reconciliation, a reorientation that gives lie to every act of exclusion as idolatry.⁵

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5. See Volf, Exclusion and Embrace, 66, who writes that exclusion—a term which encompasses oppression, alienation, and subjugation—is a form of idolatry and a “sinful activity of reconfiguring creation.”
In his 2012 review of theological literature on migration, Campese observes that the field of systematic theology “has either totally ignored or found it difficult to include the issues related to human mobility in its agenda,” although he does point to a “growing involvement of Christian theology with the phenomenon.” As is often the case, the first reflections came from those with first-hand experience, such as missionaries who serve migrants or those participating in sanctuary movements, and appropriately focused on critical needs: saving lives, protecting migrant rights, ethical implications, and providing pastoral care. Another important and developing trajectory is in the area of Hispanic/Latino/a contextual theologies and reflects on the experience of the immigrant as a *locus theologicus*. The final trajectory, exemplified by the Justice for Immigrants campaign organized under the auspices of the USCCB, concentrates on education, advocacy, and organization for immigration reform. Together, these additions offer valuable, timely, and crucial contributions.

Using the *kairos* of Latino/a migration to the U.S. as the starting point, this project builds upon their important work, furthering the inquiry in the direction of the emergent and vulnerable populations of migrants as they settle into established neighborhoods and parishes all over the U.S., and where the same patterns of displacement and rejection exist. As this thesis has demonstrated, the whole idea of migration is fraught with tensions. Public rhetoric in the U.S., undergirded by racist sentiments, xenophobia, and nativism, regularly demonizes and scapegoats migrants as a rising brown tide of alien invaders, characterizing them as dangerous, destructive, and problematic, and defining them as quintessentially “other,” characterizations that often carry over into parish life. Demands for deportation and repatriation populate public discourse, while

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6. Campese, “The Irruption of Migrants,” 5. In his review of theological literature on migration over the last fifty years, Campese notes early reflections by the Scalabrinian missionaries on their pastoral care of Italian migrants; developing Hispanic/Latino/a contextual theologies on the reality of undocumented immigration; and reflections on the Sanctuary Movement to aid and defend refugees (8-9). In 2002, the first of a growing number of conferences was organized by the Scalabrinian missionaries and the Transborder Institute (9).
migrants are subjected to increasing exclusion and oppression, predicated upon the understanding that migration is a problem to be solved. Migration to the U.S. has also proved deadly, with an estimated 444 people having lost their lives in 2013 trying to cross the border. More and more often, Latino/a residents—regardless of their citizenship or documented/undocumented status—suffer from the trifecta of racism, classism, and nativism. The situation cries out for communities of resistance and solidarity, and for a theology of migration that speaks to the encounter and engagement between the receiving communities and those migrating and is oriented toward a more inclusive vision more in keeping with Christianity’s own values and heritage.

Changing demographics as a result of immigration are already a present reality in parishes all over the U.S., making this project both timely and relevant. Forty million immigrants reside in the United States, representing thirteen percent of the U.S. population. At present, almost one-third of all foreign born residents are from Mexico. Further, one of the unintended consequences of the militarization of the Mexican-U.S. border is that many migrants now remain in the U.S. rather than risk repeated treacherous border crossings, which has accelerated the growth of the Mexican population residing in the United States. Latinas/os, therefore, are expected to account for twenty-nine percent of the total U.S. population by the year

7. IOM, “International Migrants Day 2013.” According to IOM, an estimated 444 people died in 2013 while attempting to cross the Mexico-U.S. border.


2050. More than two-thirds (sixty-eight percent) self-identify as Roman Catholic. In the U.S. today, one-half of all Catholics under the age of 40 are Latino/a.

To add to this, almost half of the migrants today are women who, once they migrate, tend to stay and begin the process of putting down roots. For sociologists who are analyzing this trend, “the presence of a large number of women in immigration populations appears to signal settlement rather than transiency.” Women are also essential to the community-building process. By virtue of their agency as household workers, consumers, and caregivers, they play a vital role in building new relationships, and they view church as a kind of semi-public space in which to foster community building. In fact, with the face of the migrant increasingly being that of a woman, migration is more and more understood outside of traditional paradigms. For example, instead of the customary “push-pull” model that speaks of the push of poverty and the pull of jobs, we may think of a broad range of forces at work, which includes family and extended families, as well as a network of sending and receiving communities involving clustered groups, making migration more of a collective endeavor with multiple trajectories and with the aim of making a home at their destination. Taken together, we may begin to


The inadequacy of a “push-pull” model was made clear to me by way of a parish event that our social justice ministry sponsored to study the “push-pull” factors. We were showing a documentary on the topic and had discussion questions prepared for the expected Anglo audience. A number of our Latino/a parishioners joined us and began to share their stories with us. The anguish of being at once separated from family members, likely forever, and at the same time, migrating to help those family members became evident. One woman, who I will call “María” told us the almost unimaginable story of losing her 4 year old in
understand that, for many migrants, migration means settling in, with church as a factor, if not a resource, to do so.

