# Remapping the 'Geography of our Heart': Towards a Place-Based Model of Education in Faith in Appalachia and Beyond

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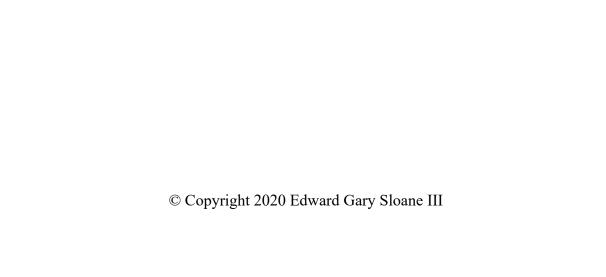
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**REMAPPING THE 'GEOGRAPHY OF OUR HEART': TOWARDS A PLACE-BASED MODEL OF EDUCATION IN FAITH IN APPALACHIA AND BEYOND**

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How should educators in faith respond to the reality of human-caused climate change and environmental destruction, especially in view of Pope Francis' prophetic challenge for Catholics to take this reality with utmost and urgent seriousness? In particular, I address those educators in faith who work in and with communities that have borne the disproportionate costs of these realities. Indigenous peoples and those who live in communities where extractive and polluting industries such as timbering, mining, energy production from hydroelectric dams, and plastics production are paramount in my mind. However, I also address those whose imagination and communities are shaped by a consumer society that depends on the displacements and exploitation of the 2/3rds world.

Drawing on the work of sociologist, Rebecca Scott, who identifies the thought patterns of the West as being grounded in a "logic of extraction," I believe that educators in faith have an important role to play in assuring the reception of Pope Francis' challenge among Catholic faithful to listen to the cry of Earth and the poor, particularly among most White Catholics in the West. In view of the dislocations of extractive socio-economic and cultural-political systems, this dissertation suggests that an appropriate pedagogical response begins with cultivating a deep sense of place. It is essential that each person comes to view their own being as grounded in places composed not only of

human built environments but of land, water, and air. As opposed to the more common attitude of "care" or "stewardship" of Creation, the guiding vision of our relationship to Creation should be one of *kinship.*

I give particular attention to the place of Appalachia as a case study for modelling what I call a critical Creation-centered pedagogy. To develop this pedagogy I draw upon Thomas Groome's model of Shared Christian Praxis, bringing it into dialogue with place-based education. In my examination of place-based approaches to learning I give particular attention to the land education model developed by Indigenous educators. The choice of Appalachia is quite simply because Appalachia, particularly West Virginia, is *my* place. It is a place I love and know, and I hope that each reader will engage this dissertation with their own place in mind.

This pedagogy is a *critical* pedagogy because it emphasizes the importance of identifying relationships of power that produce and maintain an extractive mentality. I give particular attention to settler colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism as extractive structural systems toward which education in faith must attend if it is to be a force of healing and justice. Young people engaged in critical Creation-centered education in faith are encouraged to think critically about the often complex and contradictory ways in which they are "placed" within these networks of power.

It is Creation-centered because I regard Earth as our first and primary teacher. In dialogue with Urie Bronfenbrenner, I develop an understanding of the human person that is thoroughly relational. Human health and well-being are reciprocally related to the health and well-being of the "social ecologies" in which persons live. This requires that educators in faith attend to significant relationships and institutions as well as socio-

economic and cultural-political systems with/in the lives of their students. With particular attention to adolescence, I examine the possibilities of Bronfenbrenner's understanding of human development for faith development.

For young people living in or displaced from places such as Appalachia, damaged by extractive systems, it is especially important that they are connected to empowering networks that allow them to nurture positive relationships with God, self, others, and Creation. These relationships must also empower agency from an early age. Young people should also be encouraged in developmentally appropriate ways to act as stakeholders within the significant communities and groups to which they belong. To this end, I draw upon the potential of connecting Positive Youth Development theory to education in faith, with particular attention to recent developments in this field that focus on youth-based community organizing and activism as especially salient for the positive and empowered faith development of young people displaced by oppressive systems of power.

Education in faith, when grounded in place, has much to contribute to this process. However, this requires reading the Judeo-Christian tradition with place in mind. The Judeo-Christian tradition offers an alternative logic that calls for a conversion from extraction to jubilee. Covenantal values of sabbath and jubilee express a connection to the land which was central to Jesus' ministry and preaching on the Kingdom of God. Jesus' own experience of being placed in Galilee in the context of the extractive economies of the Roman Empire influenced his spiritual development and relationship to the Creator-liberator God. Ultimately, the Judeo-Christian God is a God of life and this includes the life of all beings and all of Creation. Jesus nurtured a movement that brought people into

their own power, encouraging a new relationship to land and place. Education in faith should carry forth this mission by creating contexts for healing and justice in places damaged by extraction.

Critical Creation-centered pedagogy involves all members of a community and to this extent place-based education in faith moves young people beyond the traditional classroom and challenges the traditional teacher-student relationship. Particularly for young people from oppressed communities, it is important that they discover knowledge present in their place and community. I address primary caregivers and families, classroom educators, parish communities, and the wider civic and bioregional community all of whom have a role to play within a place-based pedagogy. I also give attention to the unique role summer camp programs might play in this process.

I conclude by attending to the work already being done by Catholics in Appalachia to seek a faith grounded in a healing and justice bringing relationship to Earth, testifying to the theological vision and ministerial work of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia. My own faith owes much to the ongoing witness of this remarkable movement, which I first encountered as a high school student. In part, my dissertation is an attempt to bring pedagogical focus to the theological and ministerial vision of this remarkable movement of the Spirit in the mountains.

*For Wheeling, West Virginia
and, of course, for my family*

*"I love you, my town, you'll always live in my soul."—Iris Dement,* "Our Town," *Infamous Angel*

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Appropriately perhaps, these acknowledgments begin with/in a place. St. Vincent's Summer Camp is the place where my vocation to education in faith was named and nurtured. I am truly grateful to Linda and Mike Hall for the love and care they offered myself and countless young people through this and many other experiences. Linda was my youth minister as a young person. She has an unparalleled ability to nurture in young people the gifts that they often have yet to recognize in themselves and to encourage them in cultivating those same gifts. Linda was the first person to recognize and nurture my ministerial vocation. It was through Mike that I developed my passion for Catholic Social Teaching, and Mike helped me to discern my vocation to theological studies. Linda and Mike together taught me the value of a spirituality centered around positive relationship with God, self, and others. Their mentoring and friendship remain a blessing from God a source of grace in my life. In no small part, this dissertation is an effort to think through what my 20 years of involvement at St. Vincent's Summer Camp, and later at St. Paul's Summer Camp and Gospel Road in Kentucky, have meant for my own faith development and what similar experiences might mean for others.

As I began to develop my theological imagination during my master's studies at Xavier University, my brother from another mother, Christopher Pramuk, quickly became a mentor and friend. We bonded over a shared love for the music of Phil Ochs and Bruce Springsteen. A quote from Ochs, posted on his office door, immediately indicated to me that we would become fast friends: "a protest song is a song that is so specific you cannot mistake it for bullshit." Since that moment this quote has informed my approach to the tasks of theological reflection and education in faith. I should also acknowledge Edward Hahnenberg, my academic adviser at the time, who invited me to accompany him to what would be my first academic conference. I am grateful for his willingness to recognize in me and nurture my love of scholarship.

Jeannie Kirkhope has been a constant source of inspiration in what it means to truly live the Gospel in kinship with Earth. I have yet to meet someone else whose life is more deeply attuned to Creation. As I discerned my vocation in relationship to my Appalachian home, Jeannie was and remains a constant source of wisdom and knowledge. My practice as an educator in faith committed to a Creation-centered way of living and teaching has been imprinted immeasurably by Jeannie, and her influence and friendship are felt throughout this dissertation. Michael Iafrate is another dear friend and comrade in the development of an Appalachian theological imagination. I know of no one who feels their faith and lives their convictions more prophetically and without apology, and he gives me the courage to be bold in my own faith and hopes for the Church. Besides being a dear friend, Michael has been a constant spiritual and intellectual companion.

streams, and the hollers will always be home. Regardless of where life has taken me my heart has remained forever in those hills. The Catholic Committee of Appalachia has been instrumental in the process of nurturing my faith in relationship to this place. The many inspiring women and men who have cultivated a unique way of being Church in the mountains helps me to keep the faith when my frustrations with the institutional Church tempt me to out-migrate from my spiritual home. CCA is why I stay, believe, and resist.

Above all my family must be acknowledged. It is because of their support that I have been able to pursue doctoral studies and realize my own deepest joys. I offer this dissertation in thanks with a debt of gratitude to my parents, Ed and Kit Sloane, and my sister Bethany. I should also mention my Aunt Cindy Becker and my grandmothers Eileen McGrail and Geri Sloane. Each in turn provided a comfortable bed, a hot meal, and conversation on my many trips home to Wheeling over the years, allowing me to remain connected to my own "place" even as circumstances scattered my parents and sister to other parts of the country.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the source of my dissertation's title. The turn of phrase, "geography of our heart" is from Dee Davis of the Center for Rural Strategies who uses this phrase in the documentary *A Hidden America: Children of the Mountains*. While I will not trouble the reader with my feelings, more appropriately frustrations, concerning the narrative of this documentary as a whole, those are for another time, I felt

that this line was an apt summary of my hopes and vision for a place-based education in

faith and the task to which it calls each of us.[1]

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[1] Dee Davis, Center for Rural Strategies, in *A Hidden America: Children of the Mountains*, Diane Sawyer reporting, ABC News Productions (New York: Films Media Group, 2013 [2009]), comments begin at about 38:00. In reflecting on structural poverty in Appalachia and its relationship to educational outcomes for Appalachian young people, Davis notes "I think it's just about changing the contours of our expectations and maybe the geography of our heart."

**General Introduction**

**Where is Faith to be Found? Hermeneutics in Place**

*"And at once the spirit drove [Jesus] into the desert
and he remained there for forty days...
he was with the wild animals."* –Mark 1: 12-13

What does a pedagogy for faith formation informed by the reality of ecological 'sacrifice zones' and those who call them home look like? A sacrifice zone is a toxic landscape of air, water, and soil polluted and made barely habitable as a result of so-called industrial 'development.' In these places, toxic chemical exposure has contaminated air, water, and soil. A litany of martyred places comes to mind. They include urban communities like Flint, MI and the rural farming communities of the mid-west. We must also name Indigenous communities in the Amazon disappearing due to deforestation and Pacific Islands disappearing off the map due to rising sea levels. Droughts, extreme heat, and forest fires force people from their home in some places. Others are forcibly, even violently, removed and their places disappeared for major development projects such as hydro-electric dams. We cannot forget the Pacific Ocean garbage patch, melting Arctic ice, the dying Great Barrier Reef, and the ongoing destruction of more-than-human communities. There are communities in central Appalachia, the focus of this dissertation, impacted by mountain top removal mining and hydraulic fracturing of natural gas.

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In each case sacrifice zones result from socio-economic structures that benefit a few at the cost of many. A critical, place-based pedagogy must address those who produce and benefit from sacrifice zones *and* those who struggle to survive and even, possibly, *thrive* in spite of them. I bring sacrifice zones into theological focus by referring to them as paschal places. In the suffering of these places we are confronted with the sinfulness of a portion of humanity who often live at a distance from the places their actions impact. Drawing close to these places and examining our relationship to them is to be drawn into the mystery of God. If we believe in the Creator-liberator God of scriptures this must include a hope for resurrection and healing despite structures of sin that produce suffering.

Utilizing a place-based pedagogy in educating for faith encourages a faith that is *public* and connected to the socio-economic, political, and cultural structures that influence the lives of Christians. It encourages critical and collective discernment about how Christians ought to respond to these structures. Further, it asks us to place our political consciousness in an ecological context, thinking more about bioregions than nation-states and empires. We live out our faith identities as *ecological* citizens of our places and speak a critical, *creative,* and jubilant word to the *extractive* forces of colonial-capitalist modernity. By placing our primary sense of belonging in and with our biotic communities we become more attentive to the health of these environments, nurture skills, and find enjoyment through participating and belonging in these communities.

I choose to focus especially on adolescents in this dissertation. During these years, which in the modern West span roughly the teenage years, persons are beginning to

develop a larger sense of self, cultivating an identity that is distinct from that of their parents or primary caregivers, and establishing for themselves a role and place in their community and the significant institutions to which they belong. This is an important moment to begin thinking critically about how they will navigate this enlarged world they are coming to inhabit. Young people today are immersed deeply in an anthropocentric (human centered), technocentric (device centered), consumer culture, which impacts their psycho-social and spiritual development. It also impacts their sense of belonging and how they place themselves within the natural and built environments they inhabit. On the other side of this, news about climate change, the grim future of our planet, or daily life in a sacrifice zone produces fears and anxieties about the present and future of life on the planet. What kind of common home are we leaving to our youth?

Critical pedagogy emphasizes education as a process of desocialization, preparing students to challenge and question social structures that produce suffering, exclusion, and inequality. Critical, place-based education nuances this task with an emphasis on de*colonization*. The right of some to belong is often the result of the displacement of others in a physical, political, epistemological (our theories of knowledge, ie. what ways of knowing are privileged), ontological (our theories of being, ie. the very being and personhood of some is denied), and spiritual sense. How does Christian religious education enter into this conversation?

