

Doing Likewise: A Theology of Neighbor and Pedagogy for Neighbor-Formation

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Boston College
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
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**DOING LIKEWISE: A THEOLOGY OF NEIGHBOR
AND PEDAGOGY FOR NEIGHBOR-FORMATION**

a dissertation

by

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Doing Likewise: A Theology of Neighbor and Pedagogy for Neighbor-Formation

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The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke's Gospel (10:25-37) may be Jesus' most well-known teaching. Though it epitomizes the heart of Christian faith and the Great Commandment to love God and one's neighbors as oneself, the depth of the challenge to "Go and do likewise" like the Samaritan is not well understood and less often put into practice. The Samaritan's example sets a standard that is not met by random acts of kindness; Samaritan-like neighbor love means acting with courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity to care for those most in need. According to Gustavo Gutiérrez, by going out of his way and into the ditch to draw near to the robbers' victim, the Samaritan's actions depict the preferential option for the poor. This reverence for the other, especially one in such a vulnerable condition, depicts what Gutiérrez calls a "theology of the neighbor," which he claims has not yet been developed.

This dissertation proposes a "theology of neighbor" motivated and oriented by the details of this paradigmatic standard for Christian discipleship to more fully capture how the principles of solidarity and preferential option for the poor may be put into practice. Before working out the theological, moral, and pedagogical implications for this framework, this project focuses on three key features of the present praxis that influence how "neighbor" might be understood today: the complex and compressed systems of globalization, the social disengagement of the "buffered self" as described by Charles Taylor, and the "networked self" that enjoys unprecedented rates of connectivity via digital technologies and social media.

In response to the challenges posed by this socio-cultural context, this dissertation articulates a moral vision for being neighbors today. This is given shape by a matrix of virtues that include compassion, courage, fidelity, and prudence. When put into practice, these dispositions and habits are meant to inspire and sustain an integral life-pattern committed to solidarity and preferential option for the poor held in balance with the moral obligations to one's family and friends. Narrowing the focus to students at U.S. Catholic colleges and informed by the current conditions for their personal, social, religious, and moral formation, this dissertation proposes a pedagogical approach to theological education as neighbor-formation. This involves establishing communities of practice that follow the Samaritan's example to draw near – physically and virtually – to neighbors in need in steadfast commitment to right-relationship in solidarity. In doing so, this dissertation develops a framework of principles and practices to effectively engage today's emerging adults to “Go and do likewise” in an increasingly globalized, digital world.

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INTRODUCTION

The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) may be Jesus' most well-known story. Though it epitomizes the heart of Christian faith and the Great Commandment to love God and one's neighbors as oneself, the depth of the challenge to "Go and do likewise" like the Samaritan is not as well understood and less often put into practice. Perhaps because it is such a familiar story, it is easy to gloss over the passage's details and reduce the message to an endorsement of voluntary acts of benevolence. However, the depth of Luke's challenge to follow the Samaritan's example is hardly captured by episodes of charity. As a result, most disciples fail to live up to Jesus' parting words to "Go and do likewise" (v. 37).

A further challenge is issued by Peruvian priest and one of the founding voices in liberation theology, Gustavo Gutiérrez. Responding to the theological problem of human suffering in impoverished conditions, Gutiérrez presents ample biblical evidence that God desires people to be freed from dehumanizing conditions, mentalities, and practices. Faithful disciples are called to cooperate with God's will for human liberation from sin and oppressive behaviors and social systems. This call to liberation, according to Gutiérrez, is an invitation to a spirituality that seeks right-relationship with God through accompaniment with poor, marginalized, and vulnerable peoples. The Incarnation transforms and universalizes the bond between God and humanity, making liberation a call to conversion and fidelity not only to Christ, but to Christ in the neighbor, the Christ who identifies himself with the "least" among us.¹ Gutiérrez cites the Good Samaritan as

¹ See Matthew 25:31-46; Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* tr. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988), 112-116.

depicting this conversion and commitment in conformity with God's will for vertical and horizontal right-relationship. According to Gutiérrez, the Samaritan exemplifies a "theology of the neighbor," which he acknowledges "has yet to be worked out."²

In his more recent writings, Gutiérrez has developed this further to propose that the Samaritan's actions depict the preferential option for the poor. By leaving the road to Jericho and descending into the ditch to care for the robbers' victim, the Samaritan enters "the world of the other, of the 'insignificant' person, of the one excluded from dominant social sectors, communities, viewpoints, and ideas."³ To be a neighbor together with another neighbor means this act should not be one of paternalistic pity. To underscore equality and mutuality between neighbors, Gutiérrez interprets the act of entering the ditch as implying friendship with the poor and among the poor.⁴

Insofar as this view highlights the solidaristic bonds of human filiation and the requirement of justice to give preference to the neediest members of society, Gutiérrez issues a bold challenge for Christian discipleship and those charged with forming disciples. This dissertation aims to respond to this challenge.

To do so, it proposes a "theology of neighbor" motivated and oriented by the details of this paradigmatic passage to more fully capture how the principles of solidarity and preferential option for the poor may be put into practice by following the Samaritan's example. Three other theological insights shape the overall vision of this project. The

² Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 116. In discussing this project with Fr. Gutiérrez, he has indicated that he is unaware of any other attempt to "work out" a "theology of the neighbor."

³ Gutiérrez continues, "The priority of the other is a distinguishing mark of a gospel ethic, and nobody embodies this priority more clearly than the poor and the excluded." In Gutiérrez, "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ" *Theological Studies* 70 (2009), 317-325 (at 318).

⁴ Gutiérrez explains, "It is good to specify that the preferential option for the poor, if it aims at the promotion of justice, equally implies friendship with the poor and among the poor. Without friendship there is neither authentic solidarity nor a true sharing. In fact, it is a commitment to specific people" (Ibid., 325). It should be noted, however, that here Gutiérrez is diverging from the actual text, which only recounts the Samaritan's unidirectional aid. This will be discussed at greater length in Chapter 2.

first theological source is William Spohn's reminder that the parting words of the passage, "Go and do likewise," do not mean "Go and do exactly the same" or "Go and do whatever you want." "Doing likewise" relies on the analogical imagination to faithfully and creatively discern what is required to follow the Samaritan's example in one's own socio-cultural context.⁵ In this case, the analogical application of the Samaritan's actions centers on his compassion, leading Spohn to assert that Samaritan-like compassion is the "optic nerve of Christian vision."⁶

The second theological source is Maureen O'Connell's work to apply the compassion modeled by the Samaritan in light of the present state of radical social inequality, unjust suffering, and other dehumanizing effects of globalization.⁷ Specifically, O'Connell calls for a political compassion that not only shares in the suffering of those left in the ditch today, but requires Christian disciples to scrutinize the ways they are complicit in the social, political, and economic practices and systems that cause such widespread conditions of human suffering. This project follows Dr. Martin Luther King's claim that today, to "Go and do likewise" demands more than charity;

⁵ Spohn appeals to this story as a key "metaphorical framework" for disciples to faithfully follow Jesus Christ, the "concrete universal of Christian ethics, the paradigm that normatively guides Christian living." See William C. Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2006), 4.

⁶ Ibid., 87. Spohn describes the example of the Samaritan as a "classic paradigm of perception and blindness," wherein the moral blindness of the priest and Levite is contrasted with the Samaritan's compassionate perception and effective action (89-91).

⁷ O'Connell writes, "Samaritanism in an age of globalization demands that [privileged Christians] recognize the connection between our ability to travel comfortably, if not prosperously, on our way and others' *inabilities* to even climb out of roadside ditches. It requires that we see the connection between our privilege and the under-development of others and between our inability to perceive injustices and others' perpetual experiences of them. It also requires acknowledging that our moral imaginations have failed to understand that a seemingly endless cycle of charity only calcifies social inequalities." See Maureen H. O'Connell, *Compassion: Loving Our Neighbor in an Age of Globalization* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2009), 1-2.

disciples should strive to transform the road to Jericho to resist and reform these life-threatening conditions as part of their commitment to justice.⁸

The third theological source is Roger Bergman's observation that, in the approximately 600 pages of documents that represent the canon of Catholic social thought, only one and a half pages address how they might be pedagogically implemented.⁹ Hence, this proposed "theology of neighbor" includes a much-needed pedagogy for neighbor-formation by engaging the principles of solidarity and preferential option for the poor. Although these themes are applicable to disciples across the whole life-span, this dissertation will focus particularly on theological education and moral formation for U.S. Catholic college students.

This project proceeds in light of three features of the present sociology of U.S. Catholic college student experience. The first draws on data collected since 2001 by the National Study of Youth and Religion as reported by Christian Smith and his colleagues.¹⁰ They detect several troubling trends among America's "emerging adults" including large numbers who are no longer religiously affiliated, unwilling or unable to articulate a consistent or coherent moral code, and abiding instead by a "moral therapeutic deism."¹¹ This individualistic and morally relativistic ethos prizes personal subjectivity, feeling, and self-fulfillment at the expense of absolute moral truths and

⁸ Ibid., 183-207. King preached this assertion at Riverside Church in New York City on April 4, 1967, one year before his assassination.

⁹ Roger Bergman, *Catholic Social Learning: Educating the Faith That Does Justice* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), vii.

¹⁰ See especially: Christian Smith, et al., *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

¹¹ Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 162. According to Smith and his colleagues, certain features of the current American social context infantilize young adults, delaying mature adulthood until roughly the mid-twenties. In this project, "emerging adults" will be used to refer to college students in this developmental stage nearing mature adulthood.

obligations. Among several related trends, Smith reports increasing rates of political disengagement, contributing to a decline in civic participation, as well. To establish a more “neighborly” social reality, this project will have to account for these acute obstacles.

The second, serious concern is the sizable “empathy deficit” across U.S. college students.¹² University of Michigan researchers, who have studied thousands of college students for the last 30 years, report empathy rates about 40% lower among today’s students.¹³ Other studies have detected significant increases in narcissism among current college students.¹⁴ Psychologists and sociologists continue to search for the root causes of these trends, but it is worth noting that increasing reliance on digital tools – especially when they replace interpersonal, corporeal connection and communication – may be a contributing factor.¹⁵ Interestingly, emerging adults’ digital hyperconnectivity means that knowing more about what others are doing does not translate into caring about them. The declining “social glue” that corresponds with feeling emotionally in tune with others may be a result of feeling overwhelmed by the volume and velocity of their digitally-mediated exchanges.

¹² Keith O’Brien, “The Empathy Deficit” *The Boston Globe* (17 October 2010), available at http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2010/10/17/the_empathy_deficit/?page=full&fb_ref=homepage.

¹³ Rick Nauert, “Compassion on the Decline Among College Students” *Psych Central* (4 June 2010), available at <http://psychcentral.com/news/2010/06/01/compassion-on-the-decline-among-college-students/14210.html>.

¹⁴ Jean M. Twenge and Joshua D. Foster, “Birth Cohort Increases in Narcissistic Personality Traits Among American College Students, 1982-2009” in *Social Psychology and Personality Science* 1:1 (January 2010), 99-106.

¹⁵ This is a central claim made by MIT professor and licensed clinical psychologist Sherry Turkle in her book, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other* (New York: Basic Books, 2011). She expresses concern for the way that digital technology makes possible a new norm: one that seeks validation increasingly (if not incessantly) in others, making young people more concerned about cultivating the “right” digital image to be affirmed. This obsessive desire makes it more difficult to have the presence of mind and heart to relate at deeper levels with others (176-177). See also: Nancy K. Baym, *Personal Connections in the Digital Age* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010), 7-11.

This leads to the third pertinent phenomenon: the rapid pace and vast quantity of interaction made possible by information and communication technologies (hereafter abbreviated as ICTs) and social media networks. The college years are crucial for personal formation and socialization, with peer relationships playing a decisive role. Insofar as so many of these connections and communications are mediated through ICTs and social media, it is necessary to pay closer attention to the effects of these new modes of behavior. Some evidence suggests these technologies and networks generate greater social capital.¹⁶ But in too many instances, imbalanced ICT use by “Generation WiFi” can lead to dependence on technology, decreased self-esteem, and lower valuation of others. The ubiquity and constant use of ICTs and social media can produce a “hyper-other-directedness” wherein self-worth gets measured by how many people one has “friended” or has “following” them, has “liked” their comments or pictures, or responded to their status updates, tweets or blog posts. Some believe the rise in narcissism being observed in today’s emerging adults is the result of a fragile sense of identity that demands constant validation by others.¹⁷ It is fed by fears of isolation and abandonment and produces feelings of uneasiness in face-to-face interactions, which seem less predictable or manipulatable. Since ICT users can be choosy with whom they interact online, and these contacts are increasingly available on-demand, this is also problematic in terms of those who are left out of these virtual connections. This is true both on a

¹⁶ See, for example: Nicole B. Ellison, Charles Steinfield, and Cliff Lampe, “The Benefits of Facebook ‘Friends’: Social Capital and College Students’ Use of Online Social Network Sites,” in *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12:4 (2007), available at <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue4/ellison.html>.

¹⁷ Turkle explains that the personalities she has observed in emerging adults “cannot tolerate the complex demands of other people but tries to relate to them by distorting who they are and splitting off what it needs, what it can use. So, the narcissistic self gets on with others by dealing only with their made-to-measure representations ... You can take what you need and move on. And, if not gratified, you can try someone else” (*Alone Together*, 177).

personal scale where “favorites” are engaged more than strangers, and also on larger scales, in what has been called a global “digital divide” between the ICT haves and have-nots. Although a binary “digital divide” may be an overly simplistic overview of the asymmetries in ICT use, it is important to note that digital consumption and connection tends to further alienate already marginalized populations like the elderly, the poor, and persons with disabilities.¹⁸

These trends point to the need to reconsider the meaning of being neighborly today. In taking up this task, Chapter 1 moves forward in three steps. First, it addresses the general state of living as a Christian disciple in the United States today shaped by globalization, extreme deprivation faced by two-thirds of the world’s population, and a “domesticated Christianity” that blunts the prophetic edge of the gospel. Second, it further explores the sociology of America’s “emerging adults,” especially their experiences in college marked by therapeutic deism, moral relativism, and decreased levels of empathic concern and social engagement. Third, it evaluates the present socio-cultural context as a hybrid between online and offline interactions, paying special attention to the way emerging adults are being shaped by their ICT use. Chapter 1 concludes by addressing how personal identity, interpretation of one’s context, and social responsibility are developed. It notes the special importance of belonging to communities of practice, providing valuable insight for effectively equipping and empowering Catholic college students to “Go and do likewise” today.

¹⁸ In the United States, see “Who’s Online?” by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (August 2012), available at [http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data-\(Adults\)/Whos-Online.aspx](http://www.pewinternet.org/Trend-Data-(Adults)/Whos-Online.aspx) and Susannah Fox, “Americans Living with Disability and their Technology Profile,” by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (January 2011), available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Disability/Report.aspx>. For a global perspective, see Sally Wyatt, *Technology and In/equality: Questioning the Information Society* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

This project has three chief goals. First, I aim to clarify the depth of the challenge in Jesus' teaching to follow the Samaritan's example (Chapter 2). Second, I propose how this standard for neighbor love might be analogically applied according to the "signs of the times" today (Chapters 3 and 4).¹⁹ Third, to bridge the gap between knowing what is required to "do likewise" and actually *doing* likewise, I articulate a framework for a more effective approach to forming U.S. Catholic college students to more consistently act as good neighbors (Chapters 5 and 6). The failure of Christian disciples to know and practice what is required by Luke 10:25-37 is the result of shortcomings in theology and exegesis, moral vision and will, pedagogy and personal formation. In response to these features of the present socio-cultural context, this dissertation envisions college-level theological education as moral formation for Samaritan-like courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity.²⁰

¹⁹ Jesus taught his disciples that it is not enough to know God's will as it has been revealed through Scripture and Tradition, but to interpret its meaning according to the "signs of the times" (see Matthew 16:3). At bottom, this dissertation is an attempt to elucidate God's call to neighborly right-relationship according to the "signs of the times" today.

²⁰ I use the term "solidarity" in reference to the principle of Catholic social thought that aims to realize the unity of the human family by overcoming the social, economic, and political boundaries that separate – and at times subjugate – persons. Solidarity traditionally refers to inclusive friendship in "social charity" as well as a just ordering of society (see, for example, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1939-1941). I use it to connote identifying with the "other" to initiate shared empowerment for communal right-relationship.

The particular emphasis on solidarity for this project is solidarity with neighbors in need, often identified as the "poor," "marginalized," and/or "vulnerable" in this text. Although it is convenient to use these terms as shorthand for those facing various kinds of need, we should avoid the temptation to gloss over the grave suffering and deprivation these persons endure on a daily basis. In this project, "the poor" is always first a reference to actual neighbors in need before being a socio-economic category.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NEED FOR SAMARITAN-LIKE-NEIGHBORLINESS²¹

Before we examine Jesus' teaching in Luke 10:25-37, we must first reconsider what "neighbor" means in a world marked by globalization, the "buffered self," and information and communication digital technologies. For the first Christians, the word "neighbor" (*plēsiōn*) referred to a person who lived nearby. They were primarily oriented toward the group identity and support found within their ethnic tribe. The command to love one's neighbor, then, was a mandate to honor mutual attachments and entitlements between reciprocal relationships. Jesus' teaching and healing ministry expanded circles of respect, right-relationship, and social cohesion. He invited his disciples to enlarge their social group as inclusively as possible.²² This has more complicated implications today, with a world population soaring over seven billion and a complex network of interdependent cultural, economic, and political systems known as "globalization."

Globalization's integrating function, especially through trade, transportation, and telecommunications, produces a variety of effects at local, regional, national, and international levels. On the one hand, there are forces that unite and homogenize; on the other, these pressures also diversify and create friction. In light of the way in which time and space are compressed through these processes of exchange, globalization

²¹ Admittedly, this is an awkward phrase. Nonetheless, the Samaritan's merciful actions need to explicitly specify what "neighbor" connotes, especially in separating it from more prosaic uses of the word. Moreover, as Spohn explains, given the detailed description of the Samaritan's actions, "'neighbor' becomes adverbial, 'neighborly,' a characteristic of generous response, rather than a clearly bounded nominal category that encompasses some people and excludes others" (*Go and Do Likewise*, 91). Going forward, the terms "neighborly," "neighbor love," or "good neighbor" refer to the standard set by the Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 (to be explored in greater detail in Chapter 2).

²² See the entry, "Neighbor" by Bruce J. Malina in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld Vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 251-252.

reconfigures the meaning of place. In particular, the globalized connections forged through ICTs seem to minimize the importance of territoriality; it is now possible to be “near” to someone despite great geographical distance. This would seem to facilitate the possibility of considering every human being one’s neighbor.

The dynamic, multifaceted realities of globalization also produce considerable insecurity and instability, especially in competition between the local and global.²³ The consolidation of power into corporations, financial institutions, and transnational trading agreements has disempowered and disenfranchised countless numbers of individuals, families, and local cooperatives. The global scope of this shift has made it easier for more people to become insensitive to human suffering and ecological degradation; it may even be called a “globalization of indifference.”²⁴ It can leave people overwhelmed at the thought of being complicit in such enormous social, political, and economic structures. It can lead to emotional inertia and moral paralysis in the face of growing concentrations of wealth for a select few and dizzying rates of deprivation among mounting masses of citizens in developing countries, many of whom are women and children. In Western nations, these conditions produce “social imaginaries” conducive to social disengagement when convenient. Philosopher Charles Taylor describes this as a

²³ Anthony Giddens describes the “upward pulls” that centralize power at the transnational level away from the local, the “downward pressures” on local market economies to cut costs and raise revenues, and the “sideways squeezes” as more and more people are brought into competition with each other. See Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 6-19.

²⁴ In his homily on July 8, 2013, Pope Francis compared Jesus’ teaching in the story about the Good Samaritan with today’s “globalization of indifference.” He preached, “we see our brother half dead on the side of the road, and perhaps we say to ourselves: ‘poor soul...!’ and then go on our way. It’s not our responsibility, and with that we feel reassured, assuaged. The culture of comfort, which makes us think only of ourselves, makes us insensitive to the cries of other people, makes us live in soap bubbles which, however lovely, are insubstantial; they offer a fleeting and empty illusion which results in indifference to others; indeed, it even leads to the globalization of indifference. In this globalized world, we have fallen into globalized indifference. We have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn’t affect me; it doesn’t concern me; it’s none of my business!” (Full text available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa_en.html.)

phenomenon of the “buffered self” that invokes the ability to opt-out of social commitments and the corresponding obligations and vulnerabilities of a robust sociality. A desire for protection, order, and autonomy ironically leads to feelings of fear, malaise, and alienation, as “buffered selves” become less receptive to their bonds with others and lose touch with the sense of identity, purpose, and responsibility developed by being embedded in broader frameworks and communities.²⁵

This permissive and noncommittal cultural anthropology is all the more problematic when considering the fact that experiences of suffering, inequality, and disempowerment appear to be growing more severe. In the last year, the U.S. Census Bureau released figures that show the highest rates of poverty in the United States since 1965.²⁶ With 143 million Americans living below or near the federal poverty line, the ratio of impoverished citizens is sliding dangerously close to one-in-two.²⁷ Sociologists warn that rising income inequality and a shrinking middle class is beginning to produce a two-tiered society.²⁸ Many who have the means are moving away from their needier

²⁵ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), 37-42. Two points of clarification are in order. First, Taylor is speaking from a position of privilege as a well-educated white male and largely speaking to a socio-cultural context specific to developed, Western nations. This means that these “social imaginaries” are not meant to be universally-relevant; in fact, there are likely many instances even in the United States where Taylor’s cultural theory does not apply, although these may be “lifestyle enclaves” that bind people together based on shared demographics or ideologies. Second, the “buffered self” may be a function of a healthful balance between solitude and sociality. In other words, I would add to Taylor’s view of the “buffered self” that social disengagement has potential to be productive for personal and social wellbeing. I critique capricious, inordinate, or irresponsible social disengagement, especially in the face of another in need to whom one could offer assistance.

²⁶ Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, “Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011” U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2012), available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p60-243.pdf>

²⁷ Tavis Smiley and Cornel West, *The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto* (New York: SmileyBooks, 2012), 9.

²⁸ See, for example: Sean F. Reardon and Sandra Bischoff, “Growth in the Residential Segregation of Families by Income, 1970-2009” Stanford University (November 2011), available at <http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/national/RussellSageIncomeSegregationreport.pdf>.

neighbors, self-selecting into enclaves of the likeminded. The result is a more geographically segregated United States, socially, economically, and politically.²⁹

The widening gap between the wealthy and needy is punctuated even more on a global scale.³⁰ The Catholic Church has a long tradition of condemning the beliefs, practices, and systems of economic exchange that condemn so many of our brothers and sisters to lives in squalor.³¹ Theologians in developing countries have been vociferous in calling Christians to resist and reform these structures of a “civilization of wealth” that produce abundant luxuries for a select few at the expense of meeting the basic needs of all.³² More recently, Pope Francis has added his voice by denouncing the “cult of money” advanced by greed and a “culture of disposal” that reduces human beings to mere consumer goods. The result is “a new, invisible and at times virtual, tyranny is

²⁹ Bill Bishop, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America is Tearing Us Apart* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2009), 5-15. See also: Emily Badger, “Poverty Maps from 1980 Look Astonishingly Different Compared to 2010” *The Atlantic* (2 July 2013), available at <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2013/07/poverty-maps-1980-look-astonishingly-different-compared-2010/6084/>.

³⁰ The latest figures from the United Nations Human Development Reports are sobering. More than 80% of the world’s population live in countries with widening income differentials. The richest 20% of the global population possess 75% of the world’s wealth and consume more than three-quarters of the goods produced, whereas the poorest 20% claim only 5% of all income and less than 2% total consumption. Half the world’s children now live in impoverished conditions; 22,000 of them die every day because they are deprived adequate shelter, nutrition, water, sanitation, and health care. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2011/>. (Some figures from 2007 Human Development Report, available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2007-2008/>.)

³¹ See, for example, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace’s *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, available at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

³² Ignacio Ellacuría, a Catholic priest, philosopher, and theologian who was murdered in El Salvador in 1989, contrasted a “civilization of wealth” (excessive, possessive accumulation of the world’s elites) with what he envisioned as a “civilization of poverty” that would guarantee that all basic human needs are met, including the freedom to participate in new, vibrant forms of culture and right-relationships with God, self, others, and nonhuman creation. See Ellacuría, “El Reino de Dios y el Paro en el Tercer Mundo” *Concilium* 180 (1982), 588-596; “Utopia and Prophecy in Latin America” *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 289-327.

established, one which unilaterally and irremediably imposes its own laws and rules” seeking profit ahead of human development.³³

In the face of these “signs of the times,” Christians are called to a different kind of globalization and socialization: one of solidarity.³⁴ But a significant obstacle to cultivating a sense of solidarity across these dividing lines is the tyranny of tolerance and pervasiveness of a domesticated form of Christianity that dilutes the demands of discipleship.³⁵ Domesticated Christianity in the United States is privatized, banal, oblivious to the underside of the status quo, and enables self-exculpating deceptions about one’s complicity in others’ suffering.³⁶ Like the “cheap grace” denounced by Dietrich Bonhoeffer as “the mortal enemy” of the church, domesticated Christianity shirks the “cost” of discipleship.³⁷ In a country that touts high rates of religiosity and enjoys its status as the most prosperous and powerful in the world, these critiques need to be confronted by American Christians today.³⁸ Disciples should resist the kinds of self-

³³ Carol Glatz, “Pope Calls for Global, Ethical Finance Reform, End to Cult of Money” *Catholic News Service* (16 May 2013), available at <http://www.catholicnews.com/data/stories/cns/1302173.htm>.

³⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Ecclesia in America*, no. 55 (1999), available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_22011999_ecclesia-in-america_en.html.

³⁵ I use “domesticated Christianity” in reference to what I understand to be an American version of what Johann Baptist Metz denounced as “bourgeois Christianity.” Metz described this phenomenon among “those who already have, those with secure possessions, the people in this world who already have abundant prospects and a rich future.” See Metz, *The Emergent Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 2.

³⁶ Mary McClintock Fulkerson describes the phenomenon of “obliviousness” in an American, middle-class context with regards to white privilege, racism, and marginalizing disabled persons. See McClintock Fulkerson, “A Place to Appear: Ecclesiology as if Bodies Mattered” *Theology Today* 64 (2007), 159-171.

³⁷ Bonhoeffer describes “cheap grace” as “grace without a price, without costs” that allows Christians to “live the same way the world does” without practicing self-denial or any of the demands of following Jesus Christ. Most concisely, “Cheap grace is that grace which we bestow on ourselves.” See Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* ed. Geoffrey B. Kelly and John D. Godsey tr. Barbara Green and Reinhard Krauss (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 43-45.

³⁸ Americans continue to report high rates of religious faith, despite trends of secularization and the rise of the religiously unaffiliated. Nonetheless, rising numbers of the unaffiliated cannot be ignored. Neither can their critiques of religious institutions, which the unaffiliated complain are too concerned with money and power, too focused on rules, and overly involved in politics. Religiously unaffiliated Americans are slightly less likely to affirm institutional religions for their ability to strengthen community bonds and help needy members of society, and are much more doubtful (relative to the general public and religiously

referential piety that shirk responsibility for (to say nothing of solidarity with) our neighbors, especially those who suffer the most from the policies and practices that maintain the status quo. Christians need to acknowledge that their overreliance on episodes of charity-from-a-distance (i.e., making donations to social services and religious organizations that directly serve the poor instead of taking up this work themselves) does little to ameliorate the present situation, and furthermore, falls short of their duties in love and justice.³⁹

Culturally, these instances of what sociologist Alan Wolfe calls “quiet faith” and “middle class morality” appear to be widespread. In his ethnographic research across the United States, Wolfe finds that Americans’ “morality writ small” is the result of the high value placed on individual freedom, personal accountability, non-judgmentalism, and modest virtue, all of which are products of self-interest and disinterested tolerance for others.⁴⁰ This pragmatic approach to a *bricolage* morality eschews conflict, tolerates diversity, and relies heavily on economic libertarianism and private self-interest.⁴¹ It generates an attitude toward public issues that carves out a space for negative rights

affiliated Americans) about organized religion’s ability to protect and strengthen morality. See “‘Nones’ on the Rise: One-in-Five Adults Have No Religious Affiliation” Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (October 2012), available at http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious_Affiliation/Unaffiliated/NonesOnTheRise-full.pdf.

³⁹ In *Compassion*, Maureen O’Connell cites Martin Luther King Jr.’s claim that most Americans are “compassionate by proxy” (20). Saint Augustine has been quoted as asserting, “Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.”

⁴⁰ Wolfe, *One Nation, After All: What Middle-Class Americans Really Think About: God, Country, Family, Racism, Welfare, Immigration, Homosexuality, Work, the Right, the Left, and Each Other* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 290. Wolfe explains this “morality writ small” as middle class morality that “should be modest in its ambitions and quiet in its proclamations.”

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 300. Wolfe believes this quiet faith and middle class morality can be summed up by a hypothetical “Eleventh Commandment:” “Thou shalt not judge” (54).

claims rather than acting on the responsibilities of positive rights claims.⁴² This results in a morality of “do no harm” rather than one that emphasizes positive obligations to others.

A serious problem with this “live-and-let-live” morality is that it can just as easily become a “live-and-let-die” morality. And this, philosopher John Dewey warned 85 years ago, will lead to the “eclipse of the public.”⁴³ To take seriously duties of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor, American Christians will need to realize moral obligations reach beyond mere tolerance. They will have to resist the cultural anthropology that equates individualism with apathetic disengagement in the face of neighbors in need. They cannot be satisfied by claiming negative rights instead of defending and delivering positive rights. Furthermore, they must pay greater attention to how younger generations are being socialized by these inadequate norms.

On this last point, the data reported by Christian Smith and his colleagues in the National Study of Youth and Religion provide reason for concern. In the research they have collected since 2001, they identify a “moral therapeutic deism” among young American Christians, a general belief that “God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other,” and that “the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about one’s self.”⁴⁴ This self-referential faith bypasses a communal dimension, as two-thirds of those surveyed say involvement in congregations is unnecessary to be religious.⁴⁵ It also interprets moral duties as inessential to character formation or spiritual maturity as

⁴² “Negative rights” are rights that protect from encroachment by others (e.g., security) whereas “positive rights” are duties to be provided (e.g., subsistence). See Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 13-29.

⁴³ Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927), 142. This will be revisited in Chapter 5 in light of Dewey’s claim that “Till the Great Society is converted into a Great Community, the Public will remain in eclipse. Communication can alone create a great community. Our Babel is not one of tongues but of the signs and symbols without which shared experience is impossible” (Ibid.).

⁴⁴ Smith and Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching*, 162-163.

⁴⁵ Incidentally, Catholic youth report similar rates of response to this question (Ibid., 76).

“largely avoidable displeasures to be escaped in order to realize a pleasurable life of happiness and positive self-esteem.”⁴⁶ These “emerging adults” as they are called, find themselves on a longer road to adulthood, and one that seems more self-indulgent and directionless than previous generations.⁴⁷ Given the many positive qualities of emerging adults today, like their high rates of community service, it seems today’s college students are struggling with how to integrate the many opportunities, responsibilities, and expectations they face.⁴⁸

Insofar as our focal interest is in the religious and moral formation of Catholic college students, it is worth noting that Smith and his colleagues find no measurable deviation from these trends among Catholic emerging adults except in some instances in which they demonstrate even lower rates of religious literacy, devotion, and participation in local faith communities.⁴⁹ These findings have been confirmed in later rounds of

⁴⁶ Ibid., 173.

⁴⁷ “Emerging adults” is a term coined by Jeffrey Jensen Arnett for those aged 18-25. He describes this age range as “exceptionally unsettled” and marked by five features: identity explorations, especially in the areas of love and work; instability; the most self-focused age of life; the age of feeling in-between, neither adolescent nor adult; and full of possibilities, when optimism is high given the unmatched opportunity to transform their life. See Arnett, “Emerging Adulthood: Understanding the New Way of Coming of Age” in *Emerging Adults in America: Coming of Age in the 21st Century* eds. Jeffrey Jensen Arnett and Jennifer Lynn Tanner (Worcester, MA: American Psychological Association, 2006), 3-19 (at 7).

⁴⁸ For example, in recent years, as many as 43% of college students were involved in community service. However, since the economic downturn in 2008, those numbers have declined, as more students have had to pick up part-time jobs to help pay for college. See report by The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, available at <http://www.civicyouth.org/quick-facts/volunteeringcommunity-service/>.

It should also be noted that some have taken issue with Smith’s seemingly negative portrayal of Catholic emerging adults. For example, Tim Muldoon offers a more promising spin in his *Seeds of Hope: Young Adults and the Catholic Church in the United States* (New York: Paulist Press, 2008). On the other hand, findings by the National Study of Youth and Religion have been corroborated by a number of other ethnographic studies of American college students. This includes the work of Conrad Cherry, Betty DeBerg, and Amanda Porterfield as reported in *Religion on Campus: What Religion Really Means to Today’s Undergraduates* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Interestingly, one of the sample schools for this study, identified only as “East University,” can easily be recognized as Boston College by someone familiar with the university (see pp. 143-218). Amanda Porterfield’s observations of Catholic student life at “EU” pre-date and still largely coincide with the trends reported by Smith and his colleagues.

⁴⁹ *Soul Searching*, 116, 194-195, 207-215. There are clear exceptions, but these are almost exclusively connected to strong religious belief and active involvement by their parents (see p. 208; n. 4, pp. 326-327).

research, as well.⁵⁰ These observations pose serious challenges for passing on the Catholic faith to future generations, equipping them for moral and religious maturation into adulthood, as well as preparing them for their future social, professional, and family responsibilities.

To illustrate the individualistic subjectivism and moral relativism of emerging adults, Smith and his colleagues found six-in-ten respondents indicated that morality is a matter of personal choice or opinion and one-in-three said they did not know what makes anything morally right or wrong.⁵¹ Smith found that two-thirds of emerging adults, like many American adults, were unable to consistently, coherently, and articulately respond to questions about moral dilemmas in their lives. Instead, they made sporadic appeals to generic platitudes like “do no harm,” the “Golden Rule,” or Karma, without many if any direct references to how these belong to established religious and ethical systems. According to Smith, emerging adults demonstrate very little concern for religious obligation or love for God; rather, their moral motivation is social order, efficiency, and prosperity under the safeguard of tolerance. This results in a moral schizophrenia, lacking both absolute moral truths and moral judgment of better or worse ways of living. These findings lead Smith and his colleagues to conclude that we have done an “awful job when it comes to moral education and formation.”⁵²

This moral disorientation appears to be inevitably made worse by the hectic pace of life, globalized compression of time and distance, and rapid rate of consumption of

⁵⁰ See Christian Smith, et al., *Lost in Transition: The Dark Side of Emerging Adulthood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19-69.

⁵¹ Ibid., 21; 36.

⁵² Ibid., 59-66. This is also true among Catholic emerging adults, for whom “morality is simply not a pressing issue for many of them” (*Soul Searching*, 215). These observations serve as the point of departure for Chapter 3 and the pedagogy to be developed in Chapters 5 and 6.

goods and information among emerging adults. It is sadly unsurprising then, that current college students report unprecedented levels of anxiety, mental and emotional instability, and feelings of being overwhelmed.⁵³ They may try to escape this through binge drinking or promiscuous physical intimacy, but such behaviors only exacerbate these mental and emotional stressors.⁵⁴ In a developmental stage when social interactions and relationships mean so much, today's emerging adults need more stable activities and supportive associations. It does not appear they are seeking these opportunities out through hobbies or civic or political engagement. Given the lack of social involvement, hobbies, or social movements, Smith concludes emerging adults are shifting away from "lifestyle enclaves" in favor of "nearly total submersion of self into fluidly constructed, private networks of technologically managed intimates and associates."⁵⁵

Among the most surprising trends discovered is the fact that 69% of emerging adults said they were not political in any way, compared to only 4% who considered themselves to be actively political.⁵⁶ Many survey respondents admitted feeling apathetic, uninformed, distrustful, and disempowered when it comes to politics. But that did not lead them to other avenues for social engagement. Though emerging adults

⁵³ See Richard Kadison and Theresa Foy DiGeronimo, *College of the Overwhelmed: The Campus Mental Health Crisis and What to Do About it*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004. The students studied in this project cite a number of reasons for consistently feeling overwhelmed: competitive campus culture, high parental expectations for achievement, the financial burden placed on one's family to afford tuition, insecurities about securing employment after college, and uncertainties about handling fewer restrictions in personal freedom, to name a few (see pp. 7-152).

⁵⁴ See *Lost in Transition*, Chapter 3: "Intoxication's 'Fake Feeling of Happiness'" (110-147) and Chapter 4: "The Shadow Side of Sexual Liberation" (148-194).

⁵⁵ Ibid., 223. Religiosity among emerging adults does not appear to be decisive for whether they are more disposed toward social engagement (see *Soul Searching*, 116).

⁵⁶ Smith notes that this data was collected in 2008, a year that has typically been described as crucial for empowering youth involvement in politics. On the contrary, the National Study of Youth and Religion reveals that most emerging adults feel "disempowered, apathetic, and sometimes even despairing when it comes to the larger social, civic, and political world beyond their own private lives." The 4% who claimed to be "actively political" were almost exclusively male. The remaining 27% reported being only "marginally political" which included such low standards as reading the news to be somewhat informed (Ibid., 196, 206-208).

affirm the value of volunteering and charitable giving and hope to make these habits a part of their lives in later adulthood, many do not feel they have the time or resources to be involved at their current age. This presents two problems: first, emerging adults fail to recognize that present priorities and practices establish patterns for the future; second, too many in this age group do not believe they can or should make a difference in the world. In fact, according to Smith's figures, less than five percent of emerging adults think they can make a difference.⁵⁷

The doom and gloom put forward by Christian Smith and his colleagues needs to be put in check by other data. In surveys, emerging adults consistently report high rates of support for human rights, equality, diversity, and fairness. Their concern for justice, ranging from gender equality to environmental responsibility, has a global scope. They show drive and ambition to achieve, as well as a knack for being creative and collaborative problem-solvers (especially in digitally-mediated interactions).⁵⁸ In stark contrast to Smith's findings that less than five percent of emerging adults say they can make a difference in the world, other reports indicate that as many as two-in-three college students "expect to make a positive social or environmental difference in the world at some point through their work."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 270, n. 5. This attitude seems to factor into their dearth of civic activity as much as their lack of interest in politics. In an age when the government seems beholden to special interests, rife with scandals of dishonesty, corruption, and manipulation, and marred by bitter partisanship and an unwillingness to compromise, it is hard for emerging adults – like most American adults – to find reasons for hope. See E.J. Dionne, *Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2012.

⁵⁸ See Jack Myers, *Hooked Up: A New Generation's Surprising Take on Sex, Politics, and Saving the World* (New York: York House Press, 2012). I take issue with some of Myers' views (including his low standards for sexual responsibility and bias in favor of unbridled capitalism), but the basic point is that today's college students do in fact provide many good reasons for hope.

⁵⁹ Cliff Zukin and Mark Szeltner, "Net Impact Talent Report: What Workers Want in 2012" John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University (May 2012), 2-3. The full report is available at www.netimpact.org/whatworkerswant.

Growing Up Digital

These conflicting accounts are also reflected in ambiguous views on emerging adults' ICT use. Today's college students spend as much as half of their waking hours using computers, tablets, e-readers, and smartphones.⁶⁰ Smartphones – owned by more than two-thirds of emerging adults⁶¹ – now provide nonstop access to the internet and social media networks.⁶² There are both exciting benefits and serious problems associated with this near-constant use. Importantly, emerging adults are not only consuming and producing content online or participating in new kinds of digital communication and connections; they are being formed by these activities and interactions, as well.

To begin, there is the matter of increased connectivity. A certain tension exists between the pull to interact mostly with close friends and family and the potential to reach outwards to new content and contacts. For example, Facebook, the second-most accessed website (after Google), now claims more than three-quarters of the U.S. population as members and boasts more than 1 billion active users around the world;

⁶⁰ A 2009 study by the Council for Research Excellence (created by the Nielsen Company) found that Americans spend, on average, 8 hours a day in front of a screen (including television, computer, and mobile phone screens). More recent data on actual time used engaging ICTs are difficult to find. Not including time spent watching television, estimates vary from as little as four hours a day to as much as 8 hours a day, with about equal time split between engaging social media and reading, shopping, gaming, and other internet activity. The overall trend is that ICT use is on the rise, consuming no less than 25 hours a week among digital natives. See, for example, "Millennials Up Their Time Online" (21 January 2013), available at <http://www.marketingcharts.com/wp/interactive/millennials-up-their-time-online-26405/>.

⁶¹ Lee Rainie, "Smartphone Ownership Update: September 2012" Pew Internet & American Life Project (11 September 2012), available at <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Smartphone-Update-Sept-2012.aspx>. 95% of emerging adults own a cell phone of any kind.

⁶² In fact, emerging adults use their phones less to make calls and more for going online and to send text messages (sending, on average, 110 messages a day). Much of smartphone use is also dedicated to taking, editing, and posting pictures as well as sharing others' photos and videos with their online contacts through social networks like Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, Vine, and YouTube. These efforts in creating and curating photos and sharing videos may be a significant source of social currency, but it is mainly limited to existing relationships. See Lee Rainie, Joanna Brenner, and Kristen Purcell, "Photos and Videos as Social Currency Online" Pew Internet & American Life Project (13 September 2012), available at <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Online-Pictures.aspx>.

more than half are 25 years old or younger.⁶³ On the one hand, Facebook and other similar platforms are mostly used to maintain preexisting relationships among an inner circle of family and friends.⁶⁴ On the other hand, it now seems more possible to establish wider networks of human connection and perhaps even community through these digital means.⁶⁵ The high value emerging adults place on tolerance is likely a result of their digitally-mediated interactions with a wide variety of friends, family, and strangers.

There are several examples which demonstrate that the digital age has produced a swell of inclusive participation, bold innovation, and new ways of social interaction so that people all over the world can share ideas, experiences, and information.⁶⁶ This is particularly important for individuals who may be socially challenged or marginalized, as they find a “safe space” in blogs, chat rooms, and other support communities online.⁶⁷

Online communities, profiles, and interactions can be more than welcome escapes or

⁶³ It has been reported that, thanks to sites like Facebook, the “degrees of separation” (first highlighted by social psychologist Stanley Milgram in the 1960s, indicating that people across the globe were only a half-dozen strangers away from being connected to almost all of the world’s population) has been reduced to 4.74, even as global population surges over 7 billion. See John Markoff and Somini Sengupta, “Separating You and Me? 4.74 Degrees” *The New York Times* (21 November 2011), available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/22/technology/between-you-and-me-4-74-degrees.html?_r=2.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Aaron Smith, “Why Americans Use Social Media” Pew Internet & American Life Project (15 November 2011), available at <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Why-Americans-Use-Social-Media/Main-report.aspx>.

⁶⁵ Among younger Americans, this potential remains largely untapped. Smith compares the centralizing forces of previous technologies like radio and television (bringing people together to a common content) to the decentralizing influences of the internet (which scatter people to their private interests or circles of previous associations) as one reason for increasing fragmentation among individual deciders and consumers (*Soul Searching*, 176-180).

⁶⁶ Just one example of this is Wikipedia: there are 30 million articles posted by roughly 100,000 contributors (open to anyone) who write in 286 different languages for 365 million readers worldwide. Compare this level of access and participation to the few who wrote and purchased volumes of *Encyclopedia Britannica* or other such reference works. A second example is the impressive array of collaborative research and innovation taking place through MIT’s Media Lab (<http://www.media.mit.edu/>) that fosters development in a vast spectrum of human life, ranging from financial independence to health education and from technological aids to compensate for physical disabilities to joint musical compositions that bring people together across ages, races, and nationalities.

⁶⁷ Dr. Michelle Ybarra presented research to the 2011 American Psychological Association Annual Convention that indicates that this is especially true for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth, who are more likely than their heterosexual peers to report using the internet to make and sustain friendships. See Tori DeAngellis, “Is Technology Ruining Our Kids?” *Monitor on Psychology* 42:9 (October 2011), 62.

sources of entertainment; many users describe spending time online as a way to practice for “real life.”⁶⁸ There are some, like ethicist Evan Selinger, who believe a robust mix between online and offline interaction and digital applications can actually help people foster the willpower (both volitional and digital) to become better human beings.⁶⁹ Sociologist Steve Fuller believes these advances in technology have created more than new powers; they have constructed a new way of being fulfilled *by* such abilities.⁷⁰

Although Fuller and other techno-utopians find much excitement and hope in the prospect of being fulfilled through these hybridized human-digital interactions and abilities, serious drawbacks cannot be overlooked.⁷¹ For one thing, there is deep concern about the “digital divide” that leaves out those who cannot afford access to ICTs and the internet. In the United States, this “digital divide” means that access is available to men more than women, whites more than minorities, the young more than the elderly, the able-bodied more than the disabled, and the wealthy and educated much more than those who are not.⁷² The global digital divide is even more starkly contrasted when comparing

⁶⁸ There are many possible examples to cite, but one prominent one is called “Second Life,” a virtual “place” where people can build an avatar and create a corresponding life for you to “love.” See “What is Second Life,” available at <http://www.secondlife.com/whatis>. This crossover between their online and offline realities is called a “life mix.” Sherry Turkle remarks, that in some cases, “We have moved from multitasking to multi-living.” See *Alone Together*, 160.

⁶⁹ See Evan Selinger, “Why It’s OK to Let Apps Make You a Better Person,” *The Atlantic* (9 March 2012), available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/03/why-its-ok-to-let-apps-make-you-a-better-person/254246/>.

⁷⁰ See Steve Fuller, *Humanity 2.0: What it Means to be Human Past, Present, and Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

⁷¹ Fuller does acknowledge some of the downsides. For example, he notes that while technology is being used to make valuable advancements in medicine, finance, and communication, etc., most of the benefits are being enjoyed by those who can afford access to this technology. There is not enough effort to “share the wealth” of these technological breakthroughs. Added to this is the largely decentralized system of the online world; without state regulation, market forces drive the developments and who benefits. The features of the new techno-cultural human condition Fuller calls Humanity 2.0 (like surgery to give brain synapses a tune-up, prescriptions for smart drugs and robotic therapy to overcome whatever imperfections one’s body may have) may serve to solidify and widen the digital divide (Ibid., 109-110).

⁷² See “Who’s Online?” Pew Internet & American Life Project (August 2011), available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/Static-Pages/Trend-Data/Whos-Online.aspx>; Susannah Fox, “Americans Living with Disability and their Technology Profile,” Pew Internet & American Life Project (January

continents like North America to Africa or Asia. This does not just mean that those living in the developing world are deprived the marvels of Facebook or YouTube; the United Nations highlights a direct correlation between digital media, social networks, and ICT use to making progress toward the Millennium Development Goals.⁷³ True, while the global digital divide persists, the gap is slowly narrowing. And importantly, where there is increasing access, work for justice grows.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, ICT connectivity, communication, and collaboration is not yet truly global. What is more, digital access is only the first step; some argue the more important task is educating for digital literacy and responsible use.⁷⁵ As college students fill their waking hours scrolling through their Facebook News Feed and “most viewed” lists of stories, pictures, and videos, a world of great need is not being sufficiently engaged.

While many American adults who are active online are also socially committed offline, current data suggest the same cannot be said for emerging adults.⁷⁶ Instead,

2011), available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Disability/Report.aspx>; and Mark Bauerlein (ed.), *The Digital Divide: Arguments For and Against Facebook, Google, Texting, and the Age of Social Networking*. New York: Penguin, 2011.

⁷³ See the 2011 Progress Report available at <http://www.devinfo.info/mdginfo2011/>.

⁷⁴ See, for example, Amir Hatem Ali, “The Power of Social Media in Developing Nations: New Tools for Closing the Global Digital Divide and Beyond” in *Harvard Law School Human Rights Journal* 24:1 (2011), 185-219.

⁷⁵ This concern should not be understated. Some point to a “new digital divide” in the way technology is being used without more adequate digital literacy and moral responsibility. See James P. Steyer, *Talking Back to Facebook: The Common Sense Guide to Raising Kids in the Digital Age* (New York: Scribner, 2012), 94-95; Matt Richtel, “Wasting Time is the New Divide in Digital Era” *The New York Times* (29 May 2012), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/30/us/new-digital-divide-seen-in-wasting-time-online.html>.

A separate but related issue to the digital divide and responsible access is the problem of online content. One of the biggest – and yet seldom addressed – vices of internet use is pornography. 12% of all websites and 35% of all internet downloads are pornographic. Every second, more than 28,000 people are viewing pornography and spending more than \$3,000 on it, generating \$2.8 billion in annual revenue in the U.S. and \$4.9 billion worldwide. This is of particular concern for the present project because 70% of men aged 18-24 visit pornographic websites each month (this is not an exclusively male issue, however: 1 in 3 viewers are women). Data available at <http://www.techaddiction.ca/files/porn-addiction-statistics.jpg>.

⁷⁶ Lee Rainie, Kristen Purcell, and Aaron Smith, "The Social Side of the Internet" Pew Internet & American Life Project (18 January 2011), available at <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/The-Social-Side-of-the-Internet.aspx>.

college students are more likely to be “slacktivists” than actual activists. This term, “slacktivism,” refers to emerging adults’ penchant for clicking “like” or “share” buttons in digital social networks to highlight certain articles, pictures, or videos to raise social consciousness about an issue without taking any concrete steps to get involved in advocacy.⁷⁷ Alternatively, however, these technologies and communication tools can bring social justices to light precisely where emerging adults are looking and spending a large amount of time.⁷⁸ Viewing profiles of well-informed friends and following the stories they “like” and “share” can increase awareness about social issues and can potentially facilitate involvement in political advocacy or philanthropic fundraising.⁷⁹ Active engagement on Facebook may yield opportunities to cultivate commitment to a community and sociability online and offline.⁸⁰ Facebook and similar social networks appear to augment social capital by extending the reach of students’ “social graph” through linking friends of friends, other acquaintances, and groups that might share similar values and interests. Whether or not these interactions follow from or lead to offline interactions, “there is implicit value in a student’s network of associations because

⁷⁷ Randy Krum, “The Rise of the Slacktivist” (23 April 2012), available at <http://www.coolinfographics.com/blog/2012/4/23/the-rise-of-the-slacktivist.html>.

⁷⁸ Ana M. Martínez Alemán and Katherine Lynk Wartman, *Online Social Networking on Campus: Understanding What Matters in Student Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 119.

⁷⁹ Facebook has a built-in social issues feature through its “Causes” app, a platform integrated in 2007. As of this writing, “Causes” has more than 8.9 million “likes,” meaning that its updates will appear in these users’ News Feed, keeping them current with new information and advocacy opportunities. See <http://www.facebook.com/causes>.

⁸⁰ Martínez Alemán and Lynk Wartman observe, “We cannot say whether the students in our study would be less or more social and engaged in campus culture without Facebook, but we do know that their extensive use of Facebook as a social register, as a space in which and through which their sociality is expressed and performed, is vibrant” (*Online Social Networking on Campus*, 87).

it is in and through these networks that students engage in the culture of the campus and in the ecology of self-development.”⁸¹

By going back and forth between online and offline interactions, today’s emerging adults are creating a new sense of “place” and a new meaning for “community” and “being together.” There is much potential here for social, religious, and moral formation, especially in residential college campus settings, where corporeal and digital connections can be synchronized and mutually-reinforcing.⁸²

Aside from the formation that occurs through these connections, emerging adults are also being shaped by their patterns of digital consumption. For example, ICTs, social networks, and the internet mostly provide information as quickly as possible: quick video recaps, brief audio sound-bites, and a few bullet point summary statements. Dominated by pithy Facebook status updates, 140-character Twitter tweets, concise text messages, and speedy Google searches, college students’ brains are operating at a rapid though more superficial level in order to maintain near-constant multi-tasking. Some experts have voiced concern this may habituate their cranial connections in a way that diminishes their ability to develop deep, sustained, and critical thought.⁸³ Fast-paced-interaction online feeds compulsive need for contact; digital natives demonstrate shorter attention

⁸¹ Ibid., 88. “Social graph” means the map of one’s friends and how those friends are connected to each other. The topic of “social capital” and whether and how this is digitally mediated will be examined more closely in Chapter 4.

⁸² Ibid., 37, 126-128. This will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

⁸³ See Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, “Millennials Will Benefit *and* Suffer Due to Their Hyperconnected Lives” Pew Internet & American Life Project (29 February 2012), available at http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_Future_of_Internet_2012_Young_brains_PD_F.pdf; Adam Gorlick, “Media Multitaskers Pay Mental Price, Stanford Study Shows” *Stanford News Service* (24 August 2009), available at <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/august24/multitask-research-study-082409.html>; and Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” *The Atlantic* (July/August 2008), available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/>.

spans, desire for instant gratification, and a loss of patience.⁸⁴ “I share, therefore I am” becomes the mantra of emerging adults who desire attention and affirmation through responses to every random thought that occurs to them. They are unconsciously training themselves to feel rewarded by interruption, whether by text, email, or instant messaging.⁸⁵ One result is that digital natives express discomfort with solitude, reflection, silence, and slowness.

Sherry Turkle points to ways that, ironically, ICTs and social networks create strange feelings of isolation and loneliness.⁸⁶ Loneliness can be exacerbated when close friends act more like acquaintances, engaging in more superficial interaction than they would if physically present to each other. The passive activities of viewing others’ status updates, pictures, and other recent activities can accentuate feeling disconnected. Moreover, psychologists like Turkle express concern about the amount of time and energy spent “curating” one’s profile, making one’s self-presentation as impressive, funny, adventurous, popular, and otherwise enviable as possible.⁸⁷ This can be

⁸⁴ Juliet Schor presciently claimed, “Once people become acclimated to the speed of the computer, normal human intercourse becomes laborious.” See Schor, *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure* (New York: Basic, 1991), 23.

The term “digital natives” applies to this generation of emerging adults and their younger peers who grew up as these technologies gained popularity. Older generations (born before Millennials) are called “digital immigrants.”

⁸⁵ See Turkle, *Alone Together*, 171; Emily Yoffe, “Seeking: How the Brain Hard-Wires Us to Love Google, Twitter, and Texting. And Why That’s Dangerous,” *Slate* (12 August 2009) available at http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/science/2009/08/seeking.html.

⁸⁶ Turkle, *Alone Together*, 157. Loneliness and insecurity have been linked to Facebook use, as people compare themselves to the perceived “social bounty” of their friends and online contacts. See, for example, Stephen Marche, “Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?” *The Atlantic* (May 2012), available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/05/is-facebook-making-us-lonely/8930/>.

⁸⁷ Turkle, *Alone Together*, 194-195. See also: John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives* (New York: Basic, 2008). Palfrey and Gasser both lament the amount of time digital natives spend on “impression management” but also praise the internet’s ability to serve as a laboratory for emerging adults to practice their identities and interactions with others (*Born Digital*, 26).

exhausting and deflating, as emerging adults compare who they feel they really are with the person they project themselves to be online.

Turkle draws attention to another downside to the multi-tasking and constant connectivity of digital natives: it leads to a perpetual state of distraction, of superficial levels of attention to others, and to turning other people into objects for entertainment (and disconnecting from them if they are not immediately found to be entertaining).⁸⁸ Another problematic behavior centers on the anonymity of the internet, which allows some to play the role of stalker, voyeur, or hacker. Users can post vitriolic messages without being held accountable to their hateful speech. Almost 90% of digital natives admit they have witnessed others act cruel online. Two-thirds have seen others join in this behavior and one-in-five have acknowledged participating themselves.⁸⁹

The myriad effects of this intense ICT use and digitally-mediated interaction need to be further considered in light of how this shapes emerging adults' self-understanding, other-regard, relationships, and sense of community. This includes measuring the "impact imprint" of certain qualities transferred to ICT users through their digital consumption and connections. Avoiding extremes of technological determinism and social constructivism calls for a middle way that accounts for these techno-cultural influences in tandem with highlighting human agency to adapt and respond accordingly.⁹⁰ For example, if digital connectivity and communication continue to supplement and replace corporeal interaction, it will be harder for digital natives to detect nonverbal

⁸⁸ *Alone Together*, 163, 168, 227, 274.

⁸⁹ Amanda Lenhart, et al. "Teens, Kindness, and Cruelty on Social Network Sites: How American Teens Navigate the New World of 'Digital Citizenship'" Pew Internet & American Life Project (9 November 2011), available at http://pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2011/PIP_Teens_Kindness_Cruelty_SNS_Report_Nov_2011_FINAL_110711.pdf.

⁹⁰ Nancy Baym describes this "middle way" as a "social shaping" approach (*Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, 26; 44).

“social cues” than in offline encounters.⁹¹ This, in turn, will make it more difficult for emerging adults to cultivate a sense of empathy with others, especially to accurately understand those that seem “other” from their routine contacts. This is one possible cause for the decline in altruism and prosocial behavior among America’s youth.⁹² A “social shaping” position does not submit to these trends, but instead seeks new possibilities to reconfigure how neighborly relations might be forged and sustained in a hybrid of virtual and corporeal interactions. To read the “signs of the times” today is to evaluate these dynamics of the socio-cultural context as it is being shaped online and offline.

Forming Responsible Neighbors Today

This “present praxis”⁹³ reveals a pattern of socializing emerging adults that falls short of preparing them to be responsible neighbors, which has significant consequences in both a civic and religious sense.⁹⁴ In *The Responsible Self*, Christian ethicist H. Richard Niebuhr claims that human actions result from one’s self-understanding. In a

⁹¹ “Social cues” help with empathy and understanding; they can range from facial expressions to posture, physical gestures to interpersonal space. Because these are not effectively mediated via ICTs, it is more difficult to sense an interlocutor’s mood and tone. Fewer practices to read and respond to “social cues” through corporeal interactions can leave digital natives less confident and capable for offline exchanges (Ibid., 51-57).

⁹² See J.D. Trout, *The Empathy Gap: Building Bridges to the Good Life and the Good Society* (New York: Viking, 2009), 21-31.

⁹³ “Present praxis” is a favored term of Thomas Groome in his pedagogical approach called Shared Christian Praxis. This “life to Faith to life” movement first engages participants’ lived reality, including their reflection and action as historical agents in a specific time and place. This pattern of critical reflection and intentional action (i.e., praxis) in response to a particular context will be an important feature of the pedagogy for neighbor-formation to be developed in Chapters 5 and 6.

⁹⁴ One of the reasons this project focuses on a “theology of neighbor” is because neighbor-relations are essential for vibrant civil society in a public/political sense as much as they are vital for Christian discipleship. Forming responsible neighbors promotes the common good, the sum total of social living (cultural, economic, political, and religious) that advances human dignity and rights for shared flourishing. See, for example, Michael J. Himes and Kenneth R. Himes, *Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).

Christian worldview, identity is developed in response to God and others as one matures in his or her interpretation of self, others, and surrounding environment. Niebuhr's vision of the human person is as a "responsive being," who is constantly interpreting reality through conversation with the world by discovering and participating in the narrative of human life in relationship with the Divine. Carrying out this response means taking responsibility for the good, the right, and what is fitting.⁹⁵ Moral responsibility is measured by one's response to the needs – actual or anticipated – perceived in oneself and others. The goal of this responsive action is not to unilaterally take responsibility for others, but to play one's part in a larger and always-ongoing-discourse that seeks deeper understanding through a cyclical pattern of interactions and reactions. In Niebuhr's view, this continuing narrative explains who we are and who we are called to be, and it generates a continuity in concert with others that leads to solidarity.⁹⁶ For Niebuhr, morality is a matter of loyalty: loyalty to God and God's people, following Jesus Christ's example of universal responsibility and reconciliation for solidarity.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 57-60. Niebuhr explains, "An agent's action is like a statesman in a dialogue. Such a statement not only seeks to meet, as it were, or fit into, the previous statement to which it is in answer, but is made in anticipation of a reply. It looks forward as well as backward; it anticipates objections, confirmations, and corrections. It is made as a part of a total conversation that leads forward and is to have meaning as a whole" (Ibid., 64).

⁹⁶ Niebuhr writes, "Personal responsibility implies the continuity of a self with a relatively consistent scheme of interpretations of what it is reacting to. By the same token it implies continuity in the community of agents to which response is being made." The moral life is responsibility in loyalty to this community of agents, which is inclusively oriented outwards, insofar as the "responsible self is driven as it were by the movement of the social process to respond and be accountable in nothing less than a universal community" (Ibid., 65, 83, 88).

⁹⁷ Niebuhr describes the "Christian ethos so uniquely exemplified in Christ himself" as "an ethics of universal responsibility. It interprets every particular event as included in universal action. It is the ethos of citizenship in a universal society" which is also "the ethos of eternal life, in the sense that no act of man in response to action upon him does not involve repercussions, reactions, extending onward toward infinity in time as well as in social space" (Ibid., 167). Niebuhr concludes by stating the responsibility is ultimately a matter of reconciliation, animated by Jesus Christ, its principal agent (177-178).