Over the past twenty years, a body of work exploring the dimensions of Christian hospitality, ranging from its moral implications, to its countercultural dimensions, to practical considerations and applications, has developed. Although migration itself has not been their primary focus, several theologians recognize its potential in this area, as well as for overcoming the barriers between us that difference can create. This project takes up and builds upon their fruitful and important work, focusing upon the encounter between emergent and vulnerable migrant populations and the dominant culture, and using radical hospitality as the central theme. Grounded as it is in a theology of grace and gratitude, and evocative of our own shared vulnerability and shared remembrance of having been strangers, hospitality decenters and reorients those in the dominant culture, while providing the foundation for mutuality and solidarity. If migration is the crucible, then hospitality is the catalyst that crystallizes the vision for a theology of migration and for a different, grace-filled future together.

The Pilgrimage Ahead

I recall a visit to Chaos Canyon in the Rocky Mountains that serves as a metaphor for the pilgrimage journey ahead. Chaos Canyon has to be the most appropriately named place I have ever seen. Boulders of every size, shape, and proportion lay before us in tumbled, jumbled disorder, some balanced precariously, others wedged firmly among a jumble of other rocks. On the middle of the desert when immigration enforcement scattered their party. After desperately searching for him to no avail, they had no recourse but to return to Mexico and try to find out what happened. Another relative had picked him up in the desert, but he was now staying in a northern city in the U.S. Having already paid the coyote with all the money they had, “María” approached her mother, who scraped together the money to pay for another coyote to escort them through the desert, with both mother and daughter knowing that it meant that they would probably never see each other again. It was at this point in the telling that “María” was unable to finish the story, and her own daughter, for whom they had migrated to offer a better life, explained to us why “María” was crying so uncontrollably, remembering the sacrifice of her own mother, and knowing they would never be together again.
the other side of the canyon, a beautiful lake glistened invitingly. The trail appeared impassible, but in the middle of the disarray of the nature-tossed obstructions, hikers who had gone before had thoughtfully placed cairns, small piles of stacked rocks, to serve as a kind of rudimentary signpost marking the next step. It was only by starting the climb across the littered canyon that one could see the next cairn, and the one after. By way of these well-placed markers, we made our way slowly across the canyon towards the respite of the beckoning lake.

As I sat by the lake later, it occurred to me that the image of a journey with well-placed “cairns” was a particularly apt metaphor to characterize the journey that parishes take in their day-to-day efforts to become one family. With its “rocky” start, and the many obstructions that make it seem insurmountable, the journey is one taken in faith, with a vision of what is ahead motivating the steps. To traverse the entire canyon seems an impossible task, but we can look for markers along the way, taking tentative steps in the right direction, and helping each other over the rough spots. A cairn seems an appropriate image for another reason: it reminded me of the many migrants making the arduous trek across the treacherous terrains of deserts and mountains, and the small markers that, at times, made the difference between life and death, pointing to water, safety, or away from a dangerous route to be avoided. A theology of migration, therefore, seeks to place some small markers in difficult places, hoping they might be helpful in setting the course.

The project began by removing one of the largest obstructions from the path: the way in which the dominant culture images migrants through powerful metaphors, narratives, and framing, and which serves to dehumanize, marginalize, and set them apart as “other,” rather than as kin and co-heirs. Unmasking this rhetoric as sinful, unjust, embedded within chronic patterns of racism, and contrary to Christianity’s own narrative, values, and self-identity, it called for an
ethic of resistance and solidarity, and for the process of conversion, resistance, and imagining differently. Catholic social teaching took the first steps in that direction, establishing the rights of migrants grounded in the common good, and in a theological anthropology of humans, created in the image and likeness of God, and endowed with dignity, and of the interdependence and interconnectedness of all of humanity. Tracing the evolution of the magisterial teachings, we found that the approach to migrants was woven into a larger vision of justice and solidarity, and in a deep and abiding commitment to pastoral care that flowed out of the heritage of hospitality.