In light of what is happening to our common home, we must ask *where is faith to be found?* It is my conviction that faith formation that engages seriously with questions of place has much to contribute to the work of ecological justice, preparing young people to

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see kinship with Creation as central to their Christian identity and to contribute actively to the healing of and justice with/in our common home. Indeed, people of faith can model hope for our planet in this time of despair. However, this requires that we as educators cultivate pedagogies that prepare the soil so this perspective may take root.

In the essay titled "Walking," Henry David Thoreau writes, "I believe in the forest, and in the meadow, and in the night in which the corn grows."[1] The passage, which reads like a creedal statement, reminds me of all the ways in which the land, the sky, and the sea in all their beauty and abundance can bring us back to God in the midst of colonial, consumer capitalism.

As I reflect on the climate crisis and ask how to educate young people of faith in such a way that Creation-kinship shapes their sense of Christian discipleship, I feel it is necessary to cultivate a preferential option for sacrifice zones and to educate students to seek out and find faith in the midst of post-modern, post-nature, wildernesses.

*A Hermeneutic for the Land*

In this introduction I offer what I am calling a hermeneutic for the land to guide my understanding of a place-based model of Christian religious education. Hermeneutics refers to methods and practices of interpretation. In the context of climate change, a rethinking of how we interpret our contemporary situation is necessary. Global environmental change demands that we expand our reflection on experience to include our places.

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[1] Henry David Thoreau, "Walking," in *The Classical American Pragmatists and Religion: A Reader,* ed. J. Caleb Clanton (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011 [1862]), 89.

I begin by defining our current historical period as the Anthropocene, or the human epoch, in which humanity has become the dominant influence on global environmental systems. I propose bioregionalism as a resource leading us toward an alternative way of defining our present and future. Finally, I offer a threefold definition of place to guide critical reflection on our present experience of global climate change. I offer the category of place as a more expansive category than context or social location. First, place cultivates an awareness of the more-than-human.[2] Second, place, as I understand it, is not a reactionary or exclusionary category. Each place is connected to other places. Third, our conception of specific places informs and is informed by relationships of power. Power is about a struggle for a place. Before, turning to an outline of the dissertation. I gesture toward the implications of a place-based perspective for educating in faith, which will be pursued in detail and from various angles throughout this dissertation.

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[2] I join a growing chorus of ecologically oriented scholars in preferring this phrase instead of the more typical "non-human species" or the equally problematic but more benign "other-than-human species." The intention is not anti-human, nor does it intend to reverse the typical hierarchical privileging of the human. Very often the human is the only thing to which we accord value. Therefore, it is all that we see. "More-than-human" suggests there is more out there than humanity and that 'more' possesses and offers a wisdom to which we cannot arrive on our own. For examples of this usage see, Brian Campbell, "Place," in *Grounding Religion: A Field Guide to the Study of Religion and Ecology,* eds. Whitney Bauman, Richard Bohannon, and Kevin O'Brien (London: Routledge, 2011), 203-221; Andy Fisher, *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life*, 2nd ed. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013); Margaret Somerville and Monica Green, *Children, Place, and Sustainability* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Rebecca Martusewicz, Jeff Edmundson, and John Jupinacci, *EcoJustice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities,* 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015); Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, and Nils Bubandt, eds., *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts/Monsters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Trevor Bechtel, Matthew Eaton, and Timothy Harvie, eds., *Encounter Earth: Thinking Theologically With A More-Than-Human World* (Eugene: Cascade, 2018); Bob Jickling, Sean Blenkinsop, Nora Timmerman, and Michael De Danann Sitka-Sage, eds., *Wild Pedagogies: Touchstones for Re-Negotiating Education and the Environment in the Anthropocene* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

*The Anthropocene*

Humans have always altered the landscape to suit their purposes, but since the industrial-scale burning of fossil fuels beginning in the late 19th century the human influence now extends beyond localized effects to impact entire Earth systems. Polar ice samples reveal increased levels of $CO_2$ and methane in the atmosphere beginning in the 18th century with the greatest and most rapid increases beginning in the mid-twentieth century. Atmospheric scientists refer to this latter period as "the great acceleration." It is associated in particular with the emergence of *consumer* capitalism and economic globalization. Scientists trace these atmospheric changes directly to human activities, particularly the industrial-scale burning of fossil fuels, industrial-scale animal husbandry, and large-scale deforestation. Humanity has entered the geological record, writing our own history into the very strata of the planet.[3]

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[3] It is not possible to provide a full explanation of the complexities and scope of climate and environmental science related to climate change. Nor is it my intention to provide an apologetic against skeptics. Following Pope Francis' lead in *Laudato Si* (nos. 7, 19, 62-63. Following typical scholarly convention all citations of ecclesiastical documents is by paragraph number, unless a paragraph number is not provided. In which case I use the page number of the edition. The edition of *Laudato Si* being cited here is Pope Francis, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, *The Encyclical of Pope Francis on the Environment with Commentary by Sean McDonagh* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2016 [2015])), I take for granted the overwhelming consensus among the scientific community on this topic and assume my readers will do the same. However, it is helpful to outline a few of the basics and enumerate some of the effects. Climate scientists observe that there has been an increase in atmospheric concentration of $CO_2$ from the pre-industrial level of 280ppm (parts per million) to over 400ppm with an average yearly increase of approximately 2ppm. These numbers commit the planet to about 1.5 degrees Celsius of increased average temperature. Effects of a changing climate are anything but benign and include mass extinctions, or what has been called the sixth mass extinction, sea level rise and the resulting displacement of coastal and island populations, droughts and other extreme weather events, and ocean acidification. Pollution, drought, heat waves, rising seas, and ecosystem collapse has already led to the displacement of millions of people and threatens to exacerbate violent political conflicts over scarce natural resources, especially water. Should we exceed certain "tipping points" related to global average temperature increase, we would risk creating what climate scientists call a series of positive feedback loops or "runaway climate change." In this scenario the effects of initial warming will generate more warming in a vicious cycle. For example, global temperature increases lead to increased Arctic ice melt in the summer months. The water then holds more heat from an already warming atmosphere leading to further ice melt. Finally, it is important to note that climate change is what David Orr calls a "long emergency." $CO_2$ remains in the atmosphere for centuries and the effects we feel now are

Writing in 1989, Bill McKibben suggests that we have reached "the end of nature." The human influence on planetary systems is now so pervasive and global that there is nowhere you can look and not see or feel the human influence. It has extended beyond strip malls, highways, hydro-electric dams, mountain-top removal sites, natural gas pipelines, patches of garbage floating in the Pacific Ocean, and timber yards, to impact the very structure of the biosphere itself. We have entirely made the world over in our own image, an image that is anything but reflective of the holy.[4]

Humanity is disrupting the relatively stable climatic system of the last 10,000 years, which geologists call the Holocene. Further, the human influence will be felt for centuries to come. For these reasons, climate scientists and geologists have suggested that we have entered into a new geological era in planetary history, which some have called "the Anthropocene," or the human epoch, owing to the anthropogenic, or human-made, causes of these biospheric changes.[5]

related to emissions increases from decades earlier. In other words, even if industrialized nations reached net-zero emissions today, the planet would continue to warm for decades to come and it will take centuries to reach pre-industrial levels once again. This summary draws from James Gustave Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing From Crisis to Sustainability* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); John S. Dryzek, Richard Norgaard, and David Schlosberg, *Climate-Challenged Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); David Orr, *Dangerous Years: Climate Change, the Long Emergency, and the Way Forward* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). See also, Damian Carrington, "Avoiding meat and dairy is 'single biggest way' to reduce your impact on Earth," *theguardian.com,* May 31, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/ environment/2018/may/31/avoiding-meat-and-dairy-is-single-biggest-way-to-reduce-your-impact-on-earth (accessed March 3, 2019); Tim McDonnell, "The Refugees The World Barely Pays Attention To," *npr.org*, June 20, 2018, https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/06/20/621782275/the-refugees-that-the-world-barely-pays-attention-to (accessed March 25, 2019); Chapters of commentary by Sean McDonagh in Pope Francis, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, *The Encyclical of Pope Francis on the Environment with Commentary by Sean McDonagh* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2016 [2015]).

[4] Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Random House, 1989).

[5] While the use of this concept first appeared among atmospheric and geological scientists, its implications were quickly applied to the humanities and human sciences. Many texts offer excellent insight into the origins of the term and the debates surrounding the scientific and socio-cultural implications of the term. See especially, John S. Dryzek, Richard Norgaard, and David Schlosberg, *Climate-Challenged Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), chapter 7; Jeremy Davies, *The Birth of the Anthropocene*

We have moved from an era of localized environmental degradation characterized by dustbowls, polluted watersheds, and smog into one of changing global systems. The whole Earth has become a sacrifice zone. These costs however are not fairly allocated. A disproportionate burden of costs and a minimum of so-called benefits are placed upon low-income communities, especially those of color, which have become the dumping grounds of colonial, consumer, capitalist modernity. As Steve Lerner notes, studies find a "clear and unequivocal class and racial bias in the distribution of environmental hazards."[6] In a meta-analysis of data related to disparities in the distribution of environmental hazards, Harvey White found that "racial disparities were found in 87 percent of the studies and income disparities were found in 74 percent."[7] Pope Francis asserts that the world's sacrifice zones and their inhabitants are owed an "ecological debt" by those who have benefitted disproportionally by the crucifixion of these paschal places.[8]

Early Christian monks had the habit of referring to the natural world as a book alongside scripture through which God reveals Godself to humanity.[9] Human greed, pride, and desire for control has overwritten God's self-communication and, in the process, our ability to read this sacred grammar is being lost in translation. Much like the

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(Oakland: University of California Press, 2016); Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016); Jason Moore, ed., *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016).

[6] Steve Lerner, *Sacrifice Zones: The Front Lines of Toxic Chemical Exposure in the United States* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 5.

[7] Harvey L. White, "Race, Class, and Environmental Hazards," in *Environmental Injustices, Political Struggles: Race, Class, and the Environment*, ed. David E. Camacho (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 63; see also Paul Mohai and Bunyan Bryant, "Environmental Injustice: Weighing Race and Class as Factors in the Distribution of Environmental Hazards," *University of Colorado Law Review* 63 (1992): 921-932.

[8] *LS*, no 51.

[9] Elizabeth Theokritoff, *Living in God's Creation: Orthodox Perspectives on Ecology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Press, 2009), 57-59.

early human community which sought to transcend their own limits by building a tower skyward, our language has been confused (Gen. 11: 1-9).[10] On the one hand, the problem is not a new one. Humanity's failure to respect the limits set by a place is one of, if not *the*, principal drama of the Judeo-Christian scriptures. As Walter Brueggemann reflects, "land is a central, if not *the central theme* of biblical faith."[11] I will explore the implications for faith more directly in chapter three below. For now, it is enough to observe that the theological tradition taps into an enduring ethical and socio-cultural tension that has plagued humanity at least since the emergence of Neolithic agrarian societies approximately 10,000 years ago and well into modern industrial societies (though until recently the consequences were only local in their effects).[12] Identifying our current epoch as one of overwhelming human influence raises ethical and structural questions that will be explored throughout this dissertation.

*Bioregionalism*

Bioregionalism proposes an alternative, less-traveled path through the history of modernity and capitalism that allows us an opportunity to critically and intentionally reflect upon our relationship with the land. More exactly, bioregionalism finds its way by

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[10] All scriptural references in this dissertation are NRSV

[11] Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 3.

[12] Jared Diamond explores how societies throughout history have engineered their own collapse due in large part to the unintended consequences of environmental overreach, mismanagement, or a failure to read their watershed or bioregion. Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Viking, 2005), 6. Of course, climate change is not the only threat facing Earth. Human activity continues to have significant localized effects in the form of pollution of air, soil, and water with toxic chemicals and trash.

going "off the path," convinced that "in Wildness is the preservation of the World."[13]

Bioregionalism begins with the conviction that,

> flora and fauna and landforms are *part of the culture*…Bioregional awareness teaches us in *specific* ways. It is not enough just to 'love nature' or to want to 'be in harmony with Gaia.' Our relationship to the natural world takes place in a *place*, and it must be grounded in information and experience.[14]

Indeed, we could say that we are *catechized* by our places.

Bioregionalism draws on the epistemological and anthropological views of primary peoples[15] around the world to heal the profound separation between human and more-than-human life in the Anthropocene.[16] Repairing this fracture requires cultivating what

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[13] Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1990), 155-165; Thoreau, "Walking," in *The Classical American Pragmatists,* 89.

[14] Snyder, 40-42. Sociologist Bruno Latour has developed the concept of Nature/Culture to express the inseparability of these concepts, often treated separately or in isolation. See Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2017 [2015]), 15-16.

[15] I find this turn of phrase borrowed from Gary Snyder helpful. It avoids the pejorative connotations sometimes attached to "primitive" and even "indigenous." It highlights a preferential attitude for colonized peoples, which has been encouraged by the Catholic bishops at the Amazon Synod in their final document (see no. 27). See Snyder, *Practice of the Wild*; Amazon Synod, *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology* (2019).