The link between interpretation and responsibility is made even more forcefully by Ignacio Ellacuría. Ellacuría presented the formal structure of intelligence as “grasping and facing reality.” This involves a three-step movement in growth in intellect, ethics, and praxis by “taking hold of reality” (intellect), “bearing the burden of reality” (ethics), and “taking responsibility for reality” (praxis). Importantly, however, Ellacuría adds, that we can only grasp reality by bearing it at its worst.⁹⁸ Reading the “signs of the times” in the developing world means being confronted with the reality of human suffering in poverty and oppression. Ellacuría called those living in this socio-cultural reality the “historically crucified people”⁹⁹ and charged Christians with the task of taking down these crucified peoples from their crosses as part of their responsibilities for love, justice, and liberation. When disciples go into the ditch, like the Samaritan, this vantage point will transform their sense of identity, practice of interpretation, and exercise of responsibility.¹⁰⁰

Accordingly, these three steps will guide this proposal to instill in U.S. Catholic college students a more robust understanding of the moral demands of Jesus’ mandate to “Go and do likewise” as well as the tools and resources to begin to do likewise. Chapter 2 will more fully address the relevant details of this passage to magnify what is required to follow the Samaritan’s example. It will also analyze and respond to Gutiérrez’s

⁹⁸ Ignacio Ellacuría, “Hacia una fundamentación filosófica del método teológico latinoamericano,” *Estudios Centroamericanos* 322:23 (1975), 419. Cited by Jon Sobrino in *No Salvation Outside the Poor: Prophetic-Utopian Essays* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 2.

⁹⁹ Ellacuría, “El pueblo crucificado: Ensayo de soteriología histórica” *Revista Latinoamericana de Teología* 18 (1989), 305-333.

¹⁰⁰ This three-fold movement in identity, interpretation, and responsibility can be traced in Jesus’ teaching about the Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. First, insofar as this passage is framed by a question about loving God and one’s neighbor (vv. 25-28), it can be inferred that the Samaritan serves as a model neighbor because he first identifies himself in terms of right-relationship with God, which is a call to right-relationship with others. Second, his awareness of his surroundings on the road to Jericho catalyzes his drawing near to the man lying in the ditch. Third, his responsible care includes courageous, compassionate, and generous actions, including recruiting others to share the responsibility for ensuring the wounded man’s restoration to wellness.

interpretation and application of the Samaritan's actions as depicting the preferential option for the poor. This standard for being a neighbor will be presented as a paradigm for fulfilling the moral demands of love, justice, and solidarity.

Thus, one of the aims of this dissertation is to improve the reception of two principles of Catholic social thought: solidarity and the preferential option for the poor. Some Catholics lament the fact that these teachings continue to be the Church's "best-kept secret."¹⁰¹ But the fact is that the Church has not been keeping these principles a secret. Rather, where and how they are being taught, they are not being received as important.¹⁰² Christian Smith's work demonstrates this is particularly true among today's emerging adults. In light of the present praxis, it would be naïve to think the solution lies in relying on more papal encyclicals, episcopal pastoral letters, priests' homilies or professors' lectures to promote and defend the authentic value of Catholic social teaching.

According to Pope John Paul II, solidarity is learned better through "contact" than "concepts" alone.¹⁰³ Like the Samaritan who went out of his way and into the ditch, to be a neighbor today means going to a place marked by need and integrating this vantage point in one's developing identity, interpretation, and responsibility. Fr. Gregory Boyle, a Jesuit priest who works with former gang members in East Los Angeles, contends that compassion and solidarity are ultimately matters of geography; they inform disciples

¹⁰¹ For example, Edward P. DeBerri, et al., *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2003.

¹⁰² So opines Roger Bergman; he states that Catholic social teaching "certainly is not a secret by virtue of being kept." He cites the numerous papal encyclicals and apostolic exhortations, episcopal pastoral letters, and plentiful scholarship to conclude the problem is a failure of reception. He contends, "At this late date, it is either obtuse or disingenuous to suggest otherwise" (*Catholic Social Learning*, 9).

¹⁰³ John Paul II, "Address to Catholic University of the Sacred Heart" Milan (5 May 2000), no. 9. Cited in Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Higher Education" (III.A, fn. 24), available at http://www.scu.edu/ignatiancenter/events/conferences/archives/justice/upload/f07_kolvenbach_keynote.pdf

where and with whom they should stand.¹⁰⁴ In a globalized, digital world transforming the meaning of *place*, this serves as a reminder that global networks of exchange and virtual connectivity cannot completely eclipse the significance of geographical location and corporeal proximity.

To make this kind of Christian neighbor love a life-long, sustainable pattern of citizenship and discipleship, this project will heed the sociological research that indicates that religious piety and moral suasion are less effective than relationships and practices of belonging. Even in an age of the “buffered self” marked by the exercise of social disengagement, peer influence and communal practices remain the most deeply formative factors for translating belief and moral conviction into action.¹⁰⁵ As Robert Putnam summarizes, “It is religious belongingness that matters for neighborliness, not religious believing.”¹⁰⁶ For more Christian disciples to follow the Samaritan’s example, it will be necessary to form virtual and corporeal communities of practice that reinforce Samaritan-like identity, interpretation, and responsibility.

In this way, we can have reason to hope that, both online and offline, more disciples will “Go and do likewise” today.

¹⁰⁴ Boyle writes, “Compassion isn’t just about feeling the pain of others; it’s about bringing them in toward yourself. If we love what God loves, then, in compassion, margins get erased. ‘Be compassionate as God is compassionate,’ means the dismantling of barriers that exclude.” And later: “All Jesus asks is, ‘Where are you standing?’” See Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion* (New York: Free Press, 2010), 75, 173.

¹⁰⁵ See David E. Campbell, “Acts of Faith: Churches and Political Engagement” *Political Behavior* 26:2 (2004), 155-180; Robert D. Putnam, et al., *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010), 444, 468-475; Paul Bloom, “Religion, Morality, Evolution” *Annual Review of Psychology* Vol. 63 (2012), 179-199 (especially 192-193). These findings will be revisited in Chapter 4.

¹⁰⁶ Putnam, *American Grace*, 473.

CHAPTER TWO

TO DO LIKEWISE

Despite the fact that the story about the Good Samaritan may be Jesus' best-known tale, it seldom gets the thorough and scholarly attention it deserves. Instead of being used normatively for the Christian moral life, the Samaritan's example is often invoked in American culture as expressing a humanitarian ideal in emergency situations,¹⁰⁷ as an inspiration for community service,¹⁰⁸ and as heroic – and thus exceptional – action.¹⁰⁹ Theologians are not immune from missing the point of the story, either.¹¹⁰ Even the customary title “the parable of the Good Samaritan” is a misnomer and will therefore be avoided in this dissertation.¹¹¹ All of which provides evidence for

¹⁰⁷ One such example includes University of Pittsburgh men's basketball coach Jamie Dixon, who stopped to help at the scene of a car accident on the Interstate late one Saturday night. Dixon approached a flipped-over vehicle and helped pull the occupants to safety, sustaining injuries to his hands by doing so. State trooper Erik Fisher described Dixon's actions by saying, “He was the Good Samaritan. That's the way people are supposed to be.” See Andy Katz, “Jamie Dixon Helps Crash Victim at Site” *ESPN* (25 October 2010), available at <http://sports.espn.go.com/ncb/news/story?id=5722907>.

A contrasting example would be the death of Walter Vance, who collapsed and later died during a 2011 “Black Friday” early-morning rush at a Target store in West Virginia. During an interview with CNN, one of Vance's co-workers expressed her incredulity that no one stopped to help someone so obviously in need. She asked, “Where is the Good Samaritan side of people?” See “Black Friday Shoppers Ignore Dying Man” (28 November 2011), available at <http://www.cnn.com/video/?/video/us/2011/11/28/wv-dead-black-friday-shopper.wsaz#/video/us/2011/11/28/wv-dead-black-friday-shopper.wsaz>.

¹⁰⁸ Sociologist Robert Wuthnow reports that in one study of people involved in community service, half of those who do not identify as religious and two-thirds of churchgoers cited the story of the Good Samaritan as part of their motivation to serve. See Wuthnow, *Acts of Compassion: Caring for Others and Helping Ourselves* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 161.

¹⁰⁹ For example, in one children's Christian religious education text, the Good Samaritan is introduced with the line, “One day, Jesus told a story about a hero.” If the Samaritan's example is described as heroic, then it can hardly be normative. See Richard Fragomeni, et al., *Blest Are We: Faith and Word Edition Parish Catechist Guide*. Grade Level 2 (Allen, TX: RCL Benzinger, 2008), 48.

¹¹⁰ In his book, *The Works of Mercy: The Heart of Catholicism* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2008) – adorned with an image of the Good Samaritan on its cover – Catholic ethicist James Keenan asserts that this passage is primarily a “story of our redemption, told by Christ” (3). This reading of the passage as a Christological allegory (and summation of the entire *kerygma*) is disputed by contemporary biblical scholars, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹¹¹ Several commentators object to calling Luke 10:25-37 the “Parable of the Good Samaritan.” One reason is that the phrase “Good Samaritan” does not appear in the biblical text. Another reason is because it is not a parable by definition (the etymology of “parable” implies a comparison); it is an example story,

the present need to revisit and reexamine this popular but poorly understood paradigmatic example of neighborly love.¹¹²

Three insights guide this chapter. First, Jesus imparts this teaching in response to a question about inheriting eternal life (v.25). Aside from whatever currency this teaching enjoys thanks to its popular familiarity, this story's pivotal importance for Christian discipleship holds fast to this ultimate concern. Being introduced by a question about eternal life means that the Samaritan's example and Jesus' parting words to "Go and do likewise" cannot be interpreted as a suggestion relevant only for emergencies, for isolated episodes of service, or reserved for a select few moral heroes. Rather, with this story, Jesus teaches about the deepest longings of the human heart and the profoundest meaning of human life. For this reason, the Samaritan's courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity are to be understood as essential for discipleship and normative for one's attitudes, thoughts, feelings, speech, actions, and relationships.¹¹³

not a simile or metaphor (about the Reign of God, for instance). Also, this story should not be completely separated from the one that follows about Jesus' visit with Mary and Martha (vv. 38-42), since together these passages depict what it means to love God and neighbor. See Charles Talbert, *Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Third Gospel* (New York: Crossroad Press, 1982), 120.

Alternate titles for this passage can be cumbersome (e.g., "Jesus and a Lawyer Discuss Love of Neighbor," as used by Robert Tannehill in *Luke* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1996), 181-185). Nonetheless, this dissertation intentionally avoids referring to Luke 10:30-37 as the "parable of the Good Samaritan." Adopting this practice is to reinforce the point that this is an example story for Christian morality, not simply a parable to be interpreted.

¹¹² Although widespread familiarity with this passage can be an asset in making it accessible, it can also reduce the "critical distance" necessary to receive the text free from these preconceived expectations and biases. New Testament scholar Sandra Schneiders writes, the biblical text "must maintain its identity, its 'strangeness' which both gifts and challenges the reader. It must be allowed to say what it says, regardless of whether this is comfortable or assimilable by the reader." See Schneiders, *Biblical Interpretation and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 171.

¹¹³ Note that Jesus says "do this, and you will live" (v. 28; emphasis added). The Samaritan's example shows what is implied by this command to *do*. It also illustrates Luke's view that disciples ought to focus on doing the law rather than discussing it. The reward for *doing* is living well, both now and eternally (cf. 10:25, 18:18).

Second, the details of the characters involved and the setting of this story specifically reference and render illegitimate social, religious, and ethnic biases and boundaries. We can thus conclude this example story is as much about the central function of charity in Christian discipleship as it is a call to more fully realize bonds of human solidarity.¹¹⁴ Being a Samaritan-like-neighbor committed to solidarity is to practice “social charity” through inclusive friendships and efforts to promote a just ordering of society for the unity and integral development of the human family in right-relationship.

Third, as noted in the previous chapter, Gutiérrez interprets the Samaritan as embodying the preferential option for the poor. Gutiérrez also asserts that this implies a commitment to justice from the vantage point of the robbers’ victim in the ditch through friendship with the poor and among the poor. This chapter will examine these claims as part of the proposed “theology of neighbor.”

These three main points as well as five key conclusions drawn from this paradigmatic story of neighbor love will demonstrate how a commitment to loving, just, and solidaristic relationships for inclusive communion is essential for integrating horizontal and vertical right-relationship, something no disciple can justifiably avoid.

Biblical Context

Luke 10:25-37 should first be situated in the context of the two-volume work (The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles), attributed to this evangelist. Luke

¹¹⁴ *Mujerista* theologian Ada María Isasi-Díaz contends, “salvation depends on love of neighbor, and because love of neighbor today should be expressed through solidarity, solidarity can and should be considered the *sine qua non* of salvation.” See Isasi-Díaz, “Solidarity: Love of Neighbor in the 21st Century” in *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside* eds. Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1998), 30-39 (at 31).

writes for a primarily Gentile audience, a “a group of late first-century churches of diverse social composition,” comprising of people from “different ethnic and religious backgrounds, social status, and wealth.”¹¹⁵ Luke tells Jesus’ story to provide guidance for action for those seeking to follow “the way” of discipleship.¹¹⁶ Luke emphasizes this action is empowered by the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁷ The Christian life is a call to follow Jesus, an invitation into a community of disciples, and ongoing discernment of how to grow in collaboration with the Holy Spirit. These tasks are fulfilled in *koinōnia*, a word typically translated as “community” but perhaps more fully expressed as “partnership,” as it implies both interpersonal right-relationship and cooperation with the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁸

Luke addresses typical gospel themes like repentance for sins, the cost of discipleship, and the Reign of God. But he also gives special attention to the lowly and marginalized, highlighted in the Magnificat of Mary (1:46-55) and the commencement of Jesus’ public ministry, wherein Jesus announces good news to the poor, release for the captives, and freedom for the oppressed (4:18-21). Sharon Ringe lifts up the unique value of this Gospel in that Luke is more inclined to “talk *about* the poor” and also “to

¹¹⁵ Tannehill, *Luke*, 24.

¹¹⁶ Luke often refers to the Christian life through the image of a journey. The path of discipleship, called “the way” in several instances in the Acts of the Apostles (see, for example, 9:2; 18:25; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22), is a communal project of imitating Jesus. See Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 134-135; Richard A. Burrige, *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 280-282.

¹¹⁷ Commentators seem to agree that the parting words of the passage, “Go and do likewise,” though attributed to Jesus by Luke, may be a Lucan redaction. This expresses Luke’s desire for his audience to respond in action “with imagination and conviction, and not through one’s own strength but through the power of the Holy Spirit.” See Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 5.

¹¹⁸ John Koenig explains, “In the great majority of passages where the *koinōnia* words appear, the meaning has to do with human participation in a blessing or task of higher reality that is directed by God.” This is a partnership in terms of “cooperation in a divine project.” See Koenig, *New Testament Hospitality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 9.

the well-to-do” concerning their responsibilities to and for the poor.¹¹⁹ In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke demonstrates his intention to address more privileged members of the early Christian communities about their responsibilities to other, needier disciples. This is part of his agenda in praising these communities’ devotion to prayer, eucharistic meals, and sharing of possessions such that “there was no needy person among them” (see Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35, for example). The implication from this idyllic description is that these disciples exemplify an accurate following of “the way,” and also signals the power of the Holy Spirit at work in their midst.

Regarding where this passage fits in the gospel as a whole, Luke places this story between the themes of “Following Jesus” (9:57-10:24) and “Prayer” (11:1-13) in Jesus’ teaching and healing ministry on his way to Jerusalem (19:44).¹²⁰ Luke describes Jesus and the disciples being denied a hospitable reception by Samaritans in 9:52 to highlight the ethnic and religious tensions that provide context for this story. The chiasmic pattern in Luke’s writings reveals a parallel with 18:18-23, when the question is again posed to Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” In this scene, Jesus encounters a rich official who asks this question and professes his faithful observance of the commandments. Jesus replies, “There is still one thing left for you: sell all that you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me” (v. 22). This coincides with Luke’s aim to provide a lesson on the proper use of

¹¹⁹ See Ringe, “Luke’s Gospel: ‘Good News to the Poor’ for the Non-Poor” in *The New Testament: Introducing the Way of Discipleship* eds. Wes Howard-Brook and Sharon Ringe (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 65.

¹²⁰ For an account of the travel narrative, see David P. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

one's possessions.¹²¹ Or, conversely, Luke issues a warning about the ways in which possessions can become obstacles to following Jesus and inheriting eternal life.

Although this story about the Samaritan is unique to Luke, the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” is also mentioned in Mark (12:28-34) and Matthew (22:34-40). However, in Luke's version, they are part of the same command, making no room for debate about a “first” or “second” priority between the two.¹²² The Synoptic authors join two distinct passages from the Hebrew Scriptures (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18), but commentators do not agree about whether Luke's combination of love of God and love of neighbor into a single command is novel. The fact that Luke places this summary statement in the mouth of the lawyer and is affirmed by Jesus without further qualification suggests a common contemporary understanding that loving God is incomplete if it does not also include loving others as oneself.¹²³

However, before proceeding, the word “love” requires a more thorough explanation. Jesus teaches an essential mark of discipleship is being motivated to “love your neighbor as yourself.” But the *caritas* (the Latin word for “love” that produces the word “charity” in English) described here is not a reference to benevolent service or supererogatory acts. Neither is it an exhortation to charitable giving offered from surplus

¹²¹ Commentators infer that a Samaritan traveling on the road to Jericho was likely a merchant, and thus a man of relative wealth. Luke's detailed description of the Samaritan's care of the victim in the ditch is a model for how possessions are to be used in service of those in need (note links to Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35). See Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 888. Burrige sums this up by stating, “The motivation behind the sharing of wealth is always love” and adds that this sharing should not exclude anyone (*Imitating Jesus*, 264).

¹²² It is worth noting that in John's Gospel, there is no commandment to love God, only the “new commandment” to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). This theme is repeated in the First Letter of John (3:11); one cannot love God without also loving one's neighbor (1 John 4:20-21).

¹²³ Fitzmyer confirms this as normative for Christian discipleship; Luke's claim is to demand “the same attitude toward one's neighbor as toward Yahweh” and that that “No love of God is complete without that of one's neighbor” (*The Gospel According to Luke*, 878). Luke Timothy Johnson contends, henceforth, “‘love of neighbor’ has the same force as ‘love for God’” in *The Gospel of Luke* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1991), 174.

or contingent on convenience.¹²⁴ This example story depicts how love is the basis for right-relationship with God and others in such a way that holiness, or right-relationship with God, implies justice, or intra-personal and inter-personal right-relationship.

This conviction builds on a rich tradition found in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Pentateuch, Israel receives both covenant and law as the way to *shalom* with God and one another. *Shalom* is often translated into English as “peace” but it is better translated as wholeness, fullness, harmony, and right-relationship. Deuteronomy 6:5, called the *Shema*, best captures how Israel is called to “love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.” To clarify, “love” in the Hebrew Scriptures is conditioned by its socio-cultural context, wherein “love” was used as a term for political loyalty between two parties. The words for “love,” most often ‘*ahav* or *khesedh*, are not fully expressed by the English word “love,” but also sometimes meant to convey friendship, loyalty, and kindness. In describing Israel’s orientation toward God, “love” means whole-hearted obedience, exclusive worship, and conscientious observation of covenant law in order to follow God’s demands for righteousness in the covenant community.¹²⁵

Righteousness in the covenant community is fulfilled through fidelity to the demands of vertical and horizontal relationships in love and justice. This means emulating Yahweh, who is revealed as the defender of the oppressed (e.g., Exodus 3:7-8; Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 82:3-4). Israel is commanded to offer hospitality for

¹²⁴ In this project I use “charity” in reference to *caritas*, not in the popularized sense of “charitable donations.”

¹²⁵ This included an affective dimension oriented toward God, since “Only actions rooted in affective commitment express genuine love for God.” See the entry, “Love in the OT” by Katharine Doob Sakenfeld in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 713-718 (at 716).

sojourners, fairly resolve conflicts and facilitate reconciliation within or between kin and clan, and strive to overcome abuse, violence, and vengeance in order to establish peace.¹²⁶ It aspires for an imitation of divine love and justice in human relationships, that is, steadfast loyalty to one another marked by mercy, forgiveness, and repairing relationships, while accounting for the reality of finitude and sin.¹²⁷ It calls for special protections for the most vulnerable members of society: widows, orphans, and the poor (e.g., Exodus 22:21-22; Deuteronomy 14:29, 15:7; Psalm 103:6).¹²⁸

In the Christian Scriptures, which are not meant to be oppositional or supersessionist to the Hebrew Scriptures, “love” most often appears as the Greek words *agape* or *philia*.¹²⁹ In most cases, “love” in the Christian Scriptures carries many meanings, from reciprocal loyalties and commitments, to submission of one to another for the sake of unity and solidarity, to the kind of emotion marked by living for others and the enjoyment of friendship. Love as a word and theme appears much more in the

¹²⁶ In the Hebrew Scriptures, *shalom* requires *mishpat* (justice) and *tsedheq* (righteousness), which are almost used synonymously, though some commentators suggest *mishpat* may carry a more theoretical sense of “rightness” whereas *tsedheq* is closely linked with *doing* righteousness (that is, living *khesedh*, covenantal love, loyalty to God and others). Rabbi Jonathan Sacks explains that love (*khesedh*) and justice (*mishpat/tsedheq*) together constitute the *darkhei shalom* (“ways of peace”), the project of *tikkun olam*, that is, mending or perfecting the world. See Sacks, *To Heal a Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility* (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 46, 72, 98.

¹²⁷ See the entries on “Righteousness” [*tsedheq*] by Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer, Marion L. Soards, and Nancy Declaissé-Walford in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4, 807-823. Declaissé-Walford concludes, “Righteousness is thus about placing the interest of all – all people and all of creation – above one’s own desires and indulgences. It is, in the end, about ‘doing the right’ in all realms of human existence” (822).

¹²⁸ This is a recurrent theme in the prophetic tradition, especially Amos (2:7; 5:11, 21, 24), Jeremiah (22:3-4, 13-16), and Isaiah (58:6-8).

¹²⁹ These words are not exclusive to Christian theology. Although distinctions can be made between *agape* (traditionally interpreted as the most selfless love), *philia* (fraternal love), and *eros* (desirous love), this is a difficult and sometimes inappropriate aim. For more on navigating these versions of love, see “Love in the NT” by John S. Kloppenborg in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3, 703-713.

Christian Scriptures than the Hebrew Scriptures, but this does not mean that it replaces the covenantal concern for justice.¹³⁰

This is true especially because another word, *dikaiosynē*, gets even more attention and emphasis in the New Testament, appearing in various forms roughly 300 times in the Christian Scriptures.¹³¹ *Dikaiosynē* is difficult to translate into English because of its varied meanings. It connotes “righteousness” in terms of being upright, honest, and correct; it means “justice” in terms of equity, fairness, or integrity; it can also convey, less frequently, “purity,” “judgment,” “blamelessness,” “mercy,” or “compassion.” In Greek literature, its most consistent use and meaning is the fulfillment of one’s duty.¹³² *Dikaiosynē* isn’t captured well as “righteousness” alone because it can be misinterpreted to mean “self-righteousness.” Despite this, in nearly every instance, *dikaiosynē* and its related forms are translated as “right,” “righteous,” or “righteousness” in the New Revised Standard Version of the New Testament. It can best be summarized as describing the nature of God and God’s expectations for God’s people.¹³³ Through the Incarnation and in proclaiming the advent of the Reign of God, Jesus Christ is the sacrament of *dikaiosynē* in the world.

¹³⁰ Anders Nygren famously claimed that Jesus’ emphasis on spontaneous love and generosity renders concern for justice “obsolete and invalidated.” See Nygren, *Agape and Eros* tr. Philip P. Watson (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), 90. Nygren specifically alludes to the example of the Good Samaritan to prove his thesis that “the whole content of Scripture is Caritas” (62, 456).

¹³¹ This counts all *dik*-stem words, typically translated into English as “just,” or “right.” There are 64 occurrences in the Gospels compared with 128 in the 13 Pauline epistles. See the entry, “Righteousness in the NT” by Marion L. Soards in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4, 813-818.

¹³² See “Righteousness in Early Jewish Literature” by Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4, 807-813.

¹³³ Perhaps the Letter of James is most emphatic on this point; *dikaiosynē* is the source, reason, content, and sustenance of the church’s apostolic mission, of the “works” of faith (e.g., 1:22, 27; 2:14-17). See the entries, “Justice in the NT,” by PHEME PERKINS in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 3, 475-476; “Righteousness in Early Jewish Literature” by Jutta Leonhardt-Balzer in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 4, 807-813; and “Righteousness in the NT” by Marion L. Soards in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 4, 813-818.

Dikaiosynē is relevant for eternal life because God's righteousness is expressed not only in salvation as a one-time gift, but also in the ongoing process of sanctification.¹³⁴ A domesticated Christian faith might interpret this to mean that God's grace is meant for individual obedience and private piety. Responding to the call to *dikaiosynē* means to strive to be more like God, but not in an other-worldly sense of private perfectionism. To be "perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48) means to be wholeheartedly faithful to God and to promote right-relationship with God and others. This involves a commitment to resist injustice and oppression and to practice merciful love and liberation for and with others.¹³⁵

In this way, *dikaiosynē* is also important for solidarity and preferential concern for the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized. To practice *dikaiosynē* is to stand with those who hunger and thirst for *dikaiosynē*; to transcend social, political, and even religious boundaries, and recognize the neighbor in the most remote place or the most difficult condition.¹³⁶ Thus, *shalom* and *dikaiosynē* do not make love and justice competing

¹³⁴ See, for example, Romans 6:13-23. John Donahue, S.J., calls for more attention to Paul's link of faith and justice. Too often it is dismissed as a justification/sanctification matter, or an "interim ethic" and what is lost is Christ's demand to take responsibility for the world, as in Romans 8:21-23 and Galatians 6:2, for example. See John R. Donahue, "What Does the Lord Require? A Bibliographical Essay on the Bible and Social Justice," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2000), 55-56.

¹³⁵ New Testament expert Ernst Käsemann writes, "The God who gives himself totally in Christ, who redeems us, demands truly incarnate persons who are totally and undividedly surrendered to the other creatures as a witness and reflection of the kingdom broken in. Perfection in this context is nothing like the formation of character up to its last possibilities in the endless way of approximating the highest. Here, perfection (and this is constitutive) exists only in relation to the other, be it the neighbor or the enemy, and of course in the sense of radical service, undivided surrender." See Käsemann, "The Sermon on the Mount – a Private Affair?" in *On Being a Disciple of the Crucified Nazarene* tr. Rudolf Landau and Wolfgang Kraus (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 126.

In other places, the idea of being perfect like God is described as a command to be merciful like God who is merciful. See, for example: Leviticus 19:2, 18; Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Luke 6:36.

¹³⁶ Käsemann writes, "we belong on the side of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, we must learn from them of our reality and task ... The Beatitudes do not allow for closed societies. They open hearts and heads to a service that transcends earthly boundaries, perceives the neighbor in the most distant place, and never concedes to tyrants the right to the earth, which belongs to God. They make ready to follow the Crucified on the way to the poor, themselves hungering for righteousness." See "The Fourth Beatitude (Matthew 5:6)" in *On Being a Disciple of the Crucified Nazarene*, 152.

claims or relegate love and justice to separate spheres of influence. Instead, they call for a return-gift of love and commitment to justice in response to God's gratuitous love.¹³⁷

This is one way in which the *dikaiosynē* of God is to be recognized and used to inspire *dikaiosynē* among persons, a notable theme in the Gospel of Matthew in the Beatitudes (5:1-12) and the Last Judgment scene (25:31-46). It is also evident in Luke 10:25-42, which combines the story about the Good Samaritan with Jesus' visit with Mary and Martha. After Martha busies herself with "much service" while her sister Mary sits at the feet of Jesus and listens to him, Martha complains to Jesus. But Jesus replies by saying, "Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her" (v. 42). Although it seems confusing to praise the Samaritan's servant actions in vv. 29-37 and then criticize Martha's service in vv. 38-42, Luke invites his audience to hold these two passages together. Doing so demonstrates a discipleship for *dikaiosynē* that balances action and contemplation; it does not prioritize merciful or generous service over and against whole-hearted piety – or vice-versa.

These notes help situate this passage in its biblical context, including Luke's intent for presenting it as he does. Jesus' story about the Samaritan has many unique features that merit special reflection and inspiration for action. At the same time, this passage is only one small part of a broad and diverse theological and moral vision passed on through Scripture and Tradition. For his part, Luke puts an exclamation point on this

This resonates with Metz's question, "Do we share the sufferings of others, or do we just believe in this sharing, remaining under the cloak of a belief in 'sympathy' as apathetic as ever?" See Metz, *The Emergent Church*, 3.

¹³⁷ The gratuity and exigency of God's universal love is an important topic for Gustavo Gutiérrez. By this he means that God's love is not only gratuitous without any concern for its effectiveness; God desires that God's love will evoke a loving response in humanity and thereby make a difference in history. Gutiérrez clarifies, "Gratuitousness is an atmosphere in which the entire quest for effectiveness is bathed" and yet "There is nothing more urgent than gratitude, for it 'proves' that love is 'genuine.'" See Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* tr. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003), 108-109.

passage to encapsulate the apostolic mission to the Gentile world: all who hear are called to “Go and do likewise.”¹³⁸

Who is My Neighbor?

The lawyer is not content to ask his question about eternal life and have his own answer confirmed by Jesus. He presses further, “wanting to justify himself” (v. 29), and asks, “And who is my neighbor?”¹³⁹ Since this is such a well-known story, this question seems perfectly innocent to modern ears. But the lawyer would have known the appropriate definition of neighbor, or *plēšion*: the word means “one who is near.”¹⁴⁰ Given the collectivistic societies that marked the Mediterranean world during Jesus’ time, group identity and support were of paramount importance. Jesus’ Jewish contemporaries would have known that “neighbor” applies to all those bound in covenant with Yahweh because they shared common blood, land, language, way of life, and worship. Daily life was marked by relations of mutual entitlements among such insiders.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Even though it is such a perfect fit with Luke’s overarching pastoral aim, commentators do not believe the entire story is a Lucan invention (i.e., not an authentic part of Jesus’ teaching ministry). Much of the weight of the story is tied to the bitter enmity between Jews and Samaritans, which would have been striking for Jesus’ hearers but lost on Luke’s Gentile audience (see Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 123).

¹³⁹ Note that “justify” is one of the *dik*-stem words derived from *dikaioσynē*.

¹⁴⁰ The lawyer’s question is essentially, “Who is my near one?” By this he wants to learn the limits of proximity and thus, the acceptable limits for his attention and responsibility. In John 4:5, as Jesus passes through Samaria, *plēšion* refers to a nearby plot of land that Jacob had given Joseph (the location of Jacob’s well, where Jesus interacts with the Samaritan woman in vv. 7-26). If a dimension of nonhuman creation can be considered a neighbor (like a field), perhaps neighbor love can be shared between humans and nonhumans. On recognizing nonhuman creation as covenant partners in right-relationship and the corresponding rights and responsibilities due nonhuman creation, see my essay, “Neighbor to Nature” in *Green Discipleship* ed. Tobias Winright (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2011), 200-217.

¹⁴¹ Bruce Malina explains that “neighbor” referred to “the widest circle of all Israel,” marked by “bonds of generalized reciprocity” wherein neighbors “act like fictive kin.” Accordingly, the purpose of the command to “love your neighbor” is to maintain social harmony and prevent conflict within the ingroup, since “Neighbors and conflict are sort of a contradiction.” See the entry, “Neighbor” by Bruce J. Malina in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 4, 251-252.

In antiquity, there were three concentric circles of relations: neighbors, non-neighbors, and enemies. Although reciprocal relations among neighbors were crucial in daily life, covenant law extended obligations to non-neighbors, as well. As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks observes, while the mandate to “love your neighbor” is repeated twice in the Hebrew Scriptures, the command to love the stranger is reiterated no less than 36 times.¹⁴² That said, there were different expectations for treatment of insiders relative to outsiders. Though strangers and sojourners should be granted hospitality, much more was expected from and for fellow Israelites. Rabbis vigorously debated the scope and limits of these obligations. For example, some taught that it was acceptable to make exceptions and restrict duties to sinners and enemies, since to offer aid to such people could be seen as condoning their sins (see, for example, Sirach 12:1-7).

Jesus’ teaching and healing ministry did not allow for any such loopholes. At length, Luke describes Jesus’ rejection of limited obligations based on reciprocal relationships (see 6:27-36). Jesus demands that his followers love even their enemies, asking “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?” (6:32). Villagers would know who would be included among their neighbors, but the lawyer asks Jesus for his interpretation of the exceptions for *plēšion*, or nearness. The lawyer’s question is not so innocent; it is a self-interested, ethnocentric, limit-seeking attempt to learn the minimum requirement for adherence to the law (and eligibility for eternal life).¹⁴³

¹⁴² Sacks, *To Heal a Fractured World*, 103. Very often this is linked with the reminder to the Israelites that they know what it is like to be a stranger from their years of enslavement in Egypt (see, for example, Exodus 23:9; Deuteronomy 10:19).

¹⁴³ Charles Talbert offers the following question to illustrate what he interprets as the lawyer’s intention: “How can I spot others who belong to God’s people so that I can love them?” (*Reading Luke*, 122).

To clarify, even if the lawyer’s question is not exactly innocent, it is still significant. As Malina explains, “The difficulty in antiquity was to consider people beyond the outermost rim of the ingroup as anything other than enemy, as a different species, as not belonging to the ethnocentric human race

Jesus turns this question about minimum limits on its head. He does so by subverting distinctions between “near” and “far,” making it impossible to draw limits of nearness. Jesus tells the story of a man who was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho and “fell into the hands” of robbers who stripped him, beat him, and left him “half dead” (v. 30).¹⁴⁴ The robbers are literally “near” to the traveler but prove the opposite of being neighborly. A priest and later a Levite, upon seeing the robbers’ victim, pass by on the other side of the road. Jesus intentionally describes the way these men – who have a duty to be neighborly – move farther away from the victim (the word is *antiparechomai*, containing two prepositions meaning “not” and “beside”). Some interpreters excuse the priest and Levite from helping the man in need because they could not risk defilement and the seven days’ lost wages spent to be purified afterward.¹⁴⁵ But this overlooks the fact that the Mishnah explicitly makes exceptions for neglected corpses and that the law could be broken in matters of life and death.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, since Samaritans followed the same legal tradition as the priest and Levite, if it had applied to the two religious leaders, it would also have been a valid excuse for the Samaritan. This is not meant to be anti-

constituted of self and one’s neighbors.” See “Neighbor” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 4, 252.

¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, this is the only story or teaching of Jesus that is geographically-specified. Jesus’ audience would have known that the road to Jericho descends more than 3,000 feet over 18 miles and was a notoriously unsafe passage, susceptible to ambush and robbery. In fact, this road was known as the “Bloody Pass.”

¹⁴⁵ See Leviticus 21:1-4.

¹⁴⁶ See *m. Nazir* 7.1, as cited by Bernard Brandon Scott in *Hear Then the Parable: A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 195-196. See also: Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 355. Herman Hendrickx summarizes the scene this way: the priest and Levite “were required to stop. According to oral law, they either had to bury the dead or give life-sustaining assistance to someone in need.” See Hendrickx, *The Third Gospel for the Third World* Vol. 3A (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1996), 66.

clerical or anti-Semitic; these figures embody the “phenomenon of avoidance” by the way they ignore the law and fail to act in love for another person in need.¹⁴⁷

Given the fact that the first two characters are religious leaders, many in Jesus’ audience were likely expecting the next person to be a lay-Israelite. Jesus’ selection of a Samaritan as the third figure is intentionally shocking because of the volatile hostility between Jews and Samaritans in this era.¹⁴⁸ A Samaritan would have been considered an enemy because of a complicated and partially shared religious history and practice. The hostility between Jews and Samaritans dates back to 722 B.C.E., when the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom, exiled most of the Israelites, and the newcomers intermarried with those left behind. Religious Jews from the southern kingdom believed this new population to be racially corrupt, morally bankrupt, and theologically insufficient and therefore unworthy of the salvation promised to the covenanted people. The Assyrian conquest interrupted the belief and practice of those in the northern kingdom; as a result, Samaritans had their own version of the Pentateuch and maintained religious worship on Mount Gerizim in Shechem (whereas Jews from Judea hold that true worship takes place in the temple in Jerusalem).¹⁴⁹ The popularity of the phrase “Good

¹⁴⁷ It would also be a mistake to read this passage as anti-clerical because Jesus shows respect for the role of priests in Luke 5:14 and 17:14, for example. Fitzmyer asserts this is not anti-Semitic, as this would be an inaccurate (and anachronistic) way of importing issues “that were not really Luke’s concern” (*The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, 885). On the “phenomenon of avoidance,” see James Breech, *The Silence of Jesus: The Authentic Voice of the Historical Man* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 176.

Gerald Schlabach proposes that Christians today consider the priest and Levite as victims “trapped in a religious system that numbed their hearts even as it overwhelmed them with obligations.” He sees these figures as a relevant challenge to ordained, vowed, and lay leaders who are over-committed and unable to love the neighbors right in front of them. See Schlabach, *And Who is My Neighbor? Poverty, Privilege, and the Gospel of Christ* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1990), 43.

¹⁴⁸ It should go without saying that the phrase, “Good Samaritan” would have been oxymoronic for Jesus’ audience.

¹⁴⁹ Sirach 50:25-26 denounces the “degenerate” people who worship in Shechem, categorizing them with the same loathing as that directed toward the Edomites and Philistines.

Samaritan” makes it easier to miss how appalled Jesus’ original audience would have been, given the bitter disdain Jews and Samaritans shared for one another.¹⁵⁰

The enmity between Jews and Samaritans strikes at the core of Jesus’ message in this story.¹⁵¹ If Jesus had intended only to reinforce the current understanding of loving one’s neighbor, it would have been sufficient for a lay Israelite to tend to the robbers’ victim. If Jesus wanted to reiterate his previous call to love one’s enemy (Luke 6:27-36), then the man lying in the ditch would have been a Samaritan and a lay Israelite would have been the appropriate figure to stop and offer aid. Insofar as the priest and Levite are presumably the victim’s own religious leaders, the Samaritan’s actions are striking because this odious outsider does precisely what would have been expected of those considered the moral exemplars.¹⁵² Jesus’ audience would have been utterly scandalized to have such a despised figure be the one to uphold the law. In fact, one commentator has

¹⁵⁰ Jews cursed Samaritans publicly and prayed that God would not allow them a share in eternal life. The faithful Jew would have no contact with the Samaritan or with anything that the Samaritan had made. In *Antiquities*, Josephus records an event around 9 C.E., when Samaritans desecrated the Temple with human remains, timing the offense so that Passover could not be celebrated (cited in Charles A. Kimball, *Jesus’ Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke’s Gospel* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the New Testament, 1994), 132).

Samaritans appear in several places in the Old Testament. In particular, 2 Chronicles 28:5-15 and Hosea 6:9 are considered pertinent parallels for this passage, according to Simon J. Kistemaker in *The Parables: Understanding the Stories Jesus Told* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 145.

In the Gospels, Luke and John are the only authors to incorporate Samaritans into their accounts. Luke’s portrayal of Samaritans is ambiguous: Jesus is refused hospitality in a Samaritan town (9:51-56), but in a later scene, when he cures ten lepers, the only one to return with words of thanks is a Samaritan (17:15-19). John also depicts Samaritans in an ambiguous light: on the one hand, the word “Samaritan” is an epithet among Jews (8:48) and Jews and Samaritans would share nothing in common (4:9); on the other hand, Samaritans sometimes model receptivity to Jesus’ message when Jews do not (4:39-41).

¹⁵¹ John L. McKenzie writes, there is “no deeper break of human relations in the contemporary world than the feud of Jews and Samaritans, and the breadth and depth of Jesus’ doctrine of love could demand no greater act of a Jew than to accept a Samaritan” in *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), 766.

¹⁵² Frank Stern writes, “the priest and Levite had broken the very laws they were expected to uphold.” See Stern, *A Rabbi Looks at Jesus’ Parables* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 214. Kenneth Bailey observes that the bandits take money from the traveler, whereas the Samaritan gives his own money to provide for his care; the bandits beat the man, whereas the Samaritan tends to his wounds; the bandits abandon their victim, whereas the Samaritan promises to return. Here, Jesus reverses the roles of those his audience would see as “near” and “far.” See Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 73.

wagered, had the victim been conscious, he likely would have refused the Samaritan's assistance since "Any self-respecting, pious Jew in a ditch would rather be left for dead than be helped by such a person."¹⁵³

The Samaritan's actions are all the more powerful given that he acts this way in a setting where he is a hated enemy. As previously mentioned, the road to Jericho was notoriously unsafe, and the Samaritan, whom commentators surmise was likely a merchant returning from Jerusalem, would himself have been at great risk of theft. Going out of his way in drawing near to the man lying in the ditch would have made him an easy target for ambush or might make him look like the one responsible for the beating and robbery in the first place. Further, taking the man in need to an inn for his recuperation might have been received by Jesus' audience as an act of sheer folly.¹⁵⁴ Given the serious threat of danger the Samaritan faces at every step along the way, it may be just as appropriate to call this the story of the "Foolish Samaritan" as it is the "Good Samaritan."¹⁵⁵ Of course, the point of this teaching is not to endorse a foolish or reckless ethic. Rather, Jesus aims to break open the closed world of Israel. He does so by using this renegade outsider as the moral exemplar. The Samaritan thus becomes a "world shatterer" and "the stimulus towards creating a new world. In this respect, he is the

¹⁵³ Sylvia C. Keesmaat, "Strange Neighbors and Risky Care" in *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables* ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 282.

¹⁵⁴ Kenneth Bailey claims, "An American cultural equivalent would be a Plains Indian in 1875 walking into Dodge City with a scalped cowboy on his horse, checking into a room over the local saloon, and staying the night to take care of him." See Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes: More Lucan Parables, their Culture and Style* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 52.

¹⁵⁵ This is the claim of Douglas E. Oakman, who imagines Jesus' audience laughing at the Samaritan's unexpected and perhaps even foolish generosity. This is a reason, according to Oakman, for considering the passage as Christological and soteriological. He imagines Jesus concluding the story with, "And the Kingdom of God is like this," to describe how God's reign is marked by such generosity in such unlikely places. (Incidentally, if this were the original intention of the story, it would then be appropriately considered a parable.) See Oakman, "Was Jesus a Peasant? Implications for Reading the Jesus Tradition (Luke 10:30-35)" in *The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models* eds. Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 125-140.

instrument of the God who is wholly Other, who cannot be identified with any object of this world, not even the Temple of Jerusalem.”¹⁵⁶ Because of this, distinguishing duties between those who are “near” and those who are “far” misses the point; all are invited to communion and right-relationship.¹⁵⁷

After concluding the story about the Samaritan, Jesus drives his point home by issuing his own question to the lawyer. He asks, “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” (v. 36). The lawyer is so embarrassed that the despised Samaritan is the moral exemplar he cannot bring himself to say the word “Samaritan.” Instead, he confesses, “The one who showed mercy.”¹⁵⁸ But Jesus is doing more than defining neighbor-relations through merciful action. He is changing the question. The lawyer posed a hypothetical question about the limits of one’s duty to others. Jesus responds by asking who was neighbor *to* the person in need, thereby shifting the focus on “neighbor” from an object of obligation to a proactively loving subject. This makes “Who is my neighbor?” a less important question than “To whom am I a neighbor?” or even, “How neighborly am I?”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ J. Ian H. McDonald, “Alien Grace: The Parable of the Good Samaritan” in *Jesus and His Parables: Interpreting the Parables of Jesus Today* ed. V. George Shillington (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 50.

¹⁵⁷ This point is made emphatically in Paul’s letter to the Galatians (3:26-28).

¹⁵⁸ This connects back to Jesus’ previous teaching abolishing reciprocal duties to love only those who offer love and the new command to love even enemies. By instructing his disciples to “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36), Jesus claims that human compassion is to imitate God’s mercy (see also: Leviticus 19:2; Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Matthew 5:48). Eduard Lohse adds that part of what is novel here is that even though Hellenistic and Jewish culture would have agreed that one should help another in need – even another considered unworthy or an enemy – the motivation would not have been described by an attitude of “love.” See Lohse, *Theological Ethics of the New Testament* tr. M. Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 56.

¹⁵⁹ Ian McFarland points out, “Jesus’ counter-question redirects attention from the status of others to that of the lawyer himself” in McFarland, “Who Is My Neighbor? The Good Samaritan as a Source for Theological Anthropology,” *Modern Theology* 17:1 (January 2001), 57-66. Herman Hendrickx claims, “By the end of the story, Jesus has transformed the focus of the original question; in fact, his apparent attempt to answer the lawyer’s question turns out to be the negation of the question’s premise” (*The Third Gospel for the Third World*, 74).

Five important points can be concluded from this paradigmatic text. First, not only is “neighbor” redefined to include non-Jews, but love of neighbor now knows no boundaries. As Augustine asserts, “all people are to be recognized as neighbors.”¹⁶⁰ This is a major reason why the Samaritan’s example is crucial for the present discussion of solidarity and responsibility. Through this story, Jesus makes clear that the bonds of human filiation exclude no one and that moreover, no person is immune from the claims of neighborly relationships and responsibilities. The second, related point is that it is always and everywhere a duty to act as a neighbor to other neighbors. Put differently, there are no loopholes to avoid acting neighborly.¹⁶¹

Third, to be a neighbor means to act with courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity. As a pariah, the Samaritan risked his own safety to tend to the robbers’ victim and to enlist others in continuing that care. Perhaps, being a despised outsider, the Samaritan more readily identified with the man left for dead.¹⁶² Relating to this person in need catalyzes the Samaritan to draw near the man lying in the ditch in stark contrast with the cold indifference or avoidance demonstrated by the priest and Levite.¹⁶³ In this vulnerable setting, the Samaritan’s merciful actions manifest tender concern and abundant care. In this detailed narrative, Jesus uses about 50 words to

¹⁶⁰ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana* tr. R.P.H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), Book I.xxx.32. Moreover, the Samaritan’s example “obliterates boundaries that close off compassion or that permit racism or attitudes of superiority” (Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 358).

¹⁶¹ Hendrickx sums this up well: “Confronted with someone in desperate need, the obligation to act as neighbor to neighbor, with practical compassion, always applies. No other consideration, even another commandment of the Torah, can take precedence” (*The Third Gospel for the Third World*, 75).

¹⁶² Although the Samaritan’s own socio-cultural context may be a significant factor in inspiring his actions on the road to Jericho, they do not determine his behavior. After all, not all marginalized peoples empathize with other vulnerable persons or groups, just as all those who experience suffering are not always sensitive to others’ suffering.

¹⁶³ Eduard Lohse states that, insofar as the story about the Good Samaritan is framed by the command to love God and neighbor, “passing by the half-dead man on the other side is the same as passing by the God who is on the side of the victims of injustice and oppression.” See Lohse, *Theological Ethics of the New Testament*, 76.

describe the how the Samaritan's actions provide a courageous, compassionate, and generous paradigm for the bookend verses "Do this and you will live" (v. 28) and "Go and do likewise" (v. 37). The Samaritan's example sends the message that what matters is not believing or belonging, but doing. Moreover, what matters is doing *like this*. The verbs Jesus uses to describe the Samaritan's care are part of Jesus' response to the lawyer's question: the law is fulfilled in love and meant to exclude no one (see, for example, Romans 13:8, 10; Galatians 5:14).¹⁶⁴ It is thus oriented to love *for* solidarity.¹⁶⁵

It is significant that Jesus describes the Samaritan's fulfillment of the law in love as motivated by compassion rather than a cognitive knowing what is right or good based on religious obligation or a theory of justice. In the text, the word for "compassion" is *splanchnizomai*, a reference to the entrails.¹⁶⁶ When this is translated into English as "pity," that pallid word fails to effectively express what is meant here: "being shaken in the depths of the womb or bowels, a wrenching gut reaction" or "his heart was melting."¹⁶⁷ Through this story, compassion serves as the "the optic nerve of Christian vision," providing a new way to see (and feel and then act) as a neighbor to other

¹⁶⁴ Frank Matera cites this passage in stating that "The essence of the law for Jesus is love." See Matera, *New Testament Ethics: The Legacies of Jesus and Paul* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 88.

¹⁶⁵ Solidarity is inferred by the boundary-breaking redefinition of neighbor more than the Samaritan's specific actions. The former creates a new category to include all human persons whereas the latter is still paradigmatic of unidirectional aid. Ada María Isasi-Díaz writes, "It is my contention that solidarity, in the original sense of that word, must replace charity as the appropriate Christian behavior – ethical behavior – in our world today. This contention implies a significant paradigmatic shift for Christian behavior for there is an essential difference between solidarity and charity. Charity, the word used most often when talking about love of neighbor, has been implemented mainly through a one-sided giving, a donation, almost always, of what we have in abundance ... The paradigmatic shift I am proposing calls for solidarity as the appropriate present-day expression of the gospel mandate that we love our neighbor. This commandment, which encapsulates the gospel message, is the goal of Christianity" ("Solidarity: Love of Neighbor in the 21st Century," 31).

¹⁶⁶ In Proverbs 26:22, this visceral feeling is linked to the womb. In antiquity, the gut was considered the center of the person.

¹⁶⁷ Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise*, 89; Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 114.

neighbors.¹⁶⁸ This new way of seeing cuts through socially-constructed barriers and excuses not to help. For this reason, the Samaritan's compassion may be considered the "fulcrum on which the story turns."¹⁶⁹

The love that ought to characterize neighborly action should be marked by courage, compassion, and generosity for solidarity. This is not a love motivated by duty; it does not seek a lower limit; it should not be patronizing. The Samaritan's example shows that he identified with another person in need, recognized him as an equal, and provided the kind of tender care and assurance for complete recovery that might only be expected by family members or close friends. This is the kind of love that should be shared among neighbors, Jesus insists. It is the fulfillment of everything Jesus had to teach.¹⁷⁰

Fourth, Jesus taught about this love and modeled it so that disciples could share in practicing it in the world. Even though the story of the Good Samaritan is not to be understood as a Christological allegory, one cannot overlook the connections between the Samaritan's compassion and divine mercy.¹⁷¹ Mercy is the characteristic that makes the

¹⁶⁸ Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise*, 87.

¹⁶⁹ Hendrickx, *The Third Gospel for the Third World*, 70.

¹⁷⁰ So believes Pheme Perkins in *Jesus the Teacher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990), 86. But Perkins acknowledges it is not quite that simple. On the one hand, the point of the story is when it comes to loving one's neighbor and being a loving neighbor, "Nothing is calculated; nothing is too much." On the other hand, Jesus understands that compassion "sets up rather a puzzle. It ignores social boundaries and all the reasonable sorts of calculations that people make. It may even cause those who are recipients or witnesses of it some perplexity ... Jesus understands compassion and love of enemy to be very complex problems." See Perkins, *Love Commands in the New Testament* (New York: Paulist, 1982), 64.

¹⁷¹ It should be noted that early commentators from Augustine to the Venerable Bede to Bonaventure did read this passage as a parable about the Reign of God and allegorized it as representing the entire *kerygma*. According to Augustine, (1) the man is Adam; (2) Jerusalem is the heavenly city; (3) Jericho is the moon, which stands for our mortality; (4) the robbers are the devil and his angels, who strip the man of his immortality and beat him by persuading him to sin; (5) the priest and Levite are the priesthood and ministry of the Old Testament; (6) the good Samaritan is Christ; (7) the binding of the wounds is the restraint of sin; (8) the oil and wine are the comfort of hope and the encouragement of work; (9) the donkey is the incarnation; (10) the inn is the church; (11) the next day is after the resurrection of Christ; (12) the innkeeper is the apostle Paul; (13) the two denarii are the two commandments of love, or the promise of life and that which is to come. See *Quaestiones Evangeliorum* II.19; this summary is from Klyne Snodgrass

Samaritan like Yahweh (Exodus 34:6-7) and Jesus (Luke 7:13). This is no small point. In the Hebrew Scriptures, compassion (*rakham*) is most often described as an attribute of Yahweh. Among human beings, it is considered a gift from Yahweh (e.g., Exodus 33:19). Receiving the gift of compassion is confined to insiders who obey the covenant (see Psalm 103:13, 17-18) for the purpose of emulating the mercy of Yahweh among God's people (see Zechariah 7:9-10 and Psalm 112:4).¹⁷² The fact that the Samaritan, as a reviled outcast, is moved by compassion is yet another way that Jesus teaches his disciples to overcome the ethnic, social, and religious boundaries that have kept Jews from practicing the kind of inclusive mercy called for by Israel's prophets.¹⁷³

This gives credence to Jon Sobrino's claim that the twin concerns for orthodoxy (right-belief) and orthopraxis (right-action) are incomplete without orthopathy. By this he means not only right-feeling, but "the correct way of letting ourselves be affected by the reality of Christ."¹⁷⁴ In this way, practicing orthopathy involves an eschatological dimension. Christ is the agent of mercy, making Yahweh's compassion and covenantal renewal already (albeit only partially) realized through the unfolding Reign of God.¹⁷⁵ The Reign of God is God's power at work in the world, transforming it, and confronting the forces that resist love, justice, and solidarity. To love God and one's neighbor as oneself is to be near this divine reality (Mark 12:34). This is reflected in Paul's

"From Allegorizing to Allegorizing: A History of the Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus" in *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables* (2000), 4. Today, aside from a few exceptions like John Dominic Crossan who argue that the story is domesticated when read as a moral example story (see *In Parables: The Challenges of the Historical Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 56), most commentators agree this Christological allegory is not what Luke intends for this passage.

¹⁷² See the entry, "Mercy" by Sze-Kar Wan in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 4, 46-49.

¹⁷³ See, for example, Jeremiah 30:17, Hosea 6:6, and Micah 6:8.

¹⁷⁴ Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A View from the Victims* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001), 210.

¹⁷⁵ Wan concludes, "Biblical covenantal language now gives way to and is enfolded by Jesus' practice of mercy and compassion. In anticipating the birth of Jesus the new age is announced, but in Jesus himself biblical mercy now finds its eschatological fulfillment. Accordingly, human mercy to one another must mirror this new eschatological situation (Matthew 18:33). Only the merciful will be rewarded with God's mercy in the new reign (Matthew 5:7)." See "Mercy" in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 48.

exhortations to the first churches to practice the compassion of Jesus Christ for the sake of wider and deeper unity, since Jesus' mercy brings human beings together to share in Christ's mercy (Philippians 1:8, Galatians 3:28).

Practicing Samaritan-like compassion is therefore an eschatological praxis. According to Sobrino, this is to take seriously what is made possible through Jesus' resurrection. Sobrino explains that the resurrection provides the "final view of existence and its meaning" and illuminates "what we can hope for, what we must do" as disciples.¹⁷⁶ What disciples can hope for and do is revealed in careful discernment and conviction that believing in Jesus' resurrection and promise of being raised themselves also makes possible "living already as risen beings in the conditions of historical existence."¹⁷⁷ This reflects Paul's belief that disciples should participate in the "new creation" as Christ's ambassadors of reconciliation (see 2 Corinthians 5:16-21).¹⁷⁸ To act in such a way that emulates divine mercy in earnestly seeking to inherit eternal life is to share in the work of salvation. To love God and one's neighbor as oneself is to participate in the divine action in the world, that is, to share in the redemptive work of God.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ *Christ the Liberator*, 33.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 1 (emphasis removed).

¹⁷⁸ Richard Hays points out that Paul's use of "new creation" echoes the prophecy of Isaiah ("For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth ..." (see 65:17ff)) to indicate Christians have entered an eschatological age. Hays explains this is not a matter of personal transformation through conversion to faith; rather, that Paul believes the resurrection nullifies the cosmos of sin and death and brings a new cosmos into being. Christians already experience this "new age" and yet still await the fullness of the *parousia* promised to come (see 1 Corinthians 10:11). Though the influence of the old age persists, Paul describes the power of the Holy Spirit as an *arrabōn* (a "down payment") that enables the church to prefigure the redemption it awaits. The ambiguity between the already-not yet can prove to be quite problematic, since it can lead to extremes of moral quietism or moral fanaticism. Paul's epistles appeal to the concept of "new creation" to increase the urgency of practicing love in mutual service and reconciliation. See Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*, 20-21.

¹⁷⁹ Protestant theologians are less confident in these claims and are careful not to presume that humans can and should love like God, forgive like God, or be agents of redemption. Reinhold Niebuhr would identify this as an "intolerable pretension of saints who have forgotten they are sinners" (*The Nature and Destiny of*

This dovetails with the fifth important lesson from this story: that Jesus aims to reorient disciples' vision away from lower limits and toward radical possibilities. As Eduard Lohse explains, Jesus teaches his disciples that love "knows no condition and no presupposition; it is valid for every place and every time" and that whenever and wherever people may be tempted to define or dwell on limits, the Samaritan's example is a constant reminder that "love as the determining motive of every deed orients itself by the possibilities."¹⁸⁰ But the aim here is not to make this an impossible ideal. Instead, it is a reminder that Jesus was posed a limit question about belonging and responded with a command to act in such a way that everyone belongs. The emphasis on doing is meant to be eminently practical, a call to mission for all. It is part of the project of *dikaiosynē* in line with Jesus' teaching that his disciples be peacemakers and to put love and conciliatory right-relationship ahead of religious legalism (e.g., Matthew 5:23-24).¹⁸¹ It parallels the lesson in Matthew's Last Judgment scene (25:31-46) that disciples are judged based on whether they meet the needs of their neediest neighbors. In the face of any temptation to restrict solidarity or responsibility, the Samaritan's example is a constant challenge to make neighborly concern and commitment ever more inclusive.

In addition to loving God with all one's heart, soul, and strength (v. 27), disciples must love their neighbors by seeing every other as a neighbor and being neighborly to all others. This unites neighborly love in solidarity with everyone as part of the household

Man Vol. II (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1964), 126). However, Niebuhr admits that despite the ideological taint of self-interest, "our responsibilities are obvious. We must seek to fashion our common life to conform more nearly to the brotherhood of the Kingdom" (Ibid., p. 308 n. 10). See also: Gene Outka, "Following at a Distance: Ethics and the Identity of Jesus" in Garret Green (ed.) *Scriptural Authority and Narrative Interpretation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 144-160.

¹⁸⁰ Eduard Lohse, *Theological Ethics of the New Testament*, 57-58.

¹⁸¹ Lohse summarizes this point by saying this passage is part of the overall aim to impose "the obligation on Jesus' disciples to be peacemakers and ministers of reconciliation, to overcome the differences that separate people, to promote mutual understanding, and to commit themselves in word and deed to peaceful cooperation among the peoples in their realm of influence" (Ibid., 58-59).

of God (Ephesians 2:19). As it did for the Samaritan on the road to Jericho, this requires courage and compassion. But the cost of this discipleship is glossed over if it is not heard afresh, if it is accepted as familiar and categorized as either voluntary benevolence or hyperbolic heroism. As it was for Jesus' original hearers, the aim of this example story is to shatter stereotypes and excuses, to issue a bold new challenge, and to serve as a catalyst for disciples' conversion.¹⁸²

Conversion to a Theology of Neighbor

Conversion is to deeper, fuller, and freer love of God and neighbor as oneself. It is a conversion to love God who is identified *in* the neighbor as Jesus teaches his disciples in Matthew's Last Judgment scene, telling them that, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (25:40). Just as the priest and Levite are indicted for their lack of compassionate care – whether for religious reasons or moral inertia – so the goats in the Last Judgment are denounced for refusing to help the nearby in need (25:41-46).¹⁸³ This reinforces the single command to love God and neighbor as oneself in Luke 10:25-27 to the extent that it seems disciples are to love God *by* loving their neighbor.¹⁸⁴ This leads the eminent theologian Karl Rahner to cite the example of the Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 and the

¹⁸² See Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 124-125.

¹⁸³ Importantly, however, neither the sheep nor the goats thought about God when they served or fail to serve those in need. The only difference between the sheep and goats is that the sheep (those who are saved) are the ones who offered assistance.

¹⁸⁴ Augustine explains that since God is love (1 John 4:8), all love is love for God and for union with God (*in Deo* and *propter Deum*; see *Confessions* XI.xxix.39) and that God alone is to be enjoyed and the world is to be used in loving God (*De Doctrina Christiana*, I.iv.4, 10). Love of God, according to Augustine, means loving God *in* the neighbor. As we have already seen, the neighbor is anyone and everyone; all are worthy of our love (*DDC* I.xxx.31-32). It follows, then, that "All people should be loved equally," without distinguishing between the differences of personal relationships or responsibilities (*DDC* I.xxviii.29). For Augustine, the moral life is about loving the right things in the right way for the right end. The proper ordering of love lies in the objects of one's love (e.g., *DDC* I.xxvii.28), with everything following one's primary focus on loving God ("Descend that you may ascend to God," *Confessions* IV.xii.19).

Last Judgment scene in Matthew 25:31-46 to conclude that “every act of charity towards our neighbor is indeed formally, even though perhaps only implicitly, love of God” and also that “every act of explicit love of God is truly and formally ... love of *neighbor*.”¹⁸⁵

This appears to be the claim Gustavo Gutiérrez makes when he introduces the phrase, “theology of the neighbor” in *A Theology of Liberation*. This phrase comes from a brief passage by Spanish theologian José María González Ruíz, in his book, *Pobreza Evangélica y Promoción Humana*.¹⁸⁶ González Ruíz exhorts Christian theologians to emphasize the Samaritan’s depiction of fraternity as he writes, “it is inexcusable to omit an authentic ‘theology of the neighbor.’” As González Ruíz sees it, this involves taking up the example of the Samaritan who “makes himself a neighbor from the others,” serving as a model for being a person “completely universal, the sworn enemy of every kind of discrimination.”¹⁸⁷ A “theology of the neighbor,” according to González Ruíz, implies a commitment to liberation to more fully realize the bonds of human solidarity for the flourishing of all peoples.¹⁸⁸

These horizontal duties to human neighbors are rooted in a reverence for God present in every person. Gutiérrez cites Yves Congar who claims that disciples’ “deepest commitment” is the “a paradoxical sign of God” who is our neighbor, or better, the

¹⁸⁵ Rahner adds, “one can love God whom one does not see only *by* loving one’s visible brother lovingly.” See Rahner, “Reflections on the Unity of the Love of Neighbor and the Love of God” *Theological Investigations* VI (London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1969), 231-249 (see especially pp. 239, 247).