The magisterial document, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* [EMCC], and a deeper exploration into the roots of hospitality and its inextricable link to migration, set the course for the rest of the project. *EMCC* clearly missions migrants as co-builders of universal fraternity; names hospitality and migration as intrinsic to the nature of the church, and to the way we bear witness; and teaches that hospitality must be practically marked by a vocation to be in exile. Christians are called to follow Christ, who was himself a temporary resident and a guest. Further, migrations are a call and prefiguration of the biblical vision of the *telos*, with its goal of reconciliation and unity with God. Thus, the coming together of cultures is a *kairos* for the church, and migration and hospitality the basis for a new sacramental unity.

Using Christianity’s own history, nature, and praxis of migration and hospitality as a catalyst for a new shared vision of dwelling together, and seeking a theological framework, the project examined their deep roots in scripture, and their pride of place in the early church. It discovered that migration is woven into the fabric of the Judeo-Christian faith, the frequent setting for the biblical narration of salvation history, a characteristic of Jesus’ existence, and a marker of the early church. Even when it was more settled and accepted into the culture, Christianity nevertheless continued to claim marginal status, and to maintain that way of life.
Hospitality was a distinguishing mark of civilization, and was born from the desire to please God and out of gratitude to God for all that the people of God had been given. It was a means of survival, and always contained an element of reciprocity and of the possibility of meeting a God-sent stranger. Hospitality was later codified into law, an ethic that arose out of Israel’s own formative experiences of migration and exile, of having been strangers themselves, and now of knowing the heart of a stranger. Thus, the ethic was born out of a theology of grace and gratitude. Remembrance of having been vulnerable strangers yielded explicit legislation that ensured the survival of those without support or kin, and later included them in their lives. In the Christian Testament, hospitality, now modeled on Jesus but still embracing its rich history, became a central means by which to transcend difference, become one body, and serve as an anticipatory sign of the in-breaking of the Kingdom. Because Jesus is now associated with the God-sent stranger, there is a distinctive understanding to hospitality that seeks out those in need, and anticipates encounters with anticipation. The vision of Pentecost serves as a model for unity-in-diversity.

With this central orientation and direction in place, we return to the thought of theological markers for a theology of migration. As we saw in Chapter 2, the U.S. and Mexican bishops advance the calls to conversion, communion, and solidarity, imaged as hospitality, in SNL. However, as we have seen throughout this study, the asymmetries and power differentials between cultures remain a significant impediment to unity-in-diversity, as does the dominant perspective that does not take seriously its own marginal identity as a church of others. This is clear from the bishops’ description of solidarity, which they write can include participating in efforts to ensure the government respects the rights of immigrants and providing direct assistance, i.e., lobbying, letter writing, advocacy, and pastoral care. While all laudable and
necessary efforts, they do not seem to reach the level of sacramental encounter envisioned by *EMCC*, nor the evocative and transformative potential of radical hospitality.

Thus, an important foregrounding was an examination and critique of the way in which power differentials can unintentionally lead to marginalization and exclusion, even in well-meaning efforts of hospitality, pastoral care, or solidarity. With that in place, and using the *kairos* of Latino/a migration to the U.S. as a crucible for change, reconciliation, and renewal, the project offered a constructive proposal for a theology of migration that more adequately addresses the sins of dominative power, exclusion, and marginality that are often operative in the coming together of dominant and privileged cultures with emerging and vulnerable ones.

Recovering the identity of the church as both pilgrim and marginal, and finding in them elements that critique of dominative practices as well as the potential for the making of new communities, it identified solidarity across difference and a spirit of reconciliation as its first two markers. These markers were characterized by a border crossing spirituality, covenantal conversations flowing out of a vulnerable and kenotic availability and eliciting both conversion and deeper community, and a central vision of the spirit of Pentecost. These markers, then, are neither simple correctives, nor detours, but necessary elements that point the way forward towards the transformative engagement with migrants.