[16] While bioregionalists take seriously the epistemological and cultural traditions of Earth's primary peoples it is worth noting that this tradition has not always been adequately committed to and conversant with a politics of decolonization and the contemporary political struggles of Indigenous people. Indeed, Wes Jackson, Wendell Berry, and others tend to speak of Native Americans in the past tense, focusing instead on how white settlers might become native to their places through ecological stewardship, occluding the ongoing reality of *dis*placement experienced by primary peoples of Turtle Island and elsewhere. In other words, it is important for bioregionalism to develop a politics that engages with and reflects on the contemporary and ongoing reality of settler privilege. As Brenna Cussen Anglada notes, reflecting on the Catholic Worker tradition's commitment to something that resembles bioregional ideals expressed through Catholic Worker farming communes, the land to which white settlers are seeking to return is stolen land. Colonization is not a past-tense experience but an ongoing reality. Cussen Anglada notes, "once we know whose land we are on, and have educated ourselves about the history of the area and its current struggles, we can begin to ask permission to be there. We can also ask to join one of the ongoing Indigenous-led struggles for land and self-determination taking place all over the continent." Commitment to Indigenous cultural and epistemological values needs to be connected to a politics of decolonization if it wishes to avoid mere 'appropriation.' Many of these struggles are explicitly connected to the fossil fuel extractive economy such as recent actions against the Kinder-Morgan Pipeline in Canada or the Dakota Access Pipeline in the United States. See Brenna Cussen Anglada, "Decolonization and the Catholic Worker," in *Catholic Worker Thought and Action*. PDF shared by the author; Brenna Cussen Anglada, "Back to the (Stolen) Land," *The Catholic Worker Anti-Racism Review* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 9.

anthropologist Eduardo Kohn insightfully calls an "anthropology beyond the human."[17] At first what Western eyes might see as a contradiction or logical impossibility would, from the perspective of many primary communities, be more like correcting a long-standing misperception responsible for centuries of violence against human and more-than-human communities. Indeed, primary peoples have long viewed the self, culture, political economy, and God as radically integrative with flora, fauna, and landscape. Humans are corn-people, whale-people, agave-people, reindeer-people, and so forth.[18] Rather than clinging to our humanity as a badge of pride or mark of separation we might learn to embrace our "placed creatureliness."[19] As Gary Snyder asks, "do you really believe you are an animal?...It is a wonderful piece of information."[20]

Cultivating an anthropology beyond the human suggests the need for a different epistemological outlook, which rejects the Promethean mindset of the Baconian-Cartesian worldview (this will be explored in chapter one). Wes Jackson suggests that we adopt an "ignorance-based worldview," which takes as its starting point the conviction "human ignorance will always exceed and outpace human knowledge." Jackson continues,

> *we cannot do better than nature…*ecosystems become our standards because they represent the best example of what is optimally efficient anywhere across the

[17] Eduardo Kohn, *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

[18] Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild,* 52-57; George Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), chapter 4; James Perkinson, *Messianism Against Christology: Resistance Movements, Folk Arts, and Empire* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 8; James Perkinson, *Political Spirituality in an Age of Eco-Apocalypse: Communication and Struggle Across Species, Cultures, and Religions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 4.

[19] Ched Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology: Theological, Hermeneutic, and Practical Reflections," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 204.

[20] Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild*, 16.

ecological mosaic of the ecosphere…the economy of nature works without us, without our knowledge of every minute detail, we can be comfortable in our ignorance.[21]

Attention to place is an important pedagogical and political strategy for responding to climate change. Ecotheologian Celia Deane-Drummond

> suggest[s] we be generally wary of most, if not all, grand narrative accounts that are universalist in scope, including Gaia, big history, and the New Creation Story, without giving up on the recognition of the need for stories of some kind. Stories that are helpful, I argue, are locally-textured, dramatic ones that make the perception of grander, cosmological-scale dramas far more manageable because they allow human beings to imagine themselves as agents in those stories.[22]

By focusing on our own places we can begin to experience ourselves as agents capable of transforming global systems and structures that often feel beyond our own ability to influence.

*Defining Place*

At the center of this dissertation is the belief that place matters. This fact isn't always recognized in our contemporary context. Global economies, the information age, the ease and frequency of transportation, the tendency to move often, and the ubiquity of consumer goods make the world feel very small and homogenize experience. In the words of the free-market economist, Thomas Friedman, the world is "flat."[23] These

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[21] Wes Jackson, "Toward and Ignorance-Based Worldview," in *The Virtues of Ignorance: Complexity, Sustainability, and the Limits of Knowledge*, eds. Bill Vitek and Wes Jackson (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 24-25; Bill Vitek and Wes Jackson, "Introduction: Taking Ignorance Seriously," in *The Virtues of Ignorance: Complexity, Sustainability, and the Limits of Knowledge*, eds. Bill Vitek and Wes Jackson (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 7; see also, Wes Jackson, *Becoming Native to This Place* (Washington, DC: Counterpoint, 1994), 23-26.

[22] Celia Deane-Drummond, "Performing the Beginning *in* the End: A Theological Anthropology for the Anthropocene," in *Religion in the Anthropocene*, eds. Celia Deane-Drummond, Sigurd Bergmann, and Markus Vogt (Eugene: Cascade, 2017), 177.

[23] Thomas Friedman, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century,* 3rd ed. (New York: Picador, 2007 [2005]).

trends impact both how we educate and what we view as the ends of education. Wes Jackson notes, "universities now offer only one serious major: upward mobility. Little attention is paid to educating the young to return home, or to go some place, and dig in. There is no such thing as a 'homecoming' major."[24] At the same time, there is evidence of nostalgia for a sense of place and a desire to reconnect with "nature," particularly as our awareness of the climate crisis deepens and we come to terms with the human role in generating that crisis. Place, or places, whether we recognize it or not, whether we create space for it in naming our experience or not, make us who we are.

*Place is More Than Human*

'Place' offers certain advantages over similar terms such as 'context' or 'social location' because it immediately evokes a geographic area, which necessarily includes ecological features. In other words, the concept of nature is also suggested when we speak of a place, bringing into focus the interrelationship between the built environments of our unique species history, the structures of more-than-human ecological systems, and the deep history of geological time.[25]

For the purposes of educating in faith we could imagine this as the interrelationship between the built environment, natural ecological systems, and religious communities (as well as the theological and spiritual traditions that they pass on). As Pope Francis notes in

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[24] Jackson, *Becoming Native to This Place,* 3. In a similar vein, Wendell Berry recommends that in a world of constant movement education should seek to answer the question "where are we?" Quoted in Jack Baker and Jeffrey Bilbro, *Wendell Berry and Higher Education: Cultivating Virtues of Place* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017), 18-19.

[25] For this definition I rely on the work of place-based educator, David Sobel, whose work has been instrumental in defining and mapping this method of pedagogy and to which I will return in later chapters. See David Sobel, *Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities*, 2nd ed. (Great Barrington, MA: Orion, 2013 [2004]), 11-3; Gregory A. Smith and David Sobel, *Place and Community Based Education in Schools* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 21.

*Laudato Si*, "we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental."[26] Scripture scholar and activist, Ched Myers, emphasizes that the climate crisis requires that "environmental and social justice and sustainability be integral to everything we do as Christians and citizen inhabitants of specific places."[27] Emphases on conservation, stewardship of resources, and objective scientific knowledge are limiting to the extent that they maintain an implicit human/nature binary. Of course, it is important and necessary to conserve, steward, and understand natural systems. It is *more* important to admit that climate change presents humanity with a political, economic, and cultural challenge to enlarge our ethical imagination to *include* more-than-human beings and ecosystems. The latter better enables us to deconstruct the hierarchical elements of the human/nature binary. We can maintain a unique vision of our own species and our species vocation without assuming our superiority.

Theologies framed around creation care or ecological stewardship only reinforce the human/nature binary, keeping the focus on human agency. From a bioregionalist perspective this sounds like a form of enlightened paternalism. I would suggest an emphasis on kinship with Creation, or more simply, Creation kinship.[28] Influenced by

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[26] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si,* no. 139.

[27] Ched Myers, "A Critical, Contextual, and Constructive Approach to Ecological Theology and Practice," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 2.

[28] Some ecotheologians, particularly those influenced by ecofeminism, have begun to draw on the language of kinship; however, more work could be done to apply the concept of kinship more consistently and systematically. See in particular, Elizabeth Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 101, 237; Ilia Delio, Keith Douglass Warner, and Pamela Wood, *Care for Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger, 2008), 81-107. In the field of ecotheory, Timothy Morton's *Humankind: Solidarity with Nonhuman People* (London: Verso, 2017) is an excellent resource for this type of thinking.

theologies of liberation and other movements for social justice the attitude of 'doing for' has shifted toward 'doing with.' True solidarity entails working for empowerment and self-determination alongside oppressed and excluded groups, privileging subjugated forms of knowledge. I would suggest that bioregionalism encourages expanding this attitude in a multi-species direction, extending the logic of liberation to more-than-human life and systems. This is essential for attending to the reality of the climate crisis and eliminating the presence of sacrifice zones from our ecological and geographic imaginations.

*Place is More Than a Locale*

Place is always in process and the local always opens out into the global. For example, we cannot separate extractive industry in Appalachia from the desire for cheap, affordable energy to power U. S. consumer lifestyles. Barbara Ellen Smith, drawing on the work of feminist geographer, Doreen Massey, challenges static understandings of place as constituting a bounded political, cultural, or geographic unit. Smith draws attention to the interactive and relational processes that link places, noting that the global and local are mutually constituting realities. This "extroverted" understanding of place allows for the possibility of a "*global* politics of *place*" in which "struggles over land, culture, nature, and identity" are able to open up space for the creation of new meanings and structures of place.[29] Attention to ecological and bioregional systems is again helpful.

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[29] Barbra Ellen Smith, "Transforming Places: Toward a Global Politics of Appalachia," in *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters*, eds. Dwight Billings and Ann E. Kingsolver (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018), 52, 60. Geographers typically distinguish concepts of space and place, defining space as empty and place as meaning-laden space. See Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 3-7. The sociologist Michel de Certeau similarly distinguishes these concepts, although using them in opposite fashion. See *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). For some

As Timothy Morton reflects, "the thing about ecological contexts is that you can't draw a line around them in advance, because ecology is profoundly about interdependence."[30] Attention to the interdependence of places necessarily provokes a consideration of how power circulates in and among places.

In response to the sometimes-accurate assumption that local history or regional studies adopts an acritical, inward-looking, or provincial methodology, some scholars, such as Douglas Reichert Powell, have adopted an approach to studying place they refer to as critical regionalism. This perspective on place pays attention to how places exist within "a regional network of communities, themselves enmeshed in a broader network of cultural conflicts and interconnections." Critical regionalism works to interrogate these relationships and the ways in which place and region are "social inventions," serving political, economic, and cultural interests of powerful groups. As Powell continues,

> region is a social construction that can be and indeed continually is shaped by the practices of its inhabitants, and that region can be a social invention used deliberately to transform the politics and culture of the landscape, a critical regionalism works in solidarity with the historically disempowered populations of its communities to transform their local material circumstances while linking their particular struggles to larger ones.[31]

geographers, such as David Harvey, these concepts exist dialectically in opposition. See *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 1989). As noted, feminist geographer, Doreen Massey sees the concepts as complementary and mutually constituting. See *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994). Some geographers are critical of concepts of place, seeing them as reactionary and insular, while space is viewed as expansive. Harvey again in *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (New York: Routledge, 2001) and *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996). Others, such as Barbara Ellen Smith suggest a positive and liberative politics of place. See above and Barbara Ellen Smith and Stephen Fisher, "Transformations in Place," in *Transforming Places: Lessons from Appalachia*, eds. Barbara Ellen Smith and Stephen Fisher (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012): 267-292.

[30] Morton, *Humankind*, 110.

[31] Douglas Reichert Powell, *Critical Regionalism: Connecting Politics and Culture in the American Landscape* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 18-19, 26. A potential critique, and a point made below in the subsequent section, is a need for clarity on what is meant by connecting local or regional struggles to 'larger ones.' Barbara Ellen Smith and John Gaventa, writing separately, note a tendency to imagine that local struggles for justice must connect hierarchically with global organizing

What is the network of relationships *between* places in and through which certain imagined geographies make sense and specific material geographies are structured and maintained, allowing power to be located in certain places as opposed to others? I will consider how people of faith can join conversations about the politics of place by engaging in critical reflection on how our institutions and theological foundations have contributed to various politics of place.

Place-based educators observe that beginning with our own place encourages direct participation in global systems of social, cultural, economic, and political production. When we focus on our own places we challenge the narrative that "nothing can happen outside the Beltline, Manhattan, or the computer capitals in the Bay Area and Puget Sound."[32] In a parallel move, focusing on place reminds us that hegemonic economic and epistemic systems originating in Europe and the U. S. are themselves local. When the local and global are viewed in critical, mutually self-constituting interrelationship then

projects. This tendency to 'scale up' and work with national and global campaigns can result in the loss of collaboration in defining an issue and a loss of voice for local communities and activists. Both Smith and Gaventa suggest a need to imagine organizing and building power horizontally and laterally, encountering each other and collaborating directly in a mutually supportive fashion through different but interlinked *local* struggles, lending mutual support, sharing insights, and strategizing. See Smith, "Transforming Places"; John Gaventa, "The Power of Place and the Place of Power," in *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters,* eds. Dwight Billings and Ann E. Kingsolver (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018). This critique echoes a point emphasized by decolonial scholars. Peripheral regions have typically related to each other only through centers of power and rarely speak to one another through horizontal networks. See Enrique Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation: In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*, ed. Alejandro Vallega, trans. Eduardo Mendieta, Camilo Pérez Bustillo, Yolanda Angulo, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013 [1997]), 45. For example, in Appalachia anti-mountaintop removal mining movements demand stronger environmental regulations from state and national government. At the same time, those protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline do the same. These movements do not typically strategize together and lend each other mutual support. The same also applies to apparently divergent struggles for justice. Movements for racial, environmental, gender, and Indigenous justice do not always think and strategize together about how their movements are connected and how they can provide mutual support for diverse struggles.