¹⁸⁶ As this book has not yet been translated into English, translations are my own.

¹⁸⁷ See José María González Ruíz, *Pobreza evangélica y promoción humana* (Málaga: Manantial-Aguaviva, [1966] 1999), 98.

¹⁸⁸ Shortly thereafter, González Ruíz cites *Nostra aetate* (the Vatican II declaration on the relation of the church to non-Christian religions), which reads, “We cannot truly call on God, the Father of all, if we refuse to treat in a brotherly way any man, created as he is in the image of God. Man’s relation to God the Father and his relation to men his brothers are so linked together that Scripture says: ‘He who does not love does not know God’ (1 John 4:8). No foundation therefore remains for any theory or practice that leads to discrimination between man and man or people and people, so far as their human dignity and the rights flowing from it are concerned” (no. 5).

“sacrament of our Neighbor!”¹⁸⁹ Congar continues, “our neighbor is privileged above all because God is actually present in him. It is right and it is necessary to speak of the ‘mystery of our neighbor’ ... [as] something which has a meaning beyond itself and in relation to the final reality towards which the whole history of salvation moves. Humanly, we never know exactly who it is we are meeting in the person of our neighbor.”¹⁹⁰ A “theology of neighbor” recognizes that God is revealed in our neighbors, which implies moral obligations for love, justice, and solidarity to simultaneously pursue right-relationship with God and one another.

A “theology of neighbor” involves a particular way of seeing others with reverence and respect. It resists distraction (like Mary’s example in Luke 10:38-42) and

¹⁸⁹ Yves Congar, *The Wide World My Parish: Salvation and its Problems* tr. Donald Attwater (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), 124.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 125. Congar connects this to Matthew 25:31-46 to conclude, “We shall be judged on what we have done, not on what we have known” (125-126).

This focus on the mystery of the neighbor resonates with the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas believes the encounter with the Other is always a temptation to appropriate or totalize the Other as an *alter ego*, another self. But this reduces the Other to the Same while there is an irreducible interior otherness (thoughts, desires, suffering), that one can never know. This radical otherness is infinite; thus the other is always Other. This implies a moral asymmetry between the self and Other. According to Levinas, this means that I always owe more to the Other than myself. He explains, “The Other who dominates me in his transcendence is thus the stranger, the widow, the orphan, to whom I am [always already] obligated.” See *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1994), 215.

The existence of another confronts me, accuses me; it means that I do not exist only for self-interest or self-preservation; I exist-for-others. This awareness comes before any decision I make; it comes from the Other. For Levinas, the Other is an ethical authority over me; he summarizes, “The fact that in existing for another I exist otherwise than in existing for me is morality itself” (*Totality and Infinity*, 261).

Though Levinas’ concern was more philosophical than theological, it would be wrong to ignore the manner in which he understood his ethics to acknowledge the presence of the Divine in the Other. He writes, for example, that the “dimension of the divine opens forth from the human face ... God rises to his supreme and ultimate presence as correlative of the justice rendered unto men,” and concludes that the other “is indispensable for my relation with God” (*Totality and Infinity*, 78).

Levinas’ infinite, absolute responsibility to others connects with Christian neighbor love through the realization that I do not choose who is my neighbor based on convenience or potential reward. As Levinas states, “the responsibility for the Other ... commands me and ordains me to the other, to the first one on the scene, and makes me approach him, makes me his neighbor” (see Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being: Or Beyond Essence* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 1998), 11). Levinas describes the neighbor as the “first one on the scene,” whose claims precede my own. The face of the neighbor, as Levinas explains, “signifies for me an unexceptionable responsibility, preceding every free consent, every pact, every contract” (*Otherwise Than Being*, 87-88). Here, recognition (of the Other) is already a response in the form of responsibility. My neighbor is not just the one who lives next door, not just the one who belongs to my kin or clan, but any other and all others (*Otherwise Than Being*, 160). These claims fit well with the implications we have already drawn from the Samaritan’s example.

less dignified visions of humanity. Gutiérrez suggests a commitment to this manner of seeing requires a process of openness and conversion in encountering the “other.”¹⁹¹ This is an openness, encounter, conversion, and commitment to Christ-in-the-other, and, citing Matthew 25:31-46, Christ-in-the-poor.¹⁹² Like the Samaritan, this requires a proactive approach toward others in need: recognizing the “other” as a neighbor and being a neighbor to those considered “other.” Gutiérrez explains, the neighbor “is not the one whom I find on my path, but rather the one in whose path I place myself, the one whom I approach and actively seek.”¹⁹³ This partiality for the other and particularly the one in need is the reason Gutiérrez believes the Samaritan’s merciful actions represent the preferential option for the poor.¹⁹⁴

The preferential option for the poor has sometimes been misunderstood to be an exclusive preference for poor, vulnerable, and marginalized peoples. It is instead a commitment to inclusively extend the reach of love, justice, and solidarity, beginning with those in greatest need. It is a commitment to emulate God’s preferential care and concern for the most vulnerable members of the human family.¹⁹⁵

In rhetoric and practice, caution must be exercised, as words like “the poor,” “the vulnerable,” or “the marginalized” risk reifying conditions and treating persons as a category by homogenizing them into a group of “others.” It can also perpetuate

¹⁹¹ Gutiérrez argues this is not only true for individual others, but entire groups, including the poor and suffering “masses [who] are also our neighbor.” (*A Theology of Liberation*, 116).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 112-113.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁹⁴ Gutiérrez explains that the preferential option for the poor “involves a commitment that implies leaving the road one is on, as the parable of the Good Samaritan teaches, and entering the world of the other, of the ‘insignificant’ person, of the one excluded from dominant social sectors, communities, viewpoints, and ideas ... The priority of the other is a distinguishing mark of a gospel ethic, and nobody embodies this priority more clearly than the poor and the excluded” (“The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ,” 318).

¹⁹⁵ This is a theme that runs through both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. See, for example, Exodus 3:7-8, Deuteronomy 14:29, 15:7, Psalm 82:3-4. Or James 2:5: “Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him?”

dichotomous thinking between “us” and “them,” making “the poor” people who need something from us, rather than first being our equal brothers and sisters in Christ.

Emphasizing solidarity in tandem with the preferential option for the poor reminds the nonpoor that we have much to learn and receive from those who are poor. This also helps to avoid paternalistic or instrumental views that only see the poor through their condition of socio-economic deprivation or treat them as objects of Christian duty.

Solidarity, or “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,”¹⁹⁶ is thus inclusive, mutual empowerment to share in receiving and building up the Reign of God (already initiated but not yet in its fullness).¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 38. Note that this definition relies heavily on a Thomistic conception of justice as a habit of the will to render to each person what is due to them (*ST* II-II.58.1).

¹⁹⁷ The connection between evangelization and liberation was made explicit by Pope Paul VI in his 1975 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, wherein the pope asserts that the Church “has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings ... the duty of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete. This is not foreign to evangelization” (no. 30).

Solidarity and the preferential option for the poor gained significant attention after the Second Vatican Council, especially as the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) interpreted the documents of Vatican II while reading the “signs of the times” in their socio-cultural context. Gustavo Gutiérrez was an important theological advisor to the bishops during the conferences that gathered in Medellín in 1968, Puebla in 1979, Santo Domingo in 1992, and most recently, in Aparecida in 2007. Although liberation theology and the preferential option for the poor have caused controversy with the Magisterium, Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI endorsed the preferential option for the poor as a matter of Christological faith and Christian charity. For example, in his opening address to the bishops gathered at Aparecida, Benedict XVI proclaimed that “the preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in the God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty (cf. 2 Cor 8:9).” In his 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, Pope John Paul II asserts, “This is an option, or a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness” (no. 42).

In the first months of his pontificate, Pope Francis has consistently demonstrated a special devotion to the poor, continuing the legacy he built as Cardinal Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In his first encyclical, *Lumen fidei* (released in July 2013, much of it written by his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI), Francis writes, “Nor does the light of faith make us forget the sufferings of this world. How many men and women of faith have found mediators of light in those who suffer! So it was with Saint Francis of Assisi and the leper, or with Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta and her poor. They understood the mystery at work in them. In drawing near to the suffering, they were certainly not able to eliminate all their pain or to explain every evil. Faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness, but a lamp which guides our steps in the night and suffices for the journey. To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments which explain everything; rather, his response is that of an accompanying presence, a history of goodness which touches every story of suffering and opens up a ray of light. In Christ, God himself wishes to share this path with us and to offer us his gaze so that we might see the light within it. Christ is the one who, having endured

A theology of the neighbor is attentive to the ways God accompanies and suffers with the poor because of the dehumanization and deprivation they face. It is a call to recognize these suffering brothers and sisters as one's neighbors, not only in reference to particular persons, but entire masses of those who are poor, hungry, sick, and otherwise deprived. Gutiérrez points out that "the poor" should refer to our brothers and sisters who suffer from conditions of material deprivation as well as other forms of exclusion, thus becoming "socially insignificant." Hence, to speak of the poor is to describe those who have been rendered "nonpersons" and that moreover, material poverty is often a sentence to "premature death."¹⁹⁸ Solidarity with the poor does not mean that the "haves" must provide for "the have nots," as this provides necessary aid but does not necessarily cultivate mutual respect and understanding or the sharing of power and resources to transform the status quo that benefits some at the expense of others. Instead, solidarity depends on shared interests and joint efforts for inclusive empowerment, always sensitive to the poverties around us and in us.¹⁹⁹

The challenge to practice "social charity" for the suffering masses corresponds with Metz's political theology, specifically his understanding of religion as interruption.²⁰⁰ The interruption needed today is the recognition that even though many

suffering, is 'the pioneer and perfecter of our faith' (Heb 12:2)" (no. 57). Pope Francis has indicated his next encyclical will focus on poverty (a tentative title has been reported as *Beati pauperes*, or "Blessed are the poor").

¹⁹⁸ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, xxi-xxii, xxix.

¹⁹⁹ Jean Vanier reflects on an abiding lesson at L'Arche communities: very often, people come to help the poor only to learn that they themselves are impoverished in many ways. See Jean Vanier, *The Heart of L'Arche: A Spirituality for Everyday* (New York: Crossroad, 1995).

²⁰⁰ By this word, Metz contends that religion provides a radical break with the banal, a witness to the "dangerous memory" of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This involves attunement to the memory of suffering (past, present, and future) and a process of translation between the Reign of God and a specific context. It rejects the privatization, domestication, and neutralization of faith through a political theology that stands in solidarity with those who suffer and takes responsibility for their suffering. The "dangerous memory" means more than aligning the faithful with those who suffer from poverty or oppression; it empowers believers to embrace their agency for social awareness and responsibility. It

of the billions of people who live in or near impoverished conditions are not visible to us on a daily basis, they are indeed our neighbors and make claims on us.²⁰¹ The task at hand is two-fold: first, to determine how to raise this consciousness among Christians; second, to develop a prudential response to do what we can, where we are.

For Gutiérrez, this task begins with a spirituality of solidarity with God and with all human beings. This spirituality centers on ever deeper conversion to Christ-in-the-poor and is sustained by disciples' life-long pilgrimage in prayer, commitment, and action.²⁰² It is a spirituality rooted in gratitude for God's generous bestowal of life and love.²⁰³ Conversion is an unending process of being transformed in greater gratitude and generosity. Though it is constant it is not necessarily gradual; Gutiérrez concedes it implies a break in personal biases, prejudices, and mental categories as well as in social, economic, and political structures.²⁰⁴ This break – like Metz's vision of religion as

challenges Christians to be critical of the status quo and the allure of progress and bourgeois triumphalism. See Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology* tr. J. Matthew Ashley (New York: Crossroad, 2007), especially pp. 58, 88, 99-107, 158.

²⁰¹ Gutiérrez draws near to this point in his call for conversion, transformation, and a “radical change in the foundation of society.” Speaking of the poor as marginalized groups Gutiérrez writes, “Our attitude towards them, or rather our commitment to them, will indicate whether or not we are directing our existence in conformity with the will of the Father. This is what Christ reveals to us by identifying himself with the poor in the text of Matthew [25:31-46]. A theology of the neighbor, which has yet to be worked out, would have to be structured on this basis” (*A Theology of Liberation*, 116). Hence, a “theology of the neighbor” is not just an I-Thou encounter, but a sense of being in relationship with (and responsible to) many neighbors precisely *as* a neighbor.

²⁰² Ibid., 117. Elsewhere, Gutiérrez succinctly defines spirituality as discipleship, that is, following the Holy Spirit through life lived in love. See *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 45.

²⁰³ Gratitude flows from an awareness of the gratuitousness of God's loving providence, an abundance which is not to be hoarded, but shared just as generously as it has been received. In short, this gift implies a return-gift. To clarify, the return-gift is implied by the gift itself, not demanded by the giver. This is not to be understood as a binary exchange between ourselves and God, but as an offering directed to other human beings. Neither is this to be considered in terms of *quid pro quo*, since we cannot be as generous as God is with us. For an illuminating treatment of this “symbolic exchange” between the gift, reception of the gift, and the return-gift, see Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2001), 117-127.

²⁰⁴ *A Theology of Liberation*, 118. Gutiérrez adds “Christians have not done enough in this area of conversion to the neighbor, to social justice, to history. They have not perceived clearly enough yet that to know God *is* to do justice. They still do not live *in one sole action* with both God and all humans. They still do not situate themselves in Christ without attempting to avoid concrete human history. They have yet

interruption – shifts one’s point of view. As the Samaritan does, it is a movement out of one’s way and into the ditch to take up the vantage point of those who are poor, vulnerable, and marginalized. Therefore, conversion requires more than a new way of seeing or believing; it denotes an intentional change of place. Gutiérrez proposes that this new place should be the locus for virtuous friendships, where disciples can share in the life of those who experience the in-breaking of the Reign of God as “nonpersons.”

A “theology of neighbor” is a call to accompany neighbors in need. It is a proactive, place-changing love for God in the poor, as part of each disciple’s vocation to the dual axes of vertical and horizontal *koinōnia* and solidarity.²⁰⁵ Like the Samaritan shows, it is a love that is not content to stay “on its own front porch.” Instead, as Gutiérrez claims, it means defining the neighbor “as the one I must go out to look for, on the highways and byways, in the factories and slums, on the farms and in the mines” which means that “my world changes.”²⁰⁶ Or, to put a finer point on this, it means that my *place* in the world changes: to “Go and do likewise” is to be a neighbor who draws near to neighbors in need.

From Charity to Solidarity?

Gutiérrez’s compelling interpretation of the story of the Good Samaritan breaks open this passage in new ways. Before moving forward, it is necessary to raise three critiques against his position. First, Gutiérrez consistently refers to the neighbor in terms

to tread the path which will lead them to seek effectively the peace of the Lord in the heart of social struggle” (Ibid.).

²⁰⁵ See Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 21.

²⁰⁶ Gutiérrez continues, “This is what is happening with the ‘option for the poor,’ for in the gospel it is the poor person who is the neighbor par excellence. This option constitutes the nub and core of a new way of being human and Christian.” See Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983), 44.

of the object of one's duty, rather than as a Samaritan-like, compassionate subject.²⁰⁷ His view of a "theology of neighbor" is focused on receiving the "other" and falls short of including the vocation to see oneself as a neighbor who is a grace-empowered agent carrying forward God-like compassion.²⁰⁸ Second, Gutiérrez's claim that the Samaritan depicts the preferential option for the poor is problematic because this option includes work for social reform and restructuring, something not demonstrated by the Samaritan's example. Although the Samaritan's courage, compassion, and boundary-breaking solidarity have implications for "doing likewise" expressed through a commitment to justice, those social, political, and economic efforts extrapolate beyond the actual passage.²⁰⁹ Third, the way Gutiérrez connects Samaritan-like proximity with the poor to friendships with and among the poor also departs from the Lucan text. As laudable as these virtuous friendships may be, there is no evidence of any kind of reciprocity or relationship established between the Samaritan and the man left for dead on the road to Jericho.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ See, for example, *A Theology of Liberation*, 113-120. There is not a single case when Gutiérrez uses "neighbor" to refer to the moral agent of charity or solidarity.

²⁰⁸ Recall Sobrino's belief in the possibility of living as risen beings and the transformative power of orthopathy, the "correct way of letting ourselves be affected by the reality of Christ" (*Christ the Liberator*, 1; 210).

²⁰⁹ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. offered a similar interpretation when he preached, "On the one hand we are called to play the good Samaritan on life's roadside; but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring." See Martin Luther King, Jr., "A Time to Break the Silence," in *I Have a Dream: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.* ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992), 148.

²¹⁰ To be clarify, Gutiérrez cites the example of the Samaritan as illustrating the preferential option for the poor by going into the ditch and then, several pages later, links the preferential option for the poor to friendship with and among the poor. In doing so, he seems to conflate neighborly actions with justice and friendship, and in so doing, perhaps confuses the original meaning of the passage (see "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ," 318 and 325).

These criticisms aside, the Samaritan's paradigmatic example of being a neighbor merits fuller attention to solidarity and the preferential option for the poor.²¹¹ This depiction of courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity ought to inspire disciples to be converted to this Samaritan-like way of seeing, feeling, thinking, and acting. Although this passage does not address the quality of permanent neighborly relations, we can surmise that such ties should be marked by mutual respect, accompaniment, and shared loyalty. Perhaps this is why Gutiérrez draws the connection to friendship; such intimate connections – especially with those who may be easily ignored or isolated – could help cultivate a greater respect for “nonpersons,” sensitivity to their suffering, and commitment to work for empowered action to alleviate these dehumanizing conditions.²¹²

In sum, a “theology of neighbor” implies closeness with the poor.²¹³ It is a closeness that should aspire for virtuous friendships because, as Gutiérrez states, “If there is no friendship with [the poor] and no sharing of the life of the poor, then there is no

²¹¹ Ada María Isasi-Díaz expresses this well: “The paradigmatic shift I am proposing calls for solidarity as the appropriate present-day expression of the gospel mandate that we love our neighbor. This commandment, which encapsulates the gospel message, is the goal of Christianity. I believe salvation depends on love of neighbor, and because love of neighbor today should be expressed through solidarity, solidarity can and should be considered the *sine qua non* of salvation. This means that we have to be very clear about who ‘our neighbor’ is. Our neighbor, according to Matthew 25, is the least of our sisters and brothers. Neighbors are the poor, the oppressed, for whom we must have a preferential option. This we cannot have apart from being in solidarity with them ... Given the network of oppressive structures in our world today that so control and dominate the vast majority of human beings, the only way we can continue to claim the centrality of love of neighbor for Christians is to redefine what it means and what it demands of us. Solidarity, then, becomes the new way of understanding and living out this commandment in the gospel” (“Solidarity: Love of Neighbor in the 21st Century,” 31, 39).

²¹² Gutiérrez often notes that poverty is a complex reality and that solidarity with the poor requires a closeness and accompaniment in order to understand their concrete situation and to overcome fear and misperception. These intimate encounters will help us overcome fear, the “enemy of faith” and its “offspring, despair and indifference.” See Gutiérrez, *The God of Life* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), 173-179, 187.

²¹³ Gutiérrez lobbied to have this emphasis on proximity with the poor made explicit at the CELAM Conference in Aparecida. In the concluding document the bishops state, “Only the closeness that makes us friends enables us to appreciate deeply the values of the poor today, their legitimate desires, and their own manner of living the faith. The option for the poor should lead us to friendship with the poor. Day by day the poor become agents of evangelization and of comprehensive human promotion” (no. 398).

authentic commitment to liberation, because love exists only among equals. Any talk of liberation necessarily refers to a comprehensive process, one that embraces everyone.”²¹⁴ Avoiding the narrowing loyalties that mark some understandings of friendship, these relationships are part of a practice that seeks an ever-widening “comradely communion” that effects the unity it signifies through the Body of Christ.²¹⁵ This is a friendship firmly committed to restoring the bonds broken by sin.²¹⁶ It involves gratuitous love for real persons, especially the alienated and exploited.²¹⁷ It is founded on freedom, shared agency, and mutual empowerment. Friendship is a mode of “social charity” that promotes interpersonal solidarity and inspires a commitment to work for justice to make progress toward systemic and structural expressions of solidarity.²¹⁸ This is part of what it means to work toward the biblical vision of right-relationships in *shalom* and *dikaïosynē*. It is to analogically apply Samaritan-like neighbor love to one’s relationships by drawing near to those in need. It is a concrete way for disciples to engage the principles of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor. It is to practice a “theology of neighbor” in the world today.

Some dismiss the Samaritan’s neighborly example as a hyperbolic ideal. But this misreading depicts the Samaritan as an exceptional hero rather than as a paradigm for the Christian moral life. The Samaritan recognizes another person in need and provides the

²¹⁴ *A Theology of Liberation*, xxxi.

²¹⁵ Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 70. Gutiérrez links solidarity to the “Body of Christ” imagery found in the Pauline Epistles, like 1 Corinthians 12.

²¹⁶ This requires a humble posture of pardon and mercy; see *We Drink from Our Own Wells*, 96-102.

²¹⁷ Gutiérrez sums this up well: friendship is not a matter of fulfilling a duty, but the “work of concrete, authentic love for the poor that is not possible apart from a certain integration into their world and apart from bonds of real friendship with those who suffer despoliation and injustice. The solidarity is not with ‘the poor’ in the abstract but with human beings of flesh and bone. Without love and affection, without – why not say it? – tenderness, there can be no true gesture of solidarity” (Ibid., 104).

²¹⁸ For more on the relationship between friendship and justice, see also: Paul Wadell, *Becoming Friends: Worship, Justice, and the Practice of Christian Friendship* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002).

care he is capable of offering. He enlists others to join in caring for the man left for dead, and continues along his way. He does not sell all his possessions, disown his family, or leave behind his manner of earning a living. He does not set up camp in the ditch or dedicate his life to the “Jericho Road Development Agency.” This passage does not ignore the reality of finitude or question the legitimate pursuit of one’s own interests and preexisting relationships. Through this story, Jesus challenges his followers to see in a way that recognizes the need around them and to respond by doing what they can, no more and no less.

But living up to the depth of the challenge to consistently “Go and do likewise” is no small feat. How should disciples be the kinds of neighbors who draw near to their poor, marginalized, and vulnerable neighbors without neglecting their preexisting roles, responsibilities, and relationships? This requires a moral framework for being neighbors today, the subject of study in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

A MORAL VISION FOR NEIGHBORS COMMITTED TO SOLIDARITY

The Samaritan's compassionate, courageous, and boundary-breaking actions provide a focal paradigm and challenging standard for Christian neighbor love today. This example of serving another in need simultaneously illustrates vertical and horizontal right-relationship and it is a criterion for evaluating the degree of inclusivity for Christians' social responsibility. Despite the fact that the Samaritan's actions were evoked by spontaneous emotions, the lasting lesson of this passage is that disciples have a duty to love those in proximity who are in need and also never allow another human person to stand outside one's moral concern.

To clarify, this "duty" is a moral ideal. In reality, a person's moral vision excludes more people than it includes. Human finitude means that persons have a limited amount of time, energy, and resources. What is needed is a virtuous midpoint between deficient concern and its excess; just as finitude cannot be invoked to justify the *antiparechomai* embodied by the priest and Levite that denies care to one nearby, so the Samaritan's courage, compassion, and boundary-breaking solidarity cannot be used to set an impossible moral standard.²¹⁹ Though a universal principle, this command cannot be reduced to mere abstraction. Luke 10:25-37 illustrates that to "love your neighbor as

²¹⁹ The command to love one's neighbor as oneself is, in reality, a standard higher than can be consistently met. But the significance is in the *striving* for the standard, and how, with grace, human capacity for love increases. Bruno Schüller explains, "both the law of Christ and the natural law command love of neighbor. But in accordance with its essence the natural law can impose as a duty only a purely human (natural) love of neighbor, whereas the law of Christ commands a love of neighbor which surpasses all human capability, a supernatural love of neighbor." See Bruno Schüller, "A Contribution to the Theological Discussion of Natural Law" in Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick (eds.) *Readings in Moral Theology No. 7: Natural Law and Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 83.

yourself” is to be practically applied toward the next person one encounters.²²⁰ In other words, universal neighbor love is mediated through loving actual, nearby persons. But too often, expressions of Christian neighbor love are episodic and partial.

Given the expanding networks of social, economic, and political interaction, “neighbor” takes on a more complex meaning today. Globalization and digital connections transform how we might define what it means to be “nearby.”²²¹ This context presents new challenges for honoring obligations to neighbors near and far who experience varying degrees of need. All of this complicates what it means to be a loving neighbor and how to carry forward the Christian tradition that aspires for human flourishing in *dikaiosynē*, *koinōnia*, and solidarity.

Recognizing afresh the challenge of Jesus’ command to “Go and do likewise,” the goal of this chapter is to construct a framework for a moral vision of Christian neighbor love committed to solidarity. The task at hand is to consider how this moral vision shapes the three-step process described by Niebuhr that links identity with interpretation for responsibility. It seeks a virtuous mean between the traditional view that presents Christian discipleship as oriented by charity and justice without sufficiently integrating the demands of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor and the liberationist perspective that exhorts every Christian to a life dedicated to solidarity with the poor in proximate communion with poor peoples, regardless of preexisting relationships and responsibilities.

²²⁰ Victor Paul Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 202. Furnish emphasizes that this summons to love is a Christian duty, a life-long vocation, and a claim placed upon believers by God. Love is more than a disposition or feeling; it is an act of the will obliged by God’s command that is not contingent on personal inclinations, attractiveness, benefit, or merit (201).

²²¹ The word for “neighbor” refers to the one who is “nearby” (in English and in Latin and the Romance Languages, for example: *proximum*, *prójimo*, *prossimo*, and *prochain* all connote a proximity with another person). The question to ask, then, is: “To whom am I near?”

This framework for a moral vision of solidarity moves forward in three steps. First, I address how solidarity has been developed as a theological principle and moral virtue in Catholic theology. I compare this vision of human life with the cultural theory of philosopher Charles Taylor to explore possible reasons why these teachings fail to be received as important.²²² Next, I aim to find middle ground between the traditional understanding of Christian duties in charity and justice for the common good and the liberationist position that calls for solidarity with the poor without adequately accounting for the socio-cultural conditions that help and hinder progress toward this goal.

Third and finally, I present solidarity as a life-pattern characterized by three traits: (1) an identity formed by a matrix of virtues including compassion, courage, fidelity, and prudence; (2) a practice of interpretation of one's socio-cultural context through a lens of attentiveness and appropriate response to those nearby; (3) an exercise of responsibility through practices, relationships, and in specific locations to promote inclusive participation for liberation. In contrast to abstract principles or situation ethics calibrated to specific contexts, this life-pattern of neighbor love orients personal dispositions and habits, practices and relationships to form persons in community to "Go and do likewise" today.

Solidarity in an Age of the "Buffered Self"

The Christian tradition, informed by Scripture, operates with a theological anthropology that defines personhood in terms of God-given dignity, being essentially social, and called to freedom and integral development for human flourishing in

²²² Recall Roger Bergman's claim noted in Chapter 1 that Catholic social thought remains the church's "best-kept secret" because it is not being *received* as "valuable or important" (*Catholic Social Learning*, 9).

communal settings marked by truth, charity, and justice.²²³ As noted in Chapter 2, the command to “love your neighbor as yourself” illustrated by the Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 strikes to the core of Jesus’ teaching about what it means to be a Christian disciple.²²⁴ This is carried forward through the social mission of the church that promotes human dignity and rights grounded in the creation of the human person in *imago Dei* (Genesis 1:28), especially in the canon of Catholic social teaching.²²⁵

Insofar as Luke 10:25-37 delivers the message that there are no “non-neighbors,” it challenges disciples to be agents who advance human solidarity. Solidarity – used here as a theological principle and moral virtue – describes the condition of shared human filiation resulting from humanity’s common Source and Destiny. Solidarity implies rights and responsibilities to advance the unity and flourishing of the human family. It is

²²³ These points provide the framework for the introduction of Pope Benedict XVI’s final encyclical, *Caritas in veritate* (nos. 1-9), written to commemorate Pope Paul VI’s 1967 encyclical, *Populorum progressio* (“On the Development of Peoples”). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* directly states: “All men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbor is inseparable from love for God. The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation” (nos. 1878-1879).

²²⁴ Although Christian neighbor love and the corporal works of mercy (as depicted in Luke 10:25-37 and Matthew 25:31-46, for example) have been exhorted to every follower of Christ, they have sometimes been thought to be reserved for special vocations, like those in religious orders. One prominent exception includes the lay confraternities of Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, wherein care for the neighbor (*il prossimo*) was understood as a condition of one’s own salvation. See Christopher F. Black, “Confraternity Philanthropy” in *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 168-233.

²²⁵ The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace’s *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* states “in the social doctrine of the Church can be found the principles for reflection, the criteria for judgment, and the directives for action which are the starting point for the promotion of an integral and solidary humanism. Making this doctrine known therefore, constitutes, therefore, a genuine pastoral priority.” (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2005, no. 7). Note that the church’s role is articulated as one of teaching (rather than learning, forming, or being formed).

On the subject of solidarity, the *Compendium* states, “In the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the *specifically Christian* dimensions of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One’s neighbor is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the *living image* of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. One’s neighbor must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love of which the Lord loves him or her, and for that person’s sake one must be ready for sacrifice, even the ultimate one: to lay down one’s life for the brethren (1 John 3:16)” (no. 196).

a form of “social charity” that takes the form of political and economic action. It strives for a “deep” sense of communion, one that does not ignore conflict but is committed to reconcile differences by promoting shared interests and joint efforts to liberate the suffering and oppressed.²²⁶ Solidarity is oriented toward hope; it trusts in the restorative, conciliatory, liberative, and ultimately creative powers of love to make new forms of human communion possible.²²⁷

The word “solidarity” does not appear in the Bible, however. It has been extrapolated from related themes of community, kinship, and universal neighbor love in the New Testament.²²⁸ For example, Paul’s letters routinely appeal to the image of the Body of Christ as a metaphor for the church (see, for example, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Ephesians 1:22-23), expressed through the equality and unity of its members, without distinction between them (Galatians 3:28).

The word “solidarity” was popularized in nineteenth-century European labor-union movements to motivate workers to unite as a group around common interests.²²⁹

Used to promote strong in-group bonding, the slogan of solidarity thus maintained an “us

²²⁶ The words typically used to express these forms of “social charity” and interpersonal bonds are “fellowship” and “fraternity” but I would prefer to avoid using these terms, given their gender-specific connotations. Recall that *koinōnia* implies more than “communion” it is also partnership with the Holy Spirit. For that reason, I will use *koinōnia* to link this biblical vision for communal bonds in right-relationship with cooperating in the Spirit’s desire to advance human unity and flourishing.

²²⁷ Recall from Chapter 1 the points made by Gutiérrez on “new creation” and Sobrino on living as “risen beings” that take seriously these new possibilities for human life in communion (described in 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Revelation 21:5, for example).

²²⁸ This implies close relationships and a commitment to justice for those members of the community. According to Richard B. Hays, the New Testament authors aimed to show how community life in the early church provided a credible witness of Jesus’ resurrection through virtuous friendships not restricted to dyadic relations or a tight-knit circle but “now exponentially expanded into the life of a community of thousands.” Community life is built up through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a gift to “establish a covenant community in which justice is both proclaimed and practiced.” See Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation; A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 123, 135.

²²⁹ Pope John Paul II, who frequently spoke and wrote on the theme of solidarity, was influenced by witnessing the *Solidarność* labor union movement in Poland, his native country. See Gerald J. Beyer, *Recovering Solidarity: Lessons from Poland’s Unfinished Revolution* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

vs. them” connotation that defined boundaries and did not avoid conflict.²³⁰ In the twentieth-century it was applied theologically to highlight humanity’s intrinsic social nature, the equality of all persons in dignity and rights, and the virtuous commitment to overcome obstacles to the unity of the human family.²³¹ With its view of society as basically organic and cooperative, Catholic solidarism intentionally created a middle way between liberalism (that exalts individual choice and views community based on social contracts) and communism (that subjugates the human person to the collective will of the group or nation). As part of the church’s teaching on human dignity and rights, solidarity moderates individual claims and duties relative to the common good.²³²

Before moving forward into the ethical obligations of solidarity, a brief overview of its theological development as a theological principle (universal teaching) and moral virtue (for personal formation) is in order.²³³ Solidarity first appeared in church teaching in Pope Pius XI’s encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*, commemorating the fortieth anniversary of Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum* on the rights of workers (the first document in the canon of Catholic social thought). It gained notoriety through Pope

²³⁰ In evolutionary biology, preference to one’s own kin is promoted and passed on through strong in-group bonding in order to maximize genetic representation in future generations. This socio-biological condition should be “appreciated for alerting us to the myopia and narrow exclusivity of kin preference” and challenge Christian ethics “to recognize that a universal human need for some kind of ordering of affections and moral responsibility has been built into human nature by millions of years of natural selection,” as Stephen Pope suggests in *The Evolution of Altruism and the Ordering of Love* (Georgetown University Press, 1994), 132.

²³¹ This was a focal theme for liberation theologians like Gutiérrez and Sobrino, and was also highlighted in the social encyclicals of Pope Paul VI (*Populorum progressio* no. 17) and Pope John Paul II (*Laborem exercens* nos. 8 and 20; *Sollicitudo rei socialis* nos. 9, 21, 23, 26, 33, 36, 38-40, 45-47). Note that John Paul II claims in *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, “The freedom with which Christ has set us free (cf. Gal 5:1) encourages us to become the servants of all. Thus the process of development and liberation takes concrete shape in the exercise of solidarity, that is to say in the love and service of neighbor, especially of the poorest” (no. 46).

²³² It is also defined as a social virtue by way of proposing a vision for social order and the organization of institutions (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 193).

²³³ This summary is informed by Matthew L. Lamb’s entry, “Solidarity” in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* ed. Judith A. Dwyer (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 1994), 908-912.

John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in terris* (1963) and Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum progressio* (1967) and was a particularly favored term for Pope John Paul II, who advanced it as an ontological and historical principle and moral virtue. Ontologically, solidarity is a gift from God in creating and redeeming humanity. Historically, solidarity is an ethical imperative for humans to cooperate in advancing integral human development and the global common good.²³⁴ As a virtue, solidarity is “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” (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 38). Solidarity is an intellectual and moral virtue cultivated in friendship and accountable to justice.

Solidarity has received special attention from liberation theologians to unite Christians to share in experiences of struggle, suffering, inequality, and oppression as well as aspirations for collective action to overcome cycles of violence, oppression, and other experiences of injustice.²³⁵ Liberation theologians point to the solidarity shared between God and humanity through the Incarnation and Jesus' triumph over sin and death through his passion and resurrection to argue that wider solidarity (especially with and among poor persons) is possible as part of the unfolding reality of the “new creation”

²³⁴ John Paul II later applied solidarity to include ecology as part of a “new solidarity” necessary for peace with the whole of creation. See his message for the 1990 World Day of Peace, “Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation,” nos. 10-11. He asserted that “Christians, in particular, realize that their responsibility within creation and their duty towards nature and the Creator are an essential part of their faith” (no. 15).

²³⁵ Jon Sobrino describes solidarity as a fruit of a spirituality of liberation, a kinship with God and with others, and a spiritual exercise to more fully realize our “kinship with God in incarnation among the crucified of history.” By drawing close to the poor and journeying with them in the struggle for liberation, we draw nearer to God. In this way, “God draws us godward” to vertical and horizontal right-relationship and ever deeper and more integral flourishing. See Sobrino, *A Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1988), 40-41.

in the communion of the Body of Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Revelation 21:5). This, in turn, makes possible a “new humanity.”²³⁶

A theological view of solidarity provides a divine perspective on the integral human family as ontologically related creatures sharing the same Source and Destiny. This shared nature is the grounds for solidarity to promote equality, friendship, social charity, and justice. Solidarity thus operates on interpersonal and systemic levels, as a fruit of shared love and as part of a commitment to the just distribution of goods and reform of vicious social, economic, and political structures.²³⁷ Pope John Paul II recognized that the increasing interdependence that results from globalization would need to be met by a moral solidarity to ensure that these interlocking relationships and systems would promote the common good of all (*Sollicitudo rei socialis*, no. 26).

However, these theological visions of solidarity do not consult social theory or social analysis to address how solidarity functions as an organizing principle, moral norm, or virtue.²³⁸ Operating in a “top-down” fashion, church teaching begins with an anthropological premise of organic unity and harmony that does not sufficiently address

²³⁶ This is an important concept for Gutiérrez, who envisions liberation as essential to the vocation of “new humanity” (see, for example, *A Theology of Liberation*, 81, 106). Gutiérrez cites *Gaudium et spes*, which claims, “We are witnesses of the birth of a new humanism, one in which man is defined first of all by his responsibility toward his brothers and toward history” (no. 55).

²³⁷ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, “Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all forms of solidarity: solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business, solidarity among nations and peoples. International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this” (no. 1941).

²³⁸ Globalization and interdependence are not synonymous with solidarity. Though interdependence is often touted as an asset to solidarity, there are also experiences of fragmentation, alienation, and growing asymmetries in shared goods that cannot be overlooked. This is briefly acknowledged in *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (no. 17). The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* also accounts for the “stark inequalities” between developed and developing countries that must be countered with the institutionalization of solidarity in structural form (see nos. 192-193, pp. 92-93). David Hollenbach suggests “unequal interdependence” is a more appropriate description of the asymmetries of power reflected in today’s globalized systems. See Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 184.

the realities of individual self-interest, anxiety, and social conflict.²³⁹ This approach of deductively following key principles differs from a sociological view of the organization of society. It speaks *to* rather than *from* human experience and addresses human identity and interaction in the abstract, removed from contextual setting. As a result, church teaching on solidarity still requires a more grounded development of its possibilities and limits.

The church could begin with the present praxis of its own 1.2 billion members, rather than these pronouncements of theological and moral principles. In theory and practice, the sense of identity, practice of interpretations, and exercise of responsibilities by disciples all over the globe could be more robustly analyzed to highlight successes and raise caution to avoid repeating mistakes. Moreover, the simultaneous local and global reach of the church could be better recognized as a latent integrating strategic and normative framework or a “social opportunity structure” to spread a “Catholic social imagination.”²⁴⁰

²³⁹ This critique, raised for example by Reinhold Niebuhr, argues that Catholic social thought fails the test of realism by minimizing humanity’s sinfulness. Human rejection of finitude and misuse of freedom leads to what Niebuhr describes as a constant state of anxiety and insecurity. To compensate, humans pridefully overstep their limits and are tempted to conflate their own interests with the divine will. In Niebuhr’s view, Catholic ethicists tend to inadequately account for these sins of pretension and overestimate human capacity despite finitude and sin. See Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation Volume I: Human Nature* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1964), 137, 178-186.

In addition to being a universal human condition, fear, anxiety, and even anger about scarcity, the threat of violence, and the unknown “other” seem to be especially pervasive in American culture. Gregory Baum asserts that these must be addressed as specific cultural traits (and vices) before solidarity can be pursued in *Compassion and Solidarity: The Church for Others* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 90-94.

²⁴⁰ Joseph M. Palacios, *The Catholic Social Imagination: Activism and the Just Society in Mexico and the United States* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 17; 57-62. Palacios develops the concept of a “Catholic social imagination” as an “ideal-type” borrowed from C. Wright Mills (*The Sociological Imagination*, 1959) and informed by Ann Swidler’s work on culture in action (see Swidler, “Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies, *American Sociological Review* 51:2 (April 1986), 273-286). Palacios’ thesis is that Catholics possess “distinctive ways of understanding, developing, organizing, and analyzing public issues of social justice based on their social doctrine” that are sociologically relevant for understanding and practicing solidarity, which he compares between the United States and Mexico (58).

With respect to solidarity, a “Catholic social imagination” represents a “social opportunity structure” for disciples to image culture as oriented toward unity and harmony, to articulate strategies for action, and to rely on resources, rituals, and local, regional, and national networks to collaboratively enact these strategies. It provides an alternate vision to instances of inordinate social disengagement, self-interest, and conflict. It invites its members to cultivate habits and virtuous relationships that could more widely promote human dignity, rights, and responsibilities and lead to inclusive flourishing. In particular, this opportunity structure can and should be used to promote knowledge and practice of the principles of Catholic social thought, as many U.S. lay Catholics demonstrate little familiarity with tenets like solidarity and are unable to articulate it as part of their social justice principles.²⁴¹ One may conclude that the potential of a “Catholic social imagination” remains more latent than realized, especially in light of the significant gap between the teaching of the U.S. Catholic Church and the convictions and practices of Catholic laity.²⁴²

One could point to any number of examples of this disconnection, but on the subject of solidarity, a relevant one is U.S. Catholics’ views on immigration. In 2003, the U.S. Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter on immigration, “Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope,” co-written with the Catholic Bishops of Mexico.

²⁴¹ Palacios summarizes the findings of his ethnographic studies of U.S. Catholics by stating, “U.S. Catholics do not appropriate solidarity as a principle and do not know how to incorporate it into their normative sense of social Catholicity – even though they use more pragmatic discourses of collaboration, networking, partnering, and the like. Certainly the idea of solidarity as a virtue does not emerge” (77).

²⁴² This does not imply there was once a golden age where church teaching was met by popular practice. Although the present project is focused on current understandings and practices of solidarity, a historical view indicates this gap has long persisted. A.M. Crofts’ 1936 book on Catholic social action, which begins with a study of Christian solidarity, laments that Catholics “do not identify themselves sufficiently with the Church. They limit themselves too often to a kind of external association and are unmindful of the depth and consolation of the teaching of Jesus Christ regarding their union as one body in the Church.” See Crofts, *Catholic Social Action: Principles, Purpose, and Practice* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1936), 23.

Echoing the call to conversion, communion, and solidarity raised in John Paul II's 1999 apostolic exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*, the bishops emphasize the universal experience of migration in human history and Scripture (nos. 13-27), the rights of migrants according to human dignity and other tenets of Catholic social teaching (nos. 28-39), and the urgent need for Christians to work together in pastoral response and policy reform (nos. 40-55). To establish the framework for making this call, the bishops highlight that the bonds of human interdependence transcend the U.S.-Mexico border. After drawing from and applying themes like conversion, communion, and solidarity, midway through the document, the content shifts from theological principles to addressing the crucial challenges of the immigration policies and practices between the U.S. and Mexico. The document is well-informed about the related issues of enforcement, detention, employment, and legalization. It offers a clear-eyed view of the effects for individuals, families, and communities. It brings together human and divine perspectives on immigration to call Catholics to stand in solidarity with their migrant brothers and sisters and, out of this conviction and vantage point, advocate for and participate in immigration reform.

Although this document was praised by many in the U.S. and Mexico, it also received backlash from those who rejected the bishops' authority to speak on immigration policies and practices.²⁴³ A 2009 Zogby poll showed significant differences

²⁴³ Michael Budde recounts popular response to bishops' teaching on immigration (including a pastoral letter written by Bishop Edward J. Slattery of Tulsa, OK, "Suffering Faces of the Poor"), citing newspaper editorials and online comment sections filled with opinions like: "If the bishops want to get involved in politics, they should lose their tax-exempt status"; "Bishops who do not comply with the law – and encourage others to resist immigration laws – should be locked up"; "Bishops are motivated by the collection basket, since so many illegals are Catholic"; and even an extreme view that the Roman Catholic church is "aiding and abetting" the "reconquista" of the United States by Mexico and the Vatican. See Budde, *The Borders of Baptism: Identities, Allegiances, and the Church* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books,

in opinion remain between Catholic church leaders and the laity, with 64% of Catholics supporting greater enforcement to encourage “illegal immigrants” to return to their place of origin.²⁴⁴ A 2006 Pew Research Center report found that 56% of non-Hispanic white Catholics agreed with the statement that immigrants are “a burden because they take our jobs, housing, and health care.”²⁴⁵ Despite the bishops’ efforts to encourage compassion and solidarity for people beyond the U.S. border, many Catholics view this issue more in terms of national-citizenship than border-transcending-discipleship.

This example illustrates a major drawback in the “top-down” method of moving from church teaching to popular reception. As noted in Chapter 1, this is not just a theological or pedagogical problem; it is also a sociological one. As philosopher Charles Taylor suggests, this is due in part to the present “social imaginary,” or “the generally shared background understandings of society, which make it possible for it to function as it does.”²⁴⁶ The “social imaginary” has important implications for shared moral imagination, as it shapes what people believe is socially valued, the scope of obligation, and what can reasonably be expected from social participation. On the one hand, Taylor understands some features of the contemporary Western/North-Atlantic social imaginaries to foster shared values for connection and kinship. On the other, experiences

2011), 85. See also: Peggy Levitt, *God Needs No Passport: Immigrants and the Changing American Religious Landscape*. New York: The New Press, 2007.

²⁴⁴ Full report available at the Center for Immigration Studies, <http://cis.org/ReligionAndImmigrationPoll>. These statistics should be compared with considerably more favorable views of immigrants and immigration policies reported by a June 2012 Knights of Columbus-Marist poll. See “Poll finds Americans respect immigrants, want ‘non-partisan’ solution,” *Catholic News Agency* (26 June 2012), available at <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/poll-finds-americans-respect-immigrants-want-non-partisan-solution/>.

²⁴⁵ Gregory A. Smith, “Attitudes Toward Immigration: In the Pulpit and the Pew” (26 April 2006), available at: <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/20/attitudes-toward-immigration-in-the-pulpit-and-the-pew>.

²⁴⁶ Taylor continues: “It is ‘social’ in two ways: in that it is generally shared, and in that it is about society.” See Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007), 323. Taylor’s work on the “social imaginary” was previously developed in *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

of violence, chaos, and disorder can generate feelings of fear, vulnerability, and despair. Taylor believes the current age is marked by more of the latter, characterized by disbelief, the self-protecting “buffered self,” and moral relativism which “breeds pusillanimity.”²⁴⁷

Living in an age of the “buffered self” means being influenced by this social imaginary of expressive individualism. The chief values are freedom, invulnerability, self-possession, and personal achievement. Taylor warns this social imaginary also contributes to blindness and insensitivity, moral malaise and mutual fragilization.²⁴⁸

Those who maintain their religious belief tend to express what Taylor calls “minimal religion,” which is confined mostly to one’s immediate circle of family and friends.²⁴⁹

When faith or morals are socially applied in this context, they risk being lost in abstractions like “systems” or “markets” or privatized concepts like “individual rights.”

Taylor describes all of this in terms of the pervasiveness of “the immanent frame,” wherein the present order appears “closed” and thus eclipses the transcendent and possibilities for transformation. According to Taylor, these “closed world structures” obfuscate theological concepts like “sacramental vision” and minimize the perceived import and influence of agapic actions.²⁵⁰ Christianity’s call to conversion, wisdom, and

²⁴⁷ *A Secular Age*, 373.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 300-304. Taylor later describes the social order has being held together by a “sociability of strangers,” individuals who associate for mutual benefit (*Ibid.*, 575-578). This is not itself a negative quality of social life; indeed, “weak ties” can strengthen overall social cohesion and efficiency. A classic articulation of this position is made by Mark S. Granovetter, “The Strength of Weak Ties” *American Journal of Sociology* 78:6 (May 1973), 1360-1380.

Nonetheless, Taylor argues that these weak ties are replacing strong ties in some instances. This diffuses the quality of social life and makes social relations and commitments more vulnerable and insecure. Hence, the “fragilization” Taylor describes has both personal and social effects.

²⁴⁹ This phrase is borrowed from Mikhail Epstein in his description of Russian Christianity in a post-Soviet context (*A Secular Age*, 533-534).

²⁵⁰ Taylor understands these “closed world structures” as “ways of restricting our grasp of things which are not recognized as such” (*Ibid.*, 551). For example, the priority of reason, empiricism, and private faith has led to what Taylor describes as the “excarnation” of Christianity. This is problematic, as Taylor points out, for achieving the highest standard of the New Testament, the bowel-wrenching pity displayed by the Samaritan (*Ibid.*, 554).

compassion are domesticated by the pervasive social imaginary of therapeutic healing. According to Taylor, in this immanent frame people are encouraged to salve their scruples and find healing for their insecurities and inadequacies instead of confronting the reality of their moral failures. This is a significant ethical problem because, as Taylor argues, without a healthy sense of sin, the “link between sacrifice and religion is broken.”²⁵¹ The assumption becomes that God only desires individual human flourishing, accomplished through therapeutic care and augmented through God’s love. It would follow, then, that making sacrifices to exercise social responsibility for the common good could be rendered superfluous and that optional altruism could replace obligations of justice and bonds of solidarity.²⁵²

What is the cause of this social imaginary? Taylor points to the fact that, for all the connection and promise touted in this globalized, technological age, the persistence of poverty, violence, and injustice contributes to a growing sense of futility, despair, and disappointment. This, in turn, contributes to the “closed world structures” of the immanent frame and the retreat back into the safety of the “buffered self.” In stark contrast, Christianity calls believers to conversion, to a new way of seeing and acting as participating with God who is at work in the world. Courageously and publicly bringing a sacramental vision and transcendent cosmic order could lead to a “transformation of the frame” away from the “buffered self” and “closed world structures.” This could shift the frame away from unencumbered freedom and optional altruism toward the possibilities of

²⁵¹ Ibid., 649.

²⁵² Taylor contends this is already the case and his criticism is biting: “our philanthropy [is] vulnerable to the shifting fashion of media attention, and the various modes of feel-good hype. We throw ourselves into the cause of the month, raise funds for this famine, petition the government to intervene in that grisly civil war; and then forget all about it next month, when it drops off the CNN screen. A solidarity ultimately driven by the giver’s own sense of moral superiority is a whimsical and fickle thing. We are far in fact from the universality and unconditionally which our moral outlook prescribes” (Ibid., 696).

grace-empowered virtuous action in the context of corporate participation and communally-shared life. And thus produce a more life-giving social imaginary.

In a fitting move for our purposes, Taylor describes the transformation of the frame as pivoting on the example of the Samaritan who acts in response to a wounded person, evoked through a corporeal encounter. This inaugurates new bonds of the “we,” which, due to the Incarnation, binds God to humanity and extends outward into a network of solidarity.²⁵³ This implies not a new set of rules, but another way of being: specifically, a way of belonging together that strives to transcend boundaries.

The Samaritan’s example is a call to fidelity to an ever-more-inclusive network of relations. But as these relations are categorized and duties articulated, divided, and institutionalized, it can generate the counter-productive effect of a “bureaucratic hardening” of people and their relationships and systems of belonging. Taylor identifies this as part of the excarnation of Christianity, wherein bowel-wrenching *splanchnizomai* (i.e., compassion) is delegated and diffused through abstract networks of agape.²⁵⁴ Christian ethics only exacerbates the problem when it is distorted by a “fetishism of rules and norms” that dwells more on rhetoric than praxis.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Taylor describes this as a “skein of relations which link particular, unique, enfleshed people to each other, rather than a grouping of people together on the grounds of their sharing some important property” or interest (Ibid., 739).

²⁵⁴ In Taylor’s view, the bureaucratic hardening of these networks is both unintentional (simply the result of trying to institutionalize agape) but also the effect of the unavoidable desire for power, wherein the “monstrous comes from a corruption of the highest, the agape-network.” This only drives people further into the problems of objectification and disenchantment, two main culprits of secularity (Ibid., 740-741).

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 742. Taylor continues his analysis of the story about the Good Samaritan by pointing out the lawyer’s question (“Who is my neighbor?”) results from the “monomaniacal perspective” that dwells on categories and rules. The lesson of the passage, as Taylor summarizes it, is illuminated by the accidental encounter with another person in need. From this we can surmise that a “theology of neighbor” is less about definitions and norms and more about a consistent life-pattern that is attentive to others, draws near to the “other,” and acts in love, justice, and solidarity with others. It must make an effort to avoid the “idolatrous traps” of even the best codes and avoid the temptation to identify temporal order and progress with Christian faith and one of its chief objects, the Reign of God (743).

These insights identify a reason why theologizing and moralizing about solidarity fail to be effectively received: because of its dramatic incompatibility with the immanent frame and present social imaginary. The feedback loop between the “buffered self” and the social imaginary only reinforces the ideas, values, and practices that permit moral obtuseness, moral diffusion, moral incompetence and impotence to persist. This feedback loop creates a closed world structure that marginalizes alternate social imaginaries, making it more difficult to resist and reform the status quo.

And yet, Taylor does not find reason to despair. Instead he recognizes this as all the more reason for Christians to embrace the call to conversion and participate in shared efforts to transform the immanent frame to a broader, more communal account of reality. Hope is to be found in being led by “God’s pedagogy” of solidarity with humanity, revealed in Scripture and Tradition, toward a new way of being, seeing, acting, and belonging to each other. To cultivate solidarity is to move beyond concepts, categories, and rules and break through the feedback loop between the buffered self and closed world structure of the social imaginary. It requires the incarnation of solidarity as a principle and virtue exercised in relationships and practices of belonging.

Turning to Taylor is important for this project for several reasons. First, it confirms the present need for neighbor love in commitment to solidarity for the common good. Second, it sheds light on the difficulties of proposing as solutions theological principles and moral virtues like agape, justice, and solidarity in two ways: (a) they need to be translated and applied to be effective within the present socio-cultural reality; (b) the potential for bureaucratization poses a problem for the expectation that these principles and virtues be integrated into social relations and macro-level systems. Third,

it provides a crucial reminder (both for Luke's passage and the corresponding "theology of neighbor") to avoid the idolatrous trap of overemphasizing codes and categories.

A moral vision for solidarity should take into consideration these features of the present socio-cultural context. It should rely on the resources within a Catholic social imagination to transform the immanent frame and actively cultivate the "creative fidelity" that will inspire and sustain disciples to "Go and do likewise" today.²⁵⁶

Catholic Social Imagination: Correcting Moral Perception

The present socio-cultural context makes it difficult to imagine *how* Christian disciples should adopt the moral and social obligations imparted by Jesus in Luke 10:25-37. To begin to follow the Samaritan's example first requires seeing this way of living is possible. It bespeaks the need for what Walter Brueggemann describes as "prophetic imagination."²⁵⁷ This promotes a vision that is both critical and energizing, denouncing present injustices and infidelities as well as presenting an alternate vision of "faithfulness and vitality."²⁵⁸ This, linked to the Catholic social imagination described by Palacios, provides disciples with access to a repertory of ways of seeing, thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting to transform the immanent frame into one that more fully captures

²⁵⁶ William Spohn appeals to "creative fidelity" as part of the analogical imagination (informed by David Tracy's work) necessary for disciples to discern how to appropriately "Go and do likewise" in their own context and relationships (*Go and Do Likewise*, 50). See also: Gabriel Marcel, *Creative Fidelity* (New York: Crossroad, 1982).

²⁵⁷ Brueggemann identifies several ways for this prophetic imagination to be cultivated and sustained. The key, as he sees it, lies in small group participation characterized by the following traits: (a) long and available memory that immerses the present community into the tradition's past; (b) sense of pain that is adopted and recounted as social reality and publicly honored; (c) an active practice of hope in the promises of God that judge the present facts; (d) an effective mode of discourse that involves people across generations. See Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), xvi.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 59. The prophetic imagination speaks in the language of hope, amazement, and anticipation of what is being made new through God's continuing action to make good on God's promises to God's people, as Brueggemann identifies in the prophecy of Isaiah (especially Second Isaiah, in chapters 40-55). This leads to the recognition that "the riddle and insight of biblical faith is the awareness that only anguish leads to life, only grieving leads to joy, and only embraced endings permit new beginnings" (56).

the gospel-informed vision of the good life and more deeply embraces the responsibilities required by the “signs of the times.”

This prophetic vision does not turn a blind eye to the realities of finitude and sin; it looks through these natural limits and moral failures to the potential of graced human nature in cooperation with God’s will.²⁵⁹ A Catholic social imagination is necessarily Christocentric, modeled on the incarnate, kenotic teaching and healing ministry of Jesus Christ. In this mode of *kenosis* (Philippians 2:5-11), a Catholic social imagination focuses not only on human goods like flourishing and fulfillment, but on the vulnerability, sacrifice, and courageous and compassionate actions necessary to more fully realize them.²⁶⁰ It attends to others’ sufferings and needs and inspires a contextually-appropriate response. It operates on the personal and communal level, guiding “the way” of discipleship at various levels from the personal to the structural.²⁶¹

A Catholic social imagination envisions discipleship as public and prophetic. A public and prophetic imagination inspires disciples to participate in articulating and working cooperatively to achieve the public good rather than private interests or

²⁵⁹ On this topic, see the essay by William F. Lynch, “Theology and the Imagination” in *Thought* 29 (Spring 1954), 61-86. Lynch believes this imagination is needed because “We have lost a sense of wallowing around in the human ... We are indeed alienated from ourselves and no longer have a great theological confidence in the capacity of the finite to lead to any of the infinities we seek” (67-68).

Edward Vacek describes human cooperation with God and the potency of God at work in human life as “theanthropy,” the partnership in love between God and God’s people. See Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine: the Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University, 1994), 105.

²⁶⁰ These themes are beautifully reflected on in Gregory Boyle’s *Tattoos on the Heart*. Despite the pain and suffering he encounters and shares in his ministry in East Los Angeles, Boyle is convinced that following Jesus requires “boundless compassion” with a “no-matter-whatness” quality.

²⁶¹ Examples of effective action in this regard may be found in John Hogan’s *Credible Signs of Christ Alive: Case Studies from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2003). The Catholic Campaign for Human Development is the official anti-poverty agency of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, although its good and important work is underfunded and struggles to receive the widespread attention it deserves. Valuable resources for joining these efforts may be found at <http://www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/>.

parochial benefit.²⁶² It is motivated by an “intellectual solidarity” in pursuit of the common good.²⁶³ It searches for public spaces to converse, debate, and organize how to promote shared goods. It appeals to religious symbols and other shared expressions of value and meaning to add depth and breadth to what is meant by the “public.”²⁶⁴ It raises a critique against vicious excess, deprivation, and other abuses of power. It can speak for those who may be left out of the conversation, whose concerns and needs might go otherwise unheard. It combats moral indifference, moral diffusion, and moral ineptitude. It aims to sustain a commitment to the common good and justice for all in the face of enduring social, political, and economic difficulties.²⁶⁵ It relies on the rich resources of Christian Scripture and Tradition, especially in Word and Sacrament, offering continual renewal and re-commissioning to its people through communal ritual and support.²⁶⁶

²⁶² This means that instead of persons focusing on “I want x,” participants reflect and converse on the idea that “x would be good for the community to which we belong.” See Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 143; Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 171.

²⁶³ This virtue is promoted for the way it cultivates a desire to take other persons serious and engage them in fruitful conversation about the good life and its implications for the *polis*. Like tolerance, it recognizes and respects differences and avoids coercion; unlike tolerance it eschews avoiding conflict in favor of humble and earnest engagement with the other in a spirit of genuine freedom and civility. See Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 137-152.

²⁶⁴ See Martin Marty, *The Public Church* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1981). “Public” refers to what is available to and shared by members of a society.

²⁶⁵ For a well-informed analysis of the resources and responsibilities of public theology, especially in the Catholic tradition, see Kristin E. Heyer, *Prophetic & Public: The Social Witness of U.S. Catholicism* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006).

²⁶⁶ Eucharist, for example, is a Sacrament full of reminders of the shared identity and mission of the faithful in the world. The alternate word for the Eucharist, Communion, implies both vertical and horizontal unity. As Pope Benedict XVI (then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger) has written, “we cannot have communion with the Lord if we are not in communion with each other ... when we go to meet him in the Mass, we necessarily go to meet each other, to be at one with each other.” See Ratzinger, *God is Near Us: The Eucharist, the Heart of Life* tr. Henry Taylor (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 52-53. This focus on unity highlights the need for reconciliation and responsibilities. Pope John Paul II highlights the manner in which the Eucharist serves as a “great school of peace” and strength and plan for solidarity in his 2004 apostolic letter in preparation for the Year of the Eucharist, *Mane nobiscum domine* (nos. 25-27). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* instructs that the “Eucharist commits us to the poor” (no. 1397). As William Spohn sees it, the Eucharist is central to all Christian morality: “Every dimension of Christian moral formation flows out from community worship and congregating around the Lord’s table” (*Go and Do Likewise*, 113).

A Catholic social imagination presents a distinctive sense of identity, a particular way of practicing interpretation, and a commitment to practice responsibility in response to encountered needs. As public and prophetic, it reorients disciples' vision away from unfettered freedom and self-interest to the benefits, indebtedness, and duties of living as part of the covenanted community.²⁶⁷ It cultivates inventiveness based on the memories and hopes of the Christian tradition.²⁶⁸ Bringing together the shared responsibilities of neighbors as disciples and citizens, a Catholic social imagination can help foster social capital and build on networks of relations to expand spheres of justice and solidarity.²⁶⁹ In this way, a Catholic social imagination helps disciples faithfully witness to the “fullness of faith.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁷ We might call this a “consciousness of belonging.” The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* includes as part of the work of solidarity that it “requires that men and women of our day cultivate a greater awareness that they are debtors of the society of which they have become part. They are debtors because of those conditions that make human existence livable, and because of the indivisible and indispensable legacy constituted by culture, scientific and technical knowledge, material and immaterial goods and by all that the human condition has produced” (no. 195, p. 93; emphasis removed).