The third marker is a recovery of a radical hospitality, situated within a theology of grace and God’s own hospitable love and welcome to creation, and drawing upon and nourished by the crucial fertilization provided by solidarity across difference and a spirit of reconciliation. Because it is God’s hospitality, it evokes memories of our own vulnerability, and of having been strangers once ourselves. These serve as a further reorientation to right relations of interdependence and interconnectedness. Next, a focus on God as source is a reminder of the
centrality of grace, and therefore on the economy of blessing, abundance, and giftedness, that are operative in hospitality. We are all recipients of God’s blessings, and hospitality is founded upon that abundance. We see this logic of abundance manifested in the guest-host dynamism found in hospitality, wherein Christians, imitating Christ, both offer and receive hospitality. In so doing, new patterns of life emerge that transform and reorder lives, so that both are transfigured and may imagine life together. In turn, because of this grace and abundance, the transformative potential of hospitality yields communities characterized by availability and a readiness to receive, a voluntary movement to the margins, and who practice solidarity and mutuality. In summary, in light of the kairos of Latino/a migration to the United States, a theology of migration must be situated within a theology of grace, must seek solidarity across difference in a spirit of reconciliation, and be rooted in the virtues and practices of hospitality, elements of which include relationality, a shared memory of having been strangers and welcomed, and a current acknowledgement of one’s own vulnerability.

If, indeed, vulnerable sojourning and migration are central to Christian understanding, it cannot be that they are problems to be solved. Instead, they are “of God,” and therefore, ripe with promise, and the means by which new communities and relationships are born, and a grace by which God is transforming the church. Using both memory and imagination, and emboldened by the discernment that God is doing a new thing (Isa 43:19), we may envision parishes as the sites/spaces to adopt a stance, spirituality, and praxis of reconciliation and border crossing in order to constitute new and intentional communities that anticipate the basileia of justice and love. Hospitality is the catalyst, the practice, the virtue, and the vision that enlivens this sacramental body. Covenantal conversation and relationality both undergird hospitality, but also provide the means by which hospitality may be deepened and enriched. In such a revisioning,
solidarity and mutuality become a part of the praxis; thus, difference and diversity are respected and honored as contributing to the whole.

There are numerous tasks ahead, and many avenues to explore, and a theology of migration remains necessarily unfinished and under construction. In the final section, I point to several potential areas of future research.

**Further Avenues of Research**

In addition to my work with immigration, I have also been involved for a number of years with ministry to the incarcerated, and especially with ministry to and with those who are homeless. All three of these areas share a common theme of diaspora and a sense of exile, yet in my accompaniment with those impacted, I regularly encounter not despair, but quiet endurance, strength, and hope bolstered by faith. These times have been, for me, both an education and a time of conversion and formation, and have shaped this thesis, as well as my overall studies, in innumerable ways. Based, therefore, upon the research in this study and my own praxis, three avenues immediately present themselves for future exploration.

First, the field of interculturality, briefly mentioned in this project, has clear resonances with a theology of migration and a theology of hospitality, and is an important direction for theologies that are undergirded by reconciliation or by the desire to build bridges. What happens, for example, in situations with multiple cultures, or, as is often the case, multiple interpretations and understandings of one’s culture? The Day of the Dead, for example, is celebrated differently depending on the region. After migrating, then, and with no cemetery to visit, does the practice move to the parish? Who decides on how the custom will be celebrated? Further, how can parishes and dioceses negotiate differences between practices held in high esteem by one culture, but not important to another? For example, in our parish, there is a large devotion to Our Lady of
Guadalupe. Our Latino/a parishioners, given the choice, would begin every function with a rosary and a prayer honoring La Morenita, where other parishioners prefer other forms of prayer. Issues like this will become more and more commonplace.

Next, our globalized and globalizing world, the changing demographics in the United States, the heightened tensions around migration, and the ever-evolving landscape around these issues point to migration and intercultural encounters as a significant challenge for Christianity in the U.S. Theology is only beginning to examine this field, and there is still much work to be done, work that will have long-lasting consequences. This study is meant to be one step in that direction. With this in mind, the third avenue is the continued fruitfulness in the recovery of hospitality as a love that does justice, and as a guiding ethic, virtue, and practice for communities of resistance and solidarity, as well as in social justice or social service ministries. In my own parish, for example, hospitality has been the guiding ethic in the establishment of a ministry to and with those who are homeless, which began with meals, but has expanded to much more. Last winter, on thirty-eight of the harshest winter nights, we also opened the parish gym as a temporary overnight shelter (affectionately referred to as a “sleepover” by the overnight guests). Parishioners and guests made dinner together, played chess or cards, or watched movies, then stayed together on cots in the gym, before breakfast and cleanup the next day. Parishioners who stayed the night named those nights moments of profound conversion. In light of the riches in store with a recovery of the ethic and practice of hospitality, how does it make its return to pride of place in the Christian tradition, rather than in limited settings? How can the living memory of migration and diaspora, so palpable in the scriptures, be reinvigorated in those now living a settled and stable existence?
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