[32] Smith and Sobel, *Place and Community Based Education in Schools*, 44.

our task is not to turn inward against ostensibly outside forces but to build alternative networks of power that seek to connect places in new ways.

*Place is Power-laden*

Focusing on the interrelationship between places highlights how power operates in and on places and allows us to think about history, the story of places, more spatially than chronologically.[33] In other words, because place is non-linear it challenges the modern concept of history as the march of progress and the advance of 'civilization.' When we turn our attention to life in the sacrifice zones of industrial capitalism and colonial conquest, when we hear the stories of climate refugees, and when we see how the privileges of life in one place have downstream consequences for life in other places, we trouble narratives of history as progress, of Europe as the bearer of cultural civility and enlightened knowledge, and capitalism as source of material wealth and comfort.

How place is defined, experienced, and understood plays an important role in what the French philosopher, Michel Foucault, calls the circulation of power. As Foucault observes,

> a whole history remains to be written of *spaces*—which would at the same time be the history of *powers* (both of these terms in the plural)—from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat, institutional architecture from the classroom to the design of hospitals, passing via economic and political installations.[34]

A pedagogy of place is interested in reflecting upon, analyzing, critiquing, and crafting places. By involving human and more-than-human beings in dialogues of 'place matters'

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[33] Gaventa, "The Power of Place and the Place of Power," 91, 94; See also Smith and Fisher, "Transformations in Place," 268-272.

[34] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Vintage, 1980), 149.

they enact power that is participatory and consultative. Most significantly, we do much more than learn *about* place—its history and socio-economic and ecological formation—we learn to *craft* place, by bringing these histories and formations into dialogue with our own stories, future visions, and horizontal relationships with other places. As Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor puts it "home is the crucible of struggle." Taylor explains,

> creating home, or what may also be described as a struggle to belong, has always been political in the United States. In a country founded on the extermination of its indigenous population, whose wealth was derived from the forced labor of the enslaved, and for whom that wealth was multiplied a trillion times over through the violent expropriation of waves of immigrant labor—to stay or belong has been brutally contested and valiantly fought to achieve.[35]

Place is not a sentimental category. Even the use of place to evoke certain sentiments is an effort to claim space and cultivate a specific politics of place and belonging (Donald Trump enacts such a politics with his 'make America great again' slogan). Again, place is process and the result of this process is a constant shifting and circulating of power in, of, and over place.

Appalachia, for example, is no one thing. There is no one Appalachian narrative or history. The meanings it evokes and the experiences of place it holds are multiple and contested, likely even conflicting within the terrain of a single person's story. Some

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[35] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "Home is the Crucible of Struggle," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 2 (June 2017): 229. Elsewhere Taylor and colleagues identify the ways in which place is made and space is claimed within places despite the strategies of oppressive and exclusionary social forces. For Taylor and colleagues, placemaking is always a struggle. It is a *positive* political task against those forces of extractive consumer capitalism that threaten the ability of certain environments to provide nourishing habitats. The neoliberal logic of *individual* freedom and social and spatial mobility replace civic and biotic commitments with consumer identities and desires focused on economic growth and accumulation of wealth. Place-making occurs in the midst of these assaults through practices of "endurance, belonging, and resistance through social interaction." See Marcus Anthony Hunter, Mary Pattillo, Zandria Robinson, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "Black Placemaking: Celebration, Play, and Poetry," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 33, nos. 7-8 (2016): 31-56. At the same time, returning to Gaventa and Smith, we should not think of the forces of extraction as concerned only with unmaking place. Those who are committed to these ideologies have their own politics of place. In what I will call the logic extraction the making of some places depends on the destruction of others.

people may even experience in their own life's geography the competing pull of various representations of place. They might love and defend Appalachia as 'home' against negative stereotypes and extractive industry or feel nostalgic about the 'simpler time' that is evoked by images of hillside cabins where grandma's quilt is draped over the bed grandpa made with wood from trees on the family land. The same person might express disgust at racism, sexism, and homophobia that permeates many Appalachian communities. They might further become uneasy when they reflect on how their ancestors were party to the slaughter and displacement of primary peoples. They might nevertheless be frustrated by the way economic realities drive them away from this place in which they long to stay. It is also important to interrogate *who* we imagine when we call to mind this ideal, if conflicted, Appalachian subject. Do we create space for female, Indigenous, black, gay subjectivities in places that are often imagined as settler, white, straight, and male?

If place is produced then understanding what John Gaventa refers to as "the power of place and the place of power" requires examining the discourses, practices, and relationships between places that influence place-stories.[36] Appalachia's *place* as a sacrifice zone is a result of its relationship to other *places* within the networks of

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[36] Gaventa examines how place is constructed through the complex interactions of forms, spaces, and levels of power. He examines how the formation of power determines whose "voices, identities, issues, and agendas" are given visibility, whose remain hidden, and whose remain invisible or unarticulated. Second, Gaventa notes that the place of power is determined by the spaces in which power is articulated and enacted. Some spaces remain closed to certain people, while others may have access through invitation; finally, there are those spaces that are claimed. In each case, our sense of power *and* place are influenced by the spaces in which we find ourselves. Finally, Gaventa views power as "multi-layered." Local, national, and global systems and actors from household relationships to transnational corporations influence power. I would add to Gaventa's formulation greater attention to the role of more-than-human actors. Global climate change and more localized forms of environmental pollution or environmental health and management also shape the power of place and the place of power within our material and imaginative landscapes. See Gaventa, "The Power of Place and the Place of Power."

neoliberal globalization and industrial capitalism. Who gets to speak for Appalachia, and who gets to claim Appalachia as a place? With whom and with what is Appalachia identified? All of these questions determine the place of power in Appalachia, Appalachia's place within networks of power, and the place of certain groups, individuals, and systems within Appalachia.

*Lessons for educating in faith*

How do we bring place into education in faith? Additionally, asked from another angle, what happens when we read our tradition through the lens of place? These questions are the topic of this dissertation. It is not enough to add a unit on 'care for creation' into our curriculum, placing it alongside other social justice issues. What is necessary is an entirely new way of approaching our theological foundations and our praxis of educating in faith.

It is the suggestion of this dissertation that if education in Christian faith is to respond in a prophetic manner to climate change it should adopt a model of place-based pedagogy as foundational to Christian religious education. To cultivate such a model, I draw upon Thomas Groome's method of Shared Christian Praxis. More recently, Groome has defined his approach as a "life to faith to life" dynamic. I propose an approach that cultivates Groome's insights with particular attention to ecological justice, suggesting movements from "place to faith to place." Learners are invited to interrogate in critical fashion their own life's geography examining the complex and often contradictory relationship we have to places, drawing on our theological and ecclesial traditions to help us in a journey of coming home to our places.

Faith is found not in spite of but in the heart of the world's sacrifice zones. It is in wild places that faith is born and hope is found. I believe that it is in these sacrifice zones that we must look if faith is to be found. Sasha Adkins invites us to reinhabit our 'garbage-sheds,' living lovingly amidst those people and places consumer society has used up and thrown away. We find in their broken beauty our own place as a people of resurrection.[37] Returning to Thoreau, today, if our creeds are going to be honest, if they are going to speak truthfully, they must say "I believe in the mountain top removal site, I believe in the Pacific Ocean garbage patch, I believe in those people, places, and more-than-human beings who have died before their time. And I believe they can live again."

*An Outline of the Dissertation*

The first two chapters focus on place and Groome's first two movements of Shared Christian Praxis.[38] Chapter one offers a brief history of the Anthropocene and then explores how this history has been experienced in the specific place of Appalachia. For educators in faith, I begin with this history to better understand the stereotypes and myths that have shaped our understanding of Appalachia and to better understand the lives of young people living in the region's sacrifice zones.

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[37] Sasha Adkins, "Plastics as a Spiritual Crisis," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 154-167.

[38] Groome's method contains five pedagogical movements, which I will discuss further in chapter four. These are 1.) responding to a proposed theme or focusing activity as it pertains to one's own life; 2.) reflecting critically on that theme through conversation; 3.) bringing "Christian Story and Vision" into focus as it relates to the theme or focusing activity; 4.) reflecting critically on the relationship between the treatment of the theme in the Christian Story/Vision and present experience; 5.) making decisions for our personal and collective life in light of what has been learned. See *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, The Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1991), chapters 5-10; *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), chapter 9.

Chapter two orients us to the Anthropocene's impact on human psychosocial development. I begin this chapter by examining the role of place in human development, drawing on the theoretical work of Urie Bronfenbrenner and Lev Vygotsky. How are we shaped by immediate and more distant contexts, relationships, and structures (both human and more-than-human) in which our lives are embedded and which we in turn participate and actively shape through our presence and action? Next, I turn to Positive Youth Development theory and research as developed by Jacqueline and Richard Lerner as an application of Bronfenbrenner's work to adolescent development theory. Finally, I examine the role of youth activism in cultivating an empowered and justice-oriented sense of place in the promotion of positive development. I suggest this approach is particularly salient for faith formation.

Chapter three turns more explicitly to faith, reflecting on the scriptural land ethic and Jesus' own relationship to place. As noted above, scripture scholar Walter Brueggemann places the theme of land and the human relationship to place at the center of biblical hermeneutics. While it would be anachronistic to view the Hebrews as modern day environmentalists, questions of land *and* sovereignty, or place and power, were central to their concerns. Norman Habel adds complexity to Brueggemann's insight by suggesting that the Hebrew Scriptures are a patchwork of competing land ideologies and *internal* debates about the power of place and place of power, borrowing Gaventa's formulation cited above.[39] I suggest that questions of land and sovereignty, place and power, and their interrelations were of great importance to the Jesus Movement. Appreciating this informs how we educate in faith today in light of the realities of climate change, extractive

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[39] Norman Habel, *The Land is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

economies, and the displacement of persons and more-than-human beings. Given the long history of Christianity providing an *imprimatur* for colonization it is crucial that we reclaim the radically anti-imperial agenda of Jesus of Nazareth if we are truly to be disciples of Christ today. To this end, I focus specifically on Jesus Christ the decolonizer.

Chapter four reflects more fully on a pedagogy of place and the praxis of education in faith from a place-based perspective. In this chapter I outline key principles and practices of place-based education. I also place this tradition in the wider context of what is known as progressive education. Given my preferential option for sacrifice zones, I emphasize the need for place-based education committed to practices of healing, critical consciousness, and decolonization through an engagement with the work of Nel Noddings and Paulo Freire. In the second half of this chapter, I examine what has been called the socialization theory of education in faith. Drawing on the work of Thomas Groome and decolonial pedagogies, I then ask how religious educators and ministers can practice a critically conscious place-based model of pedagogy. Finally, I outline concrete pedagogical strategies to guide educators in faith (parents, ministers, classroom educators) in what I call a critical Creation-centered pedagogy. I give special attention to summer camps as a setting for advancing this pedagogy.

Chapter five returns to place, and in particular Appalachia. I look to the work of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA) as a resource for considering how a sense of place and a sense of faith can enter into critical exchange. I examine significant ministerial experiments associated with CCA *and* the series of pastoral letters produced by CCA in 1975, 1995, and 2015. The chapter brings us full circle and seeks a tentative

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answer to the question posed at the beginning of this introduction, where is faith to be found?

Finally, in a concluding chapter, I offer a summary of core learnings from each chapter, takeaways for educators in faith, reasons and grounds for future hope, and an invitation to future research.

**Chapter One**

**A Life's Geography: The Politics of Place in Appalachia**

*"What is it like to be you in this place?"*—The Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home*[1]

*"The culture of good place-making, like the culture of farming, or agriculture, is a body of knowledge and acquired skills. It is not bred in the bone, and if it is not transmitted from one generation to the next, it is lost."*—James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere*[2]

Earth should be regarded as our first and primary teacher. Just as our creed begins with Creation, so too should education in faith. Indeed, theologian George Tinker laments the fact that theologians tend to focus first on the *humanity* of Jesus Christ at the expense of God the *Creator of Heaven and Earth*, particularly when addressing issues of justice and peace.[3] This chapter, then, suggests that thinking in terms of *place* as the starting point for theological education can serve as a crucial tool for education in the context of global environmental change, which, as noted in the introduction, is in many ways a crisis of *dis*placement as communities attend to the realities of air, water, and soil pollution and many are forced to migrate as a result of economic development projects, violent conflicts over scarce resources, or flooding, drought, and forest fires. Discipleship to Christ must be conditioned by discipleship to God, *Creator of Heaven and Earth.* If we

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[1] Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories That Shape Us, A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia* (Spencer, WV: Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 2015), 9.

[2] James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape* (New York: Touchstone, 1993), 113.

[3] George Tinker, *American Indian Liberation: A Theology of Sovereignty* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 36-39, 44-47.

are to follow Jesus and understand his mission and ministry in its fullness then we need to become disciples of our places and of our watersheds.[4]

In the introduction I established a hermeneutic for the land to guide this dissertation's critical analysis of how educators in faith can work with their students to respond to climate change. I now seek to apply that hermeneutic in an effort to understand the roots of the ecological crisis. In this chapter I trace the roots of the Anthropocene[5] to a logic of "extractivism," which takes from Earth and the poor without any return. I examine what I call the 3 C's of extractivism: colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism. I note how these interlocking systems, which are both historical and present realities, have shaped the human relationship to place and influence the types of solutions we seek to the ethical and systemic injustices that places face daily. I then discuss how this logic has unfolded in the history of one place, Appalachia. I critically examine each phase of the Anthropocene in Appalachia and explore how social and discursive systems of extraction have shaped the history of our sense of Appalachia.