²⁶⁸ Used here, inventiveness is meant to convey more than creativity. I use it to refer to the work of bringing about something new and envision this as a constructive feature of the “interruption” J.B. Metz describes in his work on political theology based on the “dangerous memory” of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (See Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 105-107). This “dangerous memory” requires an honest accounting of the realities of human suffering past, present, and future. It translates between the Reign of God and a specific context in order to stand in solidarity with those who suffer and empower disciples to embrace their agency for critical awareness and social responsibility. It critiques the privatization and domestication of faith, fatalism, and the “cult of apathy and of the apolitical life” (157-158). Metz summarizes this as resulting in a “Discipleship in imminent expectation: this is the apocalyptic consciousness that does not cause suffering, but shoulders it – defying apathy as well as hatred ... [it] does not paralyze responsibility but grounds it” (163). I anticipate this concept of invention to be a fruit of the “solidaristic hope” and the “mobilization of spiritual and moral forces” of this “dangerous memory” (100).

²⁶⁹ Robert Putnam describes social capital as the value of reciprocal social relationships that strengthen civic virtues. He sees churches as significant producers of social capital by generating mutual engagement, trust, and solidarity and between neighbors. See Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 18-19.

²⁷⁰ This phrase is borrowed from Michael J. Himes and Kenneth R. Himes, *Fullness of Faith: The Public Significance of Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), wherein they demonstrate the public value of the theology to renew and improve democratic life. Stated directly, “Public theology makes the linkage between the faith we profess and how we live in society ... Only an interpretation of the Christian tradition which accords a central place to public theology can provide an account of the tradition that embraces the fullness of faith” (25).

A Catholic social imagination flows from a sacramental vision that recognizes the manifestation of grace in every time, place, and person. Rather than being diffused in abstraction, this recognizes the concrete as sacred, holding together the particular and universal, the local and cosmopolitan. This is especially significant for a “theology of the neighbor” that calls disciples to reverence every other person as neighbor and to be a loving neighbor to each and to all.²⁷¹

Returning to the subject of a “theology of neighbor,” we consider Gutiérrez’s claim that “neighbor” applies not only to each, but to all in the sense that the poor and suffering “masses are also our neighbor.”²⁷² This raises the question of how to love these neighbors.²⁷³ This leads to additional questions, like how to love these neighbors relative to nearer neighbors and how to make a moral judgment between competing claims based on proximity and need. In short order, we can identify several important moral concerns: (1) the difficulty of loving distant neighbors; (2) deliberating to whom and how to respond when faced with competing claims between neighbors (what may be good for one may not be good for another); (3) negotiating between competing claims based on proximity and need; (4) prudently discerning care for neighbors relative to one’s preexisting relationships with family and friends; and (5) discerning how to love in these proximate relations while also taking into account the moral claims of solidarity and the preferential option for the poor.

²⁷¹ As Himes and Himes succinctly state, “the moral agent responds to the presence of the other, and in so doing responds to the Other” and additionally, “the movement to the universal occurs only in the embrace of the particular” (*Fullness of Faith*, 134-135).

²⁷² Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 116.

²⁷³ By “love” I mean the effective willing of the good of another, which can be traced back to Aquinas’ presentation of love as an operation of the will (*ST* I.20.1).

Jesus' teaching with the story of the Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37 establishes the standard that every human person is to be recognized as a neighbor. Gutiérrez is right to state that this solidaristic view of the human family means that masses of suffering people cannot be written off as non-neighbors.²⁷⁴ But in claiming that the neighbor "is not the one whom I find on my path, but rather the one in whose path I place myself, the one whom I approach and actively seek,"²⁷⁵ he exaggerates Jesus' imperative to "Go and do likewise." There is no evidence to suggest the Samaritan was travelling the road to Jericho looking for neighbors to help. Neither is there any indication that he made this his duty after bringing the robbers' victim to the inn. Gutiérrez seems to ignore that the Samaritan then went on his way, making room for other interests, activities, and relationships.

Although the Samaritan's movement into the ditch should rightly be praised in contrast to the *antiparechomai* embodied by the priest and Levite who avoid helping the man left for dead, there is a difference between *seeking* neighbors in need and *nearing* neighbors in need. The latter – that is to say, recognizing another person in need and moving nearer them – is the example set forward by the Samaritan. To expect Christians to leave their path in seeking others in need is not only unrealistic, it also unjustly diminishes the importance of their current path (and the needs to be encountered there). This is not an argument against changing one's location in order to better serve others in

²⁷⁴ David Hollenbach contends that one essential way to institutionalize solidarity is to defend and promote human rights worldwide, that is, to honor "the moral claims of all persons [for how they are] to be treated, by virtue of their humanity, as participants in the shared life of the human community." He continues, "These moral claims will be practically guaranteed when respect for them is built into the basic structures of society, i.e., into the main political, social, and economic institutions that set the overall terms of social cooperation. When understood this way, the protection of human rights is part of the common good ... [and] is required by a Christian commitment to solidarity." See Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 159.

²⁷⁵ *A Theology of Liberation*, 113.

need. Too much suffering and injustice persist because people confine themselves to their own “front porch” or “backyard.”²⁷⁶ Moving closer in response to a nearby neighbor in need is different than uprooting oneself to seek out neighbors in need.

Gutiérrez’s interpretation of the Samaritan’s example overstates what is implied by the command to “Go and do likewise.” Furthermore, he misrepresents what “likewise” signifies in this passage. Gutiérrez’s view suggests that “Go and do likewise” is closer to “Go and do exactly the same.” Here “same” can convey both doing exactly the “same” as the Samaritan (i.e., going out of your way to help another in need) *and* setting the “same” standard for every person (i.e., everyone is obliged to love the poor “masses,” who are our neighbors). This diverges from the “analogical imagination” discussed in Chapter 1 that aims to creatively yet faithfully apply the Samaritan’s example to one’s own unique context.²⁷⁷ In other words, Gutiérrez appears to have confused Jesus’ analogical command with a univocal one.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ This takes issue with Gutiérrez’s claim that neighbor love should not be content to stay “on its own front porch” and should define the neighbor “as the one I must go out to look for, on the highways and byways, in the factories and slums, on the farms and in the mines” (*The Power of the Poor in History*, 44). This is an exaggeration of the Samaritan’s example.

On the other hand, the Samaritan’s movement into the ditch should challenge the “not in my backyard” views that protect self-interest and try to contain social ills “elsewhere.” The social isolation of the poor is widespread in American social life. It is especially pernicious in the case of inner-city African Americans, who typically face a “lack of contact or of sustained interaction with individuals and institutions that represent mainstream society.” See William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 60. Amartya Sen has observed that, in light of the low rates of neighborhood cohesion, insecurity against violence, and poor access to health care, some African American men have lower life expectancy rates than males in Bangladesh, one of the world’s poorest countries. See Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 21-24.

The social isolation of the poor is exacerbated by widespread belief among middle-class Americans that “the problems of America’s inner cities are largely due to people’s lack of responsibility for their own problems,” as Alan Wolfe discovered in his research on middle-class morality in the U.S. See Wolfe, *One Nation After All*, 205.

²⁷⁷ Recall that William Spohn points out that doing likewise is neither “Go and do exactly the same” nor “Go and do whatever you want” (*Go and Do Likewise*, 4).

²⁷⁸ In the Lucan text, “likewise” is *homoiōs*, not *homo*: similar, not exactly the same.

The “analogical imagination” seeks what is fitting for particular persons in specific times and places.²⁷⁹ To “Go and do likewise” is neither univocal nor equivocal; it functions in similarity to the paradigm provided by the Samaritan without being too confining or abstract. It operates less from directive than from imagination. A Catholic social imagination provides the vision and pattern for living that can help disciples creatively yet faithfully discern how to “Go and do likewise today.”

Chapter 2 outlined what is implied by Jesus’ command to do likewise. These can be summarized in five points: (1) with this story, Jesus makes clear there are no non-neighbors, that is, no one is undeserving of love; (2) in contrast to the *antiparechomai* of the priest and Levite, one cannot ignore an encountered neighbor in need; (3) to be neighborly is to respond with courage, compassion, and appropriate care, as well as invite others to take up these responsibilities; (4) to be Samaritan-like is to defy barriers and boundaries between persons and groups of people that inhibit neighbor love and solidarity between neighbors; (5) this standard for loving God and neighbor as oneself is part of each disciple’s call to *dikaiosynē*, that is, giving each person what is due to them in striving for *shalom* (wholeness, fullness, balance in right-relationship). As we have seen, Gutiérrez interprets this passage as also providing evidence for a mandate to give special preference to the poor, vulnerable, and marginalized. In going beyond the text, he argues this involves a proactive search for those in need, and that a preferential option for the poor is incomplete without establishing friendships with poor peoples.

²⁷⁹ Spohn later explains that “moral implications are drawn less by strict logic than by a sense of what is appropriate and fitting” (55). Gutiérrez fails to account for what would be “appropriate and fitting” for unique persons in diverse contexts. To aid in finding what is “fitting” for each person, I propose the virtue of prudence to play a key role in cultivating the “matrix of virtues” for solidarity in the pages ahead.

But in making these claims, Gutiérrez fails to account for the unique roles, relationships, and settings of people's lives. He exhorts disciples to a conversion that implies a "break" with their previous lives²⁸⁰ and to "go out to look for, on the highways and byways, in the factories and slums, on the farms and in the mines"²⁸¹ their neighbors in need, without attending to their preexisting relationships and responsibilities. In moral discernment between competing claims based on proximity versus need, Gutiérrez tips the scales to favor need. This departs from the traditional ordering of love that gives priority to those who are nearest, including family and friends more than neighbors.²⁸²

A moral vision of solidarity aims for a virtuous midpoint between these two positions. It sets its sights on inclusive solidarity – especially with poor and needy neighbors – without ignoring what is owed to one's family and friends. In constructing this position, I propose a moral vision of solidarity to be an exercise of analogical imagination, a "doing likewise" that prudently fits each person's present praxis. I cite a number of voices from the field of Christian ethics to indicate various "signposts" for consideration to guide this process of personal and communal discernment. Disciples should apply this moral vision of solidarity to inform their sense of identity, practice of interpretation, and exercise of responsibility for the common good.

Love in Solidarity When Claims Conflict

To "do likewise" is to prudently exercise neighbor love in courage, compassion, and for solidarity while doing justice to one's responsibilities to family and friends.

²⁸⁰ *A Theology of Liberation*, 118.

²⁸¹ *The Power of the Poor in History*, 44.

²⁸² Aquinas affirms, "we love in more ways those who are more closely related to us" (see *Summa Theologica* II-II.26.7). Hereafter, references to Aquinas' *Summa* will be noted parenthetically and abbreviated as *ST*.

Analogically applying the Samaritan's standard for neighbor love must be done by each person according to what is fitting for their time and place, resources and limits, roles and responsibilities. The call to solidarity is a universal vocation. Although it applies to everyone, it does not demand the same from everyone. Instead, the vocation to solidarity invites prudent discernment from each person, held accountable by family, friends, neighbors, and other members of their "communities of practice." In responding to this call, disciples embark on a lifelong journey to integrate solidarity into their dispositions, actions, and relationships. There is no single rule or norm applicable for all people in all places.²⁸³

Striving for *dikaiosynē* and *koinōnia* combines the duties of love, justice, and solidarity. But what this requires varies by person and relationship. That is not to ignore the validity of universal principles or standards, like defending human dignity and the rights of all persons.²⁸⁴ It does mean, however, differentiating between various kinds of relationships, like those that are conditioned by mutual consent (i.e., friendships) and those that are not chosen (i.e., a parent or child).²⁸⁵ To be partial to a parent, child, or

²⁸³ Although vocation and moral discernment are an ongoing personal journey, they are not a private process. As participants in social relations and members of overlapping communities, this discernment can and should take place in consultation with others. This is true not only for one's own enlightenment and edification, but also the development of one's vocational and moral duties in relation to others. Given that gifts and tasks are shared among community members, duties should be assigned in light of these abilities and obligations. As a requirement of justice, members of a community should be on guard against communal obligations (or "encumbrances") becoming overwhelming or oppressive for any person or subgroup. See Michael Sandel, *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 221.

²⁸⁴ See David Hollenbach on institutionalizing solidarity through human rights, as noted above. Himes and Himes share this view in *Fullness of Faith*, as they write: "While love for the distant neighbor is quite unlike love for those with whom we have closer relations, it does not necessarily follow that love for all persons is a purely critical principle devoid of all substance. A commitment to human rights theory as articulated in modern Catholic social teaching is a useful way of expressing universal-regarding love ... [and] illustrates how love of a particular nation can be reconciled with a global ethic that pushes us toward a universal love" (149).

²⁸⁵ For example, Michael Sandel suggests three categories of moral responsibility in the pursuit of justice. First, there are natural duties that are universal and do not require free consent. Second, there are voluntary obligations that are particular and contingent on consent. Third, there are obligations of solidarity that are

spouse is not a whim of personal preference; this partiality is justified by the duties imposed by those who rely most heavily upon us.

It is sometimes assumed that preferential love – that is, showing partiality to a person or group instead of impartiality toward all – is incompatible with universal obligations, like those of neighbor love.²⁸⁶ This question arises with regard to the preferential option for the poor. As noted above, this principle should not be understood as an exclusive concern for one group or a zero-sum calculation that weighs benefits for one person or group at the expense of others.²⁸⁷ The “preference” in making this option for the poor is best understood under the rubric of justice. It seeks to compensate for inequalities in access, possession, or participation and is thus part of the work of distributive, contributive, commutative, and restorative justice.²⁸⁸ It should be understood as inclusive rather than exclusive, expansive in terms of love and justice, and

particular claims that are not conditioned by consent (*Justice*, 225). The first category applies to all (like universal human rights), the second category applies to friends and near neighbors (sharing life by choice), and the third category applies to family and others we find ourselves united with not necessarily by choice (like a parent).

²⁸⁶ Himes and Himes clarify that a “preferential love of some should not be seen as antithetical to universal regard to all” because “by loving the particular we can love the universal” (*Fullness of Faith*, 151). This is a helpful reminder in light of Gutiérrez’s emphasis on the poor “masses” being our neighbor (which he interestingly keeps in the singular “neighbor,” not plural “neighbors”). Gutiérrez’s position might be strengthened if he acknowledged, as Himes and Himes do, that one way to exercise neighbor love for solidarity is to love poor persons on an individual basis, which can at least partially mediate love-in-solidarity for “marginal groups” (*A Theology of Liberation*, 116).

²⁸⁷ Edward Vacek illustrates one reason why this principle should not be universally applied: if used for marriage, this would seem to imply that one should marry the person most in need of our love, which may be someone found to be offensive or even abusive. See Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine: the Heart of Christian Ethics*, 177. Although I find this to be a mischaracterization of the principle, it is true that this principle is widely misunderstood, perhaps due at least in part to its wording. Here “option” does not mean “optional” but comes from the Latin word to “opt” or “choose.” The spirit of the principle is to choose in favor of the person or group most in need to compensate for inequalities.

²⁸⁸ This is similar to John Rawls’ “difference principle,” which he describes in two parts: “Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged ... and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.” See Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1971), 302.

proportionate to need.²⁸⁹ In contrast to in-group bonding or collective selfishness, neighborly solidarity strives to navigate across multiple groups and contexts and virtuously honor the “differential pull” of the various claims made within the whole web of one’s relationships.

Defining solidarity as a virtue follows the tradition put forward by Aristotle that understands moral virtue as a habit practiced to achieve the right end. It is the “middle position between two vices,” that is, the mean between excess and deficiency, just as hope is the midpoint between presumption and despair.²⁹⁰ Understanding and practicing solidarity as a virtue means finding the right balance between competing interests and loyalties; it is the mean between excessive and deficient commitment to others.

Solidarity cannot be reduced to platitudinous inclusion because it is not mutually inclusive across all contexts; the interests of some are incompatible with others.

Negotiating between conflicting interests requires an orientation to the common good, rather than the benefit to a single person or group (especially if that person or group is not experiencing deprivation). Although proximate relations justify stronger commitments, they become vicious when friends and family monopolize one’s moral concern (in this case, excessive concern for proximate relations translates into deficient attention to distant neighbors, which is increasingly problematic in proportion to the need of the neighbor(s)). Each person is tasked with finding the “mean between extremes” so that love, justice, and solidarity chastely respond to others’ need, near and far. This

²⁸⁹ Stephen Pope explains that this preference should be harmonized with justice as fairness such that “Both must be held together in a complementary and mutually-correcting account of the preferential option.” See Pope, “Proper and Improper Partiality and the Preferential Option for the Poor” *Theological Studies* 54 (1993), 242-271 (at 267).

²⁹⁰ Aristotle taught that moral virtue needed to be discerned for every time and place through a concerted effort to do the right thing “to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way” (see *Nicomachean Ethics* Book II, Chapter 9, 1109a).

discernment also applies to communities. Communal discernment is necessary for groups to achieve a more inclusive solidarity and corporately opt for the common good of all.

This discernment, sometimes referred to as the “ordering of love,” strives to find and practice a virtuous kind of love that rightly prefers some over others. The issue of preference, however, is a longstanding moral debate. In Augustine’s view, since everyone is to be considered a neighbor, “All people should be loved equally,” without distinguishing between the differences of personal relationships or responsibilities.²⁹¹

Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard adopted this position, and, informed by Martin Luther’s understanding of love as Christ-empowered,²⁹² denounced forms of preferential love as idolatrous. According to Kierkegaard, in love of neighbor “God is the middle

²⁹¹ This is his position in *De Doctrina Christiana* tr. R.P.H Green (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), I.iv.4, 10. For Augustine, the entirety of the moral life is loving the right things in the right way for the right end. The proper ordering of love lies in the *objects* of our love, with everything following our primary focus on loving God (“Descend that you may ascend to God,” *Confessions* IV.xii.19), including the ordering of love of neighbor and self (*De Doctrina Christiana* I.xxvi.27). This is something of a simplistic summary, since Augustine’s view of loving self and neighbor is caught up in (descending) mind-soul-body distinctions, wherein the desires of the flesh are subject to concupiscence (see *Confessions* I.vii.12), passions, and disordered desires (*Confessions* VII.xvii.23). In the view of Augustine, love is an *askesis*, a discipline that requires firm commitment of the will and depends on the God-given continence and justice to love God and neighbors in addition to ourselves (see *Confessions* X.iv.5-vi.8).

²⁹² Luther writes, “as Christians we do not live in ourselves but in Christ and the neighbor ... As Christians we live in Christ through faith and in the neighbor through love. Through faith we are caught up beyond ourselves into God. Likewise, through love we descend beneath ourselves through love to serve our neighbor” and especially the weak. Luther, *The Freedom of a Christian* tr. Mark D. Tranvik (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 88, 92.

Luther’s point is that Christian love is unlike secular or worldly love. This tension was explored thoroughly by Swedish bishop Anders Nygren, author of *Agape and Eros* (London, S.P.C.K., 1954). Nygren compares *agape* to *eros* by defining the former in terms of divine qualities: it is spontaneous and “unmotivated,” “indifferent to value,” and “given without limit” (75-77). Since all love is love of God, then “all love seems to be set upon a common object,” to the point of disregarding the persons involved (498). Nygren goes as far as saying that, following Augustine (that humans are to enjoy only God and use everything and everyone else to love God), one might conclude that the world and the neighbor are “given to us to be used as means and vehicle for our return to God” (505). This reduces our neighbors (and the rest of the created order for that matter) to instruments for right-relationship with God. In this view, *agape* operates like a downward-flowing gift from God in which the Christian is “merely the tube, the channel, through which God’s love flows” (737). It should be stated that Nygren’s position (and his interpretation of Augustine) has been roundly criticized. Eric Gregory posits, “Nygren launched a thousand ships of criticism” in Gregory, *Politics and the Order of Love: An Augustinian Ethic of Democratic Citizenship* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008), 372.

term,” whereas in friendship love (*philia*), the middle term is preference, which is a form of idolatry.²⁹³ He concluded that reciprocal loves – including friendship – is reducible to self-love and ultimately incompatible with Christian love, the “essential form” of which is “self-renunciation.”²⁹⁴

Kierkegaard’s understanding of selfless universal neighbor love suggests that we should actually ignore the unique qualities of the neighbor. He insists, “one sees his neighbor only with closed eyes or by *looking away* from all distinctions.”²⁹⁵ The duty of Christian neighbor love is not to see in the neighbor a lovable object, but to love the object (the beloved) no matter who he or she is. This means that love of neighbor does not change – even if the particular object (recipient) does. Kierkegaard argued for this blanket and static concern because it avoids any temptation to compare or judge the neighbor as worthy or unworthy, a moment when love could be expressed, but is lost. One problem with this view, however, is that it fails to be attentive to what kind of love, care, or other assistance the particular neighbor needs.²⁹⁶

In this school of thought, neighbor love is best understood as “equal-regard.”²⁹⁷ For *agape* to be truly Godlike, it must be universally stable and impartial, requiring nothing less than justice. It should be impartial not in the sense of ignoring personal qualities and different abilities and needs, but in not allowing potential benefit or risk to

²⁹³ Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* tr. H.V. Hong and E.H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University, 1995), 70. Kierkegaard describes the love of a friend as corrupted by love of likeness with oneself; friendship love is “I intoxicated in the-other-I” (Ibid., 68).

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 59, 65-68. In fact, Kierkegaard contends that the most Christian of all loves is love for the dead, since they cannot reciprocate (see 317-329).

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 79.

²⁹⁶ There is some tension in *Works of Love* on this point, since at the start Kierkegaard states that what matters for the “work of love” is “*how* the deed is done” (30) and later, that the very power of mercifulness is “*how* it is given” (302). On both points, Kierkegaard writes in terms of the agent’s (formal) *intention* rather than how one (materially) responds to the unique *need* of the beloved.

²⁹⁷ The most representative text remains Gene Outka’s *Agape: An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972).

derail the selfless quality of this love.²⁹⁸ To clarify, there is still room for mutual benefit or enjoyment in *agape*; importantly, what one receives from such relationships should not be the motive for entering into them. But friendship love – that is, love shared by those with similar interests, abilities, and goals – can be found in tension with more expansive *agapic* relations, since the former require so much time and effort to cultivate and maintain. In light of the contingencies, complications, and mixed motives involved in friendships, they might seem less morally ideal.

However, as Aquinas points out, a cause of love is similitude (*ST II-II.27.3*), and it is impossible – and in fact morally undesirable – to avoid loving some more than others, especially when we share more in common with some more than others. Instead of viewing friendships as a threat to a proper ordering of love, a Thomistic approach understands them as essential for right-relationship and loving union with God and neighbor (*ST II-II.25.1*).²⁹⁹ Love of God orders all our loves; we even love ourselves and others in friendship for God’s sake (*ST II-II.25.4; 27.3, 7*) as part of the overall goal to promote the good of every person (*ST II-II.25.2*).

Thomas offers a more nuanced take on how to promote the good of every person while honoring the duties of one’s special relations. First priority is given to parents,

²⁹⁸ The problem of preference and personal differences “gives particular trouble for *agape*,” Outka admits (*Agape*, 270). The difficulty lies in ordering love to “equalitarian justice” without condensing love into justice (309). Further, the challenge for a moral agent to provide “equal regard” is held in tension with the need to identify with the neighbor’s point of view (260-263).

²⁹⁹ Thomas writes about charity as the grace inspired love of friendship. It has four components: love, benevolence, mutuality, and communication (see *ST II-II.23.1*). Thus charity is not identical to love but a theological virtue, a supernatural habit that perfects the natural inclination, ability, and delight in loving. Charity is the most excellent of the virtues and no virtue exists without it (*ST II-II.23.6-7*); it is a grace-conferred gift of the Holy Spirit, who alone decides its measure (see 1 Cor. 12:11) and progression throughout life (*ST II-II.24.9*).

For Thomas, the cause of love is the good (*ST II-II.27.1*) and the effect of love is union expressed in mutual indwelling, ecstasy, zeal, preservation and perfection, and all the person does (*ST II-II.28.1-6*). The fact that the effect of love is unity is an important reason to make this Thomistic position a “signpost” in the moral vision for solidarity. To draw near neighbors in need and virtuously love them is a crucial part of the process of cultivating more inclusive solidarity.

children, and one's spouse, followed by friends and near neighbors (*ST II-II.26.6-12*; 31.3; 32.9). Attention to these proximate relations is moderated through an evaluation of their moral claims on a person relative to the needs of more distant (and perhaps needier) neighbors. In Thomas' view, love for distant and needy neighbors can rightly be expressed through mercifully giving alms (*ST II-II.32.5*).³⁰⁰ Though it can be a gesture of solidarity, almsgiving pales in comparison with Gutiérrez's vision of seeking out neighbors in need and befriending poor persons.

Here we recognize the need for a moral vision of solidarity as a virtuous midpoint between the excess of Gutiérrez's emphasis on friendships in proximity to masses of poor neighbors without acknowledging preexisting roles and relationships and the deficiency of the standard that one's duty to the poor can be met by almsgiving-from-a-distance. One way to make progress toward this middle way is to integrate solidarity into one's friendships and family life. This does not mean that Christian neighbor love should be conflated with friendship and familial love relationships. Neither does it leave the matter of solidarity to virtuous friendships, despite the fact that this is a central lens through which to view the entire moral life.³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ While Thomas exhibits concern and pity for the poor, his focus is more on the duties of the privileged than the rights of the poor. For example, in *ST II-II.66.7* (on the question of justice), Aquinas concludes (with Ambrose), that if someone has a "superabundance" of goods, these rightly belong to the poor, who would not be guilty of stealing if they (out of need) took some of these goods for their own sustenance. Still, it should be noted, Aquinas makes no mention whether or how this might be enforced by law or require a redistribution of goods in any organized or systematic fashion. In other words, this falls short of contemporary standards for social and economic justice (note that for Thomas, justice is a personal habit of the will to render to each person what is due to them (*ST II-II.58.1*)).

³⁰¹ Aquinas describes charity as friendship "for God" (*ST II-II.23.1*) and loving others as part of this friendship for God (*ST II-II.25.1*). Growth in these virtuous friendships produces the effect of unity (as noted just above): as well-ordered relationships in loving communion (communion between God and human persons), this makes progress toward solidarity for the common good (*ST II-II.58.9*).

For more on the link between friendship and the Christian moral life, see Paul Wadell's treatment, which begins by describing friendship as the "crucible for the moral life." He explains that "The Christian moral life is what happens to us when we grant God, and others, the freedom to be our friends." See Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1989), xiii; 167.

In seeking this midpoint position, it is important to acknowledge a departure from the biblical text describing the Samaritan's exemplary actions. Though it represents neighbor love oriented by courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity, by itself, the story of the Samaritan cannot fully depict the demands of solidarity. Yet the Samaritan's movement into the ditch to draw near the neighbor in need still serves as a template to analogically apply solidarity through proximity to those in need. In these instances of proximity, it is possible to cultivate solidarity through friendship.³⁰² In this social location and through these interactions, friendships with those who are marginalized serve to forge fidelity over time with people who experience deprivation. Being exposed to their suffering can become an occasion to consider the link between one's personal lifestyle choices and structural injustices. Witnessing a friend be deprived their dignity or rights can prevent moral callousness to the injustices they experience.³⁰³ In opposition to popular views of "friendship" in terms of self-interest or utility, virtuous friendships with those on the margins require vulnerability and transparency; they have the potential to challenge self-deception and the temptation to rationalize luxury, excess, and over-indulgence.³⁰⁴

³⁰² See, for example, Christopher L. Heuertz and Christine D. Pohl, *Friendship at the Margins: Discovering Mutuality in Service and Mission* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010). In addition to being the work of love and justice for solidarity, friendships on the margins can also be virtuously affirming and nourishing for our own well-being. Heuertz and Pohl cite Henri Nouwen's line, "we will never believe we have anything to give unless there is someone who is able to receive. Indeed, we discover our gifts in the eyes of the receiver" (Ibid., 80).

³⁰³ This would be in contrast to a generous donor who may be oblivious to the causes and effects of the injustices the donor's recipients face. Heuertz and Pohl cite several examples of the way in which friendships with those who are marginalized and oppressed can help to make privileged Christians more conscious of their participation in social sin. For example: the connection between buying products that degrade or exploit sexuality and the impact that such hyper-sexualized or desensitized cultures may have in making sexual abuse (even of children) less objectionable (*Friendship at the Margins*, 47-50).

³⁰⁴ It would be naïve not to also acknowledge how these friendships can be fraught with difficulty. These ties can lead to complex situations in negotiating asymmetries in wealth, status, and power. Facing sin and evil, violence and degradation, can be disorienting and perhaps depressing. Concern about becoming morally complicit in such dark forces can lead to hyper-vigilance against exploitation, as well as wariness

On the subject of family life, although Aquinas generally gave first priority to family members,³⁰⁵ this appears to diverge from the standard set by Jesus in the gospels.³⁰⁶ In more recent Catholic teaching, the family is raised up as the *ecclesia domestica*, the domestic church. It holds unrivaled value for the way it forms a community of persons, serves the cause of promoting life, participates in the development of society, and shares in the life and mission of the church.³⁰⁷ It is important to recognize the manner in which the family unit experiences dual forces of agency and being acted upon, both *ad intra* and *ad extra*: persons are shaped by the family and also exert their agency within the family; the family is a force for social order but is also acted upon by the interests and values promoted in a given society.³⁰⁸

The family is the primary school of love. It teaches persons to be attentive to the object of love and how to love people in the right way and for the right end (it would be inappropriate to love a brother in the same way as a mother, for example). In this setting,

and fatigue, potentially resulting in becoming hardened, distrustful, and cynical. Friendships on the margins and in the midst of injustice require integrity, humility, and ongoing, prayerful and moral discernment among friends and can be sustained when people are held accountable to faith, hope, and love. Pohl reflects, “the ones who will be able to resist evil and offer hope are those who are morally and spiritually tender, deeply committed to holiness and integrity, and aware of their own frailty and dependence on Christ. If purity of heart and openness to the wisdom of others shapes every aspect of their lives, they are more likely to do well in complicated situations” (Ibid., 99).

³⁰⁵ See *ST* II-II.26.6-12; 32.5-6. Aquinas stated that it is wrong to deprive oneself and one’s dependents from what is necessary, but it is obligatory to forgo luxuries when faced with another’s extreme need.

³⁰⁶ A prime example is Luke 14:25-26: “If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” The word “hate” means to “turn one’s back on” and suggests that what is meant here is that disciples’ first loyalty is to Christ – no exceptions. Compare this with another passage, Mark 3:35, where Jesus says, “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.” These accounts indicate that family relations are valued relative to how they enable right-relationship with God.

Incidentally, also in Luke 14 (vv.12-14), the primacy of special relations are subverted as Jesus tells his disciples not to invite siblings, relatives, friends, or wealthy neighbors to a banquet but “invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind” as an act of generosity unfettered by expectations of reciprocity.

³⁰⁷ See, for example, Pope John Paul II’s 1981 apostolic exhortation, *Familiaris consortio* (no. 17).

³⁰⁸ This observation is articulated by James Gustafson in *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective* Vol. II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 154-157. Gustafson makes this point to illustrate that “Marriage and family are signs of and evidences for a divine ordering of life in the world” through mutual affection, care, and responsibility, familial interdependence, vows and pledges, trust and forgiveness, and real experiences of finitude and sin (158-164; at 158).

family members learn to act lovingly as stewards of God's care and concern within and beyond the family.³⁰⁹ Family members deserve moral priority because they present their vulnerabilities most consistently to fellow family members who are, in turn, often well-suited to provide for them.³¹⁰

In this school of love, family members also experience bitter pain and disappointment, even injustice and abuse. These lamentable but real failures “corrode the bonds of love, heighten animosities and anxieties, and create suspicions which affect the well-being of individuals and the common good of the whole.”³¹¹ The love learned in family life is thus a love that requires a readiness to forgive and be forgiven, to provide and demand, to rejoice, express gratitude, reverence, and to be loyal.³¹² It is in family relationships where each person gives and receives according to what is due to him or her; this imparts a lesson in how love and justice fit together.

As acted upon and exercising agency in the social milieu, the family has responsibilities in love and justice outside its nuclear relations. The Christian vision of the family “involves dual callings to serve one's own as well as the broader communities in and outside the home.”³¹³ This implies a moral concern that extends outside the family

³⁰⁹ As Gustafson put it, this stewardship is to be a “mask of God” in ordering right-relations within the family and as a family in participating in the “divine ordering and caring for the world” (Ibid., 167). Gustafson clarifies this stewardship is always under the condition of human finitude, which should relieve family members from misplaced guilt and idealized expectations of self and others.

³¹⁰ Robert Goodin summarizes this by saying, “What seems true for children in particular also seems to be true for other kin, neighbors, countrymen, and contractors. To some greater or lesser extent, they are all especially dependent upon you to do something for them; and your varying responsibilities toward each of them seem roughly proportional to the degree to which they are, in fact, dependent upon you (and you alone) to perform certain services” in *Protecting the Vulnerable: A Reanalysis of Our Social Responsibilities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 33-34. As Goodin sees it, the ultimate criterion for the ordering of love is in response to vulnerability.

³¹¹ Gustafson, *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective* Vol. II, 168.

³¹² Ibid., 168-169.

³¹³ Julie Hanlon Rubio, *Family Ethics: Practices for Christians* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010), 81. This book makes a great contribution to the present discourse for its focus on *practices* to sustain this dual vocation. For example, Rubio describes the manner in which family prayer can serve as

to include a “compassionate accountability for the well-being of their neighbors.”³¹⁴

Children learn empathy and altruism, social awareness and responsibility, from their parents’ example. They observe who counts, who belongs, and what it means to participate in social life.³¹⁵ In households lacking these virtuous attitudes and practices, it is harder for children to imagine what they might look like, and how they are to be incorporated into one’s adult life.

Family bonds are to be valued relative to a more inclusive solidarity and orientation to the common good. As a sub-unit of social order, the family has a special role to play in promoting the common good.³¹⁶ It does so by putting into practice the

resistance to sin and injustice through silence, gratitude, immersion in the life of others who suffer, critical reflection on relationships and habits, and petition for the needs family members come to know and share (230-234).

³¹⁴ Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Family: A Christian Social Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 110. Cahill develops the Christian vision of the family based on three main premises: (1) families structure their internal relations according to Christian ideals of spirituality and reciprocity; (2) families serve others in society to build up the common good by transforming society itself; and (3) families struggle, survive, and thrive together, despite economic, racial, and ethnic differences or differences in family structure (84).

³¹⁵ Cahill suggests that part of the break-down of social capital and commitment to the common good is the habituated learning of “shifting and narrowing of what were once public allegiances and communal identities” (Ibid., 103).

³¹⁶ This is a central claim in Cahill’s text. She writes, “The Christian family defines *family values* as care for others, especially the poor; it appreciates that truly Christian families are not always the most socially acceptable or prestigious ones; it values and encourages all families who strive earnestly to meet the standard of compassionate action; and it encourages both personal commitment to and the social structuring of mercy and justice” (Ibid., 135).

Cahill proposes five constructive recommendations for Christian family life in this pursuit. The first is promoting one’s own family well-being first. This requires equality, dignity, respect, and reciprocity between spouses and between parents and children, which will stimulate affection, empathy, and mutual support among all family members. Secondly, empathy, compassion, and mutual reciprocity should extend to non-family members. Adults and children should be formed in economic and political participation in order to promote the well-being of the local community. Thirdly, Christian neighbor love should be inclusive of all, but particularly directed toward those who are disadvantaged, afflicted, and marginalized, no matter their age, race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, or nationality. Fourthly, the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable should take on institutional form, meaning the family is obligated to more than voluntary charity; the family should work towards the creation of just and solidaristic social structures to provide for those who had previously been denied access to attention, care, goods, and resources. Finally, families should place their moral commitments in the context of a unified love of God and neighbor. Cahill adds that the development and maintenance of these moral commitments will be best sustained and enlivened through prayer, spirituality, celebration of the sacraments, and communal participation and support. In other words, by embracing the communal and sacramental dimension of the Christian faith, families can accompany, encourage, and hold accountable one another along the journey to inclusive right-relationships (*Family*, 135-137).

tenet of Catholic social teaching called “subsidiarity,” that is, carrying out commitments at the lowest effective level.³¹⁷ The family effectively bridges the person and the public; it uniquely mediates the human community.³¹⁸ It is the first opportunity to realize the vocation of every human person to participate according to one’s “position and role, in promoting the common good.”³¹⁹

These observations lead to three concluding remarks. First, with respect to the unique influences of friendships and the family unit, these proximate ties need not be considered in competition with neighbor love for solidarity and a preferential option for the poor. This proves true when these relationships maintain an inclusive orientation and sense of obligation. When attentiveness to the needs of others is shared among family members and friends and includes a healthy sense of finitude and fidelity to self-care, practicing neighbor love can be more readily recognized as an essential – rather than supererogatory – duty.³²⁰

³¹⁷ Subsidiarity is a principle that protects against the dangers of collectivism or bureaucratic intervention that can viciously encroach on human freedoms and undermine personal initiative. It is defined such that “a community of higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view of the common good” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1883, quoting Pope John Paul II’s 1991 encyclical *Centesimus annus* no. 48 §4, which in turn, is citing Pope Pius XI’s 1931 encyclical, *Quadragesimo anno*, no. 80, where he appeals to the principle of “subsidiary function”).

³¹⁸ Roberto Goizueta attests, “The Jesus of the gospels relativizes the nuclear family in order to insist that the most intimate, most particular, and most personal of relationships, our family relationships, must extend beyond the nuclear family and characterize *all* our relationships. The authentic community is inclusive not exclusive; it is, of its essence, open to ‘the other’ as a unique human person. The family is not merely a collection of self-sufficient, autonomous individuals, but the birthplace of our very personhood; the person is not the ‘building block’ of the family but its unique mediation. Likewise, the larger human community is not merely a collection of self-sufficient, autonomous families, but the network of social relationships which gives birth to our families; the family is not the ‘building block’ of the human community but its unique mediation.” Goizueta, *Caminemos Con Jesús: Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1995), 201-202.

³¹⁹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1913. See also nos. 1914-1917 on the responsibility of all to participate in public life for the common good.

³²⁰ The lack of emphasis in Scripture to love one’s family and friends (and self, for that matter) is not because these loves are unimportant, but because the biblical authors took them for granted. Repeated attention to care for those we are not predisposed to or benefitted by loving is a challenge to expand our

Second, the responsibilities to cultivate social inclusion and responsibility, compassion, unity, and cooperation should not fall to groups of friends or families alone; local governments, churches, groups, clubs, and neighborhood associations need to share in this work. Local leaders should bring people together from across all sectors of society to persevere through conflicting interests and priorities to increase the visibility of cooperative commitment between the private and public spheres in promoting the common good as inclusively as possible. This multi-level approach has the potential to institutionalize other-regard, compassion, and solidarity in overlapping communities from the personal to the structural.³²¹

Third, the ordering of love for solidarity is a public project to more fully realize the inclusive bonds and commitments of the “family of faith” (Galatians 6:10). Like faith, morality is personal but never private. The moral life is a matter of both personal and collective discernment. This means pushing back against the temptation to identify whatever is “public” with only the state or market. Moral agency includes a social dimension, specifically a “moral obligation as a socially constructed practice negotiated between learning agents capable of growth on the one hand and change on the other.”³²²

By failing to address preexisting friendships and family obligations, Gutiérrez misses how solidarity can be integrated into disciples’ present praxis without the dramatic “break” of conversion and far-off pursuit of the poor in the world. Alternatively,

circles of concern and commitment. Augustine writes, “since there was no need for a precept that anyone love himself and his own body, because we love that which we are and that which is below us ... there remained a necessity only that we receive precepts concerning that which is equal to us and that which is above us” (Augustine, *DDC* I.xxvi.27).

³²¹ Though it should also avoid the “bureaucratic hardening” that Taylor warns against (*A Secular Age*, 740-741). Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus propose “mediating structures” to link the personal to the structural and the private to the public. See Berger and Neuhaus, *To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1977), 2.

³²² Alan Wolfe, *Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 220.

traditional views of friendship and family need to be more consistently and forcefully oriented toward solidarity and the common good (as we have seen by Heuertz, Pohl, and Cahill, for example). Taken together, these efforts to prudently order relationships and responsibilities are part of the work for justice, both as a moral virtue and structural project. Additionally, one key component of a moral vision for solidarity remains: the cultivation of specific dispositions, actions, and practices in each disciple's way of living.

Cultivating a Matrix of Virtues

To this point, the downsides of solidarity have been largely set aside. But it should be noted that solidarity can also take on certain vicious forms: those committed to a certain cause can become so overconfident in its value that they use it to marginalize other features of the common good; the in-group can become elitist, sectarian, and divided against those who are less committed to the same interests; power can be misused; weakness, vulnerability, and ignorance can be ignored or manipulated; the goal of unity or liberation might be used to justify vicious habits or interpersonal relationships and thereby abandon the necessary means to solidarity in love and justice.³²³ And despite its great value, solidarity could be distorted as an urgent, never-ending moral obligation that might result in the neglect of one's own self-care and the gifts and tasks of family and friend relations.³²⁴

³²³ Jean Vanier, founder of the l'Arche ("Ark") community for the mentally handicapped and their aids, has written extensively on community and solidarity, and the unexpected obstacles (see, for example, *Community and Growth* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 17-18, 34-35). Vanier suggests solidarity comes from sharing weakness, vulnerability, and suffering, but that we must first overcome these fears and others like fear of exclusion, dissidents, difference, failure, loss, and change. Vanier proposes "the way of the heart" as an affective dimension to solidarity through acceptance, freedom, simplicity, and compassion. See also Vanier, *Becoming Human* (New York: Paulist, 1998), 73-103.

³²⁴ James Keenan identifies self-care among four virtues (justice, fidelity, prudence, and self-care) to "update" the cardinal virtues (justice, temperance, prudence, and fortitude). Keenan contends that these

To avoid these temptations and to develop a realistic³²⁵ and effective moral vision for solidarity, I propose that it include the following three components: (1) an identity formed by a matrix of virtues including compassion, courage, fidelity, and prudence; (2) a practice of interpretation of one's socio-cultural context through a lens of attentiveness and appropriate response to those nearby; (3) an exercise of responsibility through practices, relationships, and in specific locations to promote inclusive participation and liberation.

The first part of this moral vision of solidarity presents identity shaped by a matrix of virtues inspired by the Samaritan's example.³²⁶ Four virtues are highlighted here: compassion, courage, fidelity, and prudence. This is envisioned as a project for individual moral agents as part of a "community of practice" to advance the cause of solidarity as a strategy for increasing mutuality through shared interests and shared living.³²⁷ It presents a vision of the human person as called to solidarity and prepares

more fully account for the moral demands of relationships by considering how we are related generally (justice), specifically (fidelity), and uniquely (self-care). Prudence orders the other virtues to maintain right-relationship within and beyond the person. See Keenan, "Proposing Cardinal Virtues" *Theological Studies* 56 (1995), 709-729.

³²⁵ Owen Flanagan cautions, "Make sure when constructing a moral theory or projecting a moral ideal that the character, decision processing, and behavior prescribed are possible, or are perceived to be possible, for creatures like us" in *Varieties of Moral Personality: Ethics and Psychological Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 32.

³²⁶ This "matrix of virtues" is inspired by Christopher Vogt's essay proposing three "interdependent virtues" (solidarity, compassion, and hospitality) "heavily influenced by justice operating as a general virtue" to promote the common good. See Vogt, "Fostering a Catholic Commitment to the Common Good: An Approach Rooted in Virtue Ethics" *Theological Studies* 68 (2007), 394-417 (at 400).

³²⁷ David Hollenbach summarizes, "Solidarity is not only a virtue to be enacted by persons one at a time. It must also be expressed in the economic, cultural, political, and religious institutions that shape society. Solidarity is a virtue of communities as well as individuals" (*The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 189).

Ada María Isasi-Díaz presents solidarity as a "theory and strategy" for the "praxis of mutuality." She posits, "solidarity is an understanding and worldview, a theory about the commonality of interests that links humanity. The praxis of mutuality, the strategic aspect of solidarity, implements the theory of solidarity at the same time that it provides the ground for the reflection needed to elaborate further the theory of solidarity. The theoretical aspect of solidarity provides a goal for the strategy of solidarity: recognition of commonality of interests. This goal, in turn, becomes an inherent way for evaluating how mutuality is functioning as a strategy" ("Solidarity: Love of Neighbor in the 21st Century," 34). As a practice, solidarity

disciples to respond to this call by cultivating these attitudes and actions in character-formation for solidarity.

I propose this matrix of virtues in distinction to principles. A moral vision for solidarity is ultimately about the *practice* of being neighborly. It is a project less about teaching or moralizing than it is about personal formation and social transformation. Compassion, courage, fidelity, and prudence inspire dispositions and habits to cultivate the practice of solidarity and as means toward the ultimate *telos* of being neighborly and constructing communities of inclusive right-relationship.

Virtues aspire for the perfection of thought, emotion, and action.³²⁸ These four virtues represent a call to ongoing conversion and discipline to achieve the “mean between extremes” in right-relationships between God, neighbor, and self.³²⁹

Compassion is the first in this matrix of virtues for solidarity because it leads the person out of the self and into the reality of the other, especially when that reality is marked by suffering.³³⁰ Compassion is evocative; it moves the person to feel and share the suffering the other experiences. More than visceral, it is incarnational: it is an embodied way of being together. In distinction to two other related words, pity and mercy, compassion

calls for participating in resistance against oppression, a critique of unjust systems and structures, and an impetus for political action to deliver justice for those who are being deprived their dignity and rights (46).

³²⁸ Jean Porter defines virtue as “a stable quality of the intellect, will, or passions through which an individual can do what morality demands in a particular instance, and do it in the right way.” See the entry, “Virtue” in *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* ed. Richard P. McBrien (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 1316-1317 (at 1316).

³²⁹ Although these virtues are addressed here to individual moral agents for interpersonal responsibilities, they can and should be applied to macro-level views and wider social analysis to appropriately resist participating in unjust systems and reform policies and practices to promote solidarity and the common good as social virtues. The classic text for bringing together Catholic social thought and social analysis remains Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983).

³³⁰ Maureen O’Connell writes, “compassion takes seriously the suffering of others and in so doing uncovers the conscious and unconscious values that we rely on in order to perceive and to evaluate accurately what is going on in our reality. When viewed from the perspective of those who suffer, we realize that the social beliefs and values that shape our lifestyle choices, our interactions in a variety of public spheres, and our understandings of human flourishing are not all valid or morally viable” (*Compassion*, 12).

implies an acted response.³³¹ For example, to have compassion for someone who suffers from poverty, sexism, or racism is a form of moral knowing that impels moral action to address these injustices.

Courage is the virtue that carries out moral action in the face of risk to self and others. Courage is not brazen; as the midpoint between excess and deficiency, it is the mean between the extremes of recklessness and cowardice. The Samaritan modeled courage by going into the ditch of a notoriously unsafe road, risking ambush himself.³³² Courage endures through – rather than avoids – vulnerability.³³³ Courage is part of the “holy boldness” required to partner with God’s saving, loving, and liberating action in the world.³³⁴ It is a gift of the Holy Spirit to advance the unfolding Reign of God (Acts 4:13). Beyond isolated episodes of courageous action, this virtue persists in the face of

³³¹ As we have already seen, in Luke 10:25-37, the Samaritan is moved to act by compassion (v. 33). Pity and mercy do not share the same connotation of active response. For example, James Keenan defines mercy as “the willingness to enter into the chaos of others” (*The Works of Mercy*, 4), where “entering” another’s reality is distinct from “responding” to it.

³³² He further exercised courage by taking the wounded man to the inn. Douglas Oakman points out that insofar as inns had a terrible reputation for attracting unsavory characters, the Samaritan takes on great risk to himself and the robbers’ victim by entering, asking for help, and paying for two weeks’ care. In fact, Jesus’ audience may have found this example more humorous than inspiring. See “Was Jesus a Peasant? Implications for Reading the Jesus Tradition (Luke 10:30-35)” in *The Social World of the New Testament: Insights and Models* eds. Jerome H. Neyrey and Eric C. Stewart (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 125-140 (at 133-136).

³³³ Vulnerability is a universal condition for all human beings and yet experienced uniquely by each person. Vincent Leclercq observes that vulnerability has two meanings: wound and breach. Here, both words are appropriate, in the sense of the wounds people suffer and the breach that separates one from other. See *Blessed are the Vulnerable: Reaching Out to Those With AIDS* (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 2010), 11. Leclercq further argues that these two meanings are “two faces of the same coin” (15) as an inescapable part of the human, communal condition (17-18) and experienced in unique ways by unique persons (21). Leclercq appeals to the example of the Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 as risking vulnerability by his going into the ditch, to “abandon [his] position of immunity” and in so doing, becoming a “tool of the divine grace” (33).

³³⁴ Leclercq quotes Donald Messer, calling for a “new holy boldness” in the church’s response to AIDS (Ibid., 108).

adversity, apathy, and fatigue.³³⁵ Courage keeps compassion and solidarity from conceding its standards.

Courage to care for the other is balanced by the virtue of fidelity, which holds us accountable to proximate relationships.³³⁶ Fidelity is a virtuous allegiance to those who are closest to us and rely most consistently upon our care and concern. Although fidelity represents a strong pull toward these close ties, as has already been discussed, these relations among family members and friends should not be understood to be in competition with a more expansive loyalty or solidarity with all of the members of the “household of God” (Ephesians 2:19).³³⁷ Fidelity is lifted up here for the service it provides to harmonize one’s commitments between the particular and universal. Fidelity is found in the preferential option for the poor as an exercise of the loyalty due to all neighbors *qua* neighbors. Practicing fidelity would naturally lead to other virtues like humility and temperance in striving for simplicity and moderate levels of consumption.³³⁸

³³⁵ Aquinas states that courage has two principal forms: daring and endurance (*ST* II-II.123.3, 11 and 124.3). David Hollenbach draws on this to link courage and patience in his essay, “Courage and Patience: Education for Staying Power in the Pursuit of Peace and Justice” in *Education for Peace and Justice* ed. Padraic O’Hare (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 3-13. Hollenbach states, “Courage is not simply strength of will, fearlessness, or the ability to endure in the face of hardship, it is the strength of will in the pursuit of justice. It is the ability to undertake daring action for justice in spite of the presence of well-founded fear. It is patient endurance of either pain or tedium in the pursuit of justice” (7).

Hollenbach also highlights the need for direct exposure to injustice, a point that reinforces the importance of nearness and proximity with those who suffer. He writes, “The effective agent of social justice needs to feel and taste the reality of injustice. This experience is the foundation of the rightly directed anger that Saint Thomas sees as the ‘most natural’ source of courageous action.” (Ibid., 8).

³³⁶ Keenan highlights the importance of fidelity for ordering claims of love and justice. He points out that doing justice for one’s child would be different than doing justice for a stranger and argues that justice more appropriately pertains to the general relations with neighbors whereas fidelity is a more apt virtue for family and friends. See “Proposing Cardinal Virtues,” 723-726.

³³⁷ In *Fullness of Faith*, Himes and Himes evaluate whether particular allegiances – like to one’s country – are incompatible with the global scope of Christian solidarity. They conclude that patriotism “is a good to be fostered by the gospel precisely because it is a locus of our experience of love for others” but warn against the idolatry of nationalism and other forms of too-narrow loyalties (136-141).

³³⁸ Temperance defines a limit. It moderates the drive for more and seeks fulfillment in what is sufficient. This virtue thus obviates justifying luxury or excess for those closest to us at the expense of providing more minimal goods and services to those in need. In conjunction with fidelity, temperance reminds us of our proper place in relation to others and God. This can prevent making some relationships, responsibilities, or

Fidelity ensures that persons are properly attached to people and things, in the right way, for the right reasons, and ordered to the right ends.

Prudence provides the integrating function to order these considerations.

Prudence is the practical reason to discern what is good and to freely choose it. Aquinas calls it “right reason in action” that is “caused by love” (*ST II-II.47.1-2*).³³⁹ Prudence moves from moral knowledge of the good to moral striving for the good; it integrates the intellect and desire (“appetite”) to do what is good without experiencing inner turmoil or burden (*ST I-II.107.4*). Prudence yields virtuous action in the *habitus* of this practice of perfecting one’s practical wisdom. It reflects on human experience, judges good from ill, and forms one’s conscience accordingly. Prudence is valuable for this project because unlike principles or norms, it takes into account the context of one’s role, responsibilities, and relationships.³⁴⁰ It prevents compassion from becoming inordinately restrictive or expansive. It is essential for never-ending discernment on how we can best love God, others, and self (*ST II-II.31.3*).

These virtues are personally-appropriate means to the *telos* of human flourishing, both personal and collective. Prudence aids in effectively cultivating these virtues for each person, in each place. In this way, solidarity can be understood as a universal vocation and duty as a principle and virtue. Solidarity and the preferential option for the

goods quasi-idolatrous. In sum, fidelity and temperance cultivate proper attachment to people and things. Attachment is an important moral issue, as being over- or under-attached to people or things can lead to inappropriate relations. William Cavanaugh contends that a significant problem in consumer culture is not inordinate attachment to things (i.e., greed), but widespread detachment and dissatisfaction, placing people on a hedonic treadmill of never-ending consumption. See Cavanaugh, *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 34-35.

³³⁹ See also, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1806, where prudence is called the “charioteer of the virtues” as it “guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure ... [to] overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid.”

³⁴⁰ This is not meant to discount the value of universal precepts, middle axioms, or concrete moral norms. Rather, as Aquinas observes, the more one descends to matters of detail, the matters of the right will not be known to all, nor will be it be applicable to all (*ST I-II.94.4*). Hence the need for personal prudential judgment.

poor cannot be considered “reserved” for experts, saints, or moral heroes. Instead, they are core components of the duty to be neighborly, to act with love and justice for those nearby, both by circumstance and choice.³⁴¹ In this way, a moral vision for solidarity should pervade every disciple’s self-understanding, inspiring each one to right-relationship with those people who share one’s time and place, as well as a willingness to draw near to those in need.³⁴²

This willingness to respond to an encountered need is developed out of an interpretation of one’s socio-cultural context that is attentive and responsive to the needs of one’s neighbors. This lens shares a good deal in common with the “Catholic social imagination” previously described. It is grounded in the consciousness of belonging and a sacramental vision that recognize all creation as related, graced, and extending a constant invitation to partner with the divine will. It is the fruit of *eusebeia*, or the virtue of “piety.”³⁴³ Piety and contentment are virtuous insofar as they are generated by trust in

³⁴¹ In his “ordering of love,” Augustine gives preference to special relations with those who, “by the accidents of time, or place, or circumstance, are brought into closer connection” with us (*DDC* I.xxviii.29). To this circumstantial dimension I add with emphasis the importance of intentionally *drawing near* to others (especially those in need). Recall Gregory Boyle’s claim that living out the Beatitudes is a matter of geography: “All Jesus asks is, ‘Where are you standing?’” See Boyle, *Tattoos on the Heart*, 173.

In other words, the solidarity of someone like Mother Teresa cannot be held as the standard for all people; it would be vicious to expect a single mother of three children or with ill parents to forsake these special relations to pursue love and justice for faraway neighbors in need. The common good is best served by her faithful care for these people who rely so heavily on her, so long as this is not her only (i.e., exclusive) concern. A moral vision for solidarity provides a constant challenge acknowledge and compassionately, courageously, and prudentially respond to the needs one encounters by happenstance as well as by aspiring to include those presently being excluded.

³⁴² John Dominic Crossan reflects on Jesus’ description of the Reign of God being like a mustard seed. He raises the point that this is not just a metaphor for the growth of a plant that starts from a small seed. Rather, “it is that it tends to take over where it is not wanted, that it tends to get out of control, that it tends to attract birds within cultivated areas where they are not particularly desired. And that, said Jesus, was what the Kingdom was like” in *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991), 278-279. In a similar fashion, there is no place and no people exempt from the duties of being a neighbor; to be neighborly means to publically practice the aforementioned characteristics in every time and place. Only then can it be called a “life-pattern.”

³⁴³ *Eusebeia* may be translated as “godliness,” “piety,” “devotion,” or “worship.” It shares with *dikaioσynē* a desire for holiness, fidelity, and right-relationship with God. *Eusebeia* connotes reverence for God and God’s people, and interestingly, was exhorted in the Pastoral Letters in conjunction with contentment (e.g.,

God and gratitude for one's blessings. Interpretation through appreciation can evoke a deep generosity, providing a striking contrast to typical anthropological starting points based on competition, conflict, anxiety, and scarcity.

As discussed above, as part of a "theology of neighbor," this interpretive key is one of reverence for the other in a posture of respect and reception, akin to hospitality. But it is unlike hospitality that welcomes guests to the home of the host; it is a "welcoming on the way" just as the Samaritan receives the man lying in the ditch in Luke 10:25-37 and the disciples receive the Risen Christ on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35.³⁴⁴ This welcome cuts across differences and is responsive to people's needs.³⁴⁵ It offers security for those who are vulnerable, reprieve for those who face deprivation,

1 Timothy 6:6). The call to piety and contentment is not to placate disciples with a naïveté of faith or benign acceptance of the status quo. See Daniel Harrington and James Keenan, *Paul and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 118-119.

³⁴⁴ Hospitality – even "on the way" – is a recurrent theme in Luke's gospel (e.g., Jesus and Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10 and Jesus, Mary, and Martha in Luke 10:38-42). See, for example, Brendan Byrne, *The Hospitality of God: A Reading of Luke's Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2000).

³⁴⁵ Hospitality was a defining characteristic in the early church, as it helped bring the first followers together across social, ethnic, and geographical differences. The first Christians who were also Jewish abided by dietary restrictions that meant they could not eat with non-Jews. Christian hospitality – especially through *Agape* meals of bread, fish, and wine, which were dietary "neutral" selections for Jews and non-Jews – helped the first Christians move from "two menus and two tables" to the ideal of being "one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28). On the "sociology of food" for the early church, see Graydon Snyder, *Inculturation of the Jesus Tradition: The Impact of Jesus on Jewish and Roman Cultures* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), 129-174. Snyder contends, "Despite the importance of theology, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and an ethic of caring, the real alteration in Judaism occurred (and Christianity clearly emerged) when table fellowship was not blocked by dietary obligations or the rejection of food dedicated to idols" (155).

These practices followed the example Christ set himself in abolishing the exclusion of sinners or others considered unworthy or impure (see Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 5:30) and the challenge to share food and fellowship with the poor (Luke 14:12-14; see also James 2:15-16). In this way, the followers of Jesus "are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19). Christine Pohl and Letty Russell are two authors who have highlighted the need to recover the tradition of "extending God's welcome" to all. See Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999) and Russell, *Just Hospitality: God's Welcome in a World of Difference* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

and the invitation to belong and to participate in a community for those who may be alienated, isolated, and alone.³⁴⁶

This lens best receives and appropriately responds to others by drawing near to them. It can be corrected through encounters and exchanges that widen, deepen, and improve focus for accurately seeing others. Just as the Samaritan could only know how to help the robbers' victim by going to his side, this approach to interpreting one's present praxis is especially sensitive to marginalization and injustice; it operates from a locus of deprivation. Its hallmarks are proximity and accompaniment with others, those considered "other," and those most in need.³⁴⁷

Drawing near to others in need is an exercise of responsibility for solidarity. Effective neighbor-formation relies on operating from an identity oriented to solidarity. This is given shape by a matrix of virtues including compassion, courage, fidelity, and prudence. It practices interpretation through a sacramental vision, consciousness of belonging, and other features of a Catholic social imagination. It depends on establishing communities of practice that work out shared responsibilities through inclusive right-relationship.

Every instance of social participation exists within a community of practice. A moral vision for solidarity presents communities of practice with concepts, values, and habits to construct social imaginaries to promote human dignity, rights and duties, and

³⁴⁶ Wayne Meeks cites the coordinated efforts of hospitality and humility as one of the factors in the early church growing and becoming institutionalized so quickly. See Meeks, *The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 105-108.

³⁴⁷ This proximity and accompaniment can be described as a "walking with the poor." Roberto Goizueta suggests that when we "walk where poor persons walk" we become "*compañeros* and *compañeras*" with the poor, companions who share their desire for dignity, rights, and flourishing. Goizueta explains, "Unless social transformation is rooted in an everyday accompaniment of the poor, that is, in the everyday act of walking with, living with, breaking bread with particular poor persons in the concreteness of the poor persons' everyday struggle for survival, the transformation of social structures will, in the long run, simply perpetuate the oppression of the poor" (*Caminemos Con Jesús*, 207).

liberation for the common good.³⁴⁸ In a globalized, digital age, “neighbor” is not confined to physical proximity; being neighborly can and should be expressed between those who are near and far, online and offline. To make progress toward that end, physical and virtual communities of practice should be evaluated for the kinds of values and meaning being learned and whether and how they are forming members to “Go and do likewise” in their socio-cultural context. This analysis is the focus of the next chapter.

³⁴⁸ On “communities of practice” and the role they play in negotiating myriad expressions of identity and purpose, see Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). This analysis is important for considering how belonging (and being in overlapping communities of belonging or on the fringes of belonging) “become constitutive of our identities by creating bonds or distinctions in which we become invested” (191). This will be revisited in Chapters 5 and 6 in developing an appropriate pedagogy for teaching theology as neighbor-formation.