Each educator in faith is invited to bring a similar analysis to their own place. Indeed, place-based education stresses the importance of grounding our own experience of place and accompanying our students in articulating their personal narratives of place while grounding them in a critical sense of history. This requires escaping myths by identifying the root causes of present relationships of power.

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[4] George Tinker, *Spirit and Resistance: Political Theology and American Indian Liberation* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 43-46, 91-99; Ched Myers, "A Critical, Contextual, and Constructive Approach to Ecological Theology and Practice," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 7-19.
[5] Recall that the Anthropocene, or 'the human epoch,' which was discussed in the introduction, refers to the fact that humanity has become the dominant influence on global Earth systems.

Appalachia is the place that grounds me and maps the geography of my heart. It is a place I love and a place to which I am fiercely committed. I invite you to take a moment and close your eyes so that you might think about and envision a place that has equivalent meaning in your own heart and experience. As you read what follows, reflect on what it might mean to engage in a similar practice in that place that is home to you. What significance might this have for your own work as a theologian, minister, or educator? I also invite you to think about how your place is connected to the place of Appalachia. As we think about the specificity of our place it is important to also recognize that all places are connected. What is your relationship to the place-story I am going to share with you? How would you imagine building movements of solidarity with each other? What would it look like if we were to encounter each other? What hurdles do you imagine our places might face in such a process of place to place encounter? Should you choose to do this, after you have contemplated your special place, please continue reading.

*The Logic of Extraction*

How did we arrive at the Anthropocene? Beyond the question of the effects of humanity's influence is a need to discern root causes. This means thinking beyond the climate impact of a fossil fuel economy and requires thinking about climate change from a cultural and then theological perspective.

I suggest that the Anthropocene's origins are rooted in what sociologist Rebecca Scott refers to as a "logic of extraction," a specific way of being in relationship with the more-than-human in which Earth is conceptualized primarily as a storehouse of natural resources. Place is reduced to "abstract locality" and the land is viewed "essentially as

property." Within this system human lives are similarly commodified, valued only for their labor.[6] As a praxis of place, extractivism refers to a disregard for the limits and responsibilities planetary and ecological boundaries impose upon life. I identify what I call the 3 C's of extractivism—colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism—as the sources of the Anthropocene.[7] I treat these as three phases of the Anthropocene, which build upon each other.

What unifies the logic of extraction is the organization of socio-economic and political-cultural life around a human/nature binary in which the former is placed hierarchically over the latter. Certain groups of people were deemed to be outside of civilized society, usually because their social, economic, and religious systems didn't parallel those of their European colonizers. They were viewed as living in a 'state of nature,' which placed them outside of society and history. Being without history they were without agency. Being without society they were viewed as not fully human, making it that much easier to mistreat them, exploit their labor, and dismiss their cultural

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[6] Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains: Extracting Nature and Identity in the Appalachian Coalfields* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 1, 8; see also pages 12, 17-18; Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism Vs. the Climate* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 169-170; Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 3-4.

[7] These phases could just as easily be described as stages of capitalist development—colonial, industrial, and consumer capitalism—or stages of Modernity. By framing them as stages of the Anthropocene I hope to emphasize the changing human relationship to place and Earth systems as a way of framing both epistemological and economic changes. While I describe these as phases, it is important to seek traces of earlier stages in subsequent stages and hints of later stages in earlier stages. I am not positing a linear process. Indeed, the control of land as private property and the alienation of primary people from the living body of Earth persists today. For example, while commodification has taken on newer, subtler, and pervasive forms in our contemporary context, the exploitation of desire was certainly at work in earlier stages of capitalist development.

traditions and ways of knowing. Finally, it became a lot easier to dump the trash of the 'developed' world into these communities in the form of industrial pollution.[8]

*Colonialism*

How we date the Anthropocene will influence the ways in which we navigate and respond to its effects. Informed by the work of decolonial scholars, 1492 seems like a good place to start tracing the origins of extractivism as it impacts the Americas. In this first phase of the Anthropocene, 'improvement' is the primary value that orients the human relationship to place, and 'nature' becomes an object to be improved by human ability and civilizing powers.

A profound "remaking of land and labor" followed the colonization of what Europeans would call the Americas.[9] The 'discovery' of new land provided abundant raw materials and access to new and highly desired marketable goods such as sugar, coffee, timber, and precious metals. As Jason Moore points out, capitalism isn't simply a matter of economics. It also maps certain relationships between humans and nature. Ultimately, capitalism is better understood as a new form of "territorial power."[10] For these reasons we can better understand capitalism by tracing its emergence through colonialism and emphasizing how redefining the human/nature relationship in this period made modern capitalism possible. Indeed, Karl Marx is acutely aware of the interrelationship between the alienation of labor and the alienation of the laborer from the land. Marx describes

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[8] Jason W. Moore, "The Rise of Cheap Nature," in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. Jason Moore (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016), 79, 87, 91-92, 100; Sasha Adkins, "Plastics as a Spiritual Crisis," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 163-165.

[9] Moore, "The Rise of Cheap Nature," 94.

[10] *Ibid.,* 85.

nature as "man's [*sic*] *inorganic* body…Man *lives* from nature, i. e. nature is his *body*, and he must maintain a continuing dialogue with it if he is not to die. To say that man's physical and mental life is linked to nature simply means that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature."[11] Marx describes 'nature' under the conditions of capitalism as "dead matter" and observes "'the land, like man' had sunk to 'the level of a venal object.'"[12] The extraction of labor from Indigenous, slave, and peasant populations is paired with a new and emergent understanding of land as private property.

The legal system of enclosure of common lands across Europe and the *reducciones*[13] in the Americas reimagined land as a commodity. In Europe, enclosures mark the beginning of the end of the system of feudal obligations that gave people non-market access to land. Enclosures helped to generate an urban laboring class and freed-up the land for commercial uses, particularly raising sheep for wool.[14]

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[11] Karl Marx, quoted in John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 72.

[12] *Ibid.*, 74.

[13] *Reducciones,* or 'reductions,' was the name given to Spanish colonial missions in the Americas during the 16th to 18th centuries, many of which were established by religious orders such as the Jesuits. The process typically involved the forced resettlement of primary populations and the dedication of land to monocultural production in service to the extractive economy, representing what Gómez-Barris calls one of "the earliest forms of extractive reorganization in the Américas." See *The Extractive Zone,* 7, 67; George Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 18-20.

[14] Mercantilist philosophy and the enclosure system, which originated in England in the late 15th century, expanding rapidly throughout the United Kingdom and the European continent in the century that followed, were central to the emergence of early capitalism. Prior to the enclosure movement, land existed as a commons to which peasantry had access to sustain their livelihood. Although the peasantry did not own the land in feudal societies, it was not '*private* property'; rather, its use was governed by complex traditions of customary use and hierarchically organized communal obligations in which the land ultimately belonged to God, who was at the top of the holy order with the king or queen representing God on Earth. By enclosing land from common use, literally putting up walls and fences, it became available for commercial purposes and created a surplus labor force. Without access to land to sustain their material needs peasantry were forced to become wage earners in the emerging market economy. Indeed, it was the promise of land that brought many, particularly Scots-Irish peasants, to the U. S. frontier in Appalachia. See Christine Rider, *An Introduction to Economic History* (Cincinnati: South-Western College Publishing, 1995), 114-117, 128-130, 139-149. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States* (Boston:

Elsewhere, colonial management of the land and labor of the peripheries by the European center was coupled with the central management of their cultures. Colonized peoples were treated as being outside of history (including salvation history), as lacking culture, as savage (literally meaning 'of the forest'), and wild. From the perspective of colonizers, this meant that they too (like the land from which they came) needed to be improved and cultivated. Colonizers viewed themselves as a civilizing, salvific, and *humanizing* influence on these so-called primitive cultures and believed in a taken for granted, superior universality of their own system of rational management.[15]

Theological foundations and religious institutions through the so-called 'Doctrine of Discovery' gave support to this legal, cultural, and economic relationship to the land. The papal bulls *Dum Diversas* (1452) and *Romanus Pontifex* (1455), citing the Great Commission of Mt. 28: 16-20,[16] called for the conquest and conversion of primary peoples and their lands. In "1493 Pope Alexander VI called for non-Christian 'barbarous nations' to be subjugated and proselytized for the 'propagation of the Christian empire.'"[17] This theology of Christendom would later shape the discourse of U. S.

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Beacon, 2014), 32-36; Michael Northcott, *Place, Ecology, and the Sacred: The Moral Geography of Sustainable Communities* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 33-38; Jason Moore, "The Rise of Cheap Nature," 104; Steven Stoll, *Ramp Hollow: The Ordeal of Appalachia* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2017), 53-61.

[15] Enrique Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation: In the Age of Globalization and Exclusion*, ed. Alejandro Vallega, trans. Eduardo Mendieta, Camilo Pérez Bustillo, Yolanda Angulo, and Nelson Maldonado-Torres (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013 [1997]), 38-39.

[16] "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the names of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

[17] World Council of Churches, *Statement on the Doctrine of Discovery and its Enduring Impact on Indigenous Peoples*, oikoumene.org, February 17, 2012, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/executive-committee/2012-02/statement-on-the-doctrine-of-discovery-and-its-enduring-impact-on-indigenous-peoples (accessed August 29, 2020); see also Katerina Friesen, "The Great Commission: Watershed Conquest or Watershed Discipleship," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 33-35; Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy:*

American 'manifest destiny' and centuries later the same Doctrine of Discovery would become U. S. legal precedent through a series of U. S. legal decisions justifying U. S. claims to indigenous territory; this was cited as recently as 2005.[18] Primary peoples were placed outside of Church and civilization. By locating primary peoples in and with wild nature they too were 'emptied' of history and culture. Like the land, they were free to be tamed and claimed.

*Capitalism*

The technological and scientific advances that brought about the scientific and industrial revolutions owe much to the thought of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and René Descartes (1596-1650). On the one hand, empiricism and rationalism, the schools of thought associated with Bacon and Descartes respectively, have brought about many benefits to human society. Empiricism provides a system of scientific precision that offers the tools and ability to develop life-improving and life-sustaining technologies, allows for incredible advances in the field of medicine, and sharpens our ability to understand and describe the world around us. Rationalism encourages and nurtures human curiosity and the ability to question and challenge arbitrary authority, which helped give birth to movements for democracy, liberation, and civil rights.

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*Native American Social and Political Thought*, 10th Anniversary Edition (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2015 [2004]), 54-58.

[18] Grande, *Red Pedagogy*, 54-58; Friesen, "The Great Commission," 35; Miguel de la Torre, *Embracing Hopelessness* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 44-54. As George Tinker notes, even celebrated figures of Christianity such as Bartolomeo de las Casas who protested the violence of colonial conquest and affirmed the humanity of primary peoples never questioned the need for their Christianization and cultural assimilation or the conquest of their land. Las Casas simply hoped for less violent methods, or in his own words for a conquest that was "delicate, soft, and sweet." See Tinker, *Spirit and Resistance*, 103-105; Tinker, *Missionary Conquest*, 7-20.

At the same time, these philosophical systems of the so-called Enlightenment were also well suited to serve the interests of coloniality and capital, reflecting the class interests, cultural biases, and geopolitics of the philosophers who developed them. Enrique Dussel emphasizes that the philosophical and scientific systems of the 16th and 17th century, those most commonly associated with the origins of modernity, are really effects of colonialism that contributed to the production of modernity.[19]

Empiricism's descriptions of an objectively knowable, mechanistic universe, which is sharply distinguished from the human knower helps to underwrite and reinforce an understanding of land, of Earth, as private property or a commodity. In similar fashion, rationalism promotes a managerial mindset, which centralizes and simplifies knowledge and power in the hands of so-called experts, excluding the grassroots and experiential knowledge of the people. The search for universals has also contributed to a colonizing mindset, dismissing systems of thought and culture that are unique. Exclusion then is a primary effect of rationalism's managerial mindset, from which women, people of color, and those on the economic, cultural, and territorial margins of the capitalist economic system have been particularly made victims. Rationalism is blind to its own sense of place and its own parochialism as a system of thought local to parts of Europe and then expanding outward claiming space for itself through the exercise of technological power.[20]

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[19] Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation*, 35-36. See also Gregory Smith, *Education and the Environment: Learning to Live with Limits* (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1992), 27-28.

[20] Dussel, *Ethics of Liberation*, 26-37; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference,* New Edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007 [2000]); Smith, *Education and the Environment*, 20, 24-25, 33-37.

Though they are sometimes viewed as antagonists, owing to empiricism's emphasis on certainty and rationalism's emphasis on doubt, both systems advance an ontological (theory of being) and epistemological (theory of knowledge) system based on a profound separation of mind and body.[21] For Descartes "the entire universe is a great machine with no 'mind' or 'soul' in it, just inert matter interacting in a ceaseless chain of cause and effect."[22] In a similar fashion, the method of empiricism Francis Bacon pioneered in the 17th century disenchanted the world, making it "completely knowable and controllable."[23] Under this approach, the human relationship to Earth ceases to be based on "holistic participation" and focuses instead on "objective analysis of its component parts."[24]

With the invention of steam power by James Watt in 1776, the Anthropocene enters a new phase. Although colonialism had introduced a new, objectifying and instrumentalizing relationship to land through the emergence of private property and market economic structures that view Earth principally as a storehouse of 'natural resources,' economies were still reliant on Earth for economic production. The sun, water, wind, and animals dictated patterns of work, production, and transportation.

Fossil fuel power changed this and helped to advance and secure a capitalist future. Industrial capitalism is essentially about the disappearance of limits. Production is constrained only by technology and as technologies improve and become more efficient

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[21] Wes Jackson, *Becoming Native to This Place* (Washington, DC: 1994), 18-20.
[22] Anne Benvenuti, *Spirit Unleashed: Reimagining Human-Animal Relations* (Eugene: Cascade, 2014), 68. See also, Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, The Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1991), 59-63.
[23] Klein, *This Changes Everything,* 170.
[24] Smith, *Education and the Environment,* 23-24. It is worth noting, as Alice O'Connor explores in great detail, that an instrumental and rationalist approach has had a significant influence on 20th century anti-poverty programs. See *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U. S. History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

so too barriers to progress, achievement, and ability are eliminated. In other words, nature was no longer an absolute limit upon humanity, and human *knowing and ability* were thought to be the only limits. Of course, as the climate crisis makes clear, nature is not so much overcome as its response is "merely delayed."[25] Although capitalism does not begin with industrialization, a fossil fuel-based economy radically transforms the human relationship to place. The clock, calendar, and factory introduced new rhythms to daily life that were not based on the cycles of the day and seasons.[26] Industrial, technoscientific society once again remaps the human relationship to place, shifting our sense of belonging and allegiance. Indeed, grids—those of the energy grid and the land surveyor—shape the landscape of the Anthropcene in its second stage. Our politics of place is influenced more and more by the abstract, anthropocentric locality of nation states and city streets as opposed to a deep knowledge of watersheds, bioregions, and the fuller communities of life which inhabit them.[27] As Ched Myers notes, "Christians ought to recenter our citizen-identity in the *topography of creation* rather than in the *political geography of dominant cultural ideation*, in order to ground our discipleship practices in the watershed where we embody our faith."[28] I will explore this as a pedagogical task in chapters below.

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[25] Klein, *This Changes Everything*, 171-175.

[26] *Ibid.*, 172.

[27] Ched Myers, "A Critical, Contextual, and Constructive Approach to Ecological Theology and Practice," 13-15; David Pritchett, "Watershed Discipleship in Babylon: Resisting the Urban Grid," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 42-52.

[28] Myers, "A Critical, Contextual, and Constructive Approach to Ecological Theology and Practice," 15.

*Consumerism*

In the 1950s the Anthropocene enters a third phase, which is often called the "great acceleration," owing to the significant and rapid escalation in human engineered transformations of Earth and exploitation of more-than-human beings. After 1950, a post-World War II economy oriented around consumption begins to take shape. James Gustave Speth charts rapid increases in population, GDP, and investment, accompanied by concomitant increases in the damming of rivers, water usage, fertilizer and paper consumption, and motor vehicle usage with its burning of fossil fuel. Alongside these increases are a pattern of environmental distress, resulting in rapid increase in $CO_2$ concentration in the atmosphere, ozone depletion, temperature increase, flooding, and loss of marine life, forest, and biodiversity.[29]

At the heart of the third phase of the Anthropocene is consumerism. By the mid-twentieth century the suburb and the automobile redefined the sense and politics of place in the U. S., helping to promote a vision of the good life and sense of self oriented around consumption and commercial culture. As James Howard Kunstler notes, the suburb and the highway replaced civic, public spaces with commercial space. With echoes of Herbert Marcuse, he describes the suburb as a "one-dimensional community" owing to the near total absence of public spaces or civic features. There are "no town centers, squares, artful groupings of buildings to some social purpose, and little consideration of the public

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[29] James Gustave Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). See especially tables preceding the Introduction.

realm, except as a conduit for vehicles."[30] Kunstler defines the suburb as a "noplace," a sanitized escape from the messiness of industrialization; however, the rural idyll the suburb attempts to replicate is little more than a poor substitute for the countryside. The suburbs lack many of the cultural institutions, identities, and socio-cultural memories that accrue from life lived in a storied community, and its manicured lawns offer no substantive contact with the land or nature.[31] In these no-places it becomes very difficult to create any politics of place, as places of privilege and of sacrifice are replaced with places of banality.

Automobiles and the single-family suburban home organize places around habits and practices of consumption all made possible by standardized, mass production. The technologies and appliances that define suburban life are what Vincent Miller calls "commodity-intensive because their functioning depends on an infrastructure of goods and services…devices [that insulate us from the world]."[32] The suburb, the automobile, and the "technocentric economy" fragment and homogenize complex social spaces, local identities, and relationships. Zoning laws help to fragment the richly textured experience of place as somewhere people live, work, play, and pray.[33] Increasingly, place and the practice of everyday life are organized around cars. The result is that our "public realm is composed mainly of roads. And the only way to be in that public realm is to be in a car,

[30] James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere*, 52, 56; see also page 86; Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1964]).
[31] Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere,* 105.
[32] Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 46-47; see also Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere,* 107-108.
[33] Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere*, 96, 113-118

often alone."[34] Furthermore, the civic and public space of community streets has been replaced with the privatized substitute of shopping malls. Perhaps this explains why so many protesters today literally take to the streets blocking off highways and traffic and why the Occupy Wall St. movement set up tents in city parks and on streets to claim noncommercial use of public spaces.[35]

Consumer capitalism has produced what Pope Francis calls a 'throwaway culture,' which has turned Earth into "an immense pile of filth."[36] In a powerful essay, Sasha Adkins links this culture of material disposability, of which plastics are the primary symbol, to an attitude of human disposability. As Adkins reflects,

> we tend to project what we loathe onto 'trash,' and then hold to the fantasy
> that by throwing away what is 'used' and/or 'dirty' we will ourselves be
> purified. I contend that this relationship to disposables habituates us to project
> a similar shadow onto other people, thus dehumanizing them…The idea that
> people are disposable is reinforced by slurs like 'trailer trash' or 'poor white
> trash.' The salient question, then, is how to unlearn this form of oppression.[37]

If we begin to reject an economy of disposability and seek relationships to things, people, and places that are built to last, then we are more equipped to resist the sacrifice and disposability of people and places; we begin to fight for our watersheds, mountain ranges, and savannas; we begin to see places not as coalfields and nation-states but as bioregions and habitats; we begin to see more-than-human beings as kin and we begin to see one another as kin too. But restoring our relationship to places in ways that invite us to

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[34] *Ibid.*, 119.

[35] Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere*, 120; see also Joerg Rieger and Kwok Pui-lan, *Occupy Religion: Theology of the Multitude* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), chapter 3.

[36] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, no. 21.

[37] Sasha Adkins, "Plastics as a Spiritual Crisis," 163-164.

inhabit those places beyond the logic of extraction is key. As the writer Silas House reflects, "it is this land that makes us kin."[38]

On a related note, Bill McKibben urges us to seek durable economies that focus on cultivating communities rather than generating growth.[39] How do we, in the midst of a transient, disposable, throwaway culture commit ourselves to place-making and staying in place? How do we learn to find beauty in a sacrifice zone? Critiquing a logic of extraction means challenging consumer culture. It is not simply a matter of seeking green technologies that allow us to sustain our present patterns of consumption. Consumerism appeals to our desires and deepest anxieties. The act of consuming and that which is consumed becomes crucial not only to personal identity but social belonging. Using the example of Nike tennis shoes, Jung Mo Sung observes,

Nike transforms people, makes them feel themselves as their own idols for wearing

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[38] Silas House, *The Coal Tattoo* (New York: Ballantine, 2005). See acknowledgement page.

[39] Bill McKibben, *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* (New York: Holt, 2007), 197-198. More recently there has been renewed interest among Catholic economists, particularly Stefano Zamagni, Albino Barrera, and Andrew Yuengert, in the 'civil economy' tradition as an alternative view of market economies. As Bruni and Zamagni describes it, civil economy is "not founded on the cornerstone of the individual and his [*sic*] freedom *from* the community. Differing from the political economy tradition, the civil economy is a relational and social economy, and 'catholic' in the etymological sense." See. Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni, *Civil Economy: Another Idea of the Market*, tran. N. Michael Brennen (Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK: Agenda, 2016 [2015]), 7. Echoing Amartya Sen's 'Capabilities Approach,' civil economy proposes measures for the health of an economy other than GDP, focusing on public goods such as access to essential social services. This tradition is particularly helpful in nurturing economic responses to the Anthropocene by responding to the realities of market economies while critiquing the extractive logic upon which they currently rely. Given that Pope Francis identifies the environment as a common good and speaks of a 'right of the environment,' it is essential to develop measures of economic health that do not externalize the ecological costs of economic activity, but treat economic, ecological, and communal health equally without abstracting economic health in the form of GDP. See Luigino Bruni and Stefano Zamagni, *Civil Economy*; Daniel K. Finn, ed. *The True Wealth of Nations: Catholic Social Thought and Economic Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Herman E. Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr, *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy Toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, Updated and Expanded Edition (Boston: Beacon, 1994 [1989]). For Pope Francis' comments regarding the right of the environment see, Pope Francis, Meeting with the Members of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, New York, USA, September 25, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_2015 0925_onu-visita.html (accessed August 29, 2020).

> Nike…Thus, we can add that there are many street children who kill to get Nike, and others who would rather risk their lives than go out without their Nike. 'Buy Nike,' like any other brand that is in fashion…became a condition for belonging to the human community.[40]

Bringing the logic of extraction to a new stage, consumerism has the effect of the exploitation of desire. If consumerism plays to our desires and vision of the good life, then ecological justice must include more than an ascetic commitment to the *simple* life and include a revaluation of our sense of the *good* life.[41]

### *Appalachian Geographies: Physical and Imagined Histories of a Place*

In this section I reflect on the history of Appalachia through the lens of place. Personal experiences of place are embedded in structures of power, historical narratives, and events that shape our contemporary experience of place. Place-based educators work with students to reflect critically on the deeper structures of our relationship to place and how power is distributed, to whom, and to what ends. Faith-based educators will, of course, utilize the resources of religious traditions as a further guidepost in this educational

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[40] Jung Mo Sung, *Desire, Market, and Religion* (London: SCM Press, 2007), 46. The sociologist Zygmunt Bauman defines the shift from a producer oriented society in which human value and social belonging is defined by the production side of the market to an emphasis on consumption as central to understanding what is often called post-modernity, or as Bauman prefers, "liquid modernity." As it relates to Jung Mo Sung's insights, Bauman notes, "*members of the society of consumers are themselves consumer commodities,* and it is the quality of being a consumer commodity that makes them bona fide members of the society. Becoming and remaining a sellable commodity is the most potent motive of consumer concerns, even if it is usually latent and seldom conscious, let alone explicitly declared…*making* oneself, not just *becoming*, is the challenge and the task.*"* See Zygmunt Bauman, *Consuming Life* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 57; see also Zygmunt Bauman *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000). Religion scholar, Vincent J. Miller, helpfully explores how a society of consumers and the commodification of being impacts religious identity, belonging, and participation. See *Consuming Religion.*

[41] In a similar fashion, Timothy Morton argues for an ethical approach that seeks modes of pleasure and fascination beyond what consumerism can offer, allowing ourselves to be fascinated and find pleasure in and with "nonhumans" in ways that resist commodification. This approach asks us to think about what we gain as we move from the alienation and loss of belonging we often feel in consumer capitalist society towards kinship. As Morton explains, "you become fascinated by enhancing and expanding non human pleasure modes. In this way, vegetarianism (for example) is not about opposing cruelty or minimizing suffering or enhancing one's health by returning to a more natural way of eating, but about a pleasure mode designed to maintain or enhance the pleasure modes of pigs or cows or sheep and so on." Timothy Morton, *Humankind: Solidarity with Nonhuman People* (London: Verso, 2017), 144.

process and will also ask how religious traditions and institutions are a part of these narratives and structures, questions to be taken up more explicitly in later chapters.

Here I explore how specific symbolic and material structures of place have shaped the history of the bioregions of central Appalachia.[42] While I will move in a roughly historical fashion, I highlight the enduring relevance of certain conceptions of Appalachia as a place to show that they are still very much part of the present day geography—both material and symbolic—of the region. I review how relationships of power are embedded in these discourses, which are in turn shaped by broader national and international events; again, all places are somehow connected. How are these various material and symbolic politics of place influenced by a logic of extraction and the emergence of the Anthropocene? Is it possible to re-map the geography of this place in ways that attend critically to Appalachia's place within the birth of the Anthropocene?

Of course, it is only possible to give a broad overview in each area; this section is less a comprehensive view of Appalachian history but illuminates a pedagogical strategy for thinking about the role of place in our own experience. I do this by exploring how the

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[42] The U. S. government, through the Appalachian Regional Commission, defines Appalachia as covering 420 counties in twelve states. Stretching from New York to Mississippi and Alabama, the region covers approximately 205,000 square miles. Inclusion in his region is political as much as it is cultural or bioregional, providing counties with access to federal dollars through ARC funded programs. See https://www.arc.gov/index.asp (accessed August 29, 2020). Along with many Appalachian Studies scholars, and given my attention to place, I prefer a narrower and specifically bioregional definition, which resists the abstract space of the ARC definition. This core region includes the Appalachian Plateau, consisting of the Cumberland and Allegheny Mountains, the Blue Ridge Mountains to the south, and the Great Valley, which separates these ranges. This bioregion covers most of West Virginia, southwestern Pennsylvania, eastern Kentucky, western Virginia, western North Carolina, and east Tennessee. For discussion of the 'boundaries' of Appalachia see especially, John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 9-18; Donald Edward Davis, *Where There are Mountains: An Environmental History of the Southern Appalachians* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 3-8; Stoll, *Ramp Hollow*, 4-7.

three C's of extractivism have shaped our sense of this place, our relationship to it, and how power is placed in and over Appalachia.