CHAPTER FOUR

A TURN TO THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

Having examined the features of a moral vision for being a neighbor committed to solidarity, the task of this chapter is to more closely analyze the present social conditions that pose both peril and promise for teaching, learning, and practicing being neighbors for solidarity. Doing so first requires addressing how moral development is shaped by a variety of factors, including one's relationships and surrounding environment. This will help illuminate the socio-cultural conditions that are shaping the development of identity, interpretation, and responsibility among today's emerging adults in the United States.

As noted in the first chapter, the present praxis is being studied through a trifocal lens that looks at the effects of globalization, the "buffered self," and the increasing use of ICTs, the internet, and social media. These three trends shape personal, social, and moral development through culturally-constructed concepts, values, and practices. They produce significant tensions between differentiation and homogenization, vulnerability and autonomy, connectivity and alienation. This study considers the relevance of these cultural forces on five themes in particular: identity, location, relationships, community, and morality. Taking note of this context marked by such dynamisms and tensions, this chapter then considers the impact on U.S. college students and how this is relevant for their moral formation for neighborly solidarity. This will lay the foundation for Chapter 5, which will propose an appropriate pedagogy for theological education to engage these features of the present social context.

The Socio-Cultural Features of Moral Development

The opening premise of this project is that despite the fact that the Good Samaritan may be among Jesus' most well-known stories, Christian disciples continue to fall short of understanding the depth of its meaning or to regularly follow Jesus' command to take up such courageous, compassionate, and boundary-breaking actions. How can this be the case if the story is so often taught as the prime example of how to love God and one's neighbor as oneself? Having already described its fuller exegetical importance and moral implications, this chapter aims to close the gap between how these lessons are understood and might be more consistently applied.

This requires an overview of the process of moral development, which will rely on the work of Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, and Robert Kegan. Kohlberg is credited with being an original pioneer in the field of psychology known as "moral development." His six stages of moral development draw from the work of Jean Piaget, who studied the moral development of children. Kohlberg's stages mark development in moral reasoning, moving from pre-conventional to conventional toward post-conventional moral reasoning. His stages are described in terms of orientations, beginning with an orientation to punishment and obedience, moving onto an orientation to interpersonal accord, and capped by an orientation toward universal principles for the most advanced moral reasoning.³⁴⁹

Kohlberg presents moral development as a universal process that individual moral agents may progress through on their own, but always in the same lock-step pattern. In

³⁴⁹ Kohlberg's six stages of moral development are: (1) Punishment and Obedience Orientation; (2) Instrumental Orientation; (3) Interpersonal Concordance Orientation; (4) Societal Orientation; (5) Social Contract Orientation; (6) Universal Principles Orientation. This typology follows the maturation process Kohlberg observed in human moral reasoning. See Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).

Kohlberg's view, moral agents typically do not skip steps or regress to previous (i.e., lower) forms of moral reasoning. Kohlberg also proposes that moral agents are cognitively limited to grasp only one step higher than their current stage, though they possess an attraction to reason a level higher than their current stage. This produces an effect of disequilibrium, as one experiences the inadequacy of the current level of moral reasoning and tests out fledgling capacities in a higher level of moral considerations, spurring further moral progress.

Kohlberg's investigation into these stages of moral development is inspired by the question, what makes a person moral? Does knowing the good mean choosing the good? Or is the good learned through habit? Kohlberg affirms the former proposal, citing a lack of evidence that shared practices or socialization actually produce more moral persons.³⁵⁰ According to Kohlberg, the primary moral concern is for justice.³⁵¹ This interest is evoked in children after experiencing dissatisfaction with their knowledge of the good. When exposed to a cognitive disequilibrium about the nature of the good (through a discussion of what would be good for a person or group, for example), children become aware of the deficiency in their understanding or reasoning. As they take on new considerations, agents advance their moral considerations from basic obedience to one guided by self-interest (stages 1 and 2, "pre-conventional" moral development). From there, adolescents can better understand how their motives – as well as those of others – color moral deliberations and either conform to or reject social expectations and norms

³⁵⁰ Kohlberg cites the Boy Scouts, who, despite their practice of earning badges for virtuous actions, fail to demonstrate evidence of higher moral character when tested for honesty, service, or self-control (*The Philosophy of Moral Development*, 31-32).

³⁵¹ This vision of justice honors individual rights claims in an "impartial" attempt to secure fairness and equality for all (Ibid., 39). Kohlberg's theory of justice prioritizes personal dignity, autonomy, and reciprocity, which seems to give precedence to negative rights over positive rights.

(stages 3 and 4, or “conventional” morality). More dedicated adults are better able to navigate diverse opinions, biases, and priorities through social contracts that promote mutuality and reciprocity, while the most advanced agents exercise superior moral reasoning through fidelity to and apt application of universal ethical principles (stages 5 and 6, respectively, known as “post-conventional” moral achievement). This last and most enlightened stage is reserved for those who exercise consistent, principled moral reasoning.³⁵² Examples include Kant’s categorical imperative or Rawls’ difference principle.³⁵³

Moral agents progress through these stages as they develop their moral reasoning in making judgments about right and wrong. This is an interactive and dialectical process in specific instances of evaluating and applying the principle of justice.³⁵⁴ A moral agent can advance through the hierarchy of stages by articulating and applying moral principles as they are produced by personal exposure to moral dilemmas and reflection upon them. According to this view, moral development is achieved through personal reasoning and emotional maturation in response to interpersonal encounters and environmental influences, but it cannot be reduced to something that is distinctly self-constructed or received through one’s associations or contextual setting.³⁵⁵

³⁵² In Kohlberg’s view, almost all members of human society operate at stage 4, with moral leaders consistently exercising the virtues of stage 5, while only a few exceptional moral heroes achieve stage 6 status (Kohlberg’s examples include Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.).

³⁵³ Kant’s categorical imperative is to act in a way that could be applied into a universal moral norm (such as do not lie, cheat, or steal). Rawls’ difference principle is a matter of distributive justice; it implies that the distribution of goods should make up for the inequalities of society’s neediest members (justice seeking equality).

³⁵⁴ Kohlberg writes, “Morality is neither the internalizations of established cultural values nor the unfolding of spontaneous impulses and emotions; it is justice, the reciprocity between the individual and others in the social environment” (Ibid., 54-55). It is “interactionist” in this interpersonal dimension and “dialectical” in constant reorganizing as principles are applied, tested, and refined through higher stages of cognition.

³⁵⁵ Kohlberg suggests, “a more complete approach implies full student participation in a school in which justice is a living matter” (Ibid., 48), where personal maturation is the result of interaction between a person and his or her environment (56). He also cautions against proposing moral principles through mere

Kohlberg's approach is critiqued by those who believe he overstates the importance of moral development as a universal cognitive process at the expense of the affective or social dimensions. Kohlberg does present moral development as growth in moral reasoning and discourse, a competence achieved by integrating reason and emotion and best improved through interpersonal exchange.³⁵⁶ These interactions are most valuable in "real moral crises [that] arise when situations are socially ambiguous, when the usual moral expectations break down."³⁵⁷ Kohlberg believes the central processes of personal moral development universally follow this pattern and these stages, but does not propose this as a process insulated from context. On the contrary, he finds evidence that suggests these cognitive and affective modes can be found across quite diverse contextual settings.³⁵⁸

Kohlberg's presentation of moral development is that of a universal process for all moral agents who reason through moral principles and their applications. This is distinct from understanding morality as essentially relational, shared, and conditioned by socio-cultural context. Carol Gilligan offers an important corrective to Kohlberg's essentialist view. Operating from a feminist epistemology, Gilligan insists her critique is more about theme than gender. That theme contrasts with Kohlberg's operating anthropology, one based on the individual moral agent as separated from others (the etymology of

instruction, which might devolve into indoctrination, of very little benefit to morality, especially for democratic life (76).

³⁵⁶ Kohlberg responds to these and other criticisms on pages 139-145. He points out that very often emotions can be a form of moral "disruption" as emotional desire or fear may prevent one from both knowing and choosing the good. He proposes that the cognitive and affective should be integrated into a single mental process and that this should also take into account the thoughts and feelings of others, taking note of the special role sympathy has in identifying justice. Kohlberg, following Piaget, ultimately defines justice in terms of an ideal equilibrium in social interactions (145). In the end, his take on "social shaping" is mostly through interactions between moral agents and less a product of one's specific socio-cultural context.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 188.

³⁵⁸ Kohlberg cites his own comparative analysis in Taiwan, Malaysia, and elsewhere (Ibid., 115-137).

‘individual’ signifies division between the self and other selves). Instead, Gilligan proposes a vision of moral development from within the context of relationality. This presents a challenge to Kohlberg’s hierarchical and individualized stages because the webs of relationality – what is received from and due to others – cannot be so easily ranked or ordered.³⁵⁹ If justice is to be understood as fairness, this creates a considerable moral challenge, as persons try to identify and implement what may be accepted as “fair” amid numerous and diverse attachments and associations. Whereas Kohlberg focuses on the idea of justice, Gilligan underscores the difficulty of putting this concept into practice, especially in light of experiences of asymmetrical relationships marked by inequalities of affection, ability, need, resources, and power.³⁶⁰

The differential pull of these relationships and their corresponding responsibilities that span various social locations and age ranges make it difficult to envision how these webs of relations would endure individual lock-step progressions. Rather, as Gilligan suggests, it may be more accurate to envision moral development as a spectrum along which moral agents are shaped by and actively shape others through a relational epistemology.³⁶¹ This provides a “more expansive view of human development” for “a

³⁵⁹ Gilligan explains, for Kohlberg, moral maturity is expressed through climbing stages in identifying and applying universal principles, which take on greater importance than the people – and relationships – involved. In Gilligan’s framework, relationships are given priority, and moral deliberation is between conflicting responsibilities to others more than it is negotiating between various concepts of justice. See Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 18-22.

³⁶⁰ For this reason, Gilligan proposes that Kohlberg’s emphasis on justice should be augmented by attention to the importance of interpersonal care; such care is “seasoning mercy with justice” (Ibid., 149).

³⁶¹ Gilligan proposes this relational epistemology (“knowledge as a process of human relationship”) in contrast to Kohlberg’s stages (Ibid., 170-174). This comes out of her description of identity as fused with intimacy in relationships, where one’s self-conception is inevitably tied to care and responsibility for and with others. She explains the “critical experience” of moral deliberation as an encounter with the self “that clarifies the understanding of responsibility and truth” (164). Responsibility and truth are important for inequalities of power, where the opposite of care can often be neglect and oppression (168).

more generative view of human life.”³⁶² It better accounts for the ways in which personal cognition is shaped by and responds to one’s attachments and surrounding environment.

This expansive view also adds a more affective weight to Kohlberg’s presentation of moral reasoning. For example, Gilligan explains that being attentive to other people and one’s relational obligations includes being mindful of others’ feelings. When forced to choose between caring for one person and another, a moral choice soon becomes “the seemingly impossible task of choosing the victim.”³⁶³ In other words, moral dilemmas are double-edged, in that helping one can mean hurting another. Thus, reluctance to judge or act is more accurately understood as reluctance to hurt, especially in light of the impact a single decision might have on a web of relations.

Gilligan’s critique resonates with the Samaritan’s example of neighbor love in at least three ways. First, recall that the text states that the Samaritan acted out of a feeling of compassion, not a principle of justice or mercy. This is not the same as Kohlberg’s assumption that knowing the good means choosing the good; as noted in Chapter 2, both the priest and Levite likely knew the law required them to stop and offer aid to the man in need. Second, the Samaritan was a despised outcast, a vulnerable person in his own right on the road to Jericho. Being an outcast, perhaps the Samaritan could more easily identify with the robbers’ victim left in the ditch. This fact also accentuates the courage it took to act as he did, exposing himself to ambush on the road or to a hostile reception at the inn. Third, it reinforces the challenge of this passage to be neighbors who are consistently oriented to this kind of merciful action and generous care, not simply to know the law and apply it.

³⁶² Ibid., 174.

³⁶³ Ibid., 80.

This last point deserves extra attention for our purposes, in focusing on the moral formation of college students. This project is dedicated to more than teaching students to know what is expected from them as articulated in Jesus' teachings or the tenets of Catholic social thought. It is about engaging students in the process of integrating these convictions and values into their way of living so that they consistently think, speak, and act as good and loving neighbors committed to solidarity, especially with the poor. Kohlberg's structuralist perspective of moral development envisions moral progress as cognitive development that is basically the same for everyone, regardless of time and place. His emphasis on reasoning through principles diverges with a liberationist perspective like Gutiérrez's that places special emphasis on taking up a perspective – to influence interpretation, method, moral development, etc. – located on the margins, that is, a place marked by vulnerability and deprivation. It does not help that the pinnacle of Kohlberg's moral development is represented by Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who were outstanding moral heroes in the public sphere, but who were guilty of moral failures in their personal lives.³⁶⁴ To avoid such moral myopia, we should better attend to the moral weight of personal attachments and associations. A more adequate theory of moral development – especially one with an eye toward neighborly relations for *shalom* and *dikaiosynē* – not only takes into account relationships, but also considers how moral truth is mediated in and through relationships and how moral maturity is developed therein. As we will see in the pages ahead, for emerging adults, this relational epistemology plays a key role in personal, social, and moral development.

³⁶⁴ Wanting to avoid uncouth posthumous attacks, I nonetheless agree with Gilligan that we should acknowledge the discrepancies between these men's personal and public moralities. Both were champions of justice in a global sense, but also less than model husbands at home (King was an adulterer and Gandhi lamented being a "cruelly kind husband" who "harassed" his wife more like a teacher than a partner; see Gilligan, *In A Different Voice*, 103-105; 155).

For Robert Kegan, a developmental psychologist, the connection between relationships and moral responsibility comes down to a judgment of one's "response-ability." Kegan describes "response-ability" as a capacity to recruit and be recruited by others to provide care.³⁶⁵ Building on the work of Kohlberg and noting trenchant critiques by Gilligan and others, Kegan's six stages of moral development better incorporate these relational and environmental influences, while still respecting the very real differences between individuals and the importance of autonomous separation for personal development.³⁶⁶

Kegan concludes that response-ability depends mostly on understanding others. Here "understanding" connotes more than knowledge about people; it is better found in comprehending the meaning they make from their experiences. In his own framework of moral stages, he views moral progress like a helix that spirals between the formal and the personal, mediated by context and relationships.³⁶⁷ In the process of moral maturation, one becomes an "administrator" of a new way of seeing that can more fully account for ethical principles or social norms and one's own experience or perspective, as shaped by personal context and relationships.³⁶⁸ Insofar as relationships are reciprocal, these insights, experiences, and moral deliberations are never isolated endeavors. The blending

³⁶⁵ Kegan explains, "It is our recruitability, as much as our knowledge of what to do once drawn, that makes us of value in our caring for another's development, whether the caring is the professional caring ... or the more spontaneous exercises of careful parenthood, friendship, and love." See Kegan, *The Evolving Self: Problem and Process in Human Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 17.

³⁶⁶ Kegan clarifies that the "construction of 'individuality' is thus 'interindividuality'; neither any one person nor the group is an unindividuated whole, it is a category of interpenetration" wherein the organic, evolutionary space between the self and other gives rise to "stage-like regularities" in development (Ibid., 68).

³⁶⁷ Kegan's six stages move from incorporative to impulsive to imperial to interpersonal to institutional to interindividual. Emerging adults are mostly in the interpersonal stage, with experiences marked by balancing self-interest and mutuality and trying to navigate personal identity with wider webs of sociality and engagement with institutional life through college and one's first job. See helix image on page 109.

³⁶⁸ Here Kegan offers a more nuanced view than Kohlberg, as he acknowledges the importance of understanding and applying moral principles, but places emphasis on becoming the "administrator" of a new way of seeing *through* (beyond) the formal matter to make one's own judgment (Ibid., 237).

of these many perspectives helps moral agents to navigate between poles of personal autonomy and social expectations, self-interest and other-regard. Following the disorienting experience of having one's black-and-white moral vision crumble (e.g., the duty to always obey an authority figure, regardless of the command), the evolution of a more well-informed, personally-attentive, and socially-responsible moral code can slowly be articulated and adopted.³⁶⁹ As difficult as this moral growth promises to be, according to Kegan, the key is relying on small groups of friends or other trustworthy individuals to share the burden by reflecting, discussing, problem-solving, and evaluating moral deliberations together.

Another important insight from Kegan comes from his more recent work on moral education as a “coaching” to a higher level of development. Recruiting insight, advice, and support from someone with a more robust moral vision can provide a “consciousness bridge” to a way of seeing that more fully accounts for multiple points of view, the obligations of various relational ties, institutional principles and social norms, and self-authorship committed to personal and collective flourishing.³⁷⁰

This process requires more than advanced cognition or a trusted role model. It requires courage and empathy. Courage is necessary because moral progress requires discipline it would otherwise be easier to avoid. Indeed, the more one becomes aware of complex moral issues, the diversity of opinions about how to solve them, and the plethora of ramifications that could ensue depending on the chosen course of action, it may be tempting to reduce one's moral agency to either obeying or defying authority,

³⁶⁹ Kegan does not sugar-coat how difficult this process can be, as the temporary lack of clarity about what is right or wrong or how to judge between what is best for oneself or another can be “terrifying” (239).

³⁷⁰ Coaching to higher orders of consciousness is the focus of Kegan's later work, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994). On “coaching” see page 55; on “consciousness bridge” see page 278.

conforming to or subverting social norms, or making little effort to establish a consistent moral code or character.³⁷¹ It takes courage to begin such a journey; to use Kegan's language, it is no small task to cross a bridge into the unknown. Moreover, it takes courage to admit one's moral failures (whether conceptual or enacted). This is a particularly stark challenge in light of evidence that suggests Americans typically resist correcting their mistaken views, even when presented with credible evidence that contradicts their opinions.³⁷²

The second necessary ingredient for moral progress is empathy. Martin Hoffman defines empathy as "the spark of human concern for others, the glue that makes social life possible" and as "an affective response more appropriate to another's situation than one's own."³⁷³ Empathy is essential to moral development because it enables a moral agent to *feel from* a variety of points of view and various levels of moral culpability.³⁷⁴

Understood as both cognitive awareness and affective response to another person, empathy is innate, often involuntary, and isomorphic to others' expression of emotion.³⁷⁵

³⁷¹ This likely is part of the reason why so many emerging adults are found to be so incoherent, indifferent, or relativistic when it comes to morality, as discussed in Chapter 1.

³⁷² Political scientist Brendan Nyhan led a series of studies at the University of Michigan in 2005 and 2006 that reveals that not only do many Americans fail to consult facts to inform their opinions or revise their opinions in the face of new factual data, but they even uncritically accept wrong information simply to reinforce their own beliefs. Nyhan identifies this "backfire effect" as a defense mechanism to avoid cognitive dissonance. See Joe Keohane, "When Facts Backfire" *The Boston Globe* (11 July 2010), available at http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/ideas/articles/2010/07/11/how_facts_backfire/.

³⁷³ See Martin L. Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3-4. For another treatment of empathy and its essential link to morality – specifically empathy as the "heart" of Christian morality – see Charles Shelton, *Morality of the Heart: A Psychology for the Christian Moral Life* (New York: Crossroad, 1990). Shelton describes empathy in three parts: cognitive, affective, and motivational and cites the Good Samaritan as an example that reminds Christians to unite all three forms, both internally and externally (Ibid., 109-110).

³⁷⁴ For example, Hoffman identifies five typical moral roles: the victim, the innocent bystander, the transgressor, the virtual transgressor (one who feels guilty but is actually innocent), and multiple moral claimants (trying to recruit care or being recruited to provide care) (*Empathy and Moral Development*, 3-15).

³⁷⁵ That empathy is isomorphic to another's expressed emotions is an evolved trait called "mimicry" (Ibid., 37). Hoffman notes that "empathy's fragility" is that mimicry sometimes blurs the distinction between self and other (56).

To say that empathy is innate is to claim it as a universal human trait, but it is not a uniform capacity among all people. Empathy varies with personality and disposition, the product of one's genes, relationships, and socio-cultural context. Although some people are naturally more inclined to feel empathy, empathic-concern is also an ability that can be taught and trained.³⁷⁶ Evolutionary biology has hardwired humans to feel empathy most easily for those nearest and most alike. A more Samaritan-like form of empathy might be more inclusively oriented, so that those considered "other" are also included in one's affective moral response. Empathy also should be exercised chastely, to avoid "empathic over-arousal" at being exposed to the emotional state and need of too many other people.³⁷⁷

Moral development combines moral principles with personal attention to others toward the goal of cultivating a sustained "commitment to caring."³⁷⁸ This commitment to caring is to both principles and people, a life-long integration of cognitive and affective processes that take note of relational and contextual influences. This involves the cultivation of emotional intelligence as well as social intelligence. Emotional intelligence refers to honing appropriate feelings.³⁷⁹ It requires the development of

³⁷⁶ Recent research connects mindfulness with being attentive to others and compassionate to those who are suffering. See the forthcoming study by David DeSteno, Paul Condon, Gaelle Desbordes, and Willa Miller, "Meditation Increases Compassionate Responses to Suffering" in the journal *Psychological Science* (press release available here: <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/can-meditation-make-you-a-more-compassionate-person.html>).

³⁷⁷ Over-arousal can lead to "compassion fatigue" (*Empathy and Moral Development*, 197-200). Like all learning, empathy requires "selective attention" or else it risks becoming "promiscuous" or "diffuse" (214-215).

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 261. Constructing a moral code and moral character must carefully balance the cognitive process of applying principles and the affective dimension of responding to others. In some instances, principles help sustain commitment over time, after emotions have subsided. At other times, the spontaneous (or carefully trained) experience of feeling a particular emotion might "prime the pump" and spur a person into a needed moral response.

³⁷⁹ It should be noted that while all feelings may be said to be authentic, they may not be accurate. Psychologists point out that emotional dispositions follow from experience and memory, the latter of which

“motivated reasoning,” a willingness to overcome fears associated with moral failures due to biased or inaccurate views, irrational feelings, or degrees of moral indifference.³⁸⁰

Social intelligence refers to increasing one’s understanding and abilities to navigate connections with others, that is, growing in wisdom in human relationships.³⁸¹ Social intelligence is fostered through awareness of others’ emotional and mental states and produces social facility through thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting in attunement and synchrony with others. Social neuroscience examines how the brain is shaped by social interactions, revealing a “neuroplasticity” conditioned by interactions and relationships with others.³⁸²

These kinds of intelligence are not meant to eclipse the significance of genetic behavioral traits or mental capacities. Rather, they are to show how people respond to and are shaped by their interactions, relationships, and surroundings.³⁸³ In some cases, the refusal to help others is not necessarily out of moral indifference; it may actually be an act of self-preservation or a learned coping mechanism, having previously faced “toxic

is sometimes faulty. Emotional intelligence, then, requires evaluating and, if necessary correcting, one’s convictions and memory.

³⁸⁰ “Motivated reasoning” is used to describe a cognitive-affective process that is open to rectifying erroneous beliefs, perceptions, and memories. It also fuels a willingness to overcome the anxiety felt when confronted with one’s own erroneous views. For research on overcoming the tipping point that prevents some from conquering this anxiety, see the essay by David P. Redlawsk, Andrew J. W. Civettini, and Karen M. Emmerson, “The Affective Tipping Point: Do Motivated Reasoners Ever ‘Get It’?” in *Political Psychology* 31:4 (2010), 563-593.

³⁸¹ Daniel Goleman explains how, from a neuroscience level, humans are wired to connect and be sociable with others. He describes human neuro-circuitry in two branches, low (emotional) and high (rational), with the goal of coordinating “both [as] necessary rudders in the social world.” See Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006), 100.

³⁸² Ibid., 11. Goleman adds that these relationships have “subtle, yet powerful, lifelong impacts on us” such that “how we connect with others has unimagined significance” for who we become. He also notes that neuroplasticity is highest through the mid-twenties, of importance for the development of emerging adults like those focused on in this project (289).

³⁸³ For example, Goleman identifies three kinds of attachments: secure, anxious, and avoidant (Ibid., 194). Emotional and social intelligence have been linked to these kinds of “attachment systems,” training us to feel needy when we see others in need, to feel elated when we see others being helped, and to learn how and when to appropriately feel compassion and avoid “empathy distress.” Research shows that those who come from a “secure base” of attachments (about 55% of Americans, according to Philip Shaver at the University of California) are those who are most willing to help others (see pp. 194-215).

social encounters,” which may be considered the “emotional equivalent of second-hand smoke.”³⁸⁴

For these reasons, it is of paramount importance to expand the approach to moral development beyond matters of learning and choosing the good to include moral agents’ personal history, attachments, associations, and surrounding environment. In studies of what motivates people to act with courage, compassion, or generosity – much like the Samaritan’s care described in Luke 10:30-37 – in some instances it has been found that contextual factors matter more than moral principles or character traits.³⁸⁵ This is a point vigorously reinforced in a great deal of social science scholarship. Two cases – one historical and the other clinical – will help illustrate this point.

The first comes from World War II, as rescuers (those who hid Jews from Nazis) were interviewed to explain what inspired their brave actions. Holocaust survivor and sociologist Samuel Oliner interviewed hundreds of rescuers and found that only 11% cited moral principles as the inspiration for their altruistic acts, 37% attributed their actions to feeling compassion for Jewish people, and 52% explained their actions as meeting the shared values and expected social norms of their community.³⁸⁶ This – and

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 318. Goleman recognizes that one of the most powerful motivators is fear, and that the fear of social exclusion generates tremendous pressure on children and young adults. In some instances, to exclude another person or ignore their needs is to preempt this from happening to oneself (Ibid., 306).

³⁸⁵ This is a central claim in Malcolm Gladwell’s intriguing book, *The Tipping Point*. Gladwell contends that we are simply more attuned to personal cues than contextual ones, so we notice the former more often but should be paying greater attention to the latter. He argues, “Character ... isn’t a stable, easily identifiable set of closely related traits ... Character is more like a bundle of habits and tendencies and interests, loosely bound together and dependent, at certain times, on circumstance and context. The reason that most of us seem to have a consistent character is that most of us are really good at controlling our environment.” See *The Tipping Point* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 2002), 163. I do not agree with Gladwell’s description of “character” – especially from the standpoint of virtue ethics – though it is unlikely he is referencing this classic ideal.

³⁸⁶ For the full report, see Samuel P. Oliner and Pearl M. Oliner, *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Europe* (New York: Free Press, 1988), especially pp. 171-250. Over his career, Oliner has interviewed more than 1,500 altruists (WWII rescuers, philanthropists, and other moral exemplars), and contends that his research demonstrates that altruism is rarely if ever an intellectual exercise; more often it

other examples from World War II³⁸⁷ – contrasts with Kohlberg’s view that the highest form of moral development is principled thinking. In fact, many psychologists believe that the key explanation for why committed altruists behave the way they do is their practice – whether innate or learned – to take in a wide perspective and to feel genuine empathy for others in a more inclusive and impartial way. Altruists rarely have an explanation for their actions besides the fact that they recognized a person in need and helping was the only option. That is not to ignore the personal and social benefits of acting altruistically; rather, these rewards are seldom cited as motivating factors.³⁸⁸

This after-the-fact reporting does not hold to the same academic rigor as clinical testing. One famous case is reported by John Darley and Daniel Batson, who tested 40 students at Princeton Theological Seminary on dispositional and situational variables in helping behavior. The study subjects were asked to prepare a sermon; half got a random passage and the other half received Luke’s story of the Good Samaritan. On the way to deliver their sermon from one part of campus to another, the subjects passed by someone groaning in pain on the steps. 24 of the 40 men involved in this study did not stop to check on or offer help to the man expressing need, and those who had been given the passage about the Good Samaritan were no more likely to stop than the others. Personal

is the result of empathy and compassion, following social norms, or emulating the actions of respected individuals in one’s family, peer group, civic or faith community.

³⁸⁷ Perhaps one of the best examples from World War II comes from the villagers in Le Chambon, France, who collectively saved about five thousand Jews. When asked why they took on such risk to their own lives, their typical answers included: “How can you call us ‘good’? We were doing what had to be done. Who else could help them?” and “You must understand that it was the most natural thing in the world to help these people.” See Philip Hallie, *Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 20-21.

³⁸⁸ For an excellent review of altruism through several lenses (including psychology, philosophy, and religion), see Andrew Michael Flescher and Daniel L. Worthen, *The Altruistic Species: Scientific, Philosophical, and Religious Perspectives of Human Experience* (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation, 2007). Flescher and Worthen observe that exemplary altruists seem to have no categories of “us” and “them.” Instead they have a “universalistic worldview in which they see all humanity as interconnected” (153). It is this kind of solidaristic other-regard that should mark being Samaritan-like neighbors.

beliefs about helping or religious views also made no significant difference in the likelihood to offer aid. The only variable that seemed to matter was time: of the 10 told to hurry on his way to deliver his sermon, only one stopped to help; of the 10 told to take their time, six checked on the groaning man on the stairs.³⁸⁹ This example demonstrates that mental and emotional dispositions and convictions – though still significant for moral development and action – may, at times, have less influence than one’s situational context.³⁹⁰

These insights provide a fuller picture of what goes into moral development through identity, interpretation, and responsibility. Although there are some constants shared by all humans, moral development is better understood as a continuum than lock-step stages, more of an interactive process than solely an individual one, and especially a progression that is shaped by one’s socio-cultural context. Despite these contextual

³⁸⁹ See John M. Darley and C. Daniel Batson, “‘From Jerusalem to Jericho’: A Study of Situational and Dispositional Variables in Helping Behavior” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 27 (1973), 100-108. Darley and Batson lament that, insofar as being in a hurry was the most significant factor in their findings, that “ethics becomes a luxury” as peoples’ lives get busier and more hectic (107). They clarify, however, that although most of the study’s subjects were aware of the man groaning on the steps – even those in a hurry – they did not consciously avoid helping him; rather, “because of the time pressures, they did not perceive the scene ... as an occasion for an ethical decision” (108). Others noted that they didn’t help because they didn’t want to disappoint those who were waiting, making their actions more a matter of competing claims than moral callousness.

Darley and Batson’s article has received a great deal of criticism, both in terms of their method (citing, for example, its small sample-size and all male test subjects) and conclusions that so readily dismiss personality traits. See, for example, Anthony G. Greenwald, “Does the Good Samaritan Parable Increase Helping? A Comment on Darley and Batson’s No-Effect Conclusion,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 (1975), 578-583; John Campbell, “Can Philosophical Accounts of Altruism Accommodate Experimental Data on Helping Behavior?” *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 77 1:26 (1999), 26-45 (see especially pp. 39-43 for his critique of Darley and Batson).

³⁹⁰ Yale psychologist Paul Bloom reports more recent evidence to corroborate this view, as he explains in “Religion, Morality, and Evolution” *Annual Review of Psychology* 63 (2012), 179-199. Bloom writes that there is evidence of a moral boost among those who identify as religious, but most of the social benefit of religion is in functioning like a “social glue” to bond people together in mutual respect and responsibility (barring, of course, instances where religion is used to condemn and exclude outsiders). The bonds of this “social glue” get the credit for personal satisfaction and social responsibility (192). Bloom explains, “It is commitment to the social group that matters ... religious beliefs play little substantive role in religion’s moral effects” (193-194). He concludes that while believers usually try to justify their actions through appeals to Scripture *post hoc*, from a psychological perspective, “the actual causal force is more situational” (195).

influences, moral development is still, at bottom, a matter of personal responsibility. To be accountable to one's own moral formation, a person should be aware of all the factors and influences, the promises and perils, of this most important process. With this in mind, we now turn to take a closer look at the social context of today's emerging adults, especially influenced by globalization, the age of the "buffered self," and the ubiquitous use of ICTs and social media.

Three Contextual Forces

I have chosen the influences of globalization, the "buffered self," and digitally-mediated connections for their widespread impact and relevance for this project. Certainly other cultural, economic, and political trends could also be included in examining the social context of today's college students. In broad strokes, today's college students report higher rates of stress and lower levels of emotional well-being, including decreased feelings of empathy for others, as discussed in Chapter 1.³⁹¹ High parental expectations, pressure to land a job, rising financial need following the recent recession, burn-out from over-involvement in high school (undertaken in part to be admitted to the student's desired college), and the common challenges to navigate one's freedom and independence while balancing time to study and socialize all contribute to a significant time crunch and fragile emotional state for many of today's college students. Adding Christian Smith's findings of widespread moral incoherence and indifference among college students and it quickly becomes evident that there are numerous serious

³⁹¹ One in three college students report feeling overwhelmed and more than half describe their emotional health as "below average" according to *The American Freshman*, issued by UCLA. These rates of feeling stressed are even higher for female students and students of color. For the latest report, see: John H. Pryor, et al., *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2012* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute UCLA, 2012), available at: www.heri.ucla.edu/research-publications.php.

obstacles to personal development that balances self-care with other-regard, especially one that aims to integrate a moral solidarity with neighbors most in need.³⁹² To all this, globalization, the rise of the “buffered self,” and digitally-mediated activity are three pertinent forces insofar as they present additional challenges and new potential to increase social consciousness and social responsibility in aspiring for deeper and wider solidarity.

Any discussion of globalization may be more accurately one of globalizations. While most of the developed world describes the impact of globalization in terms of increased connectivity and homogenization, developing areas experience globalization mainly in terms of friction that creates alienation and heterogenization. These differentiating effects lead some to describe the current state of affairs as still only a “partially globalized world,” one that is more “erratic,” “dislocated,” and “runaway” than stable, well-ordered, and harmoniously interconnected.³⁹³ These shifting forces erode the primacy of locality. Culture, understood as the locally-shared values, rituals, symbols, and other expressions of meaning, is now shaped by vastly larger and more complex influences. This leads to a rather porous sense of place and more “translocal” cultures, linked to diverse webs of peoples and places with their intermingling narratives and

³⁹² It should be noted that, developmentally, emerging adults are rightly self-involved. This is a crucial time for personal development and identity formation. That is not to say this process cannot be enriched by meaningful interactions with others; in fact, exchanges marked by diversity (whether personal belief or background) can be particularly fruitful. See Shouping Hu and George D. Kuh, “Diversity Experiences and College Student Learning and Personal Development” *Journal of College Student Development* 44:3 (May/June 2003), 320-334.

³⁹³ These observations are described by Robert Keohane in “Governance in a Partially Globalized World” in David Held and Anthony McGrew (eds.) *Governing Globalization: Power, Authority, and Global Governance* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002) and Anthony Giddens in *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

practices.³⁹⁴ It also produces an effect described as “deterritorialization,” wherein human interaction is unmoored from geography, missing the territorial significance of its particular physical space.³⁹⁵ This poses detrimental ramifications for personal and collective identities as much as it does shared cultural expressions of history, values, ideas, and hopes. In the face of such flux – and as some would say, chaos – there are a variety of reactions from hope for new unity in diversity to fear, distrust, and fundamentalism. Suffice it to say, not all responses to globalization are that of open embrace.

To be sure, globalization presents real dangers to people and the planet. Increasing interdependence means that it is hard for any part of the world to avoid the effects of market failures, debt crises, and other instances of economic distress, climate change, ecological degradation, and resource sustainability, terrorism and war, migrants and refugees (now numbering more than one billion worldwide). The prominent – and widely unchecked – growth of transnational corporations has led some to conclude that corporations may soon become more powerful than states at both the global and local levels.³⁹⁶ If the goal of such companies is to increase corporate profits above all else, this could conflict with the fundamental role of the state to protect and provide for its people and resources. Radical inequalities in wealth distribution and economic development have generated severe – and still growing – conditions of marginalization and

³⁹⁴ For a theological reflection on this topic, see Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, & Theologians: A Postmodern Critique* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 2010), 13.

³⁹⁵ For an insightful discussion on globalization’s homogenizing, heterogenizing, and deterritorializing effects, see Vincent J. Miller, “Where is the Church? Globalization and Catholicity” in *Theological Studies* 69 (2008), 412-432.

³⁹⁶ One classic example of this view is David C. Korten’s *When Corporations Rule the World* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2001). Korten unmasks the attempt by transnational corporations “to integrate the world’s national economies into a single borderless global economy in which the world’s mega-corporations are free to move goods and money anywhere in the world that affords an opportunity for profit, without governmental interference” (3).

deprivation, especially in developing countries lacking enforceable labor standards.³⁹⁷ As more and more people suffer the disadvantages of globalized politics and economies, there is concern that too many around the globe are growing insensitive to dehumanizing suffering.³⁹⁸ This has led some to denounce globalization as a new kind of “apartheid,” with those who benefit from the system touting global integration while those on the other side of these stark asymmetries lament these forms of cultural, political, and economic imperialism.³⁹⁹

Despite the gravity of these trends, this is not the full story of globalization. The world’s emerging interdependence implies greater resources and networks to be leveraged to advance the common good.⁴⁰⁰ Economic neoliberalism insists that global capitalism will be an overall net gain by extending the influence of developed countries,

³⁹⁷ More than 80% of garment workers are women and children, making them much more vulnerable to substandard labor conditions. See Ellen Israel Rosen, *Making Sweatshops: The Globalization of the U.S. Apparel Industry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). It should also be noted that, in opinion polls, Americans generally express laissez-faire viewpoints on global economics; sweatshops, child slavery, and other forms of poverty and injustice are sometimes viewed as inevitable undersides of capitalism. See, for example, “The Ethical Mirage: A Temporal Explanation as to Why We Aren’t as Ethical as We Think We Are” by Ann E. Tenbrunsel, Kristina A. Diekmann, Kimberly A. Wade-Benzoni, and Max H. Bazerman (forthcoming in *Research in Organizational Behavior*; draft available at <http://www.hbs.edu/research/pdf/08-012.pdf>).

On the issue of international policy, most Americans believe the U.S. does more than enough to help the rest of the world. In one study, 71% of respondents expressed a belief that the U.S. does more than our fair share to solve world problems, while only 3% stated the U.S. is doing less than its fair share. See the 2000 report by the Program on International Policy Attitudes available at http://www.americans-world.org/digest/overview/us_role/concerns.cfm.

³⁹⁸ As the world’s population swells past 7 billion and almost half of those live on less than \$2.50 a day, human deprivation and suffering becomes an increasingly daunting reality. It is difficult not to be overwhelmed by these statistics and yet, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman insists, “The price of silence is paid in the hard currency of human suffering” in *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 5.

³⁹⁹ In May 2013, Pope Francis made headlines for his criticism of “savage capitalism” that has put profit ahead of all other goods. See, for example, “Pope Criticizes ‘Savage Capitalism’ on Visit to Food Kitchen” *Reuters* (21 May 2013), available at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/21/us-pope-capitalism-idUSBRE94K12K20130521>.

⁴⁰⁰ See Lisa Sowle Cahill’s excellent essay, “Globalization and the Common Good” in John A. Coleman and William F. Ryan (eds.), *Globalization and Catholic Social Thought: Present Crisis, Future Hope* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), 42-54. Cahill looks at four features: substance (human goods), procedures (government and participation), dispositions (solidarity and hope), and efficacy (effective action with other traditions and movements) to redefine and implement social change for the common good (45).

creating the potential for higher levels of prosperity, health care, education, and other potentially-liberating effects.⁴⁰¹ There is hope that increasing interaction across borders will lead to greater understanding, respect, and cooperation among the world's peoples, ushering a new age of multicultural appreciation or perhaps even better, a global cosmopolitanism.⁴⁰² It also makes the world more compressed, leading to a new kind of unity and friction, as proximity is no longer conditioned by geography.

In light of the classic definition of neighbor (one who is “nearby”), this shift in proximity changes how to love one’s neighbor in a globalized context. Although, as reviewed in Chapter 2, Jesus’ teaching in Luke 10:25-37 subsequently expanded the definition of “neighbor” to include all persons, this ethical challenge is made both more difficult and perhaps more tenable in light of this age of interconnection and interdependence. Maureen O’Connell proposes that a re-reading of Luke 10:25-37 in light of globalization suggests that:

Unlike the priest and the Levite, who had no direct culpability in this physical assault, we fail to minister to people *we directly and indirectly assault* through our participation in unjust systems, structures, and institutions. We wound these others with our everyday choices about what to wear, what to eat, what to do with our waste, how to heat our homes, how to spend our leisure time, and how to invest our savings. And unlike the priest and the Levite, who did not have the resources to address the structural injustices of the road to Jericho even if they had considered them, *we have the material and human resources to end extreme poverty*. We tragically fail to use them. Finally, unlike the priest and the Levite,

⁴⁰¹ See John Sniegocki’s essay, “Neoliberal Globalization: Critiques and Alternatives” in *Theological Studies* 69 (2008), 321-339. Sniegocki points out that neoliberals tout a net benefit to globalized systems, but most assets go to those at the top while, by and large, there is little measurable improvement for local laborers, either by design or corruption. Women, children, and indigenous people are consistently left out of this alleged “net gain” (325-326).

⁴⁰² See Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006). Appiah claims that global diversity is to be protected at the local level, while finding important areas of overlap across cultures to make progress in recognizing that all people matter – and moreover, that no one matters any less than another. To “accept the cosmopolitan challenge” is to require more from developed countries to better protect the dignity and rights of those in developing countries, especially because they are better equipped to do so (174).

who failed to see that the man in the ditch depended on their compassion in order to flourish, we fail to see that our *own flourishing depends on the compassion* we extend to those who suffer. We fail to realize that those to whom we minister can minister to us in return. Their vulnerability can penetrate our defensive invulnerability; their fundamental dependence on others can break through our isolating autonomy; their imagination can interrupt our market-driven logic; and their vision of the future can push us beyond our self-obsession with the present.⁴⁰³

O’Connell cites several social trends in the U.S. that make practicing Samaritan-like compassion a sizable challenge: individualism, autonomy, self-sufficiency, consumerism, and American *bourgeois* Christianity.⁴⁰⁴ In particular, O’Connell addresses the “white privilege” that most American Christians enjoy without being fully aware of their unearned privilege in power, access to resources, comfort, and security.⁴⁰⁵ Being Samaritan-like neighbors requires that disciples cultivate a critical consciousness attentive to the widespread suffering experienced by billions of neighbors today. Stepping beyond awareness, it also demands a willingness to confront realities of sin – both personal and social – that dehumanize, exclude, and otherwise undermine bonds of human filiation and solidarity. According to O’Connell, this involves “neighbor-oriented values” including “vulnerability and relationality, self-reflective social responsibility, and an appreciation for nonmaterial aspects of human flourishing.”⁴⁰⁶ This differs from traditional understandings of neighbor love because it necessitates more than charity. As

⁴⁰³ O’Connell, *Compassion: Loving Our Neighbor in an Age of Globalization* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2009), 15-16.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 20-28.

⁴⁰⁵ One feature of white privilege is that it makes it easier to deny the reality of human suffering; another is to compartmentalize others’ misfortune as a problem for a distant people. The result is that the “other” is more readily ignored, misunderstood, or feared rather than being welcomed as a neighbor. O’Connell notes that “white privilege is both invisible and pervasive, it presents substantial challenges to contemporary understandings of compassion. Therefore, we need to articulate an approach to compassion through which the privileged can ‘learn about what kind of ‘help’ white people need in giving up privileges they enjoy at the expense of other people’s exploitation’” (*Ibid.*, 19; quoting Traci C. West, *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women’s Lives Matter* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 119).

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

Gutiérrez and Boyle have suggested, this entails changing one's social location to analyze globalized structures and systems from the vantage point of the marginalized and dispossessed as well as an active commitment to foster a more inclusive solidarity through new relationships, networks, and communities of practice that promote human dignity, rights, and responsibilities for the common good.

As philosopher Charles Taylor sees it, however, this is a profoundly counter-cultural task in the current secular age. Taylor's interest in secularity is more a moral concern than an epistemological one. Taylor's reference to secularism alludes to a threefold rise in secularization: the separation of church and state, exclusive humanism (excluding any reference to Transcendence), and a tolerant plurality of diverse beliefs and practices.⁴⁰⁷ Taylor identifies these forms of secularity to illustrate a key change in human values and the vision of flourishing. These expressions of secularity are produced through "social imaginaries," the collective practice of images and narratives that create shared norms for meaning and purpose in communal life. Secular social imaginaries, according to Taylor, have shifted our understanding of the "good" in a way that has altered how we view ourselves and the entire universe. This involves a turn inwards, part of the condition Taylor describes as the "buffered self."⁴⁰⁸ This gives Taylor reason to lament "the world we have lost, one in which spiritual forces impinge on porous agents, in which the social was grounded in the sacred and secular time in higher times."⁴⁰⁹ The corresponding losses include convictions of belief, belonging, and shared responsibilities.

⁴⁰⁷ *A Secular Age*, 2-3.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 37-42. As described in the previous chapter, the "buffered self" is in contrast to previous instances of a "bounded self" or a "porous self" that is more closely tied to others and therefore more vulnerable to others and one's environment. On social imaginaries, see Taylor's previous work, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

⁴⁰⁹ *Secular Age*, 61.

Taylor is not wholly rejecting secular ethics; in fact, he recognizes the value of tolerance and openness in secular aims to civilize the world order. But he does propose that something important has been lost in the age of the “buffered self.” Specifically, in replacing the “bounded self” and the “porous self” of the earlier age of faith and enchantment, present social imaginaries have constructed an image of human flourishing via individual self-interest, autonomy, and invulnerability as the highest goods.⁴¹⁰ Present social imaginaries have created a set of rules for personal flourishing that include the ability to “opt-out” of social obligations.⁴¹¹ Put as concisely as possible, the “buffered self” comes out of an awareness of the possibility for social disengagement.

As noted in Chapter 3, Taylor contrasts these social expectations with the example of the Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. In diametric opposition to fixating on religious codes or categories (recall the lawyer’s limit-seeking question) or invoking disengagement in the face of need (e.g., the avoidance or *antiparechomai* embodied by the priest and Levite), the Samaritan incarnates a way of being that breaks boundaries with courage, compassion, and generosity. As Taylor notes, the Christian life is meant to

⁴¹⁰ Taylor succinctly puts it in a “one-line description of the difference between earlier times and the secular age: a secular age is one in which the eclipse of all goals beyond human flourishing becomes conceivable; or better, it falls within the range of an imaginable life for masses of people” (Ibid., 19-20). He later describes this vision of flourishing as being without “reference to something higher which humans should reverence or love or acknowledge” (245).

Taylor identifies the biggest difference in the age of the “buffered self” as the possibility of “taking a distance from, disengaging with from everything outside the mind.” He explains, “My ultimate purposes are those which arise within me, the crucial meanings of things are those defined in my responses to them” that allows the “buffered self” to “avoid distressing or tempting experiences.” The “buffered self” is a master of one’s own meanings, in that they are not necessarily guided by religious or social bonds (38).

⁴¹¹ This is in direct contrast to the previous age of the “bounded self” or the “porous self” who was always vulnerable to the influence and causal power of one’s relationships and surrounding environment (35). In these earlier ages, “disengagement” was not a possibility, either for society or religion; Taylor contends, “going against God is not an option in the enchanted world” (41).

incarnate such an agapic way of being in the world, one that replaces irresponsible disengagement with dedication to solidarity.⁴¹²

Two additional comments should be made at this point. The first is that Taylor does not presume that an incarnational practice of agape for solidarity would be easily undertaken. He acknowledges the unprecedented challenges, possibilities, and corresponding potential for disappointment. He attests, “Our age makes higher demands of solidarity and benevolence on people today than ever before. Never before have people been asked to stretch out so far, and so consistently, so systematically, so as a matter of course, to the stranger outside the gates.”⁴¹³ To this he adds a word of caution about a “lofty humanism” that drives philanthropy and solidarity with a Janus face: on the one side, endless inspiration to act; on the other, an almost inevitable sense of futility and disappointment.⁴¹⁴ These remarks reinforce a previous point: Taylor’s interest in the “buffered self” is more an ethical concern than epistemological because present social imaginaries have engendered an ethical ideal expressed in individual moral heroism. The pinnacle moral achievement in this set of rules is heroically gratuitous generosity. But, Taylor warns, this “unilateral heroism is self-enclosed,” that is, it leaves no room for

⁴¹² *A Secular Age*, 737-743. Recall, in particular, Taylor’s warning against a “fetishism of rules and norms” which leads to the excarnation of Christian discipleship (742).

Although Taylor does not focus on the demographic or developmental group of “emerging adults,” the habits of the “buffered self” can be recognized among this group, as we have seen in the data provided by Christian Smith and others.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 695.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 697. Taylor explains, “The tragic irony is that the higher the sense of potential, the more grievously real people fall short, and the more severe the turn-around will be which is inspired by the disappointment. A lofty humanism posits high standards of self-worth, and a magnificent goal to strive towards. It inspires enterprises of great moment. But by this very token it encourages force, despotism, tutelage, ultimately contempt, and a certain ruthlessness in shaping refractory human material.”

reciprocity.⁴¹⁵ Christian ethics is about more than right action; it is about right action in right-relationship, a co-responsibility for the common good.⁴¹⁶

While emphasizing the dual vertical-horizontal nature of Christian agape-for-solidarity, Taylor also makes clear that this is all based on personal freedom. In his review of the “bounded self” and the “porous self,” Taylor understates how these previous states of being marked by vulnerability were also susceptible to coercion. He later clarifies that one of the advantages of the “buffered self” is a freer personhood.⁴¹⁷ But he also recognizes in the Samaritan the paradigm of the totally free person: the one who acts not by principle or rule, neither from incentive nor coercion. In contrast to the “buffered self” who can exercise freedom *from* encroachment, vulnerability, or obligation (i.e., disengagement), Taylor presents a case for using that freedom *for* right-relationship in co-responsibility for the common good; not an avoidance of contingency, but the embrace of it as part of the incarnational reality of agape.⁴¹⁸ Facilitating this shift in

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 702. Taylor juxtaposes this set of rules with Christian faith, which “proposes a quite different view,” one that beckons people into “relationship where giving and receiving merge.” It would seem this is more a reference to the vertical-horizontal partnership of *koinōnia* discussed in Chapter 2 than Samaritan-like neighbor love. The Samaritan’s example of being neighbor makes little room for reciprocity, as mentioned in Chapter 3. This is one reason for moving past the Samaritan’s paradigmatic episode of courage, compassion, and boundary-breaking generosity to focus more on the kinds of relationships that create favorable conditions for solidarity, especially with the poor.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 706, 710. Taylor clarifies that “Christian faith can never be decanted into a fixed code” since “it always places our actions in two dimensions, one of right action, and also an eschatological dimension. This is also a dimension of reconciliation and trust” that is both horizontal and vertical (706). The eschatological dimension “involves a kind of motivational conversion” and “people bonding in a new way,” knowing that “transfiguring [the world] in the name of a new kind of common world” will be only partially-realized until the eschaton (707, 710).

⁴¹⁷ Taylor does not identify with those who might wish to return to an earlier way of life; he sees the rise of personal agency and “the practical primacy of life” to be a “great gain for human kind, and that there is some truth in the self-narrative of the Enlightenment ... we might even be tempted to say that modern unbelief is providential, but that might be too provocative a way of putting it” (Ibid., 637).

⁴¹⁸ Taylor writes, “A world ordered by this system of rules, disciplines, organizations can only see contingency as an obstacle, even an enemy and threat. The ideal is to master it, to extend the web of control so that contingency is reduced to a minimum. By contrast, contingency is an essential features of the story [of the Samaritan] as an answer to the question that prompted it. Who is my neighbor? The one you happen across, stumble across, who is wounded there in the road. Sheer accident also has a hand in

freedom *from* to freedom *for* will be essential for a pedagogy for neighbor-formation among emerging adults, especially among those who practice the traits of the “buffered self” like inordinate autonomy and pusillanimous social disengagement.

Taylor’s views on disengagement, relationality, and incarnated freedom are clear. It is less clear what effect the rising use of ICTs has on these perceptions and practices. This is of particular interest for emerging adults, known as “digital natives,” who have grown up using computers and surfing the web. Now roughly 80% own a smartphone, placing a wide range of information and communication abilities in the palm of their hand. How do we hold together the idea of the “buffered self” with an ICT user who is in a state of potentially-constant wireless connection? And what difference does this state of connectivity make in terms of personal identity, relationships and responsibilities, and what is owed to and received from community? What impact does all of this have on moral development and how can this be parlayed for effective neighbor-formation in a digital world? These are the questions to which we now turn.

Neighbor 2.0: Being Neighbor in a Digital Landscape

Chapter 1 rehearsed many of the benefits of ICT use, including widespread access to information and countless friends, family members, and strangers. Chapter 1 also outlined some of the drawbacks, including the psychological effects of this “hyperconnected” state of being.⁴¹⁹ Writing about ICT use among emerging adults is like

shaping the proportionate, the appropriate response. It is telling us something, answering our deepest questions: *this* is your neighbor” (742).

⁴¹⁹ On the “hyperconnected generation,” see Marc Prensky, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants” in *The Digital Divide: Arguments for and Against Facebook, Google, Texting, and the Age of Social Networking* ed. Mark Bauerlein (New York: Penguin, 2011), 3-11; Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, “Millennials Will Benefit and Suffer Due to Their Hyperconnected Lives” Pew Internet & American Life Project (29 February 2012), available at

aiming at a moving target, given these fluid and fast-growing trends.⁴²⁰ Moreover, this is only the beginning of what will surely be a rapid and comprehensive shift in connectivity and communication. As such, this is still just the first stage of understanding the impact on personal and social perceptions and practices of identity, location, relationships, community, and morality. These five themes serve as the primary focal points for this study of ICT use.

Beginning with identity and building on what has already been reviewed in Chapter 1, it should be clear that digital natives' time spent online, using ICTs, and engaging social media networks like Facebook and Twitter have contributed to even more demanding psychological conditions for today's emerging adults. Some research suggests that emerging adults report rising levels of insecurity, alienation, loneliness, and narcissism, and much of this has been linked to a craving for – if not outright addiction to – digital connection.⁴²¹ This delicate emotional state has led to a general trend to “overshare” personal information to attract more attention.⁴²² The cycle of posting material to recruit “likes” and “shares” and comments from others – and providing such

http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_Future_of_Internet_2012_Young_brains_PD_F.pdf.

⁴²⁰ One example: at the time I was researching Chapter 1 in Fall 2012, 66% of emerging adults owned a smartphone; by the time the present chapter was being completed, that number climbed swiftly to 79% (see Aaron Smith, “Smartphone Ownership 2013” Pew Internet & American Life Project (5 June 2013), available at <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Smartphone-Ownership-2013/Findings.aspx>).

⁴²¹ As discussed in Chapter 1, this is a chief concern in Sherry Turkle's *Alone Together* (see pp. 171-179; 241-248). These views are corroborated by recent findings including those reported by Soraya Mehdizadeh, “Self-Presentation 2.0: Narcissism and Self-Esteem on Facebook” in *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 13:4 (August 2010), 357-364; and Elliot T. Panek, Yioryos Nardis, and Sara Konrath, “Mirror or Megaphone?: How Relationships Between Narcissism and Social Networking Site Use Differ on Facebook and Twitter” in *Computers in Human Behavior* 29:5 (September 2013), 2004-2012.

⁴²² Webster's New World College Dictionary made “overshare” the 2008 Word of the Year for the way in which modern technology makes oversharing “astonishingly easy.” See the press release available at <http://www.prweb.com/releases/Websters2008/WordoftheYear/prweb1688964.htm>. Even if an ICT user is on guard against oversharing, that does not guarantee that one's contacts won't post images or content he or she would rather not have made public.

feedback on other contacts' profiles (perhaps to oblige them to return the favor) – and awaiting others' responses can be so engrossing that a growing number of emerging adults report feeling dependent on technology.⁴²³ For college students in particular, the amount of time spent on Facebook can become unwieldy, as some research suggests that extensive Facebook use corresponds to lower grade point averages.⁴²⁴ Experts aren't the only ones to express concern that digital natives have yet to establish a well-balanced approach to using ICTs; six in ten emerging adults admit they spend too much time on their phones or online.⁴²⁵

Against the benefits of quick and efficient communication with a large number of personal contacts, at least one trade-off includes a flattening of exchanges in mostly superficial forms such as clicking "like," typing pithy comments, or sharing pictures of banal subjects like food, traffic, or other random events.⁴²⁶ This does not necessarily set

⁴²³ This may not hold for all areas of life, but two statistics are striking. First, more than 50% of smartphone owners sleep with their phone within reach to avoid missing a call, text, or social media update. That number climbs to 75% for emerging adults. See Nancy Gibbs, "Your Life is Fully Mobile" *Time* (16 August 2012), available at <http://techland.time.com/2012/08/16/your-life-is-fully-mobile/>. Second, 73% of college students said they "could not study" without technology. See report by Charlie Osborne, "Are College Students Dependent on Technology?" *ZDNet* (23 May 2012), available at <http://www.zdnet.com/blog/igeneration/are-college-students-dependent-on-technology/16299>.

⁴²⁴ See the study by Reynol Junco, "Too Much Face and Not Enough Books: The Relationship Between Multiple Indices of Facebook Use and Academic Performance" in *Computers in Human Behavior* 28:1 (January 2012), 187-198. In fairness, time spent on Facebook may represent just a "new" way for students to be entertained or procrastinate, which is not a new phenomenon.

⁴²⁵ See the report by Frank Newport, "U.S. Young Adults Admit Too Much Time on Cell Phones, Web" (12 April 2012) available at <http://www.gallup.com/poll/153863/young-adults-admit-time-cell-phones-web.aspx>.

⁴²⁶ In fairness, not all digital communication is so trite. But given its sheer quantity and velocity, much of it is. One study reveals that 40% of tweets on Twitter amount to sheer babble, more than any other category (the next three in order are: conversational (37%), passing along value (9%), and self-promotion (6%)). See the 2009 Pear Analytics Study available at <http://www.pearanalytics.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Twitter-Study-August-2009.pdf>. A recent trend of sending pictures – lasting only for a brief, pre-determined amount of time, usually just a few seconds before being automatically deleted – via Snapchat shares more than 60 million impermanent pictures a day. The vast majority of users of Snapchat are teens and emerging adults, who mostly use the service to capture silly expressions, a random greeting, or, more seedily used for sexting. See Jenna Wortham, "A Growing App Lets You See It, Then You Don't" in *The New York Times* (8 February 2013), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/09/technology/snapchat-a-growing-app-lets-you-see-it-then-you-dont.html>.

up a zero-sum relationship between the quantity and quality of one's digital communication, but avoiding this requires extra effort.⁴²⁷ The sheer number of one's contacts ("friends" on Facebook) is both an opportunity for a deeper and wider social network and source of endless busyness if not distraction.⁴²⁸ As we have already seen, the results of this busyness/distraction are not always benign.⁴²⁹ Some experts express concern because they had expected digital media consumption to reach its "ceiling" in 2005, even before most digital natives were using personal smartphones.⁴³⁰

Insofar as personal connections are now more of a matter of choice, interpersonal interactions need not be determined by geographical or social location. Accustomed to greater freedom in choosing their contacts and content, digital natives are often described for their sense of entitlement, seeming like "modern Goldilocks"⁴³¹ if not outright "wimps."⁴³² To date, these digital omnivores seem largely disinclined to show restraint

⁴²⁷ Sherry Turkle contends that most ICT users have "sacrificed conversation for mere connection." She suggests several ways to recapture fruitful conversation in her opinion piece, "The Flight From Conversation" in *The New York Times* (21 April 2012), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/22/opinion/sunday/the-flight-from-conversation.html>.

⁴²⁸ See Turkle, *Alone Together*, 202-206; Newton Lee, *Facebook Nation: Total Information Awareness* (New York: Springer, 2013), 21-24.

⁴²⁹ This is especially true for emerging adults with a preexisting disposition or psychopathology (e.g., depression, social anxiety, substance dependence). See R.A. Davis, "A Cognitive-Behavior Model of Pathological Internet Use," *Computers in Human Behavior* 17:2 (1 March 2001), 187-195.

⁴³⁰ Not surprisingly, rates of ICT consumption have only continued to grow since this alleged "ceiling" was reached in 2005. See Tamar Lewin, "If Your Kids Are Awake, They're Probably Online," *The New York Times* (20 January 2010), available at http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/20/education/20wired.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1331406173-qaimCChuyGqe/VtITxzUVA.

Real concerns about tech addiction persist, as well as growing fears that high rates of ICT use will result in what is being described as "digital dementia," as it is manifested among the youth of South Korea, one of the world's most digitally connected countries. See Julian Ryall, "Surge in 'Digital Dementia,'" *The Telegraph* (24 June 2013), available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/southkorea/10138403/Surge-in-digital-dementia.html>.

⁴³¹ *Alone Together*, 15.