*Colonial Appalachia: This Land is Whose Land?*

Before many of the contemporary archetypal images of Appalachia entered into the U. S. imagination, indeed, before "Appalachian" served as an identity marker, it was a place on the maps charting European conquest, appearing first in 1562 as "Apalachen." This name had its origins among the primary people of central Florida who pointed *conquistadors* toward the mountains to the north in their search for gold and raw materials for the production of goods for European markets.[43] In this section I explore how the colonial character of extractivism has shaped the power of place and the place of power in Appalachia. What lessons do we learn for educating in faith today?

*Nature in colonial Appalachia*          Upon their arrival, Spanish *conquistadors* of the 15th and 16th centuries and the settler-colonists who began to arrive with the aim of establishing permanent settlements in the following century encountered one of the world's most diverse hardwood forests and oldest mountain ranges.[44] This land was home to Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Seminole, and Creek peoples.[45] Prior to European conquest, the Mississippian ancestors of later Cherokee and Creek peoples practiced subsistence agriculture, particularly of maize and beans, and found in the forests of the southern highlands ample small and large game for meat and clothing. While they altered

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[43] John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia*, 19-20; Donald Edward Davis, *Where There are Mountains,* 3; Steven Stoll, *Ramp Hollow*, 5.

[44] John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia*, 14; Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 20; Donald Edward Davis, *Where There are Mountains*, 11-18.

[45] Steven Stoll, *Ramp Hollow*, 24.

the landscape to suit their purposes through practices such as fires for forest clearances and traded amongst one another, their relationship to Earth was governed by an animistic cosmology and the rhythms of the ecological landscape, limiting their impact. Trade with the Spanish and later settlement by other European peoples would have a drastic impact on the cultures of primary peoples as well as the landscape of the mountains as the region was increasingly redefined through the European logic of place as property.[46]

As noted in the first part of this chapter, European colonists brought with them an emergent ideology of land as private property and nature as a storehouse of *marketable* goods. The place of the mountains was defined by their market value and the relationship of colonists to nature was abstract and profit driven. Settlers further redefined the human-nature relationship. Land became property by becoming *cultivated*. For *conquistadors,* land surveyors, and settlers, wild nature was to be tamed and claimed. Quoting William Bradford, first governor of the Plymouth Colony, Jedediah Purdy notes that for early colonizers and the first settlers "the new land was 'a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men'…their feeling was that they were living in near-chaos, a land hardly fit for the ordered and holy life that they sought."[47] It is no surprise then that the primary peoples of Turtle Island, were viewed as *savages*, literally meaning 'of the forest.' They had no legal claim or natural right to the land because, in the eyes of colonizers, they had failed to subdue the land and make it profitable.[48]

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[46] Donald Edward Davis, *Where There are Mountains*, 18-34.
[47] Jedediah Purdy, *After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 51-52.
[48] *Ibid*., 81-82.

*Relationships among places in colonial Appalachia*        Under the influence of colonizers, Appalachia was primarily a source of capital for trans-Atlantic trade and a frontier passage into the American West. Conquistadors, speculators, and settlers helped to contribute to the commodification of the land upon which they settled. A complex, contradictory legal and extra-legal framework that fell along class lines influenced Appalachia's place in this colonial system of land occupation and trans-Atlantic trade. While some acquired land through actual settlement, much of the land was held by absentee owners who acquired land through grant, purchase, or payment for military service. Focusing on what is now Kentucky, Dwight Billings and Kathleen Blee explain, "the legacy of colonial Virginia's land laws was a nightmarish pattern of hopelessly overlapping land claims."[49] Absentee owners had largely forgotten about the mountains because they lacked any commercial use. Squatters, however, made use of this unoccupied private property, treating it as part of an unofficial commons. Those who settled there often assumed or would later make legal claim, asserting 'tomahawk rights,' claiming that occupying and working the land gave them legal rights.[50] Conflicting claims to land generally favored wealthy absentee owners given that "thousands of ordinary settlers who lacked the benefit of expensive legal representation lost the lands they thought were theirs whereas 'men of wealth, gentry, speculators, sons of planters and the like possessed the tools to manipulate the legal tangle to their advantage. The best lands fell into their hands and the hands of absentee owners.'"[51] Appalachia is America's

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[49] Dwight Billings and Kathleen Blee, *The Road to Poverty: The Making of Wealth and Hardship in Appalachia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 38; see also pages 36-39.
[50] Steven Stoll, *Ramp Hollow*, 9-15.
[51] Dwight Billings and Kathleen Blee, *The Road to Poverty*, 38.

first and last frontier. Within America's founding myth, it was the pioneering spirit of those who tamed and settled the Appalachian wilderness that opened up the west and made possible the expansion of America. This myth continues to frame the placement of Appalachia within the American mythology. The 'pioneering spirit' is now transferred to the coal miner taming America's energy frontier.

For those who support the coal industry, Appalachia is part of America's energy frontier and like the first generations of pioneers, coal miners represent rugged individualism and human power over wild nature, claimed and tamed for national interest. In parallel fashion, industry opponents draw on frontier nostalgia and romantic images of subsistence homesteads and traditional folkways to sound a note of anti-modern resistance to capitalist exploitation and its environmental impact on the region. Homespun goods, subsistence agriculture, bartering, traditional crafts, and mountain culture, all represent a practical lifestyle option in resistance to consumer capitalism and extractive industry's exploitation and devastation of the regional economy and ecosystem. These back-to-the-landers often position themselves as *reclaiming* a pioneering identity that technocentric economies have debased. Drawing on Rebecca Scott's analysis, both arrangements naturalize in apparently opposite ways "a set of relationships between people and the land that are essential to American national identity" as each side makes a moral claim to colonized land.[52]

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[52] Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 152; see also pages 143, 151-2; Carter Taylor Seaton, *Hippie Homesteaders: Arts, Crafts, Music, and Living on the Land in West Virginia* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2014), 24-27; Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 171-175.

*Colonial power in Appalachia*        'Who owns Appalachia?' was and remains an important question. From 1979 to 1980 this question was the focus of a massive research project coordinated by activists, scholars, and community members in eighty counties covering six Appalachian states. In more than a few counties, corporate and absentee ownership accounted for 90% of the surface rights and 100% of the mineral rights. These patterns of ownership were accompanied by a system of taxation in which corporations paid less than a fair share of property taxes or taxes on unmined minerals.[53]

Though those involved had a variety of feelings about the experience, in terms of process and finished product the study served as an important resource for both unmasking hidden power and creating new spaces of knowledge and power among citizens. The study served as an important resource for scholars and activists who in the preceding decade had begun to articulate a theory of Appalachia as an "internal colony." Their work drew particularly on 2/3rds world scholars such as Albert Memmi and Frantz Fanon and the global liberation and justice movements of the 1960s to offer a structural and political explanation for regional poverty in Appalachia.[54]

One of the most influential volumes articulating this position, *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case,* outlines the basic contours of the argument, explaining

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[53] Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 168-169; Shaunna Scott, "The Appalachian Land Ownership Study Revisited," *Appalachian Journal* 35, no. 3 (Spring 2008): 236-252; Shaunna Scott, "Discovering What the People Knew: The 1979 Appalachian Land Ownership Study," *Action Research* 7, no 2 (2009): 185-205; Shaunna Scott, "What Difference Did It Make? The Appalachian Land Ownership Study after Twenty-Five Years," in *Confronting Ecological Crisis in Appalachia and the South: University and Community Partnerships*, eds. Stephanie McSpirit, Lynne Faltraco, and Conner Bailey (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 39-60.

[54] For commentary on the origins and development of Appalachian Studies in the context of regional activism see Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground*, 170-173; Shaunna Scott, Phillip Obermiller, and Chad Berry, "Making Appalachia: Interdisciplinary Fields and Appalachian Studies," in *Studying Appalachian Studies: Making the Path By Walking* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 8-41.

how absentee land ownership, corporate control of mineral and timber rights, the flow of

capital outside of the region, and tax structures favorable to industry, all created patterns

of dependency, exploitation, and poverty in the mountains. These structured inequalities

limited economic alternatives and helped to establish a local political elite whose power

and interests were closely allied to extractive industries and continue to influence the

trajectory of regional economic development.[55]

Perhaps encouraged by the increased visibility of primary peoples' struggles against

oil and natural gas industry in Alberta, Canada and the Dakotas in the United States,

scholars and activists in Appalachia have more recently begun to explore the limitations

of the internal colony model.[56] As Stephen Pearson illuminates, the internal colony model

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[55] Helen M. Lewis and Edward E. Knipe, "The Colonialism Model: The Appalachian Case," in *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case,* eds. Helen Matthews Lewis, Linda Johnson, and Donald Askins (Boone, BC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978), 9-31; Helen M. Lewis, Sue Easterling Kobak, and Linda Johnson, "Family, Religion, and Colonialism in Central Appalachia, or Bury My Rifle at Big Stone Gap," in *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case,* eds. Helen Matthews Lewis, Linda Johnson, and Donald Askins (Boone, BC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978), 113-139. Another important resource here is Rodger Cunningham, *Apples on the Flood: The Southern Mountain Experience* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987)

[56] The relevance of the internal colony model for the future of Appalachian Studies was the topic of a roundtable discussion at the Appalachian Studies Association Conference in 2015. Participants included some of the architects of this model as well as young scholars, activists, and artists, all reflecting on the past, present, and future of the model. The presentations from this roundtable were later collected and published in the *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 22, No. 1 (Spring 2016): 45-79. Other recent responses to debates about the internal colony model include Stephen Pearson, "'The Last Bastion of Colonialism': Appalachian Settler Colonialism and Self-Indigenization," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37, no. 2 (2013): 165-184; Jacob Stump, "What is the Use of the Colonial Model (or, Better Yet, the Concept of Coloniality) for Studying Appalachia?" *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 151-167. An early critique of the model comes from David Walls, "Internal Colony or Internal Periphery? A Critique of Current Models and an Alternative Formation," in *Colonialism in Modern America: The Appalachian Case*, eds. Helen M. Lewis, Linda Johnson, and Donald Adkins (Boone, NC: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1978), 319-349. With the exception of Pearson, none of these make settler colonialism and ideas about land in shaping a politics of place their central focus. In their efforts to 'reinvent' Appalachia, these scholars focus on internal *exploiters*. Emphasizing that Appalachia's natural resources and communities have been exploited by regional elites, such as former CEO of Massey Energy, Don Blankenship, or West Virginia's current governor, Jim Justice. These critiques also focus on other forms of oppression within the region, exploring racism, homophobia, sexism, and cissexism (or the oppression, exclusion, and violence against persons whose gender identity is beyond the male-female binary).

might "provide Appalachian Whites with positive emotional and affective returns" in articulating a liberative politics of place against fossil fuel extraction, but it also reproduces and participates in the logic of extraction by uncritically erasing the history and relationship to this place of the primary peoples of the region and the role of white settlers in their removal.[57] Indeed, white settlers historically and presently participate in what Pearson describes as "self-indigenization." Pearson cites many examples from some of the most influential texts in the field and statements from activists and activist groups to show how these white scholars and activists rhetorically position themselves as "indigenous" and "native," describing white settler culture in the same terms.[58] Ultimately, the internal colony model and the question 'who owns Appalachia' remain limited in their ability to respond to the Anthropocene's logic of extraction because they frame extractivism in Appalachia as a conflict that is *internal to settler colonialism* and between settler classes. A politics of place that can think beyond the extractive logic of the Anthropocene needs to reflect critically on Appalachia as a *settler* colony.

*Beyond the Anthropocene*        The question, 'who owns Appalachia' remains relevant in our present era. Mountain top removal mining, natural gas pipelines, and a future of petrochemical development and plastics production continue to threaten the Appalachian bioregion.[59] Our ability to respond adequately to the question has as much

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Appalachia is not a homogenously victimized landscape, but is a complex, intersectional landscape of exploitation, oppression, and movements for liberation.
[57] Pearson, "The Last Bastion of Colonialism," 166; see also page 175.
[58] *Ibid.*, 165-184.
[59] James Bruggers, "Plastics: The New Coal in Appalachia?," *Insideclimatenews.org*, February 25, 2019, https://insideclimatenews.org/news/25022019/plastics-hub-appalachian-fracking-ethane-cracker-climate-change-health-ohio-river (accessed March 31, 2019).

to do with whose voices are considered and whose rights are the focus of the answers we seek. Placed-based educators need to work actively to critically interrogate how the place of Appalachia and knowledge and power within and over this place have been shaped by both attitudes of land as property and practices of settler colonialism. How have Christian institutions and theology lent support to this view? For what reasons and for whom do these narratives still hold an appeal?

We can work with our students to confront settler privilege, learn the history of primary peoples, and build horizontal forms of solidarity that link Appalachia to primary peoples in other places to support their struggle against extractivism. We can decolonize our theological imaginations and institutions through an encounter with the spiritual, epistemological, and anthropological understandings of primary peoples. We can prioritize their voices in crafting policies and practices of land use and access. This is the work at hand!