⁴³² Hara Estroff Marano has been exploring this finding in Millennials since 2004. See her essay, "A Nation of Wimps" in *Psychology Today* (19 February 2013), available at <http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200411/nation-wimps>. This would seem to reinforce the trend Taylor describes in the "buffered self" which "breeds pusillanimity" (*A Secular Age*, 373).

in their ICT use and report great difficulty in “unplugging” from ICTs.⁴³³ Despite this, emerging adults stay plugged in, enduring the effects of “technostress,”⁴³⁴ and trapped in a “cycle of responsiveness”⁴³⁵ that marks a high percentage of their waking hours. By emphasizing the experience of connection over its actual content or the persons involved in forging the connection, they unconsciously make personhood both cheap and over-glorified.⁴³⁶ The temptation to commodify persons is difficult to avoid in an era in which people feel their identity is linked to an ICT device (a product designed to be purchased, used, disposed of, and replaced).⁴³⁷ It does not help that so much of life, both online and offline, is shaped by the market, making it difficult to avoid transaction-like exchanges, instrumental approaches to making connections with others, commercialization to increase profits, the “soft new totalitarianism of consumerism,” or the electronic

⁴³³ Some college professors have tried introducing a “Technology Fast,” “Unplug Challenge,” or “Digital Sabbath” to reign in their students’ rampant consumption of digital/social media. Many of the students – and in some trials, as many as four in five students – report withdrawal symptoms similar to those trying to quit smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol, or using drugs. See one report by Andrew Hough, “Student ‘Addiction’ to Technology ‘Similar to Drug Cravings,’ Study Finds” *The Telegraph* (8 April 2011), available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/8436831/Student-addiction-to-technology-similar-to-drug-cravings-study-finds.html>.

⁴³⁴ “Technostress” is described as the psychological and physical effects of this constant connectivity, sometimes manifested through decrease of appetite, insomnia, and suppressed immune activity. See John Palfrey and Urs Gasser, *Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Natives* (New York: Basic, 2008), 190. They also attribute “technostress” – potentially a “major health hazard for most digital natives” – to concerns about personal safety, especially in light of instances of online bullying. These issues can be exacerbated because of the gap that exists between digital natives’ understanding of technoculture (the good and bad) and their parents, who may not be aware of these issues or how to appropriately respond (see pp. 109-110, 186-187).

⁴³⁵ This is observed among those who seek nonstop availability for and from their personal and work contacts (e.g., constantly checking emails and texts in such a way that it consumes evening hours and even vacation days). See Leslie A. Perlow, *Sleeping with Your Smartphone* (Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012), 7.

⁴³⁶ This is the viewpoint of Michael Bugeja in *Interpersonal Divide: The Search for Community in a Technological Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 99-100. This is due in part to the influence of corporate marketing, and its corresponding commodification of human activity in the ICT realm.

⁴³⁷ Mobile phones, in particular, are symbolically-laden objects that serve as a “repository of personal history,” designed to capture and save some of life’s most intimate experiences – only to be thrown away and replaced. See Rich Ling, *New Tech, New Ties: How Mobile Communication is Reshaping Cohesion* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008), 97.

“colonization of the lifeworld.”⁴³⁸ Since so many internet-based services are free, the trade-off for corporate interests is personal information, considered the highly desired “oil” of the digital age.⁴³⁹ As the saying goes, if a product is free, then the user is the product. Whereas many digital immigrants are rankled by encroachments on personal privacy, digital natives appear less concerned about the potential impact on their identity and relationships.⁴⁴⁰

But not all digital natives should be cast as insolent, self-indulgent, and perhaps ill-equipped consumers and producers of technoculture. In every time and place, human beings desire to belong and this is precisely what emerging adults pursue today. The challenge is for emerging adults to make sense of this in a three-dimensional world when they spend so much time living in the two-dimensional interface of their computers, tablets, and smartphones. After all, identity is often as much a social construction as it is personal.⁴⁴¹ To summarize the influence of all these technocultural forces, it might be

⁴³⁸ Felicia Wu Song quoting Benjamin Barber and Jürgen Habermas, respectively. See Song, *Virtual Communities: Bowling Alone, Online Together* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 78.

⁴³⁹ Newton Lee, *Facebook Nation*, 61. “Data mining,” that is, the collection of ICT user habit information by corporations, is used both to improve targeted advertising to attract new customers and to track consumers’ behavior to find ways to entice them to “stickier” brand loyalty. The result is a considerable loss of ICT user privacy; in fact, some believe that Facebook’s data mining tactics mean that it has effectively “murdered privacy.” See Jessica Guynn, “Is Facebook Killing Your Privacy? Some Say it Already Has,” *Los Angeles Times* (26 September 2011), available at <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/technology/2011/09/is-facebook-killing-your-privacy-.html>.

⁴⁴⁰ Palfrey and Gasser describe the “net effect of the digital age” as “paradoxical:” on the one hand ICT users have more power and access to create images of themselves, while on the other hand, they have less control over how others perceive them (*Born Digital*, 19-20). Digital natives do not make sharp distinctions between their online and offline self; they see it all as a messy process of experimentation and do not mind “leaving more of themselves – more of their emerging identities – in what are effectively public spaces – ‘digital publics’” (32). The authors conclude that digital natives have “much less” control over the perception of their identity than previous generations (34). They find that, by and large, most digital natives are willing to trade such control for convenience (39). Having grown up with this technology it is “completely transparent to them,” and they hold lower expectations for privacy. See Don Tapscott, *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1998), 33.

⁴⁴¹ Palfrey and Gasser state, “Increasingly, the identity of just about anyone living in a digital era is a synthesis of real-space and online expressions of self. And increasingly, what matters most is one’s social identity, which is shaped not just by what one says about oneself and what one does in real space but also by what one’s friends say and do” (*Ibid.*, 36).

best to conclude that for emerging adults, identity is not only evolving, it is mobile. It is also unavoidably digitally-mediated⁴⁴² and protean.⁴⁴³ This portrait of today's emerging adults tends to depict more of a "connected self" who is more "bounded" or "porous" than a "buffered self." It may thus be more accurate to describe the emerging adult as a "networked self" or "embedded self."⁴⁴⁴

Taylor's account of the "buffered self" fails to account for how ICTs make possible new kinds of connection. Emerging adults' near-constant state of connection may be an expression of a deep human desire to interact with others. It presents a much more relational view of identity, interpretation, and responsibility than suggested by Taylor (or Christian Smith, for that matter). What is more, these experiences of being bound, set free, and networked are also reflected in the theme of location; the "networked self" is tethered more by interests than by place. This experience of connection has less to do with the *where* it is taking place than the *what* of the content and the *who* of the contacts being engaged. Before ICTs found widespread adoption, place was an

⁴⁴² Studies and surveys suggest that more than 97% of college students have a Facebook profile and actively use Facebook every day. See, for example, Reynol Junco, "The Relationship Between Frequency of Facebook Use, Participation in Facebook Activities, and Student Engagement" *Computers & Education* 58 (2011), 162-171.

⁴⁴³ Palfrey and Gasser claim that, above all, digital natives experience identity formation through insecurity and instability (*Born Digital*, 31). Sherry Turkle describes identity formation as "newly free, newly yoked," more influenced by others, multiple, and constantly evolving due to the flow of content and impact of personal contacts (*Alone Together*, 152, 194, 260). Michael Bugeja contends identity is more disembodied than ever before, and more blurred, since "In every facet of life, virtual habitat is intruding on real habitat," resulting in "deeply disorienting consequences" (*Interpersonal Divide*, 118).

⁴⁴⁴ Sociologist Barry Wellman describes this in terms of a "networked individualism." This phrase expresses a tension between the digital ties between persons tempered by a neo-liberal conception of the self that maintains autonomy. He describes the resulting virtual communities as "ego-centric networks." See Barry Wellman, "The Rise of Networked Individualism" in *Community Networks Online* ed. Leigh Keeble (London: Taylor & Francis, 2001), 17-42.

Identity is produced through the roles and relationships of one's networks. See Mark H. Walker and Freda B. Lynn, "The Embedded Self: A Social Networks Approach to Identity Theory" in *Social Psychology Quarterly* 76:2 (June 2013), 151-179.

inescapable dimension of the connections people made.⁴⁴⁵ Before wireless connections, ICT users had to search out an internet connection to plug in from home, school, work, or an internet café. They budgeted time to “go online,” used mostly for email communication, message boards, and web-browsing.⁴⁴⁶ This meant being tied to a specific location in order to connect with information, individuals, or groups completely unmoored from that same location. Following the advent of wireless technology (for both phones and computers, the pinnacle of which is the smartphone that combines both capacities), digital connections are no longer constrained to a particular location. Wireless servers make it possible to constantly carry along the content, contacts, and connections of the internet. Today, the words of William Wordsworth’s 1807 sonnet ring true at an even deeper level: “The world is too much with us.”

These new possibilities for mobility are relevant in light of the deterritorializing effects of globalization and the manner in which rising ICT use has contributed to the sociological trend known as “displacement.”⁴⁴⁷ Structurally, digital interactions and online communities are not well-equipped to work against displacement, and “if left unchecked” can “become quite counterproductive in the effort to cultivate a lively civic culture.”⁴⁴⁸ This new sense of being partially or completely set free from a physical place

⁴⁴⁵ Old habits are hard to break. Now that place cannot be taken for granted – a change resulting from the use of mobile phones in contrast to the previous landline era – people ask “Where are you?” when talking on cell phones because of the expectation that location matters, and to help give the conversation context.

⁴⁴⁶ This is typically called Web 1.0, whereas the advent of wireless technology and the ability to “log on” from any location and engage in much more dynamic exchanges via this new platform is considered Web 2.0.

⁴⁴⁷ Displacement is described as the chaotic clash between real and virtual environments, a loss of connection to one’s physical place, and the blurring of roles and relationships, including between business and family life. For more on this topic, see James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994) and Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).

⁴⁴⁸ Felicia Wu Song notes that “Online communities are not linked together like neighborhoods or street blocks that require you to drive through, or even be cognizant of the existence of, an impoverished or wealthy part of town. Instead, online life can be hermetically sealed within the particular modes of

is not inconsequential. If locality is less defined than before, there is potential for this to be more liberating and also more disorienting. It can be emancipatory in that people are no longer constrained by their geographical or social context. But insofar as cultural meaning is locally created, a more ambiguous shared “space” makes it more difficult to construct and maintain shared ideologies necessary to foster moral norms and a sense of social solidarity. As people spend more and more time online, the “cabled enclaves” of digital connections can potentially become more meaningful than the ties in one’s geographical neighborhood.⁴⁴⁹ True, this can be liberating, especially for those who might feel marginalized in their local community.⁴⁵⁰ Yet it is also difficult to predict the psychological and sociological effects of being physically in one place but mentally or emotionally present elsewhere, described as “continuous partial attention.”⁴⁵¹ Could this be the start of a “culture of elsewhere” in which people are split between a disembodied virtual presence and their actual physical presence?

interaction that are chosen within one’s groups” ... “As such, the configuration of the internet’s online communities reinforces and exacerbates the processes of urbanization and suburbanization that have reorganized social life so that the overlap of function in one physical space is increasingly lost.” Insofar as ICT users are free to engage in the content and groups of their choosing more so than unexpected encounters offline, it is easier for ICT users who are not “even trying to get into or interact with another group” to remain in a rather homogenous digital enclave that too easily “promotes a self-absorbed state of being that cares little for the collective good” (Song, *Virtual Communities*, 125-126).

⁴⁴⁹ Some, like Michael Bugeja, are concerned these “cabled enclaves” may ultimately undermine community life, insofar as personal attachments and associations will too easily be reduced to a “cluster” of those who share the same “likes” (*Interpersonal Divide*, 23-28; 99-104).

⁴⁵⁰ Recall the point made in Chapter 1 that the internet provides a “safe space” for minority groups. For example, research shows that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth are more likely than their heterosexual peers to report using the internet to make and sustain friendships. See Tori DeAngellis, “Is Technology Ruining Our Kids?” *Monitor on Psychology* 42:9 (October 2011), 62. This kind of escape and support is important in light of what youth might face in their local communities. An illuminating infographic, “The Geography of Hate” tracks racist and homophobic tweets on Twitter, largely found in small towns and rural communities. See the article by Alexis Kleinman, “Twitter Hate Speech Map Pinpoints Racist, Homophobic Hotspots Across U.S.” *The Huffington Post* (13 May 2013), available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/13/twitter-hate-speech_n_3265916.html.

⁴⁵¹ Sherry Turkle cites this phrase, credited to Linda Stone, in her musings about whether ICT users are more present or absent, and how to tip the scales between their partial attention between their physical surroundings and virtual connections. Turkle concludes by describing the “new state of the self” as “tethered and absent” (See *Alone Together*, 155-161).

These examples in physical detachment and social disengagement are countered by the fact that the connectivity afforded by globalization and ICTs makes it possible to be “proximate” (i.e., neighbor) to others without physical proximity.⁴⁵² For those with ICT and internet access, the self is more “connected” than “buffered” to places and people that may not actually be nearby.⁴⁵³ Taylor isn’t wrong to point to the reality of disengagement, but this willful choice to disengage from one sector of social life can often be a substitute to engage with another kind of network. The “networked self” is conditioned by a complex ecology of connections that bridge disengagement and engagement online and offline. As previously noted, the deciding factor today is one based more on interests than location.⁴⁵⁴

Given that all these technologies are still in nascent stages of development and use, it is unclear what impact they will have over time. Will personal and shared interests completely eclipse the significance of locality? Can vibrant, virtuous communities be established without actually sharing the same space? Some sociologists anticipate that the ease, volume, and velocity of online interactions will mean that digital connections could outpace desire for corporeal encounters, even making the latter seem cumbersome

⁴⁵² To some extent this has been true since the invention of the telephone. But phones were still bound to specific locations until the widespread adoption of mobile phones. Today’s smartphones – owned by more than 50% of American adults as of June 2013 – combine traditional telephone abilities with digital camera functionality to share images and video. Accordingly, Rich Ling points to these phones as essential for sociation and social cohesion through the ritual interaction of texting, calling, and video conferencing, which ultimately “result in social solidarity” (*New Tech, New Ties*, 83).

⁴⁵³ On the other hand, it does seem to reinforce Taylor’s assessment that the “buffered self” is aware of the ability to disengage from one’s physical surroundings. After all, virtual reality has long provided an escape from one’s physical reality. On this subject, see Turkle’s review of the prominence of using robots and video games as an escape from one’s physical reality in *Alone Together*, 23-147.

⁴⁵⁴ Again, to clarify a point made in Chapter 1, I am not criticizing social disengagement *per se*, as it can be part of a healthful balance between solitude and sociality. Rather, I use Taylor’s emphasis on the pusillanimous social disengagement of the “buffered self” to critique capricious, inordinate, or irresponsible social disengagement (virtual or physical), especially in the face of another person in need (much like the *antiparechomai* embodied by the priest and Levite in Luke 10:31-32).

and perhaps obsolete.⁴⁵⁵ Others envision a more synthetic future, wherein geography is more fluidly conceived, the horizon is not restricted to the physical, and the content and contacts in ICT use can be informed by one's concrete locality when helpful. A growing number of smartphone apps consult users' geographical location to tailor content to help users become more "location aware" of their physical surroundings, including the people and local businesses nearby.⁴⁵⁶ Being neighborly online could reinforce bonds between ICT users living in the same neighborhood.⁴⁵⁷

In the interim, the use of ICTs has yet to be seamlessly integrated into public spaces. Some of the most vehement critiques of ICTs relate to its use in public, especially with regard to users who are virtually connected but ignorant of their physical surroundings. Examples range from faux pas like speaking loudly on a cell phone or texting during class to more dangerous offenses like texting while driving or cyberbullying. However, as public ICT use becomes more "normal," it is likely to be more widely embraced and mined for new ways to engage one's physical surroundings,

⁴⁵⁵ Recall sociologist Juliet Schor's prophetic insight, noted in Chapter 1, that "Once people become acclimated to the speed of the computer, normal human intercourse becomes laborious" (Schor, *The Overworked American*, 23).

Song explores whether "face-to-face communities" might be "outdated and obsolete" following higher rates of mobility and divorce which "have progressively weakened the sense of local and familial bonds." She adds, "Even without the internet, it is typical for the modern person to belong to nonlocal social networks that are multiple and specialized rather than solitary and geographically bounded" which contribute to a shift in the sense of community as no longer a "special relation or a kinship group" (*Virtual Communities*, 25).

⁴⁵⁶ Eric Gordon and Adriana de Souza e Silva point out that, since January 2010, Google started factoring in IP address information or mobile phone GPS coordinates to order search results by users' actual locations. Since that time, smartphone apps – from news services to dining and shopping guides – help ICT users become more "location aware" of their physical environment. See Gordon and de Souza e Silva, *Net Locality: Why Location Matters in a Networked World* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2011), 2, 56.

⁴⁵⁷ This is precisely what Keith Hampton and Barry Wellman found in their study of one Toronto suburb. See their report, "Neighboring in Netville: How the Internet Supports Community and Social Capital in a Wired Suburb" in *City & Community* 2:4 (December 2003), 277-311. Hampton and Wellman found that online interactions between physical neighbors increased offline interactions compared to neighbors who did not have access to the internet.

Hampton found corroborating evidence in a more recent study, described in his essay, "Neighborhoods in the Network Society: The e-Neighbors Study" in *Information, Communication & Society* 10:5 (October 2007), 714-748.

especially by younger generations.⁴⁵⁸ Even if connections via ICTs are considered “secondary” to the “primary” form of corporeal interaction, these new technologies create a kind of “co-presence” in hybrid space previously not possible.⁴⁵⁹

This new form of digital “co-presence” or “connected presence” is quickly shaping the third and fourth themes, relationships and community.⁴⁶⁰ The first relevant example is that the “networked individual” demonstrates a higher degree of selectivity in being social. By and large, this has led to smaller social networks, online and offline.⁴⁶¹ Given the near-constant availability of virtual ties, they can be initiated more readily and sometimes to the exclusion of face to face interactions.⁴⁶² The prevalence and ease of digitally-mediated connections pose new possibilities and also some potential drawbacks

⁴⁵⁸ One interesting example of the shift in the perception of public ICT use comes from two studies conducted by the University of Michigan. A 2006 survey found that 62% of respondents felt that when others use a cell phone in public it is a “major irritation” to other people (though only 32% of 18-27 year olds felt this way, compared to 74% of 60-68 year olds). A 2011 study found that although some people still find having conversations on a cell phone in public to be a nuisance, mobile phone conversations – especially those initiated to get news – have “more relevant fodder for conversing with strangers and probably increased motivation to do so” in their physical settings. See the report by Jared Wadley, “Public Nuisance? Cell Phone Use Might Actually Spark Conversations with Strangers” *University of Michigan News Service* (23 March 2011), available at <http://ns.umich.edu/new/releases/8323>.

⁴⁵⁹ Rich Ling concludes, “While the mobile telephone may be fraying the fabric of some co-located social interactions, it seems to be supplementing it in others,” especially as they make possible more consistent “connected presence” via multiple, quick check-ins (*New Tech, New Ties*, 169, 171). He adds, the “mobile phone structures the flux of interactions, the flow of information, and the sense of belongingness in the group. It is precisely the omnipresence of the mobile telephone that facilitates this intense form of interaction” (172).

⁴⁶⁰ To avoid confusion between these terms, allow me to clarify that I use “relationships” to refer to the sustained connections between two or more persons (whether asymmetrical or reciprocal) whereas “community” refers to shared values, space (virtual or physical), resources, practices, and interdependent relationships.

⁴⁶¹ See the report issued by Miller McPherson, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and Matthew E. Brashears, “Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades” in *American Sociological Review* 71:3 (June 2006), 353-375. The authors find smaller discussion networks from 1985 to 2004, with three times as many people reporting they have no one with whom to discuss important matters, as well as a substantial reduction in kin and non-kin confidants, and fewer contacts through voluntary associations and neighborhoods.

⁴⁶² Nancy Baym writes, “Digital technologies hold the potential to engage us more closely in meaningful communal connections but, inasmuch as they might take us away from embodied local interactions, they could threaten to damage the real thing” (*Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, 73). Here, Baym reveals her bias in favor of corporeal connections, but digital natives might ask whether virtual interactions are any less “real.”

for relationships and community life. Considering the impact of ICTs on being “neighbor” today, it is best to avoid extremes of technological determinism (where people are helplessly formed by their ICTs) or social construction of technology (where people have complete power over their ICTs). A middle way, described as a “social shaping” stance, explores how people adapt to ICTs, domesticate them, and also experience the “impact imprint” of using them to such a great extent.⁴⁶³

Adapting to ICTs involves taking advantage of new forms of connecting with others. Video conferencing most closely approximates face-to-face interaction. When that form of interaction isn’t possible, texting and email provide fast and efficient means of communicating. However, this also means navigating around reduced nonverbal social cues. ICT users have been creative in modifying text, from using all capitals to show emphasis, acronyms to express a physical action (e.g., “smh” stands for “shaking my head” as in disbelief or disappointment; “lol” originally was used for “laughing out loud” but now more generally functions as a filler word to connote levity), and emoticons to help express one’s mood (e.g., ☺ or ☹).⁴⁶⁴

On the internet and through social media, digitally-mediated communication has generated a wide spectrum of various kinds of interaction. Some ICT users have experienced liberation in not being pigeonholed by their age, gender, race, or other markers of their physical appearance. Many have made use of the low threshold to participate in online conversations, empowering greater numbers to access a plurality of voices and activate their own agency to be included among them. In virtual communities,

⁴⁶³ This is the “syntopian” position espoused by Nancy Baym in *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*, 26, 39-46.

⁴⁶⁴ Despite these innovations, Baym and others describe digitally-mediated communication as “impoverished interaction” that reflects a disembodied, depersonalized and less orderly “social vacuum” (Ibid., 52-59).

they have experienced belonging, solidarity, and efficacy.⁴⁶⁵ The internet has been championed as a powerful tool for advancing democracy, and social media is quickly transforming the landscape of political and social imaginations.⁴⁶⁶

Although ICTs are mostly used simply to make life's tasks easier, there are asocial dimensions to this realm. Countless hours are spent online shopping, gaming, and consuming entertainment in ways that require little or no interaction with other ICT users. Moreover, one important feature of digitally-mediated communication is the possibility of changing – to whatever degree desired – one's actual identity. Some choose to distort their identity slightly, in the hope of seeming more attractive, accomplished, intelligent, or popular, for example.⁴⁶⁷ Others use the internet as a cloak of anonymity, whether for escape, "disinhibition," aggressive, or deceptive behavior, feeling immune from the consequences of what they share online.⁴⁶⁸ But such misleading or abusive behavior is a threat to vibrant and virtuous community life. Strong virtual communities establish

⁴⁶⁵ This is especially true for young people from "resource-poor" backgrounds. See the report by Ricardo D. Stanton-Salazar and Stephanie Urso Spina, "Adolescent Peer Networks as a Context for Social and Emotional Support" *Youth & Society* 36:4 (2005), 379-417. The authors focus on the ways in which Latino students discover *confianza* to offer support and buffer against environmental stress through peer networks.

⁴⁶⁶ Two classic examples include Barack Obama's use of social media to launch his successful presidential campaign in 2008 (see David Carr, "How Obama Tapped Into Social Networks' Power" *The New York Times* (9 November 2008), available at http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/10/business/media/10carr.html?_r=0) and the manner in which Facebook and Twitter advanced the Arab Spring revolutions in 2011 (see David Wolman, "Facebook, Twitter Help the Arab Spring Blossom" *Wired* (16 April 2013), available at <http://www.wired.com/magazine/2013/04/arabspring/>).

⁴⁶⁷ And, as Sherry Turkle points out, some ICT users use multiple online personalities to test out various dimensions of themselves, akin to various "windows" into their emerging identity. This could in fact be a valuable experience for one's identity development. See Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 14.

⁴⁶⁸ When deception is employed to attract a potential romantic partner, this behavior has been referred to as "catfishing." See Paula Fleming, "Online Dating Scams: What is Catfishing?" *BBB* (24 January 2013), available at <http://boston.bbb.org/article/online-dating-scams-what-is-catfishing-39791>. This widespread trend has inspired the MTV television series, "Catfish" (<http://www.mtv.com/shows/catfish/series.jhtml>).

The most hostile content is referred to as "flaming." It is routinely denounced as part of a "culture of narcissism" that feeds extremist positions, exacerbates a wide trend in a loss of civility, and contributes to a thinning public discourse. See Baym, *Personal Connections*, 57 and Song, *Virtual Communities*, 122.

norms to discourage and even punish such behavior, although the anonymity of the internet makes accountability difficult to enforce.⁴⁶⁹

On the other end of the spectrum, there are promising developments for those looking to find a romantic partner. Today, more than 20% of romantic relationships begin online, a surprising figure in light of the fact that in the 1990s, less than 1% of romantic relationships started online.⁴⁷⁰ The associations being cultivated online have potential to bolster the social fabric and produce democratic goods.⁴⁷¹ For good reason, Robert Putnam's theory about the decline of social capital in the United States made an exception for the capital forged through online groups.⁴⁷² And while some studies have shown the internet to be the "ultimate isolating technology" in terms of a loss of corporeal interactions and community engagement, most evidence is to the contrary.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁹ Song offers examples from various online communities. But she admits such examples only point to possibilities that "are often not pressed into plausible potentials because the structure of virtual communities – that is, the field that it becomes for public life – is one merely open to these possibilities but not configured to actually encourage and constrain members toward these essential democratic goods" (*Virtual Communities*, 123). The challenges of exercising sanction against offenders means that communities must rely heavily on members' good will, as there is little incentive or organizational structure that counters the "ethic of individual choice" to behave as they wish, join or leave groups as they so desire (124).

⁴⁷⁰ See the findings by Eli J. Finkel, et al., "Online Dating: A Critical Analysis from the Perspective of Psychological Science" in *Psychological Science in the Public Interest* 13:1 (January 2012), 3-66.

⁴⁷¹ Mark Warren tests the assumption that all associations are beneficial for democracy in his helpful study, *Democracy and Association* (Princeton University Press, 2001). He proposes six kinds of goods that can be fostered through virtual associations to improve personal identity and inclusive social bonding (*Ibid.*, 133).

⁴⁷² Putnam alleges, "Social capital is about networks and the Net is the network to end all networks." See *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 171. In particular, Web 2.0 and the corresponding ICTs seem to have enormous potential to activate "latent ties" and "weak ties" to bridge social capital with a breadth and depth that were hard to imagine in 2001 (and it is likely their full potential still escapes our vision today).

⁴⁷³ An oft-cited study is by Norman H. Nie and Lutz Erbring, "Internet and Society" for the Stanford Institute for the Quantitative Study of Society (2000), available at <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/socy/alan/webuse/handouts/Nie%20and%20Erbring-Internet%20and%20Society%20a%20Preliminary%20Report.pdf>. Nie and Erbring posit a zero-sum relationship between online and offline interactions, whereas more recent scholarship indicates a more complementary link, as people can use their time online to expand their social networks to enrich their lives offline. For example, scholars at the Pew Internet and American Life Project routinely find that ICTs and social media enhance civic engagement, as they did in their most recent survey. See Aaron Smith, "Civic

At issue is Putnam's "time displacement hypothesis" as the determining factor for whether ICTs, the internet, and social media contribute to or detract from social capital. This, in turn, depends on whether digitally-media consumption and connections replace or supplement face to face interactions. Importantly, however, Putnam and other scholars originally viewed time spent online (especially in the era of Web 1.0), much like time spent watching television, a pastime considered mostly asocial. Since the development of Web 2.0, however, ICTs, the internet, and social media are used in such diverse and dynamic ways that it is impossible to place all virtual activity in the same category, especially if that category is in competition to sociation. Above all, smartphones have changed the digitally-mediated social context, and today's emerging adults demonstrate that it is possible to simultaneously bridge online and offline interactions so that neither one completely overshadows the other.⁴⁷⁴

Important for the present project, virtual activity changes relationships and community life online as well as offline. Chapter 1 briefly outlined some of these "crossover" effects, including the link between digital natives being less exposed to and thus less practiced in reading nonverbal social cues, leading many to feel less comfortable in face to face settings. Hence, emerging adults are widely known for their preference to

Engagement in the Digital Age" (25 April 2013), available at <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Civic-Engagement/Summary-of-Findings.aspx>.

⁴⁷⁴ This is not to suggest that bridging these virtual and corporeal connections is always to be desired, especially if trying to engage both at the same time, which is usually to the detriment of one or both. It should also be noted there are different motives for making these connections and different kinds of connections. For example, Putnam distinguishes "weak ties" from "strong ties." Weak ties require less maintenance but also offer less support than strong ties. Updating Putnam, strong ties are those that experience regular contact online and offline, whereas weak ties typically share less of one or even both. Felicia Wu Song is among several scholars who explore these different kinds of connections – including "latent ties" – to consider the impact of virtual connections on them. She concludes that it is a mistake to pit online and offline ties against each other, given the hybrid nature of most Americans' interactions today. See Song, *Virtual Communities*, 13-21.

email or text rather than call or arrange a visit in person.⁴⁷⁵ Although this is still a form of connection, it may be judged a thinner form than corporeal interactions, which involves attending to others' bodily cues as a way to improve one's emotional and social intelligence.⁴⁷⁶ Insufficient attunement to others can hinder rapport and may well be a reason for emerging adults' significantly lower rates of empathy than their counterparts from previous generations.⁴⁷⁷

If it is true that the structures of virtual communities are designed to cater to “networked individualism,” then they foster engagement with “public life in terms of personal fulfillment, rather than viewing personal fulfillment in terms of public life.”⁴⁷⁸ By this logic, ICTs, the internet, and social media – as tools in a larger social milieu – “promote a culture of autonomy and choice that not only appeals to people but also makes them efficacious.” However, given the “inexorable role that the market plays in both shaping the community and its members,” it is possible that the “very dynamics of this autonomy and choice will reduce the civic sphere to a state of consumption built upon a foundation of self-interest.” This leads to the conclusion that “the strengths and most exciting characteristics of virtual communities are, in turn, the greatest weaknesses

⁴⁷⁵ Baym, *Personal Connections*, 51-57.

⁴⁷⁶ Daniel Goleman outlines how being attentive to others' bodily cues helps us to understand their emotional state and respond appropriately. For example, if someone whispers to us, we automatically whisper back – perhaps even regardless of the context. If we fail to heed these cues, we can easily get anxious and awkward, creating a mismatch which is sure to “torpedo rapport” (*Social Intelligence*, 30).

⁴⁷⁷ Sara Konrath, “The Empathy Paradox: Increasing Disconnection in the Age of Increasing Connection” in *Handbook of Research on Technoself: Identity in a Technological Society* ed. Rocci Luppicini (University of Ottawa, 2013), 204-228. Konrath's studies at the University of Michigan have found empathy to be 40% lower in today's college students; ICT use is among some of the root causes for this dramatic change.

⁴⁷⁸ Song, *Virtual Communities*, 129. Song continues, “virtual communities do not so much introduce a completely new dynamic of membership to the public sphere but actually reinforce a set of assumptions about the self and community that ... becomes fully realizable and augmented in radically new ways through the novel experiences of social interaction and collective action online. The technology itself functions to grant further legitimacy as its design and configuration implicitly justify and ‘hardwire’ these assumptions into the very entities we choose to call ‘communities’” (130).

that threaten to undermine their democratic potential.”⁴⁷⁹ Put differently, those that tout the many advantages of increased rates of connectivity need to more closely examine the kinds of contacts, content, and connections being engaged, especially in a context so heavily influenced by the market and consumer sovereignty. This is one way that Taylor’s “buffered self” becomes the “networked self” who sits at the center of one’s own community of choice. Yet “networked individualism” is not the end of the story, otherwise there would not be enough overlapping ties to sustain social media networks and online communities.

These crossover examples lead to an important point: in all these discussions about ICTs, the internet, and social media, it is important to identify the motives, means, and ends of such connections. Narrowing our scope to the impact of ICTs on relationships and community for emerging adults on residential college campuses, it becomes clear that the overlap between shared physical space and digitally-mediated interactions are most often mutually-reinforcing. The widespread use of Facebook is one such example. Multiple studies have shown that Facebook use on college campuses can bolster social capital among students and enhance their level of engagement with campus life, as well as personal life satisfaction.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 132. Song adds, “If virtual communities are to be the harbingers of the future, then their greatest service to American public life may be to function as canaries in a coal mine” (Ibid.)

⁴⁸⁰ See Reynol Junco, “The Relationship Between Frequency of Facebook Use, Participation in Facebook Activities, and Student Engagement” *Computers & Education* 58 (2011), 162-171. Junco found that the pivotal issue is how Facebook was used (i.e., the kinds of Facebook activities engaged), much like Sebastian Valenzuela, Namsu Park, and Kerk F. Kee did in their report, “Is There Social Capital in a Social Network Site?: Facebook Use and College Students’ Life Satisfaction, Trust, and Participation” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 14 (2009), 875-901. These authors found that joining groups on Facebook was the key factor because this facilitates greater access to information, opportunities for involvement, and results in “increased participation in online and offline groups [which] helps to build trusting relationships among members, further enhancing the potential of Facebook to increase social capital” (882). Interestingly, Facebook use coincided with higher participation in “nonpolitical activities” (888), perhaps supporting evidence previously cited by Christian Smith that today’s emerging adults largely eschew political matters.

Social media – and Facebook in particular – has a unique potential to fuse intimacy with numerous “friends” across various distances. This is one example of digitally-mediated communication that shapes behavior, as social media networks provide a surging “medium and an engine of social relations” through the sharing of personal information, images, and other shared routines. The volume, velocity, and ease of this sharing expands students’ “social graph,” which in turn influences their own sense of identity, belonging to a certain place, and agency in relationships and community life. This is especially potent at residential college campuses, where students share the common ground of “socially produced space” shaped by “shared knowledge and information, and community beliefs and practices.”⁴⁸¹ Because of the overlap between virtual and physical interactions, there is less room for the downsides of anonymity and more avenues for accountability in this hybrid setting.⁴⁸² In sum, residential college campuses may be one of the best possible settings to integrate virtual and physical connections to cultivate vibrant and virtuous identities, locations, relationships, and communities. Older students could mentor younger students and professors and students could learn from each other, transforming the teacher-learner relationship.⁴⁸³ Despite this potential, however, it remains largely untapped; these kinds of interactions have yet to

See also the earlier study by Nicole B. Ellison, Charles Steinfield, and Cliff Lampe, “The Benefits of Facebook ‘Friends’: Social Capital and College Students’ Use of Online Social Network Sites” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12 (2007), 1143-1168. These authors found particular benefits to Facebook use for students with low rates of life satisfaction and self-esteem (1158).

⁴⁸¹ Ana M. Martínez Alemán and Katherine Lynk Wartman, *Online Social Networking on Campus*, 20, 88. This may prove all the more true at mission-based institutions, which includes U.S. Catholic colleges, that bond members of a campus together under the auspices of a shared purpose.

⁴⁸² This is not to suggest that college campuses are free from deception, manipulation, or aggressive behavior. Recall the tragic story of Tyler Clementi, the Rutgers first-year student who had an intimate encounter surreptitiously recorded – and subsequently shared – by his roommate, prompting his suicide in September 2010 (see Lisa W. Foderaro, “Private Moment Made Public, Then a Fatal Jump” *The New York Times* (29 September 2010), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/30/nyregion/30suicide.html>).

⁴⁸³ Martínez Alemán and Lynk Wartman, *Online Social Networking on Campus*, 93-104, 127-128.

find traction in many college classrooms, as only 4% of faculty report using Facebook in class.⁴⁸⁴

Leaving aside the reasons for this lack of progress in taking advantage of these possibilities, this kind of inertia in the final theme, morality, cannot continue. The foregoing points should demonstrate that the use of ICTs, the internet, and social media – as commonplace and swiftly growing – is not a morally neutral subject. Given emerging adults’ full immersion in this complex ecology of content and interactions, it is essential to consider how it is shaping their moral development. Working against the temptation to describe the social context as given or fixed, it is necessary to evaluate the beliefs (and disbelief), values (or disvalues), practices, and relationships emerging adults bring to ICT use, time spent online, and social media, as well as how these technologies influence these evolving beliefs, values, habits, and connections.

At the intersection of emerging adults’ progress in social and moral development and this particular social context, the first task is to critically assess the motives, means, and ends of their behavior and relationships. For example, as corporations seek to grow their revenue and market shares, it is easy to get caught up in the cycle of consuming and producing digital media. But the effects of this cycle should give users pause to consider to where it may lead. It should raise questions about who decides what kind of ICTs are being used and the quality of the content, contacts, and connections engaged therein.

Users should investigate who benefits from these choices and, moreover, who suffers as a

⁴⁸⁴ Reynol Junco, “The Relationship Between Frequency of Facebook Use, Participation in Facebook Activities, and Student Engagement” *Computers & Education* 58 (2011), 163. Junco reports this isn’t because students would feel uncomfortable seeing Facebook used in the classroom; only 15% of students said this would encroach on their privacy. Neither is it due to a lack of familiarity by faculty, as 77% report using social media for personal use. It has simply not been successfully or widely implemented to date.

result of them.⁴⁸⁵ They should evaluate to what extent their ICT use helps or hinders a healthful sense of self-identity, with whom they are digitally “co-present” and why, and the quality of their hybrid online-offline relationships with others.⁴⁸⁶

Another task can be found in reference to the “digital divide,” or the inequalities in technological access, resources, and literacy. Although progress is being made in resolving some of these asymmetries, a more nuanced view sheds light on the work left to be done.⁴⁸⁷ Instead of thinking in terms of a binary divide between the “tech haves” and the “tech have nots,” it is more accurate to think in terms of a continuum of technological access, resources, and literacy.⁴⁸⁸ These disparities – which can be found across gender, age, race and ethnicity, and physical ability – provide a sobering contrast experience to much of what is consumed and produced by digital natives in the U.S. If the majority of what one reads, sees, and responds to is about daily minutiae ranging from campus gossip to the entertainment industry to video games or sports, it is hard to make room for more serious matters. Yet, given the wide reports of the self-absorbed state of being of the “networked self,” experiences of deprivation and suffering may be the kind of wake-up

⁴⁸⁵ This triad of questions – Who decides? Who benefits? Who suffers? – comes from a model of social analysis developed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot. See Holland and Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1980), 28.

⁴⁸⁶ Recall that Luke’s presentation of Jesus’ story about the Samaritan should not be separated from Jesus’ visit with Mary and Martha (10:38-42). In that visit, Martha’s busyness distracts her from what really matters (being present to her guest, Jesus); emerging adults might consider how they are distracted by ICT use to miss opportunities to love God and neighbor.

⁴⁸⁷ Some have simply called for more ICTs and internet access in developing countries, and although this is happening, it does not always ameliorate the situation on the ground. Pippa Norris offers a more developed account of the “digital divide” in three parts: (1) the global divide between industrialized and developing nations; (2) the social divide between those with or without access in each country; (3) the democratic divide between those who do or do not use ICTs to participate in public life. A more effective approach responds to all these issues, taking into consideration the desires of the people involved (*Digital Divide*, 4).

⁴⁸⁸ See Mark Warschauer, *Technology and Social Inclusion: Rethinking the Digital Divide* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 6. Warschauer also notes that the rhetoric of the “digital divide” can be patronizing and exclusionary, if not overly simplistic. Taking into account the real disparities in technological access, resources, and literacy at the micro-, meso-, and macro-levels, Warschauer proposes several helpful strategies to marshal ICTs for social inclusion, including leveraging the resources and connections already in place as well as designing ICTs to encourage prosocial motives and behaviors (163, 210-211).

call to social consciousness and social commitments digital natives need.⁴⁸⁹ This helps to raise the question of digital natives' "virtual morality" and to resist the common assumption among some emerging adults that simply because they *can* do something, they *should* do it.⁴⁹⁰

If, as has previously been asserted, the "networked self" is conditioned more by personal interests than place, and more by consumer sovereignty than social bonds, this points to a need for a thicker shared moral culture with well-established foundations for moral obligation.⁴⁹¹ This requires becoming more attentive to the three-fold "social shaping" context that includes adapting to these tools and methods for connection, the way we modify these technologies, and the "impact imprint" of engaging these resources, practices, relationships, and the resulting "virtual morality."⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁹ It cannot be overstated how necessary it is to confront the dangers of self-absorption. Daniel Goleman insists, "self-absorption in all its forms kills empathy, let alone compassion. When we focus on ourselves, our world contracts as our problems and preoccupations loom large. But when we focus on others, our world expands. Our own problems drift to the periphery of the mind and so seem smaller, and we increase our capacity for connection – or compassionate action" (*Social Intelligence*, 54).

⁴⁹⁰ Michael Bugeja warns that the "virtual morality" of today is one in which morality is being shaped more by the mechanism than the human (*Interpersonal Divide*, 139). Emerging adults do not always take the time to reflect on their actions and whether or not they were beneficial to themselves or others. To borrow a concept from Robert Kegan, to "coach" emerging adults to a higher stage of moral consciousness would involve leading students through more self-reflective exercises to consider precisely this question. This will be part of the pedagogical approach articulated in Chapters 5 and 6.

⁴⁹¹ Felicia Wu Song contends that the narrative of communal decline cannot be reduced to the structural erosion of local neighborhoods and civic life, because this is also a result in a significant shift in people's beliefs and values about public life. In fact, she wagers, "the more significant shift may lie in the *very meaning* of communal action and civic practices" (*Virtual Communities*, 64).

⁴⁹² Song posits, "What this technology gives us, then, is a means of adapting our existing relationships to challenges posed by the social realities of geographic distance and the task-cluttered lives that contemporary Americans seem to have. The irony, however, is that while these technologies help us confront the challenges of modernity in these ways, they also serve to exacerbate these conditions and even radicalize them" (*Ibid.*, 136).

A good example of the radicalization of these conditions is "slacktivism." Rampant consumer sovereignty grants us the ability to choose which injustices we care about and makes advocacy/activism as convenient as possible. To "like" a cause for social responsibility or to "follow" a moral exemplar is more about self-presentation than a commitment to justice. And it certainly falls short of real advocacy and activism. In an essay adapted from the commencement address he gave at Kenyon College, Jonathan Franzen laments the Facebook "like" as a cowardly way to avoid controversy and rejection. He writes, "since our technology is really just an extension of ourselves, we don't have to have contempt for its manipulability in the way we might with actual people. It's all one big endless loop. We like the mirror and

Heeding the perils and promises of this hybrid social context for its influence on the moral formation of emerging adults means finding ways to avoid problematic influences and to amplify the possibilities for human flourishing for the common good. For example, this highlights the need to outline more chaste patterns of digital consumption and production. It also points to the need to leverage the “digital scaffolding” inherent in ICTs, the internet, and social media that lower boundaries to participation to increase widespread interaction from the ground up.⁴⁹³ It means augmenting avenues for accountability in these virtual connections, since there can be no morality – or solidarity – without accountability. It is a matter of activating personal agency as much as it is evaluating the practices and structures of communities to create alternate approaches for engaging the content, contacts, and connections of the digital world.

Distinctions in morality are not usually made between the physical and virtual. But given the “impact imprint” of ICTs, the internet, and social media, these virtual behaviors can no longer be left out of consideration for how emerging adults are being formed in this networked context. Particular attention should be paid to the way these patterns of interaction shape their evolving sense of personal and shared identity, interpretation of their socio-cultural context, and awareness of personal and social

the mirror likes us. To friend a person is merely to include the person in our private hall of flattering mirrors.” Love, on the other hand, splatters dirt “on the mirror of our self-regard.” Jonathan Franzen, “Liking is for Cowards. Go for What Hurts.” *The New York Times* (28 May 2011), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/29/opinion/29franzen.html>.

On the other hand, there are those who praise slacktivism and the accessibility ICTs, the internet, and social media provide as an entrée to social consciousness and social responsibility (see, for example, TakingITGlobal.org). Some believe this pragmatic idealism is precisely the way to make headway among such an anxious, overwhelmed, and narcissistic cohort of digital natives. See David D. Burstein, “Millennials Will Save Us” *Salon* (16 February 2013), available at http://www.salon.com/2013/02/16/millennials_will_save_us/; and also Mark Pfeifle, “Changing the Face(book) of Social Activism” *The Huffington Post* (14 June 2012), available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-pfeifle/social-media-political-activism_b_1594287.html.

⁴⁹³ Gordon and de Souza e Silva, *Net Locality*, 109.

responsibility. There is little question this hybrid online-offline present praxis is changing the perception and reality of being neighbor in the world today.

This chapter has aimed to shed light on the process of moral development and importantly, the social and environmental factors that play a role in moral formation for today's emerging adults. Kohlberg's stages serve as a reminder that emerging adults share common patterns in moral cognition, despite unique variations in personality and socio-cultural context. According to Kohlberg, most emerging adults operate from a conventional morality, content to conform to or reject social norms for acceptable behavior. Among college students, the pull to "fit in" and be a part of the campus community is especially strong. ICTs, the internet, and social media are a major way for emerging adults to actualize their sense of belonging. These digitally-mediated forms of connection and consumption are also a primary practice for engaging personal relationships. As Gilligan points out, these webs of relations influence moral development and make it more complex than a universal process of cognitive growth. Navigating these ties – weak and strong, online and offline – is an ongoing, demanding process that contributes to moral deliberation, experimentation, and learning. The relational epistemology that arises through these encounters and exchanges plays a key role in identifying and maintaining shared moral norms and a person's relation to them.

As Kegan points out, these relationships also provide the setting for moral agents to practice their emerging "response-ability." For decades, the experience of going away to college may have shut off young adults from recruiting – and being recruited by – friends and family at home. But ICTs, the internet, and social media largely collapse these and other forms of distance, making it possible to cultivate a "response-ability"

through a digitally-mediated proximity. These technological developments should be chastely employed, however, since emotional intelligence is essential to moral development and empathy is better cultivated in person than via ICTs. Attending to personal history, relationships, and socio-cultural context helps moral agents learn and exercise a prudent “commitment to caring.”

Taken together, personal dispositions, traits, and relationships as well as environmental factors all shape how emerging adults come to recognize personal and shared identity, interpretation of the present praxis, and emerging sense of responsibility and accountability. As we have seen, those who act altruistically in helping others are often aided by favorable social conditions to do so. This insight imparts an important lesson: forming emerging adults to be good neighbors requires more than introducing the content for right thinking, feeling, or acting. It means establishing social conditions that are conducive to think, feel, and act with courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity. It involves making use of the virtuous features of globalization and ICT use that make it possible to facilitate more solidaristic connections.

This turn to the socio-cultural context has highlighted three contextual forces: globalization, the “buffered self,” and the “networked self.” The influences of these social, economic, and political trends deeply shape the present praxis for today’s emerging adults, and thus impact their moral development. They create a dynamic and diverse setting rife with tensions between differentiation and homogenization, vulnerability and autonomy, and connectivity and alienation. Moreover, inordinate disengagement and excessive displacement pose particular challenges to cultivate a context conducive to form neighbors committed to solidarity. Alternatively, however, a

“social shaping” stance takes seriously the reality that ICT users are not powerless against these technocultural trends; rather, digital natives and digital immigrants alike can adapt to these tools and techniques as well as modify them to better fit our values and needs. The socio-cultural features of moral development indicate that “networked individualism” is a product of current conditions in personal agency, relationships, environmental context, and macro-level structures, but that changing these causal forces can lead to a different result.

A central goal for this project is to draw attention to the ways in which globalization, the “buffered self,” and the “networked self” – if left unchecked – can create a socio-cultural context resistant to the gospel command to love God and one’s neighbor as oneself in the pursuit of human dignity, rights and responsibilities, and solidarity with the poor. In most cases, these phenomena make it more difficult to forge Samaritan-like proximity with those in need. To “do likewise” today requires acknowledging these challenges, understanding some of their root causes, and recognizing the resources available for constructing an effective response. For those charged with education and formation for Christian discipleship, this involves more than proposing an analogically-appropriate model for “doing likewise” for this socio-cultural context. It requires the commitment to create more favorable conditions to foster the sense of identity, practice of interpretation, and exercise of responsibilities which will yield Samaritan-like attitudes, actions, and relationships. Religious education should play an essential role in forming the communities of practice that promote such a way of being in the world. The following chapter takes up this task.

CHAPTER FIVE

TOWARD AN APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING THEOLOGY TODAY

To the three social phenomena just studied – globalization, the “buffered self,” and the “networked self” – one more relevant social change should be added: the decline of religious affiliation. According to recent polls conducted by Gallup and the Pew Research Center, one in three Americans under 30 does not identify with a religious denomination, making this age group the most “religiously unaffiliated generation” in U.S. history.⁴⁹⁴ The number of “nones” in college is slightly lower, with less than 30% of students at public universities describing themselves as religiously unaffiliated. This fraction is smaller at U.S. Catholic colleges, where less than 15% of students identify as “nones,” although that figure has tripled since 1980.⁴⁹⁵ Insofar as 30% of students report not having attended a religious service in the past year, it is likely they are also missing out on the rituals and relationships that mark religious communities, as well as the formative “social glue” forged through participating in these communities of practice.⁴⁹⁶ This adds yet another significant challenge to educating U.S. Catholic college students to

⁴⁹⁴ See the report by Heidi Glenn, “Losing Our Religion: The Growth of the ‘Nones’” *NPR* (13 January 2013), available at <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/01/14/169164840/losing-our-religion-the-growth-of-the-nones>. To clarify, “nones” include those who do not identify with any religious tradition but who still pray as well as those who identify as agnostic or atheist. They widely report no interest in finding an organized religion that would be right for them.

⁴⁹⁵ It should be noted this is mostly a trend among white college students. For example, only 7% of black college students identify as “nones” and there is virtually no difference between those attending public or private universities. There are slightly higher numbers of Hispanic students who identify as “nones,” but very low numbers of Asian students. Overall, “nones” are slightly more likely to be male than female. For the full report, see John H. Pryor, et al., *The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2012* (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute UCLA, 2012), available at: www.heri.ucla.edu/research-publications.php.

⁴⁹⁶ Recall this point made by Paul Bloom, cited in Chapter 4. See Bloom, “Religion, Morality, and Evolution,” 192.

be good neighbors today, as fewer emerging adults feel compelled – by conviction, habit, or social context – to love God and neighbor as oneself.

This chapter responds directly to these challenges by proposing a philosophy of education for teaching theology at U.S. Catholic colleges informed by the work of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Thomas Groome. It weaves together the relevant contributions of these figures in light of the sociological phenomena studied in the previous chapter to identify ten principles for a more effective pedagogical approach. Although this is not a project for religious conversion or catechesis, it is aimed at educating college students to understand and put into practice the core beliefs and values of the Christian tradition, including what it means to love God and neighbor in the world today.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁷ This proposal is not to conflate theology as an academic discipline with religious catechesis. However, teaching theology at a Catholic university is about more than academic rigor; it is also an ecclesial vocation. It is no small task to navigate the “conflict of moralities” in loyalty to the church and the academy, as David Tracy has discussed so insightfully. See David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology* (New York: Seabury, 1975), 6-7. Tracy identifies “three publics” to whom the theologian is responsible: the church, the academy, and society; my proposed pedagogy for neighbor-formation strives to address – and be accountable to – all three publics.

I am also compelled by Pope Francis’ description of the relationship between faith and theology, as he articulates in his recent encyclical, *Lumen fidei*: “Since faith is a light, it draws us into itself, inviting us to explore ever more fully the horizon which it illumines, all the better to know the object of our love. Christian theology is born of this desire. Clearly, theology is impossible without faith; it is part of the very process of faith, which seeks an ever deeper understanding of God’s self-disclosure culminating in Christ. It follows that theology is more than simply an effort of human reason to analyze and understand, along the lines of the experimental sciences. God cannot be reduced to an object. He is a subject who makes himself known and perceived in an interpersonal relationship. Right faith orients reason to open itself to the light which comes from God, so that reason, guided by love of the truth, can come to a deeper knowledge of God. The great medieval theologians and teachers rightly held that theology, as a science of faith, is a participation in God’s own knowledge of himself. It is not just our discourse about God, but first and foremost the acceptance and the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the word which God speaks to us, the word which God speaks about himself, for he is an eternal dialogue of communion, and he allows us to enter into this dialogue. Theology thus demands the humility to be ‘touched’ by God, admitting its own limitations before the mystery, while striving to investigate, with the discipline proper to reason, the inexhaustible riches of this mystery. Theology also shares in the ecclesial form of faith; its light is the light of the believing subject which is the Church. This implies, on the one hand, that theology must be at the service of the faith of Christians, that it must work humbly to protect and deepen the faith of everyone, especially ordinary believers.” (no. 36).

A Deweyan Foundation

John Dewey, America's most influential philosopher of education, envisioned education as teaching people habits of learning in order to realize their personal and collective human capacities. This project will focus on five points gleaned from Dewey's work in the philosophy of education: (1) education as originating from experience and self-reflection for the reconstruction of experience; (2) the process of education as being educational itself; (3) education as necessarily interactive, relational, and for the purposes of democratically-shared life; (4) education as growth, for growth, and with an eye toward moral development; (5) education as instrumental for social progress and reform.

Dewey succinctly summarized his philosophy of education as "the theory of education as a deliberately conducted practice."⁴⁹⁸ Dewey emphasized "plasticity," a willingness to be shaped by experience and openness to the need for and of others.⁴⁹⁹ Plasticity, however, is anything but passive; it is an intentional disposition aimed at the "reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience."⁵⁰⁰ For Dewey, the two greatest goals for facilitating learners' plasticity are personal freedom and social unity. Growth in these areas is cultivated through attentiveness to experience, with the caveat that not "all experiences are genuinely or equally educative."⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁸ Previously Dewey explains, "'Philosophy of education' is not an external application of ready-made ideas to a system of practice having a radically different origin and purpose: it is only an explicit formulation of the problems of the formation of right mental and moral habitudes in respect to the difficulties of contemporary social life. The most penetrating definition of philosophy which can be given is, then, that it is the theory of education its most general phases." See John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), 386-387.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 58.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., 89-90.

⁵⁰¹ John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Collier, 1938), 25.

The first task of education, then, is to create conditions conducive for learners to reflect on experience. This “intelligent activity” is a process that encourages the learner to become practiced in the pattern of making observations that discern the sources, conditions, and likely consequences of experience, gaining knowledge, and exercising judgment on the “measure of value” to be discerned in any experience.⁵⁰² It is an invitation to self-possession and personal responsibility for one’s development through a continuous habit to “reconstruct experience.” Learning is not in preparation for a future task or goal as much as it is unending cycle of interpretation and re-interpretation of experience which adds to the value and richness of subsequent experiences.⁵⁰³

Although a deeply personal practice (in the sense of actively engaging each unique learner), education is anything but private. Dewey envisions education as always interactive and participatory; not just in the intentional way of sharing reflections and insights in a discussion, but through “the very process of living together.”⁵⁰⁴ Relationships and community (e.g., the shared life of the school) are an essential precondition for learning; drawing from these exchanges, the “chief business” of education is to enable students “to share in a common life” and through their shared experiences to access the “funded capital of civilization.”⁵⁰⁵ This joint effort in the

⁵⁰² *Democracy and Education*, 164.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 65. Dewey later summarizes this by saying “the process and goal of education are one and the same thing.” See Dewey, “My Pedagogic Creed” in *The Essential Dewey* (Vol. 1) eds. Larry A. Hickman and Thomas M. Alexander (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 229-235 (at 233).

⁵⁰⁴ *Democracy and Education*, 7.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 8. This is a major point of emphasis in Dewey’s *Ethics* (see *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925-1953* Vol. 7 ed. Jo Ann Boydston (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University, 1985)). Dewey writes, “The *kind* of self which is formed through action which is faithful to relations with others will be a fuller and broader self than one which is cultivated in isolation from or in opposition to the purposes and needs of others ... The kind of self which results from generous breadth of interest may be said alone to constitute a development and fulfillment of self, while the other way of life stunts and starves selfhood by cutting it off from the connections necessary to its growth. But to make self-realization a conscious aim might and probably would prevent full attention to those very relationships which bring about the wider development of self” (302).

“reconstruction of experience” provides an entrée into the “funded capital of civilization,” meaning that learners are not starting from scratch. In fact, Dewey might say it is better to call students “knowers” than “learners,” insofar as beginning with their own experiences provides access to the inherited knowledge that existed before they did. This is another sense in which education is linked with democracy, since it relies on participants’ own freedom, capacities, and quality relationships for the intent of personal and social growth. Education prepares persons to be “partners in action” in sharing interests, collaborating in investigations, and growing into self-realization through “the power of self-control.”⁵⁰⁶

Thus, for Dewey, the goal and method of education are one in the same. It proceeds in a five-step process. It begins by becoming aware of a specific context, focused on analyzing experience, and following the interests and needs of those involved. Second, learners are presented with a problem or challenge as a stimulus for thought. Third, the teacher provides information and makes observations which help to address the problem. Fourth, students brainstorm possible solutions based on their personal reflections and shared discussions as they have been directed and organized by the teacher. The final step is perhaps the most important, as learners test ideas in practice, detect whether and why some are valid, and make conclusions about the lessons to be derived from this particular experience for future application.⁵⁰⁷

This method is evidence of Dewey’s conviction in the unity and continuity of the human experience of coming to knowledge. He believed that shared interests and discussions would bring people together to learn about the world and themselves. It

⁵⁰⁶ *Democracy and Education*, 18; *Experience and Education*, 64.

⁵⁰⁷ This summary is drawn from *Democracy and Education*, 192.

would lead learners to discover and be captivated by the “dominant vocation of all human beings,” which is “intellectual and moral growth.”⁵⁰⁸ The learning environment should be structured on democratic principles to advance mutual respect, moral equality, and collaborative participation.

Dewey had ambiguous feelings about religion’s role in this process. Although he acknowledged religion’s potential for social unity and harmony, he was skeptical of its emphasis on rules and conformity to a rigid scheme. He was not compelled by the “Golden Rule” or Jesus’ other teachings.⁵⁰⁹ Morality, according to Dewey, is constitutive of education and becomes self-evident in the process.⁵¹⁰

At the same time, Dewey was not convinced that a particular focus on “moral education” would be effective, for if morality is treated as a subject, it may be something students learn by “acquiring” it without cultivating the practices to apply it.⁵¹¹ Furthermore, whereas much of Roman Catholic morality has centered on conscience-formation, Dewey found this focus on the conscience too sentimental, arbitrary, and subjective. Distrustful of personal caprice and reliance on obedience, Dewey favored

⁵⁰⁸ *Democracy and Education*, 362.

⁵⁰⁹ Dewey was not convinced that moral principles should be universally-binding. Instead, education – always and including as a moral aim – is contextually-conditioned. A single, universal standard will lead only to mediocrity, according to Dewey (see *Democracy and Education*, 203). For example, in discussing the “Golden Rule,” he considers it a “point of view from which to consider acts” but not obligatory (see *Ethics* in Boydston (Vol. 7), 257; 275-283). Dewey was also doubtful that Christians should follow religious commandments; he asks, “Did [Jesus] lay down rules for life, or did he give insight into [the] nature of life? That is, is ‘salvation’ conformity to some scheme laid down, or is it the freeing of life reached through knowledge of its real nature and relations?” (*The Study of Ethics* in Boydston (Vol. 4), 226).

⁵¹⁰ According to Dewey, “Education is morality, not just preparation for such a life.” He adds that this is one important reason for education’s link to democracy, as it is directed at the “power to share effectively in social life” (*Democracy and Education*, 418).

Importantly, despite Dewey’s emphasis on personal freedom, he did not consider morality a private or individualistic matter. In fact, he denounced the “live and let live” ethos, which enervates social responsibility and serves to “eclipse the public.” See Dewey, *The Public and its Problems* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1927), 142.

⁵¹¹ In other words, morality would be something to “know” and not necessarily something to “do.” (*Democracy and Education*, 414).

cumulative, deliberate reflection in a community setting that nurtures intentionality, responsibility, and accountability in learners for their future actions.⁵¹² Part of this process of moral formation involves the cultivation of emotional intelligence. Dewey corrected an earlier view that “emotions will for the most part take care of themselves” by writing in *Ethics* that insofar as moral failures are often the result of “some absence of sympathy,” education requires emotionally relating with others.⁵¹³ He revised this by asserting that sympathy is the “animating mold of moral judgments ... because it furnishes the most efficacious *intellectual* standpoint. It is the tool, *par excellence*, for resolving complex situations.”⁵¹⁴ Relating to others leads to the discovery of shared interests, and this, Dewey believed, was the key to fostering solidarity among diverse people.⁵¹⁵ It also protects against certain dangers native to morality, like thoughtlessly obeying rules or conforming to certain norms regardless of the people or circumstances involved.

Dewey was particularly sensitive to the balance between social harmony and conformity. He warned against the pervasive influence of capitalism that makes consumption an economic duty and results in the loss of individuality through the forces

⁵¹² Ibid., 406-414. The communal dimension is essential to education’s moral aim, as relational interaction “builds up a social interest and confers the intelligence needed to make that interest effective in practice” (Ibid., 414). Dewey also attests that part of what makes education ineluctably moral is the “moral training” that takes place in relationships with others, as one learns how to “enter into proper relations with others in a unity of work and thought” (“My Pedagogic Creed,” 231).

⁵¹³ “My Pedagogic Creed,” 234 (published in 1897). Dewey proposes sympathy can help ward off weaknesses in personal dispositions and bias: “To put ourselves in the place of others, to see things from the standpoint of their purposes and values, to humble, contrariwise, our own pretensions and claims till they reach the level they would assume in the eye of an impartial sympathetic observer, is the surest way to attain objectivity of moral knowledge” (*Ethics* in Boydston (Vol. 7), 299-300).

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 270.

⁵¹⁵ See Dewey, “What I Believe” in *The Essential Dewey* (Vol. 1), 22-28. Interestingly, Dewey locates a role for religion in this process, suggesting, “the future of religion is connected with the possibility of developing a faith in the possibilities of human experience and human relationships that will create a vital sense of the solidarity of human interests and inspire action to make that sense a reality” (26).

of quantification, mechanization, and standardization.⁵¹⁶ He argued that this dispossession breeds impersonality that foments personal and social insecurity and disintegration.⁵¹⁷ These experiences make it too easy to choose “irresponsibility” and “parasitism.”⁵¹⁸ It confuses instrumental goods for ultimate ones and makes artificial matters more significant than they ought to be. Unless learners are educated by exercising their own responsibility for character and competence, students will be left ill-prepared to resist these dehumanizing social, economic, and political systems and structures.⁵¹⁹

On the whole, Dewey was confident that this philosophy of education would inspire the framework and practices to promote social progress and reform. This would find traction on the personal and collective levels as students grew in their personal capacities and through their shared experiences of reflection, conversation, and reconstruction of experience to improve “the life we live in common so that the future shall be better than the past.”⁵²⁰ He expected learners to embrace this opportunity to develop in personal freedom and discipline in order to cultivate the manners, morals, and mutuality necessary for a vibrant and just democratic society. He believed reflection on experience would naturally lead to social awareness and social responsibility, as well as a

⁵¹⁶ See Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New* (New York: Minton, Balch, and Co., 1930), 24-34. He decried the state of “United States, Incorporated,” wherein American rugged individualism has been subsumed into a “dominant corporateness” concerned more about economic efficiency than individuality (36-44).

⁵¹⁷ Dewey comments, “Most of those who are engaged in the outward work of production and distribution of economic commodities have no share – imaginative, intellectual, emotional – in directing the activities in which they physically participate” (Ibid., 131). As a result, “internal dissolution is necessarily accompanied by a weak social efficacy” (139).

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 167.

⁵¹⁹ On this subject, see Dewey, *The School and Society* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, [1900] 1976), especially page 66. Dewey emphasizes that schools must be accountable to the community and vice-versa, aware of the fact that schools are “a miniature community, an embryonic society” (Ibid., 5, 12). Dewey meant this in the sense that schools should be an ideal version of society, but this does not usually prove to be the case.

⁵²⁰ *Democracy and Education*, 199.

trained flexibility to adapt to relations for shared benefit.⁵²¹ His vision of education does not give much weight to vice or sin, like greed or sloth, prejudice or the misuse of power, which would obfuscate this lofty vision of education for democracy. Paulo Freire, an educator in Brazil inspired by Dewey's philosophy, accounts for this by adding a critical principle to the learning experience.

Education for *Conscientização*

Paulo Freire gained widespread notoriety for his literacy programs in Brazil, implementing a method informed by Dewey's praxis-pedagogy.⁵²² Freire summarized the whole process and intent of his method as *conscientização* ("conscientization"), in reference to an intentional insertion into reality for critical analysis and transformative action.⁵²³ Freire describes this contextually-situated scrutiny as a method of investigation and critique, especially to unmask the ideologies and practices that undermine human

⁵²¹ Dewey's confidence on this point stems from his vision of reflection (the "seed of responsibility") that activates students to apply and test values. In the face of someone who shirks their duties to a neighbor, a learner would assess the implications for self and others to discover what "measure of value" (or disvalue) might be gleaned from this social problem. Problem-posing as a pedagogical tool is often credited to Freire, but Dewey first proposes it as an effective exercise to help learners reflect on responsibility for one's actions past, present, and future. See *Democracy and Education*, 171-189; 211; 226.

⁵²² For example, one of Freire's claims sounds like something right out of a Dewey text: "Responsibility cannot be acquired intellectually, but only through experience." See Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* ed. and tr. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Seabury, 1973), 16.

Freire's thesis to become Professor of History and the Philosophy of Education at the University of Recife cites Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (published in Brazil in 1936), and he has referenced him "ever since" according to Moacir Gadotti in *Reading Paulo Freire: His Life and Work* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 117.

⁵²³ See Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* tr. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, [1970] 2008), 81. Freire contrasts this with the "traditional" model of education, which he calls a "banking" method wherein students are treated as vessels to be "filled" with the "deposit" of content to be learned (Ibid., 72). In the "banking" model of education, learning is understood as a transfer of knowledge whereas in *conscientização*, learning is accomplished through reflection-in-action (i.e., *praxis*).

By *conscientização*, Freire means "the process by which human beings participate critically in a transforming act."

This two-part dynamism of critical awareness *unto* transformative action is not always conveyed by the English translation ("conscientization"), and for that reason, I will use Freire's Portuguese term instead. See Freire, *The Politics of Education: Culture, Power, and Liberation* tr. Donaldo Macedo (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1985), 106.

dignity and maintain oppressive social, political, and economic systems.⁵²⁴ In this pursuit of personal freedom and flourishing, Freire championed the cause of naming one's own reality and critically reflecting upon it because of the empowering effect in becoming aware of one's relationship to reality.⁵²⁵ Importantly, however, this is not just naming reality as it is; instead, this is a process that questions or "problematizes" reality. It refuses the "myth of neutrality" in favor of a "permanent struggle" for personal and social transformation to promote human dignity, freedom, and liberation.⁵²⁶

To facilitate this process, Freire charged educators with the task of "decodification." Teachers help learners "decode" their reality by posing problems for them to investigate various elements of reality, breaking it down to constitutive parts to analyze especially the socially-constructed beliefs, values, assumptions, and practices that sustain this particular experience of reality. Freire was adamant that *conscientização* had to be done for oneself; no one, not even an instructor, could "conscientize" another person.⁵²⁷ This means empowering each student to conduct his or her own analysis of the present praxis and its socio-cultural context, articulate a new understanding of reality, and make decisions in relation to their previous beliefs, motives, attitudes, and actions (or

⁵²⁴ Freire writes, "Liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 79). Education, then, is "the practice of freedom" (81).

⁵²⁵ The effect of this self-realization is also an experience in humanization; thus, Freire sometimes referred to *conscientização* as *humanização* (see, for example: *The Politics of Education*, 115).

⁵²⁶ Ibid., 106-114. Freire emphasized that this is an involved process that develops over time; he would later define "*conscientização*" as a "*development of the awakening of critical awareness.*" It invites the learner to grow into deeper interpretation of problems, a better grasp of causal links, moving beyond flawed or passive positions, improving on failed duties, casting a wider net of inclusive dialogue, and experimenting with solutions to construct and reconstruct experience anew. See Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 18-19.

⁵²⁷ Ibid., 52; 125. Freire provides one example of decodification by examining a cigarette ad featuring a beautiful, smiling, bikini-clad woman. The point of the ad is to suggest that the happiness and sexual appeal of this woman is linked with smoking *this* brand of cigarettes. To "decodify reality" is to reveal that smoking *this* (or any) brand of cigarettes has nothing to do with this woman. We might also consider how such hyper-sexualized imagery objectifies women and desensitizes us to how women are disempowered and dehumanized in society, resulting in more permissive culture in the face of the exploitation of and physical violence (e.g., domestic abuse) against women (*Education for Critical Consciousness*, 57).

inaction). Teachers direct and organize these efforts, and instill in students a commitment for the long-term. Freire saw this process – both in terms of goal and method – as participation in solidarity with all but especially with the oppressed for the liberation of all.⁵²⁸

Some have interpreted Freire's emphasis on reflection and dialogue to mean an anything-goes, open-ended conversation. But Freire clarifies that his dialogical method is not for the purposes of "a vacuous, feel-good comfort zone" or "group therapy" that amounts to a "form of middle-class narcissism."⁵²⁹ This would be an educational farce, as it does little to empower students to practice real freedom, work toward dismantling ideologies and structures that contravene human dignity and rights, or cultivate a robust solidarity that reconciles differences. It would essentially be education in the form of bureaucratization.⁵³⁰

Freire acknowledged that to ward against these temptations is no small task. His is an ambitious proposal that may be unwelcome to some educators and learners. He was sensitive to the potential to create factions between groups as they point fingers at who is

⁵²⁸ *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 63. It should be noted, again, that Freire's approach to education is rooted in his experience in literacy programs in Brazil, a purpose and context that is vastly different than the social conditions presented in Chapter 4. Writing about solidarity and liberation takes on significantly different meaning among these oppressed peoples than among students at North American Catholic colleges, who are more likely to be considered among the oppressors, and who therefore have much more to lose in this process. This will be an important point for further consideration as this pedagogy for neighbor-formation is developed.

⁵²⁹ Freire laments the way *conscientização* has been manipulated to become "a romantic pedagogical mode that exoticizes lived experiences as a process of coming to voice" or an effort in "humanitarianism" that is "cloaked in the false generosity of paternalism" that begins with the egoistic interests of those with power and who benefit from the status quo. See *The Paulo Freire Reader* eds. Ana Maria Arújo Freire and Donaldo Macedo (New York: Continuum, 1998), 9-12.

Part of the problem stems from applying Freire's method to a different cultural context, especially one less conscious of the oppressed/oppressor dynamic, or at least where this dynamic is not as clearly defined (see previous footnote).

⁵³⁰ Freire was critical of the bureaucratization of education, including that of his pedagogical approach. He writes, "It is essential that educators learning and learners educating make a constant effort to refuse to be bureaucratized. Bureaucracy annihilates creativity and transforms persons into mere repeaters of clichés. The more bureaucratized they become, the more likely they are to become alienated adherents of daily routine, from which they can never stand apart in order to understand their reason for being" (Ibid., 117).

to blame for the “reality” in question. He was aware of the asymmetries in people’s abilities, resources, interests, and power. He admitted that a “pedagogy of the oppressed” – and of the oppressors – can be a destabilizing and disorienting experience, as participants dissociate ideas, propaganda, and other cultural myths that perpetuate the status quo.⁵³¹ Accounting for these difficulties, Freire developed a four-step process to give shape to encouraging *conscientização*.

According to Freire, the key lies in beginning with a “generative theme,” a topic, problem, idea, or question that is germane and vital to the learners’ daily life.⁵³² By starting with what participants share in common and is of real interest, and facilitating this process for each person and for the group as a whole, Freire believed it possible to carve out a critical distance to see reality afresh. This means uncovering what has been kept hidden or silent, especially by socio-political interests, and to activate capacities to realize personal freedom toward the goal of liberation.⁵³³ This activity in self-possession leads to the second step, to valorize the popular wisdom of the people. This does not mean romanticizing their views; on the contrary, it shows people their lives are worthy of careful examination, of possibilities and limits, successes and failures, values and lessons from experience itself. It makes learners become creators – rather than consumers – of ideas by their critical reflection on their own lives in the world. It targets ignorance,

⁵³¹ This is no minor point. Instability in the learning process can easily derail the desired learning outcomes. Conversely, having too strong a grasp on the agenda and order throughout the learning experience can stifle *conscientização* and risk indoctrination. For other important critiques of Freire’s approach, see Daniel S. Schipani, *Religious Education Encounters Liberation Theology* (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1988), 22-24.

⁵³² *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 96, 106.

⁵³³ *The Politics of Education*, 107. Freire reflects on his experiences teaching literacy that as learners were engaged first with their own lives – and not the alphabet – they became aware of themselves as Subjects in relation to the object of reality, as opposed to previously considering themselves passive objects of reality (Ibid., 160).

which Freire considered the root cause of oppression⁵³⁴ in nurturing a habit of critical analysis to question and discover truth in a spirit of wonder.⁵³⁵ From Freire's point of view, sharing wonder together is a natural way to develop empathy, and sharing empathy becomes a powerful force for unity and joint commitment to one another.⁵³⁶

The third movement is to share these reflections in inclusive and respectful dialogue and collaboration to more fully account for the depth and breadth of people's experiences of reality. This is a practice that depends on trust and cooperation, at once requiring and providing support and encouragement for all involved.⁵³⁷ These conversations are oriented to the purpose of acting to improve this experience of reality and to advance the humanization of the participants. They build on the vigilance, insight, and action of each participant and are careful to avoid temptations to simply reflect the status quo, perpetuate bias or discrimination, exclude anyone from the activities, divide the group into cliques, or defend the "totalitarian rigidity" of the status quo that continues to benefit some and oppress others.⁵³⁸ This sharing and support is necessary to help persons remain vigilant against prejudice and ignorance, misuse of privilege and power, and confusion of the political for the palliative. It calls for a "new period of

⁵³⁴ *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 133.

⁵³⁵ Freire articulates the goal of his philosophy of education to empower students to a consciousness of "I wonder" which imagines different possibilities, rather than simply accepting the world as a fixed and given state. Freire envisions this approach to learning as an act of love and courage, as learners are invited to engage reality for the purposes of re-creating and re-inventing it (*Education for Critical Consciousness*, 36-38).

⁵³⁶ *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 164. Freire perhaps draws this link too easily, as he assumes reflection will lead naturally to dialogue, which will generate empathy, which will in turn inspire communion in shared commitment. He envisions a path to solidarity through humble, loving, and courageous encounter between learners (*Ibid.*, 129).

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*, 167-172. For this reason, *conscientização* is a long-term process, since trust and cooperation can only be established and maintained over time and through ongoing interaction. Freire understood this as a way for education to become an encounter for communion and solidarity; insofar as there are "no spectators" to the process of *conscientização*, each learner is relied upon and relies on others (176-180).

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-58. A common refrain in Freire's work is "no neutrality," since to do anything but side with the oppressed is to either directly perpetuate or be complicit in ongoing injustice (see *The Politics of Education*, 121).

apprenticeship” to make progress toward recognizing, resisting, and correcting social, moral, and political myopia and the oppressions it sustains.⁵³⁹

This work finds traction in the fourth step, as learners evaluate their actions and plan for future collaboration. The pinnacle of praxis-pedagogy, this reflection-in-action, is reached in dialogue among the learners, which “authenticates both the act of knowing and the role of the knowing Subject in the midst of the act.”⁵⁴⁰ Learners work together to establish an action-plan in “patient impatience” to effect social change and evaluate their progress toward liberation for all.⁵⁴¹ Teachers evaluate their motives and loyalties and see themselves as part of the learning community committed to humanization, as well.⁵⁴²

Through this critical-reflection-on-present-praxis process, Freire drew a straight line from *conscientização* to liberation.⁵⁴³ Like Dewey, he operated with a positive anthropology, and although he was more sensitive to matters of suffering and oppression, he rarely engaged issues of sin or vicious temptations of self-interest or sectarian preference. He expected the poor and oppressed to rise above the dehumanizing attitudes and actions of their oppressors.⁵⁴⁴ He assumed that education for *conscientização* would generate revolutionary insights and actions. Rather than dwelling on the failures and factions of the past, Freire looked to the future with hope and expectation, trusting that with enough curiosity, creativity, and commitment to courageous love, a humanizing

⁵³⁹ *The Politics of Education*, 122-125.

⁵⁴⁰ From *Pedagogy in Process: the letters to Guinea-Bissau* tr. Carman St. John Hunter (New York: Continuum, 1983), cited in *The Paulo Freire Reader*, 139.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁵⁴² Freire reminds educators that they “must ask themselves for whom and on whose behalf they are working” (*The Politics of Education*, 180).

⁵⁴³ In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* he claims, “the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation” and then “become a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation” (54).

⁵⁴⁴ Freire has a very optimistic (if not romantic) view of poor people. It may even border on ethnocentrism (see Schipani, *Religious Education Encounters Liberation Theology*, 22-23).

revolution is possible.⁵⁴⁵ In sum, Freire's vision was a utopian one, full of hope and promise.⁵⁴⁶

Some of Freire's hopeful anticipation might be attributed to his Christian faith, a reflection of his utopian vision of the Reign of God as the ultimate horizon and criterion for what is possible. Trusting that this reality is becoming more fully realized from the future into the present, Freire suggested that educators should see themselves as permanent apprentices, always looking for and learning from the in-breaking of the Reign of God.⁵⁴⁷ On this point, a young Dewey might also agree.⁵⁴⁸ However, Freire's faith did not make him an unquestioning ally of the church or its religious education program. On the contrary, he was often critical of the institutional church and its claim to be a sacrament of salvation and liberation, as it too often falls short of consistently acting to

⁵⁴⁵ Freire's recipe for transformative action is simple: faith in people, solidarity among teachers and learners, and a utopian vision to guide the way forward (*The Politics of Education*, 63). See also: Freire, *Daring to Dream: Toward a Pedagogy of the Unfinished* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2007), 26; Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope* (New York: Continuum, 1992).

⁵⁴⁶ Freire articulated three requirements: have faith in people, be in solidarity with them, and be utopian (*The Politics of Education*, 63).

⁵⁴⁷ Freire writes that educators should "experience their own Easter, that they die as elitists so as to be resurrected on the side of the oppressed, that they be born again with the beings who were not allowed to be. Such a process implies a renunciation of myths that are dear to them: the myth of their superiority, of their purity of soul, of their virtues, their wisdom, the myth that they save the poor, the myth of the neutrality of the church, of theology, education science, technology, the myth of their own impartiality. From these grow the other myths: of the inferiority of other people, of their spiritual and physical impurity, and of the absolute ignorance of the oppressed" (*The Politics of Education*, 122-123).

⁵⁴⁸ Dewey explains, "I believe, finally, that the teacher is engaged, not simply in the training of individuals, but in the formation of the proper social life ... I believe that in this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer of the true kingdom of God" ("My Pedagogic Creed" in *The Essential Dewey*, 235).

By the time he wrote "What I Believe" 33 years later, Dewey was less comfortable using religious language and less confident that religious institutions and leaders would participate in education for democracy. In "What I Believe," he offers a more tepid take on the "future of religion" as "connected with the possibility of developing a faith in the possibilities of human experience and human relationships that will create a vital sense of the solidarity of human interests and inspire action to make that sense a reality ... "If our nominally religious institutions learn how to use their symbols and rites to express and enhance such a faith, they may become useful allies of a conception of life that is in harmony with knowledge and social needs" (*The Essential Dewey*, 26).

realize these goals.⁵⁴⁹ The church, and therefore its religious education, must do more than teach about love or liberation; it should establish settings and shared practices to implement *conscientização* among its peoples so they can see for themselves that reality as it is experienced today does not live up to the Christian vision of human life. By *conscientização*, Freire means critical awareness *unto* action; new ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling must include new ways of acting and interacting. In light of this task, we look to the work of Thomas Groome, whose “Shared Christian Praxis Approach” responds to this challenge.

Religious Education as Shared Christian Praxis

Groome’s “Shared Christian Praxis Approach” (hereafter abbreviated SCPA) owes a sizable debt to the pedagogical insights developed by Dewey and Freire. Groome has deftly adapted these (and other) contributions to propose a model of Christian religious education that goes beyond cognitive learning about the faith. Groome’s praxis-pedagogy reflects the emphases in those of Dewey and Freire that highlights the connection between knowing and being. In SCPA, Groome proposes an “epistemic ontology” that draws from and contributes to a person’s being and becoming.⁵⁵⁰ He calls this a “conative pedagogy” that engages the being of learners in their self-identity as “agent-subjects-in-relationship,” the place and time their being is realized, and their decision to articulate and act upon the truth of Christian faith. This is a holistic

⁵⁴⁹ Freire’s critique of the institutional church is *ad intra* and *ad extra*. In addition to lacking sufficient prophetic witness to justice (and corresponding action) in the world, the church stands in need of critical analysis of its own structures and practices, to break free from the “culture of silence” as it is “freezing to death in the warm bosom of the bourgeoisie” and will “certainly not tolerate any ideas, even if only verbal, that the elite considers diabolic” (*The Politics of Education*, 131).

⁵⁵⁰ See Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1991), 80-82.

educational experience that involves and integrates the person mentally, emotionally, volitionally, and corporeally. Its goal is to inform, form, and transform Christian disciples to strive for both personal and social freedom and flourishing in responsibility to self, God, and others.⁵⁵¹

Conation, a word derived from the Latin for “striving,” is used as a synonym for wisdom, the desired learning outcome of Christian religious education.⁵⁵² SCPA pursues wisdom by forming in learners a *habitus*⁵⁵³ for partnership, participation, and dialogue⁵⁵⁴ in sequential movements that begin with lived experience, draw from the Christian tradition, and return to life-in-the-world for applied action.⁵⁵⁵ Groome explains this approach as basically a dynamic movement from “life to Faith to life.”⁵⁵⁶ Thus, SCPA provides a way for disciples to not so much learn from or about Christian faith, but to actually become it as their lived identity in the world. It facilitates an intimate encounter with Jesus Christ and a lifetime of discipleship in striving to receive and contribute to the

⁵⁵¹ Ibid., 85-87. In his more recent work, Groome succinctly describes the goal of SCPA as threefold: to (1) “Educate people to know, understand, and embrace with personal conviction Christianity’s core beliefs and values (*inform*);” (2) “Grow people’s identity through a formative pedagogy and the intentional socialization of Christian family and community (*form*);” (3) “Open people to a lifelong journey of conversion toward holiness and fullness of life for themselves and ‘for the life of the world’ (John 6:51; *transform*).” See Groome, *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 12-13.

⁵⁵² *Sharing Faith*, 30-31. Importantly, this is a *praxis* of striving. Groome identifies *praxis* “as the defining term of this pedagogical approach” and uses it in reference “to the consciousness and agency that arise from and are expressed in any and every aspect of people’s ‘being’ as agent-subjects-in-relationship, whether realized in actions that are personal, interpersonal, sociopolitical, or cosmic ... praxis can be viewed and pedagogically engaged from three perspectives: it has active, reflective, and creative aspects. They overlap and unite as one in the existential life of agent-subjects in the world” (Ibid., 136).

⁵⁵³ Groome explains that *habitus* refers to “the disposition of a person, formed over time, that shapes their identity and agency in a particular kind of ‘being.’ To come into the *habitus* of Christian faith, which in fact is to take on Christian ‘character,’ requires education in the understanding, desire, and disposition to so live” (Ibid., 129).

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid., 143-144, 401. Groome emphasizes the importance of cultivating a commitment to do the truth in love through relationships of trust and an ethic of care (Ibid., 127).

⁵⁵⁵ By “Christian tradition” I refer to Scripture, the apostolic tradition, and magisterial teaching of the church. Groome uses the phrase “Christian Story and Vision” to apply to this tri-dimensional tradition.

⁵⁵⁶ *Will There Be Faith?*, 17. Groome observes that this reflects the manner of teaching modeled by Jesus, who makes not only the heart of Christian teaching but also the inspiration for its style (19-21).

realization of the Reign of God in our time and place.⁵⁵⁷ It is education for “liberating salvation,” that is, in raising awareness and shaping actions to promote liberation from sin for wholeness, holiness, and the fullness of life for all.⁵⁵⁸ Insofar as justice and holiness are “two sides of the same coin”⁵⁵⁹ (as noted in Chapter 2 in the discussion on *dikaïosynē*), SCPA presents the overarching vision of Christian religious education under the auspices of “liberating salvation” which must include social justice and peace.⁵⁶⁰ This means more than making justice and peace a focal point of the material engaged; in its goal, content, and process, Christian religious education should promote justice and peace by fostering a *habitus* of *shalom* and justice in all its teachers and learners.⁵⁶¹

SCPA is organized into five movements, though it involves seven parts in all. Groome describes the first exercise as a “focusing activity,” the purpose of which is to “turn people to their present praxis, to some aspect of their lives in the world with shared focus.”⁵⁶² Inspired by Freire’s notion of a “generative theme,” this focus on a dimension of the present praxis engages learners by tapping into their own interests, needs, and experience of being subjects-in-relationship. This opening activity aims to activate the participants and direct their attention to a shared focal issue, theme, or symbol, something

⁵⁵⁷ Groome describes the lifetime of discipleship in terms of apprenticeship, paralleling the Freire’s call for a “new period of apprenticeship” in *The Politics of Education*, 122-125. This apprenticeship is oriented to the Reign of God, the “metapurpose” of Jesus’ teaching and healing ministry and thus, Christian religious education (*Sharing Faith*, 16-17). The Reign of God can be defined as the “ongoing coming to fulfillment of God’s intentions for humankind, history, and all creation” that is already – but not yet fully – realized in the world (*Ibid.*, 139).

⁵⁵⁸ *Will There Be Faith?*, 131-135. Groome cites Pope Paul VI’s 1975 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii nuntiandi* (nos. 9, 18) in connecting liberation, salvation, and humanization.

⁵⁵⁹ *Will There Be Faith?*, 138.

⁵⁶⁰ *Sharing Faith*, 379-406; *Will There Be Faith?*, 121-153. Groome writes, “The understanding of Christian religious education I propose throughout this book – its nature, purposes, intended learning outcome, and approach – implies that every instance of it is to educate for a faith that does justice and peace” (*Sharing Faith*, 397).

⁵⁶¹ As noted in Chapter 2, *shalom* is typically translated as “peace” but is more richly understood to imply wholeness, fullness, balance, and inclusive and mutual right-relationship, as Groome notes in *Sharing Faith*, 15-16. He states the aim for a “*habitus* of justice” on page 399.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, 155-156.

of life or of life-in-faith that is of vital interest to the participants. It is significant for Christian religious education because it attests to the fact that “God is actively revealing Godself and will in the everyday history that is people’s lives in the world” and that “people are agent-subjects within events of God’s self-disclosure and can actively encounter and recognize God’s revelation in their own historicity through reflection on their present action in the world.”⁵⁶³ Attentiveness to God’s presence in the world – and one’s agency and the possibility for cooperating with this presence – is part of the “sacramental vision” described above.⁵⁶⁴ It is part of the educator’s essential responsibility to create a hospitable environment for learning, conducive to mutual respect, trust, dialogue, and participation.⁵⁶⁵

Once participants have been engaged in this opening activity and have come to understand and actively engage with the focal theme or question to be examined, SCPA proceeds to Movement 1: inviting participants to “name” their present praxis of the theme. This invites participants to “objectify” their consciousness of the present reality, and by doing so, is an exercise in praxis itself.⁵⁶⁶ This is both an act of self-possession as agent-subjects-in-relationship and a dialogical sharing of one’s interpretation of reality with others. This two-fold process “is essential for responsible freedom and social transformation” because the act of “naming reality for ourselves rather than accepting it as already named for us can be a first step to reshaping it.”⁵⁶⁷ Movement 1 is inclusive in

⁵⁶³ Ibid., 159-160.

⁵⁶⁴ Groome clarifies that “although God continues to existentially disclose Godself and will in and through human history, it cannot be presumed that ‘present praxis’ reflects what God wills to be done.” Unlike Dewey and Freire, Groome acknowledges that the present praxis is marked by sin and that by “hardness of heart” participants may miss – willingly or unwillingly – God’s desire for human reality (Ibid., 163).

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., 168-169.

⁵⁶⁶ Groome explains that this can be a turn to their own praxis, society’s praxis, or both. In this movement, learners express how they perceive what is “going on” in the world around them (Ibid., 176-177).

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid., 179-180. This echoes Freire’s second movement in his pedagogical approach, as described above.

that everyone is encouraged to share – to the extent they are willing – their interpretation of the present praxis as well as listen to those of their fellow participants.

Movement 2 follows this sharing by inviting learners into a dynamic critical reflection on the present praxis. Such reflection should engage the reason, memory, and imaginations of participants (their whole “mind”), and should be done on both personal and socio-cultural levels. The purpose of such critical reflection is to cultivate a “critical consciousness” of one’s present praxis “to understand and imagine how this praxis is shaped by and can reshape their location in place and time.”⁵⁶⁸ This critical reasoning includes the intent for social analysis, an investigation to learn who and why some people benefit and others suffer as a result of the historical roots, structures and systems, and networks of relations in a given context. Findings are articulated and shared in dialogue among participants, filling out learners’ understanding of the possibilities and limits of one’s present praxis. This is a dialectical movement between the participants and their specific place and time, a critical consciousness that “emerges as participants un-cover and dis-cover together the personal/social sources of and reasons for present praxis and discern its consequences.” It reflects the process of “decodification” described by Freire, as learners push back against the “packaging” or “coding” of reality in a particular way (and perhaps as part of specific interests). It seeks to unmask personal and social biases and ideologies and explore new possibilities. As part of Christian religious education, it aims to be especially critical of values, beliefs, structures, and practices of

⁵⁶⁸ Groome adds that it is “a critical and creative hermeneutic of present praxis, an activity of discerning what to affirm, what to refuse, and what needs transforming in one’s historical ‘reality’” (Ibid., 188).

dehumanization or domination.⁵⁶⁹ More than simply critical, Movement 2 is also creative, dedicated to imagining better alternatives to the present praxis.⁵⁷⁰

This dialogical movement gives way to Movement 3, the persuasive access to the Christian Story and Vision. The chief task of the educator in this movement is to make accessible the living Christian tradition so participants can “critically appropriate its meaning and truth to their lives.”⁵⁷¹ This step conveys the gifts and duties of Christian faith, the normative promises and expectations expressed through the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus and the subsequent Christian tradition. The Christian Story and Vision is to be presented as a past, present, and future reality, a vocation to spiritual wisdom, and a commitment to love-in-action for the sake of justice and peace. It strives to cultivate in participants attentiveness to revelation, that is, God’s self-communication in history. In this movement, the educator’s primary task is hermeneutical: to interpret and translate meaning and possibility, story and vision, from the Christian tradition.⁵⁷² The intent for learners is to appropriate the meaning made from this experience for oneself.

Movement 3 is yet another example of the praxis-pedagogy in action. This is not a “transfer” of catechetical content to learners; it is personal and collective interpretation of the meaning of texts, rituals, symbols, beliefs, and practices. Interpretations should be

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid., 188-189. In this way, it resists “a false liberalism or ‘niceness’ in which everyone passively accepts everyone else’s reflection as if it were a final word” (192). As a critical and creative discernment, it seeks to identify the truth in participants’ reflection and analysis.

⁵⁷⁰ Groome links this creative-imaginative movement with ethical consciousness and moral formation, an urgent area of neglect in education, both general and moral (Ibid., 196-197).

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., 215. Groome uses “story” and “vision” to refer to the content and style of the Christian tradition, metaphors for the “historical roots and realization of Christian faith over time and in its present community – the church,” including the “promises and responsibilities that arise from the Story for the lives of people who claim it as their own” (216-217).

⁵⁷² Ibid., 223. This stands distinct from sermonizing. Providing access should not be confused with indoctrination; rather, it adopts a style of disclosure, dialogue, and engagement (243-244).

faithful to the text and how it has been traditionally understood while also dialectically speaking to and from the present praxis of the participants.⁵⁷³ This involves a threefold schema to recognize the truths of the content under consideration, acknowledge its limitations or forgotten or erroneous interpretations over time, and construct new possibilities for how the Christian Story and Vision relates to the present praxis.⁵⁷⁴ In this movement, a humble posture of being open to God's ongoing revelation means the educator is less an "expert" than a "leading-learner" who provides leadership in facilitating the learning of all to grow in deeper wisdom in Christian faith and active discipleship.⁵⁷⁵

SCPA continues to Movement 4, where participants are encouraged to "see for themselves" the dialectical relationship between the Christian Story and Vision and their present praxis. It is another effort in appropriation, inviting participants to "integrate Christian Story/Vision by personal agency into their own identity and understanding, that they make it their own, judge, and come to see for themselves how their lives are to be shaped by it and how they are to be reshapers of its historical realization in their place and time."⁵⁷⁶ It is, in essence, a moment to integrate the insights discussed in Movements 1 and 2 with the faith that was accessed in Movement 3. In the light of this comparison, participants make a judgment about what is true for their life, both as it is experienced in the already and hoped-for in the future. It illuminates a lesson in the pursuit of personally

⁵⁷³ To navigate this dialectical task, Groome proposes nine hermeneutical guidelines (see pp. 227-239) and raises nine questions to assist with this process of interpretation (240).

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid., 230. Groome suggests these efforts in interpretation be evaluated in terms of Newman's three "marks of authenticity:" continuity, consequences, and community (235).

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 246.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 250.

appropriated spiritual wisdom and activates the agency of the learners to articulate this truth, recognizing for themselves its implications for their lives in the world.

Movement 5, then, intentionally invites participants to make decisions to act in ways that are “conceptually and morally appropriate to Christian faith.”⁵⁷⁷ By making “praxis-like decisions” that can be cognitive, affective, or behavioral, participants practice decision-making for Christian identity, faith, and moral character on the personal level as well as part of a small-group community. As opposed to knowledge by transfer or acquisition, these practices invite learners into an experience of conversion, as they are formed in conation through habits for intellectual, moral, religious, and social growth. According to Groome, this socialization within a “wisdom community” is effective because it provides experience in striving for spiritual wisdom together. He cites John 8:31-32 wherein Jesus tells his disciples, “If you live according to my teaching, you are truly my disciples; then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” to highlight that learning the truth comes from living – not just knowing – gospel teachings.⁵⁷⁸ To contribute to and draw from this “wisdom community” is to engage in dialogical and participatory action that authentically adheres to the Christian Story and Vision for life for all. At its best, Movement 5 returns participants to the original generative theme, dialectically considers that in light of what has been reflected on and shared in the subsequent movements, and sparks imaginative new ways to envision how to “live the decision” being made.

⁵⁷⁷ It offers participants a chance to see themselves as “Christian actors” who “decide and choose both what to do now in faith regarding this generative theme and who to become over time” (Ibid., 267). Groome outlines four categories for these “praxislike decisions:” (1) cognitive, affective, or behavioral forms; (2) personal, interpersonal, or social/political spheres; (3) individual or communal activities; (4) realized in or beyond the group (268-271).

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., 272. Groome adds, “Movement 5 of shared Christian praxis reflects a similar conviction that by following Jesus’ ‘way’ of life, people can come to the wisdom that sets them free.”

Though Groome outlines six pedagogical movements, I note a seventh part of SCPA: living the decision made in Movement 5.⁵⁷⁹ This is where participants live into the insights that have been raised and discussed, pursue an answer to a question that has been posed, and share the experience of learning with others around them as they leave this formal setting of learning. It empowers disciples to practice these decisions “for lived Christian faith toward God’s reign.”⁵⁸⁰ It trusts in the spiritual wisdom gleaned by reflection-in-action among agent-subjects-in-relationship in viewing learning through a wide-angle lens that measures growth over time. For this reason, intentional, patient progress through these seven parts is necessary to effectively implement SCPA.⁵⁸¹ This is not to suggest that SCPA is incomplete or doomed to fail if it does not attend to each of these movements and features on every occasion. Groome encourages flexibility and creativity in adopting these seven parts. What matters more than the methodological movements is the attitude, style, and “way of being with” that teachers model for and cultivate among learners.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁹ I count the Focusing Activity, Movements 1-5, and this Sixth Movement as the seven parts of SCPA. Groome writes, “In one sense, movement 5 concludes the dynamics of shared praxis within a formal pedagogical event, but in another it only marks a beginning. There should always be a ‘sixth’ movement – living the decision made” (Ibid., 278). Groome adds this “living the decision” is always with the help of God’s grace (279).

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid., 273. It also points to why the nomenclature of SCPA is so fitting: it is a shared, collaborative approach to learning that is oriented *to* praxis and guided *by* praxis from start to finish and makes accessible the Christian tradition for lived Christian faith.

⁵⁸¹ Groome counsels educators “to a kind of relinquishment and also for a patience about ‘seeing results.’” He quotes Dewey’s insightful line, “Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is that people learn the thing they are studying at the time they are studying it” (Ibid., 278).

⁵⁸² Ibid., 279-280. Groome explains, “The movements of shared praxis are dynamic activities and intentions to be consistently honored over time rather than ‘steps’ in a lockstep procedure. The dynamic among participants often causes the movements to overlap, occur, and recur, be recast in many sequences. I use the word *movements* intentionally to signify a free-flowing process ... Educators should remember, as Jesus said of the Sabbath, that the process is made for the participants, not participants for the process” (297; emphasis removed).

Furthermore, it matters that teachers realize the political implications of the content and style of the educating they employ.⁵⁸³ The traditional style of education, described as “banking” by Freire, does not necessarily activate the agency of learners to think for themselves, practice critical analysis, or learn through creative collaboration. SCPA proposes dynamic practices for inclusive, mutual, critical, imaginative, and cooperative empowerment. By treating learners, their present praxis, and the group of participants with respect and by issuing the aforementioned responsibilities to their process of learning, this style of educating promotes human dignity and right-relationship. It embraces the political implications of education.⁵⁸⁴ It takes seriously the adage that education for justice must be done justly.⁵⁸⁵

Analyzing and Applying SCPA

Laudable as it is to assert that this praxis-oriented pedagogy can be used in the service of justice, Groome’s general overview of Christian religious education as a ministry of the church makes it necessary to put a finer point on how this can be practiced for neighbor-formation for solidarity. I do so by first raising three shortcomings of SCPA, and then by addressing the challenges of the present social context for educating emerging adults in theological studies.

⁵⁸³ From early on in *Sharing Faith*, Groome takes the position that “the essential characteristic of all education is that it is a *political activity*.” He notes this position owes its roots to Plato and Aristotle, who first made this argument, then adds, the “knowledge to which [education] gives people access, how it does so, and the influence it has on people’s ‘characters,’ all shape how people live their lives together in both the private and public realms ... In a teaching/learning event power and knowledge combine to form how people respond to the deepest questions about what it means to be human, how to participate with others in the world, and the kind of future to create together out of their past and present” (Ibid., 12).

⁵⁸⁴ Groome posits, “educating in ways that are consciousness-raising, teaching people to read critically their own reality and to think for themselves, informing them about traditions and perspectives, and forming in values that encourage them to fulfill their social/political responsibilities, to claim their own human rights and promote the rights of others” is an important way to make “their whole curriculum in every discipline of learning ... ‘infused’ with commitment to justice and peace” (Ibid., 400).

⁵⁸⁵ *Will There Be Faith?*, 143.

One critique of SCPA is that Groome, like Dewey and Freire, assumes the best possible outcome for education. For example, Groome highlights grace over sin, the vast resources of the Christian Story and Vision rather than its limits, and the possibilities of the learning community more than its obstacles or drawbacks.⁵⁸⁶ I do not take issue with Groome's earnest outlook, as positive psychology appears to confirm that Groome's lofty expectations may yield more promising results.⁵⁸⁷ However, one of Groome's mantras is, "It is better to bring people along than to send them away." Although it is hard to quibble with this spirit of inclusion, it assumes learners *want* to be brought along in the first place.⁵⁸⁸ Without sapping interest or enthusiasm for these efforts, more consideration should be given to the considerable challenges facing those charged with educating emerging adults today.⁵⁸⁹

Along similar lines, Groome's positive outlook might mask some significant problems. For example, Groome has great confidence that learners' reflection on the present praxis will reveal the way God is at work in their lives. Drawing from Rahner's "supernatural existential," the "innermost center of the Christian understanding of existence," Groome describes how this aptitude for God confirms that everyday

⁵⁸⁶ Groome explains his positive anthropology through the lens of grace that makes humans innately good with the capacity to sin. I would argue that, given the present state of the human condition, sin is more than a "capacity;" it is a pervasive marker of the present praxis, and that personal and social sin cause human oppression and suffering that should merit additional, urgent attention. See *Will There Be Faith?*, 61.

⁵⁸⁷ Some research suggests that it is possible to will oneself to a happier and more virtuous life and that moreover, people tend to behave well when they are treated well, so Groome's high hopes for the participants of SCPA may be rewarded by learners who are motivated to meet these high expectations. On the fruits of positive psychology for moral formation and personal well-being, see, for example, Sidney Callahan, *In Good Conscience: Reason and Emotion in Moral Decision Making* (New York, Harper Collins, 1991); Martin Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (New York: Free Press, 2002).

⁵⁸⁸ In *Will There Be Faith?* Groome better accounts for the challenges of the "tough times" for Christian religious education today, but then quickly moves on (see pp. 7-9).

⁵⁸⁹ See, for example, the challenges noted in Chapter 1, especially those studied by Christian Smith and his colleagues.

experience bears the possibility of encountering God.⁵⁹⁰ But Groome does not sufficiently account for ways the present praxis might hide, misrepresent, or even thwart these divine recognitions because of the reality of sin.⁵⁹¹ To be more effective, SCPA needs to better address the beliefs, practices, and structures that run counter to the Reign of God, to confront and resist what Jon Sobrino describes as the “anti-Kingdom.”⁵⁹² By failing to develop a prophetic edge to actively seek out the forces of the “anti-Kingdom,” SCPA runs the risk of ascribing too much of the status quo to the will of God. This may also dilute the moral problems facing emerging adults today, and perhaps diminish their moral agency, as well.

A second criticism takes issue with SCPA’s emphasis on the present praxis of participants. Although this is a worthy and empowering locus of study, it is also limiting. It can dwell on the “here and now” for “me” or “us” at the exclusion of what is true for others, especially outsiders or those considered “other.” This is not to suggest that

⁵⁹⁰ See *Sharing Faith*, 162; Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: Seabury, 1978), 126-132.

⁵⁹¹ Groome addresses sin as part of his theological anthropology, but this is more as an abstract feature of the human condition than an intentional examination of how sin – personal and social, of commission and omission – marks the present praxis of participations. For instance, he acknowledges that the “present praxis can be sinful,” which is quite different from stating that it *is* sinful and subsequently uncovering the causes and effects of sin (*Sharing Faith*, 163). Groome describes how Movement 2 can evoke in participants “disbelief” in and beyond persons that “maintain structures of domination” (e.g., sexism, racism, homophobia, etc.) to suggest that “Critical reflection on present action *can be* a source of both personal and social emancipation” (*Sharing Faith*, 189-190). Though I agree in principle with Groome’s position, this point deserves more rigorous development. I argue for more attention to the reality of sin not for the sake of making learners feel guilty (although guilt, when appropriate, can be a potent motivator), but so they can become more acutely aware of the ways in which they are participating, wittingly and unwittingly, in the dehumanization and deprivation of others. In light of the unequal interdependent relations resulting from globalization and the suffering it inflicts on a growing number of the world’s population, to avoid making this a matter of deliberate analysis risks prolonging learners’ naïveté.

⁵⁹² Sobrino uses the phrase “anti-Kingdom” to describe the forces of sin that are “formally and actively opposed” to the Reign of God, making the Reign of God a “dialectical and conflictual reality, excluding and opposing the anti-Kingdom” that requires “an active and fighting hope against the anti-Kingdom.” See *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth* tr. Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 72 (emphasis removed). Incidentally, Sobrino later adds that the Reign of God is a “praxic” concept, “implying putting its meaning into practice” and that in doing so, “the act of ‘making’ the [Reign of God] is the best indicator of the real existence of its counterpart: the anti-Kingdom” (87-88). Put differently, the existence of the anti-Kingdom is confirmed by the need to put into practice the realization of the Reign of God.

learners should presume to know others' experiences. Instead, SCPA could be more intentionally directed toward theological reflection as a welcoming encounter with the "other."⁵⁹³ A spirit of catholicity leads to embracing others' realities and considering them dialectically with one's own present praxis.⁵⁹⁴ Thus learners can better recognize how the present praxis holds together multiple experiences of reality and corrects one's own inevitably limited view. For a generation noted for its self-indulgent dispositions and habits and decreasing rates of empathy, this practice provides a de-centering experience by starting with the "other" for one's personal reflection, social analysis, and theological inquiry.⁵⁹⁵ SCPA can be crafted to help advance the cause of raising up the voices of minority or marginal persons and groups. In these ways, SCPA can become a praxis of hospitality, a much-needed task in a world of "riotous difference."⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹³ As David Tracy sees it, this is part of the "preferential option for the poor." He explains, "Just as Emmanuel Levinas has shown how philosophy today should begin not with the modern problem of the self but with the problem of the other, so too should Christian theology, in its distinct turn to the other, especially, but not solely, the oppressed, repressed, and marginal other, make the contemporary turn-to-the-other, as opposed to the modern turn-to-the-subject, the starting, not conclusion, of all genuine Christian thought." See Tracy, "The Christian Option for the Poor," in *The Option for the Poor in Christian Theology* ed. Daniel G. Groody (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 119-131 (at 120).

Recently, Pope Francis described how a "culture of encounter" with others is the foundation for peace. See his homily from May 22, 2013, available at http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2013/05/22/pope_at_mass:_culture_of_encounter_is_the_foundation_of_peace/en1-694445.

⁵⁹⁴ Catholicity is derived from the Greek (*katha holos*) meaning "pertaining to the whole" in a way that emphasizes unity in diversity. Thus, incorporating the present praxis of others should be an intentional objective of SCPA, and should be done in a way marked by respect and mutuality, with every effort to avoid pity, paternalism, and inappropriate use of power by some over others.

⁵⁹⁵ Considering the reality of the "other" is a particularly important starting point for a "theology of the neighbor," as will be discussed in the pages ahead. Recall the observations regarding the asymmetrical relationship between self and other in light of the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas discussed in Chapter 2.

As has been previously noted, where possible, a "neighborly consciousness" should not be exclusively anthropocentric. This is yet another potential area for development in SCPA, although Groome alludes to the emergence of a "green" consciousness in *Sharing Faith* (390) and describes ecological responsibility under the auspices of a commitment to justice in *Will There Be Faith?* (216). I have cited above (in Chapter 2) my essay considering how "neighbor" might be expanded to include nonhuman creation.

⁵⁹⁶ Groome acknowledges the need for creating a hospitable learning environment, but his brief comments (*Sharing Faith*, 168-169; *Will There Be Faith?*, 209) would be enriched by Letty Russell's work on hospitality, which she defines as "the practice of God's welcome by reaching across difference to participate in God's actions bringing justice and healing to our world in crisis." See Russell, *Just*

A third critique calls for greater emphasis on the changing state of “location” in the present praxis, as well as the value of choosing to change one’s location through the learning experience. Groome underscores the importance of “time and place” as part of the learning environment and the influence it has in shaping the present praxis.⁵⁹⁷ He envisions SCPA as an “inculturation approach” that honors culture and the gospel and enriches both, as well.⁵⁹⁸ But for the most part, time and place remain constant in the movements of SCPA.⁵⁹⁹ In light of the sociological phenomena discussed in the previous chapter, I submit that globalization and the widespread use of ICTs warrant a more intentional and dynamic approach to engaging learners’ time and place, especially for how it changes the meaning of being near to others, and thus, a neighbor.

I propose adapting the movements of SCPA as part of the present project to engage emerging adults in religious education in a manner that is more attentive to the ways students at U.S. Catholic colleges are immersed in the fluctuating forces that compress “time and place.” Compression of time and space results in increasing exposure to new content and bringing people into proximity across distance (whether

Hospitality: God’s Welcome in a World of Difference ed. J. Shannon Clarkson and Kate M. Ott (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 19.

Russell proposes a “hermeneutic of hospitality” that stands on three legs: (1) attention to the power quotient involved in the encounter; (2) giving priority to the perspective of the outsider; (3) rejoice in God’s unfolding promise (43; emphasis removed). Although Groome’s SCPA fulfills the last of the three, by incorporating the first two, this method could become even more inclusive and empowering.

⁵⁹⁷ Groome writes, “A conscious effort to create a ‘shared’ environment is necessary throughout all the movements ... The educator and the group are to attend deliberately to both the psychosocial and physical aspects of the environment” and reiterates that reflection on the present praxis must attend to “the whole ‘being’ of participants as agent-subjects in time and place” (*Sharing Faith*, 168, 189).

⁵⁹⁸ According to Groome, inculturation is “the process of historically realizing the intimate relationship between ‘culture’ and ‘the Christian faith’ so that (a) Christian faith is expressed in people’s lives through symbols and modes of native to their culture; (b) it is a source of transformation for its cultural context; (c) each cultural expression of it renews and enriches the universal Christian community” (*Sharing Faith*, 154; emphasis removed).

⁵⁹⁹ Groome cites, as one exception, the Pulse program at Boston College, which incorporates service-learning in the city of Boston as part of the course’s curriculum. Through these and other experience-based learning programs, students can dialectically explore how their service changes their understanding of the present praxis and Christian Story and Vision throughout their service (*Sharing Faith*, 158).

ideological or geographical). The number and mode of these techno-cultural features result in a much more participatory and polyvocal present praxis than was possible when SCPA was first developed.⁶⁰⁰ These sociological phenomena need to be more robustly addressed for the ways they mediate culture and the gospel, affect how shared Christian praxis is most effectively approached today, and create new possibilities and limits for how learners strive to live out their decision to act.

Following the contributions of Dewey, Freire, and Groome, and informed by these contextual influences, an appropriate pedagogy for theological study at U.S. Catholic colleges invites learners into a process of shared theological reflection, social analysis, and commitment to action for the common good. It makes evident the essential link between Christian faith and disciples' lived commitment to serving as agents of love, justice, and solidarity. It pays particular attention to raising students' consciousness about how they live up to these moral obligations, especially in light of how they are formed by their social context and relationships.

An Appropriate Pedagogy for the Present Praxis

Teaching theology at U.S. Catholic colleges is both an academic and pastoral aim. On the one hand, teaching theology provides access to the Christian tradition that has inspired believers for over two millennia, including those who founded the particular school where this learning is taking place. This is at least partially a project in conveying meaning about the church and university's identity and mission, and how its members play a role in their ongoing development. It is confessional without being sectarian or

⁶⁰⁰ Still, these forces get minimal attention in Groome's more recent work, *Will There Be Faith?*, whether as features of the present praxis (12) or as part of strategies for effective response (177).

catechetical. On the other hand, it is now common for theology as an academic discipline to be approached under the auspices of the more pluralistic rubric of “religious studies.” The critical analysis and academic rigor applied to theology, along with the professionalization and laicization of theology in the university setting, makes for a closer identification with the academy than the church.⁶⁰¹ As part of a rigorous course of study, theology helps students grow in their understanding of and abilities in hermeneutics, history, and ethics. Its catechetical dimension serves a generation that prides itself in moral autonomy and privatized spirituality.⁶⁰² Although there is an abundance of literature about how to strike a harmonious balance between these two aims, not all of these proposals include a developed pedagogical approach to teaching theology in the classroom. Even fewer do so citing sociological features like how globalization, the “buffered self,” and the “networked self” present possibilities and challenges for effectively engaging today’s emerging adults.⁶⁰³ In weaving together the insights of Dewey, Freire, and Groome with these features of the present praxis, I propose the following guidelines for an effective pedagogical approach to theological studies at U.S. Catholic colleges.

⁶⁰¹ Although the historical development of Catholic universities in the United States is beyond the scope of this project, some context is helpful. Theology had been more confessional before the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965) and the corresponding reforms which helped to advance the professionalization and laicization of theology as an academic discipline. Before this point, the majority of teachers were priests and the primary focus for teaching theology was catechetical, as the vast majority of students at Catholic colleges and universities came from Catholic families. Today, this no longer holds as true: the majority of theology professors are lay people (many of whom received their doctorate from non-Catholic institutions) who teach students who may or may not identify as Catholics or Christians. For more detailed analysis of this trend, see Thomas Rausch, *Educating for Faith and Justice: Catholic Higher Education Today* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2010), 20-38.

⁶⁰² This “religious individualism” has been traced in a number of studies. See, for example, William D’Antonio, James D. Davidson, Dean R. Hoge, and Mary L. Gautier, *American Catholics Today: New Realities of their Faith and their Church* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).

⁶⁰³ One exception is Thomas Beaudoin, whose work focuses on teaching Catholic theology in a postmodern, virtual context. See, for example: *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998) and *Witness to Dispossession: The Vocation of a Postmodern Theologian* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008).

Teaching theology should eschew the “banking” model of education that teaches knowledge by acquisition of content.⁶⁰⁴ Instead, it should be an experiential process that invites students into new ways of thinking, feeling, speaking and acting, of interpreting and re-interpreting experience for oneself (as an act of freedom and self-possession) and as part of a group (taking in experiences and viewpoints of others, responding to them, and establishing a fuller view of reality in light of these interactions) always with the intent of engaging and being of consequence to people’s lives. It should critically correlate these perspectives with the Christian tradition of the past, present, and future. It should be sensitive to socio-cultural context and how this mediates participants’ experience of reality. It should be critical, that is, analyzing with good discernment beliefs, practices, and structures, to understand their root causes, who benefits, who suffers, and why. It should consider these questions through the lenses of human dignity, rights and responsibilities, and the common good. It should promote learning as coming into critical consciousness that is ever intent on acting informed by this awareness. In this way, it should be understood as education for *conscientização*.

In sum, this pedagogy should mirror the “life to Faith to life” movements of SCPA. It should begin with a generative theme that draws on students’ interests, abilities, and needs to demonstrate why theological studies are relevant to life-in-the-world today. After engaging learners through a central question, problem, or theme, it accompanies participants in a cyclical pattern of six steps: personal reflection, small

⁶⁰⁴ Recall Roger Bergman’s observation that, in the 600+ pages of the Catholic social teaching, only 1.5 pages are dedicated to pedagogy. The fact that these teachings – introduced by lengthy documents and essential principles from which the faithful should deduce action steps – remain the “church’s best-kept secret” may be evidence that the “banking” model of “teaching” is ineffective (*Catholic Social Learning*, 14-15).

group discussion, analysis and consultation of authoritative material⁶⁰⁵, discernment and decision to act, practicing the enactment of this decision, and evaluating its successes and failures. In this way, learners should glean insights for modifying their own beliefs, actions, and relationships going forward in personal growth, as well as anticipate relevant changes that can and should be pursued on a social and systemic scale. This cycle continues for the sake of further revising these insights and practices.

This calls for a pedagogical approach that integrates the whole person and one's capacities for cognitive, emotional, and social intelligence.⁶⁰⁶ As much a process for personal growth, it broadens horizons for social consciousness and social responsibility. Following Dewey and Freire, it envisions education for social transformation through cultivating personal freedom, discipline, and accountability to others. Filling in a lacuna in Dewey and Freire's approaches, it will train learners to reflect on experiences of vice and sin (personal and social), in order to learn from these mistakes, confront the consequences, and strive to avoid perpetuating these moral failures. In the words of Pope Paul VI, it should be part of an evangelization that proclaims the gospel and places it "into people's hearts with conviction, freedom of spirit, and effectiveness" for humanization and liberation in order to heal the division between the gospel and culture, "without a doubt, the drama of our time."⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁵ By "authoritative material" I mean social analysis of the present praxis as well as the teachings of the Christian tradition. This process, as Groome explains, is dialectical, but that is not to suggest these sources are mutually exclusive. In an inculturation perspective, the present praxis mediates the Christian Story and Vision (Christian tradition is always culturally-conditioned) and this should be compared with what the tradition professes is possible – theologically, spiritually, socially, politically, etc. – in a condition marked by finitude and sin.

⁶⁰⁶ Groome describes this in terms of educating to integrate the "head, heart, and hands" of its participants (*Will There Be Faith?*, 13).

⁶⁰⁷ *Evangelii nuntiandi*, nos. 4, 9, 20. Pope Paul VI continues, asserting this is part of the church's "duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings ... the duty of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete. This is not foreign to evangelization" as part of living

To more effectively address and repair this division between culture and the gospel, I propose these guidelines for teaching theology at U.S. Catholic colleges today:

1. **Invite students to slow down, unplug, and think theologically about their lives.**

We have already noted how this generation of students reports high rates of feeling stressed, overwhelmed, and anxious. The constant ability to be digitally connected or entertained increases emerging adults' level of distraction and inability to focus in sustained thought.⁶⁰⁸ Added to or apart from "digital fasts" that encourage emerging adults to unplug from ICTs for a period of time, this opportunity to shift their perspective out of their hectic routine can be rewarding. In my experience with undergraduates, they are not often in the practice of personal – much less theological – reflection.⁶⁰⁹ And yet, students commonly express appreciation for carving out the time and developing the discipline to contemplate the "big questions" about God, life,

out the command to love one's neighbor, especially the one "who is suffering and in need" (nos. 30-31). Available at http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html.

⁶⁰⁸ The culture of "iDistraction" has been detected and analyzed by psychologists and authors like Sherry Turkle (*Alone Together*, 268) and James Steyer (*Talking Back to Facebook*, 21). This behavioral trend seems to be one downside to consistent multi-tasking, as digital natives struggle to focus, relate, and respond to single subjects over a sustained period of time. See Janna Anderson and Lee Rainie, "Millennials Will Benefit and Suffer Due to Their Hyperconnected Lives" Pew Internet & American Life Project (29 February 2012), available at http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_Future_of_Internet_2012_Young_brains_PD_F.pdf.

⁶⁰⁹ I have been fortunate to serve as a graduate assistant in Boston College's office of Campus Ministry for the last five years. In that time, I have accompanied several hundred BC undergrads, many of whom identify with a particular faith tradition, but struggle to integrate it into their daily routine. For example, when I ask where they experience God in their life, many students find it difficult to articulate a response. They are so busy running from class to work to activities to studying and socializing (corporeally and digitally) that quiet, solitude, and reflection are rarely a feature of their present praxis. When pressed to come up with at least one example, most reply by saying "my friends."

This busyness is problematic for the way it distracts people from more meaningful intentionality and actions, as noted in the story about Jesus' visit with Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), and in Darley and Batson's findings that those in a hurry failed to recognize being placed in an ethical situation. This first guideline confronts their warning that "ethics becomes a luxury" as peoples' lives get busier and more hectic, also acknowledging how this might prove true for faith and spirituality in light of the rising number of "nones" among emerging adults.

and love, meaning and purpose, and reflecting on how these play out over the course of a day or week. For this reason, teaching theology should begin with a centering activity to encourage students to recognize this as time set apart from the rest of their busy routine, to be still and silent, and to seek the ways that God might be revealed in their life. It can be time for quiet, personal introspection, or shared prayer.⁶¹⁰

Especially after students have become comfortable with this routine and developed a sense of trust with their classmates, this can be an effective student-led practice for thinking theologically and recognizing the nearness of God and the goodness of creation, including their own goodness.

2. **Connect with students' emerging sense of vocation.** In the spirit of a “generative theme” this attention to vocation helps students see the relevance of God (and theology) by considering it in rather intimate terms (rather than just another subject to study). First, in light of the fact that even those who have been catechized in Catholic schools and religious education programs until college find it difficult to avoid viewing God as a bearded old man, judging their actions, punishing bad behavior and rewarding good behavior (or tallying these for judgment for eternal life), false images and idols need to be dispelled. God should be presented as ultimate mystery and yet

⁶¹⁰ I have found, especially on a Jesuit university campus, Ignatius' *Examen* prayer to be warmly welcomed by students. In this prayer, Ignatius invites disciples to pray in five steps: (1) to become aware of being in the presence of God; (2) to review the day with gratitude; (3) attend to the emotions of the day and that arise during reflection on it; (4) choose a particular moment from the day, either of consolation or desolation, and pray from it; (5) look ahead to tomorrow and resolve in hope to be more attentive to and cooperative with God's will. Timothy M. Gallagher's *The Examen Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* (New York: Crossroad, 2006) is an effective tool for this practice.

knowable as love (*agape*).⁶¹¹ God should be understood as relational (i.e., Trinitarian) and desiring to be in right- and loving-relationship with each person, especially in promoting his or her integral well-being. Students should be invited to consider what best promotes their health, wellness, and holiness, what they desire for their lives in the future, and how this fits with God's hope for them to flourish. They should also reflect honestly where they have "missed the mark" and struggled with vice or sin. They can come to discern God's desire for their life within their deepest desires for their own life. They can begin to detect God's call by reflecting on what brings them joy, what they are good at, and in *agapically* responding to the needs of others around them.⁶¹² Journaling, small group conversations, reflecting on the consolations and desolations of their lived experience as clues for their calling, and hearing an older peer share his or her process of vocation discernment might facilitate this experience.

3. **Make accessible the riches of the Christian tradition.** The widespread claim to be "spiritual but not religious" appears to be at least partially a rejection of an institution that seems out of step with emerging adults today. College students reflect a lukewarm commitment to the institutional church, citing differing views with magisterial teaching and reporting low attendance at religious services.⁶¹³ This may

⁶¹¹ According to Michael Himes, this is "the least wrong way to think and speak about God." See 1 John 4:8, 16; Himes, *Doing the Truth in Love: Conversations about God, Relationships, and Service* (New York: Paulist, 1995), 10.

⁶¹² Himes writes, "Discover what it is that you most really and deeply want when you are most really and truly you. When you are you at your best, what is it that you most truly desire? *There* the will of God is discovered." (Ibid., 56). He also develops these three signs (what brings you joy, a special ability or area of growth, and responding to a need in *agape*) as helpful cues in vocation discernment (57-59).

⁶¹³ D'Antonio's study of American Catholicism found zero Millennial Catholics who self-identified as having a "high" commitment to the church (73% described their commitment as "medium" and 27%

well spill into apathy or antipathy toward studying theology. Combined with “rampant religious illiteracy”⁶¹⁴ this demonstrates a need to be more effective, engaging, and persuasive in presenting the Christian tradition. To counter notions of theology as timeless teaching handed down on stone tablets and out of touch with today’s reality, students should be persuasively introduced to the ways that the faith has been formulated in thought and practice over the centuries, shaped by socio-cultural context, and continues to be received and practiced in relevant and life-giving ways today. For example, students should read, reflect on, and discuss: passages in Scripture to examine this form of contextually-mediated revelation; personal narratives of disciples’ conversions and struggles with doubt to see how faith is a life-long and sometimes tumultuous journey; commentaries on councils to appreciate how dogma came to be developed; accounts of martyrdom and the costs of bearing witness to faith under religious persecution; homilies and pastoral letters to compare how the gospels challenge the faithful across time and place; liturgical rites (even better when experienced firsthand) to behold how faith and prayer are put into action; the primary sources of theological giants in order to directly engage the content and style of the most influential figures; the letters, prayers, and reflections by the “communion of saints” like Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, and Mother Teresa to be inspired by these heroes and to perhaps serve as exemplars for

described it as “low”). About one-third of Catholic students say they attend Mass less often than before college. Nearly one in ten report they have abandoned their faith by the time they graduate (*American Catholics Today*, 41). See also the data gathered by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, available at <http://old.usccb.org/education/highered/CARACMSpecialReport.pdf>.

⁶¹⁴ See Stephen Prothero, *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know – and Doesn’t* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2007). In a 2010 Pew Forum Poll, Catholics, in particular, fared poorly in their religious literacy about Catholicism and other religions, as well. For example, 45% of Catholics said the church teaches the bread and wine at communion are only symbols of Jesus’ body and blood (available at <http://www.pewforum.org/U-S-Religious-Knowledge-Survey-Who-Knows-What-About-Religion.aspx>).

new ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting.⁶¹⁵ In addition to being made accessible to these convictions and lifestyles, students should be encouraged to identify one or several takeaways they hope to integrate into their lives, experience firsthand, and later evaluate and discuss any impact this makes, as well as establish a pattern or partner to be accountable to living this decision to act.

4. **Provide a contrast to moral therapeutic deism.** Not only does privatized spirituality distort an image of God to create an idol of comfort without any demands, but it leaves emerging adults adrift in negotiating the moral demands of responsible adulthood. As noted in Chapter 1, as many as 60% of emerging adults say their morality is situational, with roughly half saying they determine what is moral based on whether it might hurt someone.⁶¹⁶ But even when this inconsistent “do no harm” principle is applied, it maintains an individualistic worldview that fails to adequately account for what one receives from and owes other people. This is entirely inconsistent with the Christian tradition, to say nothing of most other religions. It disregards the covenant community established between Yahweh and Israel, of the obedience commanded through right-relationship in love, justice, and *shalom*.⁶¹⁷ It

⁶¹⁵ Saints and heroes need not be from distant times or places; I count Gustavo Gutiérrez and Gregory Boyle among many alive today whose humble, courageous, and faithful witness to the gospel inspires multitudes. Importantly, of these examples only Dorothy Day was not ordained or vowed; more work is needed to lift up examples of lay people, especially those living the blessings and burdens of witnessing to the gospel in marriage and family life, as this will be the vocation of the majority of our students.

⁶¹⁶ These statistics are reported by Christian Smith in *What Is a Person?: Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 38-39. Smith reports two-thirds of the emerging adults he studied were incapable of coherent moral discernment (59).

⁶¹⁷ See Walter Brueggemann, *The Covenanted Self: Explorations in Law and Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).

fails authentic personal, social, religious, and moral maturation.⁶¹⁸ Theological education – especially when operating from a relational epistemology, as discussed in Chapter 4 – corrects this myopia by witnessing to a tradition, covenant community, rituals, and morality that is conditioned by right-relationship between God, self, and others. This leaves no place for individualism and moral relativism; mere “tolerance” is shown to be a necessary but insufficient trait for social living.⁶¹⁹ It does not gloss over sin for fear of being alienating; instead it encourages students to take seriously the causes and effects of moral failures. Instead of presenting moral theology as a sub-discipline, every aspect of theological studies should be evaluated for its moral import. Indeed, the “very soul of the moral life” is how a person responds “to the initiative of God’s offer of love” to each and all.⁶²⁰ Teaching theology today should involve critical reflection on the causes and effects of these personal responses, examination of how they are influenced by relationships and socio-cultural contexts, and evaluation of what kinds of dispositions, actions, relationships, and practices might lead toward more consistent right-relationship in personal and communal flourishing.

⁶¹⁸ According to Lonergan, authentic maturity is to “be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love.” See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1971), 268. Kenneth Melchin, inspired by Lonergan, applies this “intentionality” to demonstrate that teaching morality is not to create or impose responsibility, but to reveal the ways we are already tied up in it as social beings. See Melchin, *Living With Other People: An Introduction to Christian Ethics based on Bernard Lonergan* (Ottawa: Saint Paul University, 1998), 21.

⁶¹⁹ Wendell Berry reflects, “If I merely tolerate my neighbors on the assumption that all of us are equal, that means I can take no interest in the question of which ones of us are right and which ones are wrong; it means that I am denying the community the use of my intelligence and judgment; it means I am not prepared to defer to those whose abilities are superior to mine, or to help those whose condition is worse; it means I can be as self-centered as I please.” See Berry, “Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community” in *The Art of the Commonplace: Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2002), 181.

⁶²⁰ Richard Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 6.

5. **Problematize the “buffered self.”** Moral therapeutic deism is one effect of the “exclusive humanism” prevalent in the secular age described by Charles Taylor.⁶²¹ As discussed in Chapter 4, the awareness of the possibility of disengagement is not in itself a problem; rather, it becomes problematic when invoking this ability to disengage produces an excessive individualism that pusillanimously shirks social responsibility. Autonomy and self-possession are social goods to be encouraged, but also to be ordered toward the common good of all.⁶²² Respecting the developmental need for emerging adults’ to disengage from their social context at times, teaching theology can present a more chaste habit of disengagement.⁶²³ Following Taylor’s lead, the way to respond to the phenomenon of the “buffered self” is to emphasize the incarnational vocation of the Christian to live *agapically* in co-responsibility for the common good.⁶²⁴ Even more urgently stated, we should take seriously Leonardo Boff’s indicting claim that future generations will call us “barbarian, inhuman, and shameless, for our great insensitivity to the suffering of our own brothers and sisters.”⁶²⁵ Exposing the ignorance, indulgence, and self-deception of the “buffered self” or other forms of neoliberal individualism or moral relativism (see guideline #4, just above) may help students see for themselves that capriciously opting out of social responsibility frays the social fabric of community life and ignores the gospel command to love one’s neighbor as oneself. It also does nothing to avoid being

⁶²¹ *A Secular Age*, 19.

⁶²² Jacques Maritain considered this a difference between “individuality” and “personality,” where the latter is a “deeper mystery” that performs itself in “communications of knowledge and love,” which is necessarily relational and directed toward the good of others. See Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1947), 38-42.

⁶²³ Perhaps this could be modeled on Jesus’ own pattern of ministry and retreat, or the tradition of harmonizing contemplation and action (note, again, how the Samaritan’s *active* example is followed by Mary’s *contemplative* example in Luke 10:30-42).

⁶²⁴ *A Secular Age*, 706-710, 737-743.

⁶²⁵ Quoted by Jon Sobrino in *No Salvation Outside the Poor*, 7.

complicit in perpetuating human deprivation and suffering. Emerging adults might be encouraged to recognize that it is a short distance from invoking tolerance to generating relationships of mutual indifference.⁶²⁶ Comparing virtual and physical forms of disengagement might help them see for themselves the assets and liabilities of forging or withdrawing meaningful social commitments. Introducing students to learn about and practice the works of mercy and legacy of hospitality in the Christian tradition might provide the kind of contrast experiences to help emerging adults more acutely recognize the fruits of providing – and being provided – dispositions and actions of such munificent care.⁶²⁷

6. **Acknowledge globalization’s ubiquitous effects.** College students learn about the effects of globalization through a number of subjects including political science, economics, international affairs, law, and other cultural studies. In light of the fact that nearly one in four undergraduates studies abroad, a growing number of them experience these trends firsthand. But too many students compartmentalize globalization as a social, political, or economic system, without reflecting on its influence in their own life. Globalization makes it easier to produce and ship products all over the world, and too often these far-flung distances have made it seem morally insurmountable to consider our culpability for the conditions of workers (especially in developing countries), the demands of production, and the costs of

⁶²⁶ Recall Dewey’s warning about ambivalent tolerance leading to the “eclipse of the public” (*The Public and its Problems*, 142).

⁶²⁷ See James Keenan, *The Works of Mercy: The Heart of Catholicism* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2008) and Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

disposing all the goods we consume.⁶²⁸ The increasing power of corporations and support for capitalism have translated nearly everything into market terms to maximize profit.⁶²⁹ It has come to such a sad state of affairs that even water is being debated as either a commodity or a human right.⁶³⁰ Unless more people become aware of these realities and organize a response, the globalized systems and structures that give more leverage to TNCs than to local communities and groups will continue unchecked. But given its own global reach, religion – and the Catholic Church in particular – can provide a potent response in promoting an alternate vision for organizing global society, one that promotes human dignity ahead of corporate

⁶²⁸ Indeed, this is no small task. As Tom Beaudoin recounts in his book, *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are With What We Buy* (Landham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2003), TNCs are not forthcoming about the conditions under which our products are made. It is possible, however, with the help of digital cameras, the internet, and social media, more of this information will be brought to light. For instance, recent tragedies at factories that produce Apple products (including the iPad and iPhone) helped raise the question of whether it is ethical to own Apple products (see the report on the “iEconomy: A Punishing System” in the *New York Times*; for example, Charles Duhigg and David Barbosa, “In China, Human Costs are Built into an iPad” *The New York Times* (25 January 2012), available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/26/business/ieconomy-apples-ipad-and-the-human-costs-for-workers-in-china.html?_r=0. Similar stories have come to light about sweatshops, which produce the majority of our clothes. See, for example, Jason Burke, “Bangladesh Factory Collapse Leaves Trail of Shattered Lives” *The Guardian* (6 June 2013), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/06/bangladesh-factory-building-collapse-community>.

⁶²⁹ John Kavanaugh identified two competing forces: the “Personal Form” of the Christian tradition and the “Commodity Form” of unbridled capitalism and consumerism. He contrasted the human dignity inherent in the person qua *imago Dei* with the market economy, which both erodes personhood and moral responsibility. See Kavanaugh, *Following Christ in a Consumer Society: The Spirituality of Cultural Resistance* (Maryknoll: Orbis, [1981] 2006). Kavanaugh writes, “We become transformed *into* the idols we *trust*. In worshipping those products, in living for them, in measuring ourselves by their qualities, we have created a false god which exacts from us our freedom and personhood. Idolatry in all of its forms displaces proper human relationships and turns upside down the ordered human world. Idolatry victimizes the person whose life and purpose becomes reduced to serving a state, or material possessions, or technology, or any religious or political ideology” (35).

⁶³⁰ Under mounting pressure, the United Nations has finally recognized access to water a human right (Resolution 64/292), though its inability to enforce this statute means that corporations are still able to profit from privatizing – and thus controlling for profit – this precious natural resource and fundamental requirement for all life. See Maeve Shearlaw, “Talk Point: Is Water a Commodity or Human Right?” *The Guardian* (15 March 2013), available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development/2013/mar/15/talk-point-water-commodity-human-right>. Theological ethicist Christiana Peppard responds to this issue in her essay, “Fresh Water and Catholic Social Teaching: A Vital Nexus” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 9:2 (Summer 2012), 325-352.

profit.⁶³¹ For this reason, theology needs to consider not only how globalization is changing the experience of the Christian tradition, but how Christians are called to respond to these changes at various levels from the local to the global.⁶³²

Specifically, the principle of solidarity in Catholic social thought reminds us of our shared bonds and obligations that make it immoral to disregard the impact our life has on our brothers and sisters, neighbors near and far. A “theology of neighbor” is particularly relevant and useful for these purposes, as we will see in Chapter 6.

7. **Upgrade pedagogy to meet digital natives’ learning styles.** It would be wise to heed Dewey’s aversion to “abundant lecturing,” especially in light of the rapidly-shrinking attention span of digital natives. Until recently, the average attention span of a college student was about 15-20 minutes, although several studies have observed this has decreased to about 8-10 minutes, roughly the time of television programming between commercials.⁶³³ However, as digital natives rapidly click through webpages, scroll through headlines and photos, and reduce communication to terse texts, some experts warn that emerging adults’ attention span could soon plummet to a matter of seconds, not minutes.⁶³⁴ Today’s students are constantly multi-tasking, giving their

⁶³¹ Beaudoin writes, “our spirituality always has an economic dimension: the distribution of resources encourages or discourages people from living in fidelity to the Other and others ... And likewise, our economics always has a spiritual dimension: every advocacy for a distribution of resources is a manifestation of that to which one is accountable. In every economic activity, we are stating who or what we stand for” and whether we are faithful to Jesus, who is “God’s economist” (*Consuming Faith*, 21).

⁶³² Robert Schreiter discusses the role of religion through its “holism and commitment to particular cultures [which] give it moral power against what appear to be alienating and impersonal global systems.” See Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and Local* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997), 16.

⁶³³ See, for example, Marilyn Elias, “So Much Media, So Little Attention Span” *USA Today* (30 March 2005), available at http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/education/2005-03-30-kids-attention_x.htm.

⁶³⁴ The Associated Press conducted a study in 2012 that showed the average attention span of an American adult is eight seconds. In what some call the “Twitter-age,” there is evidence that suggests digital natives’ attention span is shrinking to meet the 140-character limit imposed on Twitter. See the recent *Time* cover

attention to webpages, texts, photos, and more only a matter of seconds. Some evidence suggests this is changing the wiring of the brain to work more quickly, but also more superficially.⁶³⁵ Too many of today's students think research is complete after visiting Wikipedia or reading Google's first few search results. Some educators lament the rise of a "copy and paste culture" among these digital natives who struggle to unplug, think for themselves, and have a conversation with others. Responding to this present praxis, educators should help students become more self-aware of these habits and to reflect critically on them.⁶³⁶ Digital natives do not typically distinguish between their online and offline lives, but it may help to examine the differences between these ways of engaging content, building relationships, and making connections. Educators can and should use ICTs and social media to engage students, but they should do so in a way that models a prudent use of digital technology. As a contrast experience, it may be valuable to make some classes technology-free to encourage students to take their eyes off the screens of their tablets and laptops to give each other – and this learning experience – their undivided attention.

8. Encourage greater attention to identity and relationships, online and offline.

Students may express satisfaction with the convenience afforded them by their ICT use, but they rarely reflect on how they might be shaped *by* these tools and practices.

story, "Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation" (20 May 2013), available at <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2143001,00.html>.

⁶³⁵ See Nicholas Carr's provocative essay, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" *The Atlantic* (1 July 2008), available at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/>.

⁶³⁶ In my experience with undergraduates, they consider this "just the way it is" rather than question participating in this mode of techno-culture. They are surprised to consider questions like, "Why do students walk through campus with earbuds in and faces glued to their phones?" or "Why is it easier to pull out your phone and flip through it when waiting in an elevator or classroom than to interact with those around you?"

We have already noted how ICT use and social media may be partly responsible for this generation's decreased empathy and overall life dissatisfaction related to increased rates of narcissism, entitlement, anxiety, and alienation.⁶³⁷ These difficulties should not be our sole focus; there are also new possibilities that are made possible through the connectivity, mobility, and rising participation afforded by ICTs. And yet, these techno-cultural goods should not be uncritically embraced.⁶³⁸ It is incumbent on educators to make clear that a commitment to right-relationship and justice is not restricted to the physical world, and this has important implications for the content, connections, and ultimate aims for ICT use.⁶³⁹ In addition to these features of personal use, there is also the matter of addressing the "digital divide" and making use of the native traits of ICTs and social media to expand access and promote the kinds of content and connectivity that can advance the common good.⁶⁴⁰ Having learners reflect on the quality of the content and connections they engage in – as well as those on much larger scales – can generate rich material to analyze and discuss the differences between "being connected" and "being bonded" or "being

⁶³⁷ Recall Sherry Turkle's analysis in *Alone Together*; see Chapter 8, "Always On" and Chapter 9, "Growing Up Tethered" and Chapter 10, "No Need to Call" (151-209). See also, Soraya Mehdizadeh, "Self-Presentation 2.0: Narcissism and Self-Esteem on Facebook" *Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking* 13:4 (August 2010), 357-364; Elliot T. Panek, Yioryos Nardis, and Sara Konrath, "Mirror or Megaphone?: How Relationships Between Narcissism and Social Networking Site Use Differ on Facebook and Twitter" in *Computers in Human Behavior* 29:5 (September 2013), 2004-2012; and Noelle Chesley, "Blurring Boundaries? Linking Technology Use, Spillover, Individual Distress, and Family Satisfaction" *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67 (Dec 2005), 1237-1248.

⁶³⁸ Steve Fuller argues the possibilities of digital technologies far outweigh the problems; he states the point of ICTs is "to realize the latent potential of the actual world, typically by getting us to see or do things that we probably would not under normal circumstances but could under the right circumstances" through online interactions like file sharing, cloud computing, and other ways to converge intelligence and resources. Fuller adds that these improvements are inevitable; the real question is how to distribute the costs and benefits (and manage risks), since "unregulated innovation is likely to increase already existing inequalities in society." See Fuller, *Humanity 2.0* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), 105-109.

⁶³⁹ As noted in Chapters 1 and 4, due to the amount of time spent gaming, shopping, being entertained, and viewing pornography, emerging adults should critically reflect on whether their ICT use is advancing their own good as well as that of others, instead of simply accepting these patterns of behavior as "the way it is."

⁶⁴⁰ See Chapter 4 for this discussion in light of the work by Warschauer and Gordon and de Souza e Silva.

available” and “being accountable.” They can and should reflect critically on with whom they interact virtually and/or physically, how these connections and relationships might differ, and the unique strengths and weaknesses of these different mediations of identity, interaction, and interpretation.⁶⁴¹ Being present to another person – whether corporeally or digitally – requires more than simply being “connected.” To be a “responsible self” is to be mindful of others and responsive to their needs, online and offline.⁶⁴²

9. **Educate for quality social cohesion.** Dewey, Freire, and Groome all envision education as generating high quality, democratically-inclined participation and social cohesion. Their contributions to collaborative praxis-pedagogy are especially needed today, in light of a dwindling reserve of social capital. Felicia Wu Song reminds us that the narrative of communal decline cannot be pinned on the erosion of neighborhoods and vibrant civic interactions or the rise in ICTs and more privatized rates of digitally-mediated consumption and connection.⁶⁴³ Perhaps a new theory of community is necessary and a new “civic habitus” should be proposed to account for the effects of globalization, the “buffered self,” and the “networked self.” The Christian tradition views the human person as inherently social, and whose

⁶⁴¹ Although some have cited the liberating effects of virtual interactions freed from physical constraints and corporeal characteristics, these disembodied connections differ in a significant way from face-to-face encounters. Bodiliness is a unique mediator of the present praxis (for better and worse), as one’s body occupies one’s place in the world through specific features of body shape and size, age, race, ethnicity, sex, etc. These characteristics cannot be digitally duplicated. They may be approximated in some ways or completely ignored in others, depending on how much the ICT user shares about their real corporeality. On “embodied consciousness” reflecting on the present praxis, see Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 86-88.

⁶⁴² See the recent essay by Jonathan Safran Foer, “How Not to Be Alone” *The New York Times* (8 June 2013), available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/09/opinion/sunday/how-not-to-be-alone.html>. In response to the many forms of “iDistraction” that plague digital natives, Foer proposes a new form of attentiveness to other people, quoting Simone Weil, who wrote, “Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.”

⁶⁴³ See *Virtual Communities*, 64.

flourishing is indivisible from the common good. This implies a need for thicker shared moral norms that foster pro-social dispositions, habits, relationships, and sustained commitment. It presents discipleship as a joint gift and task, shared responsibilities, and communal exchanges of blessings and burdens. To educate for social cohesion, then, is to engage students in these kinds of relational exchanges with other persons and groups. Learners will experience firsthand the causal chain between shared tasks and shared responsibility, social commitments and affections for those who have synchronized their efforts and overall goal.⁶⁴⁴ Educators should design activities in and outside class for students to practice forging these person-to-person and person-to-group exchanges, communicating their thoughts and feelings evoked from this experience, and acting on proposals to carry forward these kinds of social interactions and commitments.⁶⁴⁵ They should be invited to reflect on the quality of their present “communities of practice” and how they are being formed therein.⁶⁴⁶ Students can thereby experience the fruits and frustrations of community

⁶⁴⁴ This is described as the “emotional contagion” that results from shared labor in joint responsibilities and “occurs because people synchronize the behavioral manifestations of their feelings ... and these exterior manifestations have feedback effects on their feeling states.” The result is “people become more socially and affectively committed to the groups, organizations, and communities within which they repeatedly or regularly experience positive emotions or feelings, insofar as they attribute these emotions to the social unit.” See Edward J. Lawler, Shane R. Thye, and Jeongkoo Yoon, *Social Commitments in a Depersonalized World* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2009), 64-71.

⁶⁴⁵ Lawler, Thye, and Yoon identify three key ways to foster social cohesion: (1) a sense of shared responsibility generates complementary emotions directed at self and others; (2) group cohesion is deepened as members share their emotions with each other, creating a feedback cycle of shared feeling and responsibility to one another; (3) cohesion is further reinforced through structures that give people a clear sense of freedom and control (i.e., self-efficacy) and “opportunity structures” that provide access to network connections and shared participation (Ibid., 71-72; 85-89).

⁶⁴⁶ In other words, persons are always located in a web of relations and practices that mediate meaning, community, learning, boundaries, and locality. These “communities of practice” shape and socialize members according to shared interests and patterns of behavior. Students should critically reflect on what kinds of “communities of practice” they participate in, the values and goals of those groups, and how they are being influenced through these shared interactions. For more on “communities of practice” and how they affect the learning process, see Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). On the mediation of meaning, community, learning, boundaries, and locality, see the brief overview on pp. 49-50 and the subsequent chapters.

life, in the hope that they realize how they and others benefit from these reciprocal relationships and commitments over time, and miss out when they opt-out. They should be challenged to recognize opportunities to influence and improve their communities of practice, and not just become aware of how they are being influenced *by* such networks, whether corporeal or digital.

10. **Educate for trans-locality.** Dewey, Freire, and Groome all note well the ways in which education is shaped in and through its location. But observing the ways that one benefits from the privilege of one location or suffers from the disenfranchised locale of another is only the first step. A second step reconsiders the conception of “place” in a digitally-mediated world, as it is harder to identify “where” we are when we are using ICTs. The possibilities of being simultaneously present to multiple peoples and places can be dizzying, but the difficulties of being always “elsewhere” should not be ignored. The potential for increasing one’s access and availability should be weighed against the temptation to be distracted and overwhelmed. On the one hand, the importance of place risks being diffused in globalized webs of exchange and digitally-mediated interactions that seem to render locality less significant than in previous ages. On the other hand, these new avenues for communication and exchange allow people to transcend their geographical place in what could potentially be a liberating experience. In the face of this changing sense of “place,” the Christian tradition highlights God’s presence in every time and place and our being present to God, self, and others. Authentic presence means being focused in a single-minded and single-hearted way. This is the kind of attentiveness

required for genuine empathy and mutuality. It encounters and reverences the other as Other and not just an alter-ego.⁶⁴⁷ It is an intentional drawing near another, an essential trait for being neighborly. To educate for trans-locality means more than having learners become attentive to their “place” and those around them. It is an invitation to redefine proximity, to recognize the call to see every other as one “nearby” and thus a neighbor, and to avail oneself to be “nearby” and thus a neighbor to every other person. Above all, it is a practice of crossing over categories and distances, just as the Samaritan crossed into the ditch, breaking the boundary between Jew and Samaritan. Relying on the opportunities made possible through globalization and ICTs can help foster the disposition and habit of drawing near to others, especially those most in need. To educate for trans-locality is to foster the “motivated reasoning” described in Chapter 4 to prudently discern how to universalize one’s availability and loyalty in seeking solidarity with others by drawing near, physically or virtually. It involves fostering an awareness of how place shapes one’s present praxis, and then deciding to change this location to compare how this new vantage point, socio-cultural (or techno-cultural) context, and resulting relationships expand one’s horizon for learning about oneself, others, the world, or God. In doing so, it cultivates plasticity in one’s ability to be near – and thus directly experience – God, self, and others.

⁶⁴⁷ Recall our discussion in Chapter 2, informed by Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas describes the encounter with the Other is always a temptation to appropriate or totalize the Other as an *alter ego*, another self. But this reduces the Other to the Same. The Other always escapes being fully known or understood, which implies a moral asymmetry between the self and Other, as I cannot decide what is best for the Other. Levinas argued this means that I always owe more to the Other than myself (see *Totality and Infinity*, 215).

Also note how the Samaritan and Mary demonstrate reverence for the Other in Luke 10:30-42: the Samaritan does so for the robbers’ victim and Mary does so for Jesus. Taken together, these examples depict Luke’s presentation of proper love of God and neighbor.

The philosopher Martin Heidegger describes “nearness” not in terms of distance (which he asserts is disappearing in the postmodern world), but as a practice.⁶⁴⁸ More than a perception or attitude, nearness results from the action of “nearing.”⁶⁴⁹ A theology of neighbor centers on encountering the one nearby in reverence and respect, empathy and compassion, courage and generosity. A pedagogy for neighbor-formation presents this vision of solidaristic relationships and responsibilities for liberation and facilitates experiences to grow in this commitment. It is, in the end, pedagogical accompaniment in the practice of nearing. This is the focus of the sixth and final chapter.

⁶⁴⁸ Heidegger writes, “the frantic abolition of all distances brings no nearness; for nearness does not consist in shortness of distance ... Nor is great distance remoteness ... Nearness, it seems, cannot be encountered directly. We succeed in reaching it rather by attending to what is near. Near to us are what we usually call things ... in this discovery we also catch sight of the nature of nearness. The thing things. In thinging, it stays earth and sky, divinities and mortals. Staying, the thing brings the four, in their remoteness, near to one another. This bringing-near is nearing. Nearing is the presencing of nearness. Nearness brings near – draws nigh to one another – the far and, indeed, *as* the far. Nearness preserves farness. Preserving farness, nearness presences nearness in nearing that farness. Bringing near in this way, nearness conceals its own self and remains, in its own way, nearest of all. The thing is not ‘in’ nearness, ‘in’ proximity, as if nearness were a container. Nearness is at work in bringing near, as the thinging of the thing.” See Heidegger, “The Thing,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought* tr. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 165-166, 177-178.

⁶⁴⁹ As Heidegger succinctly states, “Nearing is the nature of nearness” (Ibid., 181). It is possible to see a connection with Gutiérrez’s claim that the preferential option for the poor is a matter of cultivating friendship with poor persons, since it would be impossible to do so without a commitment to nearing the poor. This will shape the pedagogy to form students to “Go and do likewise,” to be discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER SIX
A PEDAGOGY FOR NEIGHBOR-FORMATION:
TEACHING TO “DO LIKEWISE”

In the foregoing discussion, we have seen that the depth of meaning in Jesus’ teaching to love God and neighbor as illustrated by the Samaritan’s example in Luke 10:30-37 is not widely understood, nor is it consistently put into practice. We have also observed several sociological trends which point to the pressing need for this to change so that more Christian disciples become neighbors who emulate the Samaritan’s courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity. It has also become evident that, more than a failure in exegesis, homiletics, or pedagogy, a significant reason for this can be traced to the present “social imaginaries” that inhibit these Samaritan-like dispositions, traits, and practices. The present “social imaginaries” have generated a socio-cultural context (especially among today’s emerging adults) marked by moral therapeutic deism, deficient empathy, and a fragile psychological state exacerbated by digital hyperconnectivity. Today’s college students report such high rates of anxiety, stress, and isolation that exhorting them to integrate Samaritan-like virtues into their lives may seem an inordinately onerous – if not outright impossible – task. If any progress is to be made in promoting these neighborly characteristics, relationships, and communities, it will require more than teaching theological tenets and moral principles. It demands an approach to theological education that builds on the guidelines presented in the previous chapter and puts a finer point on the theological, moral, and social features of this proposed pedagogy for neighbor-formation. It depends on a coordinated response to

cultivate the “social imaginaries” that encourage the qualities, relationships, and practices to promote Samaritan-like neighbor love by engaging students’ everyday lives as both starting and end point in the pedagogy.

To make progress toward constructing these “social imaginaries,” we return to H. Richard Niebuhr’s argument that a person’s actions result from his or her self-understanding, and that this sense of identity is formed and expressed through a person’s interpretation of the world, their role, and response to it. A response informed by one’s environment and relationships is enacted through personal responsibility, according to Niebuhr. In Chapter 1, we also took note of Ignacio Ellacuría’s assertion that to grasp reality is to bear its burden by taking responsibility for it at its worst. This embrace of the reality of suffering and deprivation follows the Samaritan’s example in identity, interpretation and responsibility.⁶⁵⁰

The pedagogy for neighbor-formation proposed here adopts this tri-focal emphasis on identity, interpretation, and responsibility. In so doing, it aims to present and put into practice a social imaginary that encourages neighbor love in each of these three perspectives. It first seeks to transform the “immanent frame” operative among so many emerging adults, what may be considered a hybrid between the “buffered self” that can invoke the ability for social disengagement by opting-out of certain social obligations and the “networked self” that is hyper-other-directed, caught in an incessant cycle of digital connection, consumption, and production. It rejects domesticated Christianity and

⁶⁵⁰ First, because the story is predicated on a question about loving God and one’s neighbor (10:25-28), it can be surmised that the Samaritan understood himself to be a man of God, and thus, someone covenant-bound to help others nearby, even if he were despised by them. Second, his awareness of his surroundings on the road to Jericho catalyzes his drawing near to the man lying in the ditch. Third, his responsible care includes courageous, compassionate, and generous actions, including recruiting others to share the responsibility for ensuring the wounded man’s restoration to wellness.

moral therapeutic deism. It provides an alternative to the anxiety, loneliness, deficient empathy, and reluctance for face-to-face interaction expressed by digital natives. It rebukes their widespread belief that they cannot make a difference in the world.⁶⁵¹

To construct this neighborly “social imaginary,” this pedagogical approach considers how identity, interpretation, and responsibility are shaped by one’s “communities of practice” (i.e., the patterns of shared participation that make meaning in our lives). In the webs of virtual and corporeal interactions, relationships, and shared practices, people are always learning and performing their identity. In these shared networks, they can activate personal agency and realize capabilities through their participation or play a more passive role. Experiencing life in community denotes mutual engagement, shared interests and goals, and norms for activity and rituals. A wide variety of learning takes place in such communities: for example, about the self and others, and about what defines those who belong within and outside the community. In this setting, identity, relationships, and meaning are shaped by the location of the community of practice, which may or may not promote a value like diversity, for instance. Online and offline, communities of practice are in states of constant flux, so negotiating identity and meaning, roles and responsibilities is an ongoing task.⁶⁵² A pedagogy for neighbor-formation makes learners aware of the communities of practice they participate in, to reflect critically on these influences, and to form them to be agents who actively try to shape these networks of relationships and practices to be more Samaritan-like. If, as has

⁶⁵¹ Only 5% think this way, as reported by the National Study of Youth and Religion, cited by Christian Smith (*Soul Searching*, 270). Compare that to strikingly different figures – two-in-three who say they *can* make a difference – by Cliff Zukin and Mark Szeltner, as reported in “Net Impact Talent Report: What Workers Want in 2012” John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University (May 2012), 2-3. The full report is available at www.netimpact.org/whatworkerswant.

⁶⁵² These summary remarks have been drawn from the aforementioned text by Etienne Wenger, *Communities of Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1998).

been demonstrated from the outset of this project, one of the most influential factors in moral formation is one's socio-cultural context and relationships, then the first task of a pedagogy for neighbor-formation is to invite participants to reflect critically on whether and how their preexisting communities of practice advance or undermine Samaritan-like virtues and relationships. Then, subsequently, participants should reflect, discuss, and finally act in ways that can improve their virtual and physical communities of practice to promote the "social imaginaries" that encourage the sense of identity, practice of interpretation, and exercise of responsibility conducive for courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity.

This means making clear from the very start that everyone is called – and capable – to be a neighbor. Neighborly relations imply making a difference in others' lives, as well as being influenced by other neighbors. This web of relationality in identifying oneself as a neighbor and recognizing others as neighbors builds toward a solidaristic "immanent frame" or lens. More than an outlook that is universally-embracing, this is a relational frame of reference that recognizes identity as produced through, influenced by, and accountable to relationships. Neighbor-identity is intrinsically relational in contrast to the individualistic anthropology of the "buffered self" and "networked self" that presumes a dichotomy between the person and community.⁶⁵³ By making the starting point one's relationships, learners are invited to become more cognizant of the ways they are shaped by their relations, as well as the influence they have on others through these interactions. What is more, they are challenged to see for themselves whether these

⁶⁵³ I am not proposing an alternative anthropology that conflates the person with the community; rather, in lieu of this dichotomous person-community separation, I envision a more "organic anthropology" that views "every human person [as] a concrete, particular, and unique mediation of the universal." See Roberto Goizueta, *Caminemos Con Jesús*, 49, 76.

relationships are in fact virtuous ties, and if these relationships equip, empower, and expect them to “Go and do likewise” to meet the needs around them.

The second step of this pedagogical approach explores what “likewise” entails in their specific time and place. Students critically reflect on their present praxis and do so in light of Christian Story and Vision in order to interpret the problems and possibilities of their socio-cultural context. This facilitates practice in the “analogical imagination” to consider how the Samaritan’s example might be prudently applied as part of their personal response to this particular time and location. Importantly, doing “likewise” means emulating the Samaritan’s movement into the ditch to be near persons in need. Moreover, it means interpreting the present praxis from this vantage point and incorporating the perspectives of those at the margins and in need. This step is about learning to speak with – not for or to – those in a more vulnerable condition. It is sustained through accompaniment so that together, shared interpretations can fill in blind spots that would otherwise persist if not for this intentional change in social location. These shared interpretations and interactions create new opportunities for and experiences of a more inclusive sense of identity, boundary-breaking relationships, and mutual responsibilities.⁶⁵⁴

The third step provides students an opportunity to reflect on their experiences in acting responsibly (or not) and being treated by others responsibly (or not). It raises the

⁶⁵⁴ Gregory Boyle writes, “If we choose to stand in the right place, God, through us, creates a community of resistance without our even realizing it. To embrace the strategy of Jesus is to be engaged in what Dean Brackley calls ‘downward mobility.’ Our locating ourselves with those who have endlessly excluded becomes an act of visible protest. For no amount of our screaming at the people in charge to change things can change them. The margins don’t get erased by simply insisting that the powers-that-be erase them ... The powers bent on waging war against the poor and the young and the ‘other’ will only be moved to kinship when they observe it” (*Tattoos on the Heart*, 177).

Note how this is an inclusively solidaristic, emancipatory approach to the interindividual pattern of personal, social, and moral development described by Robert Kegan, as discussed in Chapter 4.

question, “To whom am I a neighbor?” and carves out time for reflection on who is included and excluded from one’s “social graph,” and why they care for some and neglect others. It confronts the reality of finitude and sin. And yet it balances these limits with a prudent orientation to possibilities, analogically following the way Jesus’ story about the Samaritan seeks to enlarge what is possible in contrast to the limit-seeking-question raised by the lawyer in Luke 10:29. It provides experience in acting responsibly and in cultivating the matrix of virtues for solidarity that includes compassion, courage, fidelity, and prudence. This pedagogy for neighbor-formation not only studies right-relationship or touts right-relationship, it works towards realizing it in the world. It thus incarnates a contrast experience to the dominant “social imaginaries” by putting into practice the “Catholic social imagination” discussed in Chapter 3. It leverages the resources of the college community and sense of “shared place” to instantiate communities of practice that form, sustain, and hold accountable neighbors committed to inclusive solidarity.⁶⁵⁵ As we have seen, belonging to such communities of practice is the most influential factor in whether or not disciples actually “Go and do likewise.”⁶⁵⁶

Ten Pedagogical Principles and Practices for Doing Likewise Today

Theological education as neighbor-formation is moral formation for solidarity.

The core question this pedagogical approach poses is “To whom am I near?” The

⁶⁵⁵ This orientation to inclusivity should be received well by emerging adults who express support for values like diversity and tolerance. While, on average, today’s college students have a more diverse “social graph” than older generations, one-in-three still report not having any friends of other races than their own. See Ronald Brownstein, “Diversity Now” *National Journal* (27 April 2012), available at <http://www.nationaljournal.com/thenextamerica/demographics/diversity-now-20120418>.

⁶⁵⁶ Recall Putnam’s conclusion: “It is religious belongingness that matters for neighborliness” (*American Grace*, 473). This was also confirmed in Paul Bloom’s findings (“Religion, Morality, and Evolution,” 193-194).

reflection, discussion, decisions to act, and communities of practice that revolve around this question push beyond the current experiences of nearness in favor of encouraging learners to make their commitment to *nearing* more inclusive, especially in intentionally drawing near to people who are poor, marginalized, and vulnerable. To identify with the poor, take up their vantage point, incorporate this “immanent frame” into one’s own, and dedicate oneself to the empowerment and emancipation of other neighbors in need is to start “doing likewise.” It is also a way to personally encounter Jesus Christ in the poor, as he promises in Matthew 25:31-46. Insofar as Luke 10:25-37 unfolds in response to the lawyer’s question about inheriting eternal life and Matthew 25:31-46 foretells of the Final Judgment, this pedagogy for neighbor-formation is also education for salvation.⁶⁵⁷

This pedagogical approach seeks to transform learners to make more inclusive *nearing* part of their integral way of life, so that *nearing* those in need plays a part of how they think, feel, speak, act, relate, and pray. According to sociologist and educator Jack Mezirow, “Learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind.”⁶⁵⁸ This *pedagogy for nearing* seeks to integrate all four of these ways of learning by (1) expanding one’s frame of reference to include that of those who are poor; (2) to learn a new frame of reference from a disadvantaged perspective; (3) to transform points of view through accompaniment with poor and vulnerable peoples;

⁶⁵⁷ According to Ada María Isasi-Díaz, “From a Christian perspective the goal of solidarity is to participate in the ongoing process of liberation through which we Christians become a significantly positive force in the unfolding of the ‘kin-dom’ of God. At the center of the unfolding of the kin-dom is the salvific act of God. Salvation and liberation are interconnected. Salvation is worked out through the love between God and each human being and among human beings. This love relationship is the goal of all life – it constitutes the fullness of humanity. Therefore, love sets in motion and sustains the ongoing act of God’s salvation in which each person necessarily participates, since love requires, *per se*, active involvement of those who are in relationship” (“Solidarity: Love of Neighbor in the 21st Century,” 32).

⁶⁵⁸ See Mezirow, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 19.

and (4) to transform habits of mind that work against categories of “us” and “them” toward a more solidaristic horizon and lens. As we have seen, however, moral formation requires more than cognitive development; it also involves emotional and social intelligence. Encountering others helps learners to “feel with” them. Over time and with sufficient mutuality, honesty, and trust, this “feeling with” can become less about feeling with *them* and more of an inclusive feeling with *together*. To think and feel together, to discuss and share together, to take responsibility and hold one another accountable is to form a community of practice through mutuality and accompaniment that – *ad intra* and *ad extra* – can motivate, mentor, and sustain commitment to *nearing* for solidarity. This occurs when these communities of practice include those who identify as persons who are on the margins of society, face deprivation, and experience suffering.

To promote these kinds of communities of practice for transformative *nearing* for emancipatory solidarity, I propose ten principles that build on the guidelines articulated in Chapter 5 for teaching theology at U.S. Catholic colleges. Taken together, these provide a framework of perspectives and practices for students to learn to become more neighborly by “doing likewise” today.

1. **Professors should model the *nearing* they strive to teach.** The pedagogical style for this approach to neighbor-formation is one of accompaniment: learning through being together. This cannot be accomplished apart from *nearing* one’s students and those in need. Teachers should be close to their students so as to understand them, relate well, and communicate clearly with them. Only through such proximity and familiarity can professors be assured that the “generative theme” will be engaging and

effective, and how to appropriately challenge them to learn and grow in knowledge, freedom, and love. Furthermore, it is not enough just to teach about poverty, social exclusion, or systemic hegemony; it is necessary to draw near to those whose lives are marked by such social, economic, and political injustices. By making this social location part of their own, professors can give voice to actual opinions, beliefs, and narratives *from* this position, rather than teaching to or about it. In this way, the preferential option for the poor pervades one's manner of living as well as one's curriculum and instruction, as it ought to also inform one's research and writing.⁶⁵⁹

2. **Education for *nearing* should be shared Christian praxis.** This means that this pedagogical approach should be a communal project (hence, “shared Christian praxis”) and that it should reflect the movements of Groome’s Shared Christian Praxis Approach (SCPA). It should begin by naming one’s present praxis in answering the question: “To whom am I near?” It facilitates *conscientização* to discover the meaning to be made from this reality, the strengths and weaknesses of who is included in these relationships, the interests and agendas that motivate these ties, the quality of the relations, and who benefits, suffers, and wields control through them – and why (i.e., for what *telos*). In the face of these reflections, the Samaritan’s example of being neighborly to the robbers’ victim represents the Christian Story and Vision to be engaged, discussed, and appropriated. Learners should sit with the rich details of this story (as presented in Chapter 2) as well as Gutiérrez’s interpretation that the Samaritan’s actions depict the preferential option for the poor by “leaving the

⁶⁵⁹ This first principle honors the conviction that “the poor deserve the very best scholarship,” and hence, ought to shape a special responsibility of theologians and professional academics. So contends Roberto Goizueta, who credits this insight to Matthew Lamb in *Caminemos Con Jesús*, xi.

road one is on ... and entering the world of the other, of the ‘insignificant’ person, of the one excluded from dominant social sectors, communities, viewpoints, and ideas.” And that, further, this “equally implies friendship with the poor and among the poor. Without friendship there is neither authentic solidarity nor a true sharing. In fact, it is a commitment to specific people.”⁶⁶⁰ Following exposure to these claims, learners should personally and collectively reflect on how this challenges them to respond to their present praxis, their routine dispositions and habits, the way they spend their time and money, for example. Students might begin to recognize some patterns of behavior as self-indulgent, opinions as ignorant, and relationships as more destructive than constructive. They might reconsider the content they engage online, or question why they are connected with some but not others. They should analyze why they are near – in both a physical sense and virtual one – to some and not others. They should consider the differences between nearness in a corporeal and virtual sense, and how this influences their perception of self, others, and larger systems and structures.⁶⁶¹ This should lead them to decide to act in a way that practices *nearing* those in need, and to commit to a pattern of analysis, evaluation, and conversation that fosters growth in reflecting on these experiences, both personally and as part of a community of shared practice.

3. ***Nearing* should be a part of conscience-formation.** Freire’s use of the term *conscientização* implies both consciousness-raising and conscience-formation that disposes people to act for justice and liberation. Conscience-formation may be the

⁶⁶⁰ Gutiérrez, “The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ,” 318, 325.

⁶⁶¹ See guideline #8 in Chapter 5 on why place and corporeality matter in a way that escapes digital approximation (see also: Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 86-88, 104-106).

point of greatest emphasis in the tradition of Roman Catholic moral theology. This is because, as the church teaches, one's conscience functions as more than a judgment of reason; it is a sanctuary for the voice of God and serves as "the aboriginal Vicar of Christ."⁶⁶² Conscience-formation is a life-long process that involves the cultivation of virtue (especially prudence, in order to make sound judgment), the exercise of freedom, reflection on experience (especially in acknowledging when one has sinned to avoid erring again), and consultation with Scripture and Tradition.⁶⁶³ Conscience-formation is enriched through prayer, the sacramental life, and virtuous friendships. It is incomplete, however, without experiences of being near to those who suffer the consequences of sin, both personal and social. Exposure to these forms of dehumanization and oppression is a unique prick of conscience. Being steadfast in commitment to being near to these people and their situation continues the conscience-formation beyond an initial sense of guilt or shame. Having people who are poor or disenfranchised play a role in conscience-formation shapes disciples to be consistently more sensitive to their suffering and to consider the root causes of those choices and systemic patterns. In responding to Gutiérrez's call to cultivate friendships among those who are poor and marginalized, these virtuous relationships can foster a sense of responsibility and accountability to one's friends in reforming one's manner of living so as to practice charity and justice in all dimensions of life (this includes, again, one's activity online and offline). In this way, *nearing* becomes more than episodes of movement; it becomes a pattern of behavior and fruit of relationships to make being a neighbor central to one's identity and overall character.

⁶⁶² *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 1777-1778.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1783-1785.

It also can also invite learners to honestly assess times when they were distracted from or directly avoided others in need, when they may have imitated the *antiparechomai* embodied by the priest and Levite more so than the *nearing* modeled by the Samaritan.⁶⁶⁴

4. ***Nearing* should play a role in vocation-discernment.** To advance *nearing* as part of identity- and character-formation, it should also be presented as part of God's calling for each person. In addition to following the Samaritan's example in drawing near to those in need and acting with courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity, *nearing* should play a role in one's vocation-discernment. It provides broadening experiences for learners to reflect on Himes' three questions (What am I good at? What brings me joy? What does the world need from me?) as well as new insight into possibilities for professional careers and personal lifestyles. The point here is that each and every vocation should be embraced as an avenue for one's own praxis of *nearing* and to model it for and with one's friends, family, and colleagues. With so many Catholic religious orders and charitable organizations, lay Catholics too easily consider proximity to the poor to be a special vocation or apostolic mission reserved for a holy few; they have not been socialized to perceive themselves as equal agents of the church's mission as its ordained and vowed members. The responsibility of *nearing* the neighbor in need comes with baptism. Jesus' command to "Go and do likewise" should reinforce the fact that this is a universal mission for every disciple, making *nearing* a feature of everyone's

⁶⁶⁴ James Keenan contrasts mercy ("a willingness to enter the chaos of another") with sin ("a failure to bother to love"); this dialectic between near/far might be a useful tool for the examination of conscience. See Keenan, *The Works of Mercy*, xv; with Harrington, *Jesus and Virtue Ethics*, 101.

religious, professional, and family aspirations.⁶⁶⁵ To make this part of a “Catholic social imagination” seem more plausible, narratives from personal experience and the lives of moral heroes should be lifted up as exemplars for emerging adults to emulate as they embrace this dimension of their vocation-discernment. Avoiding the radical break called for by Gutiérrez, *nearing* should be a response to vocation integrated into one’s friendships and family life, responding to the needs of these proximate others, as well.

5. When firsthand *nearing* isn’t possible, learn from narratives and moral heroes.

When not possible or practical to change one’s own location, the next best option is to hear the voices of those on the margins speak for themselves or to hear others share their reflections on these kind of transformative encounters. Here, ICTs are an invaluable asset, as they provide real-time access to be digitally “co-present” with people and stories it may not be possible to connect with offline. Social networking sites like YouTube and Facebook are filled with opportunities that give voice (and increasingly, full video capabilities) to the dispossessed. Blogs and chat rooms cultivate solidarity among those who share their own personal stories. Even more directly, Skype, FaceTime, and other video-conference services digitally-mediate “face-to-face” interactions across geographical distances. Organizations like Global Exchange (globalexchange.org) and TakingITGlobal (tigweb.org) are among

⁶⁶⁵ It is not only a universal vocation for each individual disciple; it is part of a collective vocation of the community, as well (e.g., school, church, etc.). During the Conclave of Cardinals in March 2013 to elect a successor to Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Bergoglio (soon afterwards elected pope, and taking the name Francis), addressed his brother cardinals by making four points. The first three had to do with the church needing to go outside itself, to avoid being a self-referential church that lives “in itself, of itself, for itself.” He called for a church that more fully embraces the world and goes to the “peripheries,” which he clarified to mean more than in a geographical sense, but also existential: to be “near” the mysteries of sin and suffering, injustice and ignorance. The *nearing* proposed in this project should reflect these same aims.

hundreds if not thousands of groups committed to empowering poor and marginalized peoples by using ICTs, social media, and their own websites to post narratives, videos, images, and artwork and garner reader feedback and comments to get more people educated and organized for action. These dynamic means of connecting need not eclipse narratives already captured in print, however. Newspapers, magazines, and books have provided these kinds of personal accounts for decades and can still be successfully used to approximate *nearing* today.⁶⁶⁶ Learning these stories and taking in these examples expands students' frame of reference, both for reality as it is and could be. Like corporeal nearness, it can offer a threshold experience for learners to enter a new way of seeing themselves and others, as well as a new recognition of their responsibilities to neighbors they more easily feel empathy for, after learning their story. Moral heroes provide a blueprint for a pattern of living that makes a commitment to solidarity seem more tenable. The goal is not direct imitation, but analogical application: a "doing likewise" by following a template for mutual, responsible, and meaningful neighborly relations that can be continually deepened and widened over a lifetime. This is one significant way for learners to be held accountable to a higher moral calling than what is typically presented by the dominant "social imaginaries."

⁶⁶⁶ Examples are numerous, ranging from the explicitly religious (Maureen O'Connell, *If These Walls Could Talk: Community Muralism and the Beauty of Justice* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2012); Henri Nouwen, *Gracias: A Latin American Journal* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993); Oscar Romero, *Archbishop Oscar Romero: A Shepherd's Diary* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger, 1993); Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness* (New York: Harper & Row, 1952)) to more conventionally biographical (Tracy Kidder, *Strength in What Remains* (New York: Random House, 2010); Ron Hall and Denver Moore, *Same Kind of Different As Me* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006); Jonathan Kozol, *Rachel and Her Children: Homeless Families in America* (New York: Three Rivers, 1998); Elliot Liebow, *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women* (New York: Penguin, 1995)).

6. **Make *nearing* a part of social analysis.** The interpretations carried out in the form of social analysis would be wide-ranging and all-embracing (i.e., to exclude nothing). As has already been discussed, critical reflection on the present praxis ought to include an intentional change in one's social location. This provides a new, fuller view of the socio-cultural context. Following Ellacuría's assertion that to grasp reality is to bear responsibility for it in its most difficult settings,⁶⁶⁷ social analysis should involve *nearing* in a way that takes in the vantage point of those who are poor and marginalized. This is carried out not only to illuminate situations of injustice or analyze the root causes for these conditions as part of a complex, globalized reality. It is, above all, to give voice to those whose present praxis is marked by such deprivation and suffering and to empower them to be agents of their own future.⁶⁶⁸ Students have much to learn from this perspective and can and should offer their own resources and abilities in partnership for empowerment and emancipation. Social analysis should be exercised on campus and off campus as a matter of service for and with those in need. In a collaborative commitment, students, faculty, and staff should work together to ensure U.S. Catholic colleges are communities and institutions that promote human rights and the common good by standing in solidarity with poor peoples.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁷ See discussion in Chapter 1; Ellacuría, "Hacia una fundamentación filosófica del método teológico latinoamericano," *Estudios Centroamericanos* 322:23 (1975), 419.

⁶⁶⁸ Gutiérrez asserts, "There is no true commitment to solidarity with the poor if one sees them merely as people passively waiting for help. Respecting their status as those who control their own destiny is an indispensable condition for genuine solidarity. For that reason the goal is not to become, except in cases of extreme urgency or short duration, the 'voice of the voiceless' as is sometimes said – undoubtedly with the best of intentions – but rather in some way to help ensure that those without a voice find one. Being an agent of one's own history is for all people an expression of freedom and dignity, the starting point and a source of authentic human development." See "The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ," 325.

⁶⁶⁹ Taking this on at an institutional level reaches beyond the scope of this project. Nonetheless, Dean Brackley's essay, "Higher Standards for Higher Education: The Christian University and Solidarity" should

7. ***Nearing on the policy level makes advocates out of neighbors.*** Despite all the emphasis on being a neighbor and drawing near to those in need, this is not meant to reduce the demands of love and justice to the interpersonal sphere alone. On the contrary, these experiences of *nearing*, the narratives, and interpretive social analysis should be expressed through responsibilities for social, economic, and political advocacy. This is the logical outcome of *conscientização* understood as critical consciousness unto transformative action. While respecting Gutiérrez's concerns that people of privilege should not appoint themselves the "voice of the voiceless" in a way that disempowers the voiceless, education as neighbor-formation should include firsthand experience in advocating for more just policies and practices. To avoid a paternalizing advocacy that seeks to be the mouthpiece for those at the margins, advocacy should be a fruit of accompaniment and, to the extent possible, directly amplify the voices of poor and oppressed peoples.⁶⁷⁰ Certainly there are religious reasons for raising a prophetic voice that speaks truth to power.⁶⁷¹ Aside from these, citizens ought to be motivated to advocate for justice as part of a civic duty. After all, being a "good neighbor" has a double meaning that includes both religious discipleship and civic citizenship. To be an advocate is to fully wield the power of being an informed and empowered disciple and citizen. In the present globalized context, discipleship and citizenship cannot be confined by borders. To provide

be acknowledged and praised for developing this important aim (available at <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/brackley.html>).

See also the forthcoming volume co-edited by Susan Crawford Sullivan and Ron Pagnucco, *A Vision of Justice: Engaging Catholic Social Teaching on the College Campus* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press).

⁶⁷⁰ A prominent example of this approach is provided by Jesuit Refugee Service, whose three missions are: service, accompaniment, and advocacy. See *Everybody's Challenge: Essential Documents of Jesuit Refugee Service, 1980-2000* (Roma Prati, Italy: Jesuit Refugee Service, 2000), available at <https://www.jrsusa.org/assets/Publications/File/EverybodyChallenge.pdf>.

⁶⁷¹ See, especially, Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.

opportunities for political engagement at various levels from the local to the regional to the national to the international scale is to counteract the current trends that only 4% of emerging adults identify as actively political (as well as the aforementioned figure of less than 5% of emerging adults who believe they can make a difference in the world).⁶⁷² And when advocacy is connected with a praxis of *nearing* it also resists the tendency of digital natives to be “slacktivists” who reduce advocacy to clicking “like” or “share” on a particular cause, without requiring any further involvement from the ICT user.⁶⁷³ Here, *nearing* as advocacy requires an actual change in thinking, feeling, acting, and speaking. It is accountable to those on the underside of power, while striving to hold accountable the decision-makers for a given social, economic, or political issue. It can start with what might be called “slacktivism,” as this can easily draw in digital natives by using the digital media they so often use, but it should not end there; *nearing* should bridge online and offline forms of advocacy through direct experiences of political activism.

8. ***Nearing is part of the ordering of love (and justice).*** As we observed in Chapter 3, the Christian commitment to right-relationship includes the virtuous ordering of one’s loyalties and duties to those nearby. This involves the prudential discernment how to love, honor, and serve one’s family, friends, and neighbors. Hence, neighbor-formation for solidarity is moral formation through practicing these rightly-ordered

⁶⁷² Christian Smith, *Soul Searching*, 196.

⁶⁷³ As noted in Chapter 4, “slacktivism” is a hotly debated subject. Some denounce the laziness it seems to inspire in young people, enabling them to believe that political duties are fulfilled by only a few mouse clicks. Others point to the aggregate power of enough online signatures or “likes” to actually sway public opinion, political outcomes, and thus, warrant being considered a legitimate political force. On the latter, see for example: change.org; dosomething.org; ipetitions.com.

relationships. As we previously discussed, although being a good neighbor is oriented to inclusion, this is not to the detriment to what one owes one's most proximate relations. That said, a commitment to Samaritan-like neighbor love implies an openness to initiate more inclusive relations, and to take seriously Gutiérrez's challenge to initiate friendships with those at the margins. These friendships ensure firsthand proximity with the poor, as well as test transparency for one's overall manner of living. As argued by Heuertz and Pohl, these relationships hold us accountable to practice love and justice as economic and political agents. For example, a student who befriends a working mother who struggles to make ends meet might experience a series of revelations like: (1) that the poor are not lazy, content to benefit from welfare, or deserve their fate; (2) that social welfare programs are in short supply and leave gaps between all the expenses of raising a family; (3) that women, minorities, and those who are not fluent in English face greater challenges for employment than, say, a white male; (4) the inadequacies of her children's school system and problems with tying school funding to real estate taxes; (5) the difficulties of feeding a family nutritious food, when fast food or junk food is so much cheaper. These insights are valuable lessons, but when they are the basis for reflection, discussion, and a decision for action, they can inform the student's moral vision. Having greater understanding and empathy for this woman's situation, the learner more fully grasps what is owed to her on a personal and systemic level. Out of concern for this friend, the student applies these insights to analyze how he or she spends time and money, the causes he or she supports, the way he or she votes in local and national elections. It should influence the ordering of love and justice in

one's dispositions, habits, and relationships. It can give students direct experience to motivate their desire to become informed and empowered citizens and to be consumers who try to avoid being complicit in unjust labor practices, trade policies, and other forms of exploitation. ICTs and social media can further enhance these opportunities for being informed and empowered. Websites like slaveryfootprint.org reveal the conditions of human trafficking that too often go undetected in the food, clothing, and other products we buy. Efforts like betterworldshopper.org rate numerous corporations by their track record ranging from human rights to environmental responsibility to give consumers more information to aid in a more just pattern of consumption. Facebook has a "Causes" app that places a great deal of information front and center to its users and also coordinates the causes engaged by users' friends, so it is possible to continue enlarging the circle of one's awareness and activity for justice. Leading learners through experiences in this combination of online and offline opportunities to practice love and justice on a personal and interpersonal level as citizen and consumer is to help emerging adults realize what it means to be a neighbor, corporeally and virtually.

9. ***Nearing is a spirituality.*** All this temporal emphasis should not eclipse the spiritual dimension of drawing near, especially in light of the fact that loving God and loving neighbor are part of the same command that frame Jesus' story about the Samaritan in Luke's Gospel (and link the story about the Samaritan in 10:30-37 with the subsequent one about Mary's attentiveness to Jesus in 10:38-42). To be clear, *nearing* is first and foremost theocentric: in drawing near to one's neighbor, one

draws near to God (Matthew 25:40). One cannot draw near to the God of Jesus Christ without drawing near to one's neighbor, and especially the neighbor in need. This act is an expression of gratitude that receives everything and everyone as a gift, and offers one's life as a response in grateful return-gift.⁶⁷⁴ It is a humble commitment to continuous conversion to draw ever nearer to God and neighbor and to destroy whatever idols one makes to stand in for either God or neighbor. It is steadfast in seeking the fullness of life in freedom and love so that our means and ends are one in the same.⁶⁷⁵ This spirituality is a gift and task that inspires and sustains the path of discipleship, that is, to "walk according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). In other words, it is not only oriented *toward* God, but it is powered *by* God.⁶⁷⁶ To educate for this spirituality is to provide access to a Catholic social imagination that is a sacramental vision recognizing the manifestation of grace in every time, place, and person. It invites students to practice holding together the temporal and spiritual, the particular and universal and to acknowledge that to be neighbor to every other person and to recognize every other person as a neighbor is part of the *imitatio Christi*. Nourished by Word and Sacrament, this spirituality is marked by availing oneself to the Holy Spirit for partnership with the Spirit.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁴ This was described in Chapter 2 as part of the "conversion to the neighbor."

⁶⁷⁵ As Gutiérrez succinctly puts it, "our methodology is our spirituality." See *The Power of the Poor in History*, 103.

⁶⁷⁶ Recall the observation noted in Chapter 2 that Luke's exclamatory final line, "Go and do likewise" is to elicit a response-in-action "with imagination and conviction, and not through one's own strength but through the power of the Holy Spirit" (Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 5).

⁶⁷⁷ The phrase Gutiérrez uses for this is "*ser disponible*," that is, "to be available." This is how Gutiérrez translates "spiritual poverty" or "spiritual childhood" as it is described in the gospels (see Matthew 5:3), which he interprets to mean, "to have no other sustenance than the will of God. This is the attitude of Christ." See *A Theology of Liberation*, 169-170.

10. **Nearing should be motivated by hope for the future.** Drawing near to someone is an act that involves vulnerability. It more readily exposes the self to manipulation or exploitation by those looking for ways to take advantage of others. These real possibilities should not be glossed over, but neither should they be reason to be paralyzed by fear, despair, or doubt. Despite the realities of human finitude and sin, the spirituality described just above orients disciples to possibilities rather than limits. It inspires courage in the face of daunting challenges. It calls for imagination for new ways of being human, and thus, further realizations of the “new humanity” and “new creation” described by Saint Paul.⁶⁷⁸ Importantly, it should be oriented toward new ways of *being together* as neighbors in right-relationship for *shalom*, *dikaiosynē*, and *koinōnia*. As part of the church’s mission to promote *koinōnia*, that is, both virtuous, inclusive community and partnership with the Holy Spirit, *nearing* operates out of a desire to cooperate with the Spirit at work in the world, bringing the Reign of God ever nearer to its realization. It avoids Pelagian delusions by placing complete trust in God and simply doing one’s part – wherever one is, with whatever one has, no more and no less, just as the Samaritan did on the road to Jericho – to play a role in cooperating with the Holy Spirit in “catapulting history forward towards total reconciliation.”⁶⁷⁹ A praxis of *nearing* sloughs through the gritty realities of the

⁶⁷⁸ This has been described above in Chapter 2; see, for example, 2 Corinthians 5:17; *A Theology of Liberation*, 56; *Christ the Liberator*, 1, 33.

⁶⁷⁹ Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 96. Gutiérrez continues, “Christ does not ‘spiritualize’ the eschatological promises; he gives them meaning and fulfillment today (cf. Luke 4:21) ... which takes on and transforms historical reality. Moreover, it is only in the temporal, earthly, historical event that we can open up to the future of complete fulfillment.” He later adds, “Nothing escapes this process, nothing is outside the pale of the action of Christ and the gift of the Spirit. This gives human history its profound unity” (Ibid., 104).

world without being daunted or overwhelmed precisely because it is fixed on eschatological hope and joy.⁶⁸⁰

In all of these ways, a pedagogy for neighbor-formation seeks to inspire today's students at U.S. Catholic colleges to understand what is implied in Jesus' command to "Go and do likewise" and moreover, to be committed to Samaritan-like neighbor love in their overall manner of being in the world. Above all, it proposes an accompaniment model of theological education for *nearing* that practices proximity with those in need, and in so doing, forms emerging adults in a *habitus* of Christian discipleship marked by courage, compassion, and generosity in boundary-breaking solidarity. Living in this way, online and offline, is to begin to "do likewise" today.

⁶⁸⁰ According to Gutiérrez, this eschatological orientation is "the very key to understanding the Christian faith" (Ibid., 93).

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