*Capitalist Appalachia: Fields of Coal*

Following the Civil War and over the course of the 20th century, Appalachia's place in America went from being a colonial frontier to a national sacrifice zone, "a place written off for environmental destruction in the name of a higher purpose, such as the national interest."[60] Land surveyors discovered vast timber reserves and easily accessible high quality coal, which were desirable in the context of the industrialization of the northeast. But how did industrialization in the United States further shape the sense of place in Appalachia, influencing the human/nature relationship, the relationship between Appalachia and other places, both domestically and internationally, and how did

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[60] Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 31.

extractive industry influence the place of power regionally? How does critical reflection upon industrial capitalism's influence on the politics of place inform education in faith?

*Nature in capitalist Appalachia*        Extractive industry, particularly logging and coal mining, had a rapid and tremendous impact on the sense of place, relationship to place, and relationship to nature in the mountains. This was true for those who lived in the mountains and worked in these industries as much as it was for the corporate, mostly absentee, owners of these operations and the land. As Brian Black notes, by the mid-19th century nature was reimagined "to be less an enemy and more of an opportunity."[61]

Timber extraction, which preceded the rapid increase in coal mining, had a profound impact on both mountain ecology and the lives of those who relied upon it. While mountain people made use of the forest, cutting down trees for personal use and profit, they also relied on the forest and soil to sustain their livelihood; participation in the industrial economy was viewed as supplemental and secondary to subsistence farming. Industrial scale harvesting of timber effectively destroyed the ecological base that made such lifestyle possible, causing soil erosion, forest fires, flooding, and loss of wildlife due to habitat destruction, pushing subsistence farmers increasingly into the industrial economy. As Donald Edward Davis describes, this was as much to do with the technological methods employed as it had to do with the scale of industry.[62]

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[61] Brian Black, "A Legacy of Extraction: Ethics in the Energy Landscape of Appalachia," in *Mountains of Injustice: Social and Environmental Justice in Appalachia,* eds. Michele Morrone and Geoffrey Buckley (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), 34.

[62] Donald Edward Davis, *Where There are Mountains*, 167-182; Ronald L. Lewis, "Beyond Isolation and Homogeneity: Diversity and the History of Appalachia," in *Confronting Appalachian Stereotypes: Back Talk from an American Region,* eds. Dwight Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 29; Stephen Stoll, *Ramp Hollow*, 149-151, 165. Rebecca Scott

Timber and coal extraction often worked hand in hand and the same companies often

participated in both. Indeed, the extraction of the forest landscape was often a necessary

first step in mining operations and the need to establish infrastructure to support an

industrial workforce in a largely rural environment led to rapid construction of "company

towns." As Ronald Eller describes them,

> the company town was a closed community…Dominated by a single industry,
> the company town offered few of the amenities of ordinary community life.
> There were usually no public places and few public roads except the bed of the
> creek which flowed between mountain walls. The company controlled or
> owned the land and furnished the houses, stores, churches, and schools. There
> were no public agencies to provide for social welfare, and residents had little
> voice in the management of public affairs.[63]

In the company towns and through the redefinition of the region as the 'coalfields,'

capitalism and energy extraction became a dominant influence shaping how people were

placed in the mountains. As Richard Callahan notes,

> they effectively reoriented the environment around industrial landmarks instead of
> natural ones, with the result that people came to locate themselves in space with
> reference to mines and camps…Where once places had been named for settlers,
> landmarks, local events, or biblical characters and sites, the industrial landscape

describes how, despite corporate ownership, the forest still serves as an important supplement to capitalist economic activity in the mountains today. She notes how a local culture of use and sense of place persists as a source of invisible power claimed by local people against more visible forms of industrial power over place. Scott describes how "intimate knowledge of place is important in local definitions of freedom, which depend on knowledge of the mountains, forest products, and an off-the-grid ethic of self-reliance." Despite corporate ownership of the land, people continue to use the land as an unofficial commons where "they hunt deer, bear, raccoons, squirrels, and turkeys. They collect plants like ginseng and goldenseal. They fish. Children in the mountains have traditionally viewed the forest as their playground, where they build forts, hunt, fish, and explore freely." See Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 120, 123. Scott continues, observing that this sense of place features largely in anti-mountain top removal mining discourse (*Removing Mountains*, 123-126). This sense of place is not exclusive to those who are opposed to extractive industry. As Dwight Billings observes, even those who otherwise support or participate in extractive industry or other corporate employment, also maintain a similar relationship to the land. The point is that our relationships to place, our sense of place, and the meaning of nature can often be complex and contradictory. The way we live our relationship to place and our sense of place is much more complex than binaries such as jobs vs. the environment or commons vs. capital. See Dwight Billings, "Rethinking Class Beyond Colonialism," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2016), 59.

[63] Ronald Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 194.

was made up of places named for coal companies and sometimes their officials.[64]

Beyond this reimagining of the built environments of daily life, Eller describes the effects in terms of the health and well-being of human and more-than-human life. Pollution of land and water from garbage, human waste, and acid runoff from mines and coal dust was a characteristic feature of company towns; health problems and crime complimented a lack of adequate educational and other social services. The mountains were given over entirely to profit. Ultimately, "coal companies showed little interest in such problems, arguing that coal could not be mined economically if they concerned themselves with ecology."[65] Technological advances allowed for the mechanization of the industry, beginning as early as the 1930s but increasingly rapidly during and following World War II. Surface mining and its modern extreme version of mountain top removal mining further redefined the sense of place of those who lived in the mountains and worked in the mines.[66] Beyond the coal industry, Appalachia has become a location for the citing of

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[64] Richard J. Callahan, Jr. *Work and Faith in the Kentucky Coal Fields: Subject to Dust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 67-68; Samuel Cook, *Monacans and Miners: Native American and Coal Mining Communities in Appalachia* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 219-220.

[65] Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, 186. See also, 187.

[66] Mountain Top Removal mining is a particularly extreme form of surface, or strip, mining which involves the use of heavy machinery and explosives. The process begins with the removal of trees and vegetation, which the industry refers to as 'overburden,' from the mountain. Timber is sold and forest vegetation, topsoil, and detritus are often dumped into nearby streams, destroying these waterways in the process. This is referred to as a 'valley fill.' Heavy machinery, known as a dragline, and dump trucks flatten the surface and roads are created. Then drilling and blasting through rock is used to expose the coal seam, which is broken up through further drilling and blasting. The coal is then processed and hauled away. Washing coal so that it meets the regulations of the Clean Air Act is a water intensive process. The wastewater is stored in nearby 'slurry' impounds. This slurry leeches into topsoil and ground water leading to further pollution and ecological destruction. The Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 requires that these sites be restored to their "approximate original contour." However, this is typically done with little regard to native species. The economic uses of 'reclaimed' mine sites often do little to contribute to sustainable economic growth. They include shopping centers, golf courses, and prisons. However, very often the poor land cannot support the foundations of large structures and cracked foundations are not uncommon. The ecological costs and the cost to the built environment and human health are severe. As early as the 1930s, policy makers were aware of the environmental and public health costs of strip mining. Ecologically, strip mining results in soil erosion, habitat destruction, and water pollution. The destruction of the forest

landfills, toxic storage facilities, and federal prisons. Additionally, "super-stores" have "undermined local businesses, drained capital from the region, weakened local government, [and] bled resources from smaller rural towns."[67] Within the context of American industrial development, the mountains and the people who call them home are disposable.

As Appalachia was reimagined as 'the Coalfields' the region became less important for what was in the hills than for what was *underneath*. Attention shifted from the land itself to the minerals underneath the land. To avoid legal disputes, many companies began offering to purchase the minerals beneath the land, allowing residents to retain surface rights and to continue to occupy and use the land. This arrangement benefitted coal companies through a legal device called the 'broad form' deed, which favored the rights of mineral owners, allowing them the right to remove minerals "by any means convenient or necessary." Following the spread of strip mining and mountain top removal mining, this became a particularly contentious issue. Many families were forcibly

ecosystem of the mountains, along with the valley fills that clog streams, contributes to flooding, and along with blasting, it leads to the destruction of communities, threatening public health and safety. These costs have only multiplied with the more intensive practice of MTR. Further, lax attention to mine-safety requirements continues to cause the needless deaths of miners, and poor environmental safety standards compromise public health and safety in many mountain communities. The environmental effects of mountain top removal mining, and coalmining more generally, also contribute to a variety of costs to human health in the form of chronic illness from environmental exposure and occupational exposure in the form 'black lung disease.' See Samuel Cook, *Monacans and Miners*, 188-91; Shirley Stewart Burns, *Bringing Down the Mountains: The Impact of Mountaintop Removal Surface Coal Mining on Southern West Virginia Communities, 1970-2004* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2007), 5-6, 14, 36; Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground,* 36-40, 240-55; Nancy Irwin Maxwell, "Pollution or Poverty: The Dilemma of Industry in Appalachia," in *Mountains of Injustice: Social and Environmental Justice in Appalachia,* eds. Michele Morrone and Geoffrey L. Buckley (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), 50-78; Michael Hendryx, "Health and the Physical Environment," in *Appalachian Health and Well-Being*, eds. Robert Ludke and Phillip J. Obermiller (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 47-66; Joseph D. Witt, *Religion and Resistance in Appalachia: Faith and the Fight Against Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 20-28.

[67] Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *This Land is Home to Me (1975) & At Home in the Web of Life (1995): Appalachian Pastoral Letters*, combined edition (Martin, KY: Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 2007), 62. Reference here is to *At Home in the Web of Life*; See also Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground*, 254.

removed from their land so that it could be stripped for surface mining operations. The elimination of broad form deeds in Kentucky, where they were widely utilized, became a focus of regional activism and was successfully eliminated in 1988 due to the community organizing efforts of Kentuckians for the Commonwealth.[68]

 

       *Relationships among places in capitalist Appalachia*      Industrialization of the U. S. northeast led to new relationships between Appalachia and national and global socio-economic centers. On the one hand, the remaking of Appalachia as the Coalfields helped to position the region as an economic periphery in the emerging industrial economy. On the other hand, it also *brought* a commercial relationship to place *into* the mountains, linking mountain communities as both the energy landscape for an economy that circulated back to those same communities in the form of consumer goods.[69]

Company towns also introduced new class, racial, ethic, and gender relations, but as Callahan suggests,

> the system of classification that subsumed all other distinctions of groups in the industrial setting, *class*, was indicative of a new order of the world that measured people and value in very different terms…the industrial world measured the value and reward of work through the logic of the marketplace.[70]

Local mine owners and company officials lived in mansions perched on the hill tops, over-looking the cheaply constructed company homes in which miners were housed. Owners and operators enjoyed leisure time in clubs, hotels, and resorts, introducing mountain society to the industrial order by way of

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[68] Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground*, 38, 146-148, 170. Shaunna Scott, "The Appalachian Land Ownership Study Revisited," 243.
[69] Richard Callahan, Jr., *Work and Faith in the Kentucky Coal Fields*, 70-71, 74-76.
[70] *Ibid.*, 80.

conspicuous consumption, with an exaggerated demonstration of its benefits…to those who had not been to the seat of the industrial world, here was the manifest expression of its potential benefits, undifferentiated by the thought that these representatives of that world were the exception rather than the rule.[71]

With a little hard work and dedication to the company, many miners hoped that they too could have a privileged place in this new landscape and enjoy its many material benefits.

As Appalachia became integrated into the energy economy, an important imaginative shift occurred in Appalachia's politics of place. Appalachia was no longer 'private property' but 'company property.' As Gaventa explains,

> I remember talking to farmers [in Clear Fork Valley, TN] about the huge conflicts between farmers over land: they would fight intensely over the encroachment of fences, animals, and so on. When I asked about the encroachment of muck from strip-mined land on their crops, however, they would say, 'Oh, we can't do anything about that land, it's not private land: that's company land.[72]

For many residents their place in the national energy economy had taken on an air of inevitability. While Appalachia became integral to America's energy economy, the experience for many people in the place itself was one of fragmentation—the separation of surface and mineral rights, the forced removal of people from surface, and the air of inevitability that fractured citizen and company into separate categories.

*Power in capitalist Appalachia*        Early scholarship in the field of Appalachian studies tends to portray mountain people as the victims of unscrupulous corporations who

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[71] John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 63-64. See also Ronald Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers,* 196; Samuel Cook, *Monacans and Miners*, 219; Richard Callahan, Jr., *Work and Faith in the Kentucky Coal Fields*, 80.

[72] John Gaventa, "The Power of Place and the Place of Power," in *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters,* eds. Dwight Billings and Ann E. Kingsolver (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018), 100; Gaventa is referring to his landmark study of land right and power in central Appalachia, *Power and Powerlessness*, see especially p. 207. For similar observations see also Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 13.

took advantage of "obscure land titles, lost deeds, and poor records…[and their own] greater understanding of litigation procedures and access to the courts." Add to this the hospitality and lack of an understanding of the market value of minerals and timber on the part of local populations.[73] More recent work, however, portrays mountain people less as victims and more as complex economic actors, highlighting the complexity of decisions to sell land, enter into industrial labor, move into company towns, or remain in the region.[74]

While coal camps were certainly not democratic spaces and mitigated against civic participation, miners in company towns were able to craft "free spaces" of power, particularly through involvement in unions. In the context of company towns, striking meant eviction. Miners and their families took to the hills that once sustained them, setting up tent colonies. Describing the tent colonies set up by miners during the Paint Creek-Cabin Creek strike in April of 1912, David Alan Corbin observes the festive atmosphere that broke through amidst hardship and violence; he notes that "in these colonies [miners and their families] sang, danced, and played games; as much as they could they enjoyed life."[75] Miners were able to create and claim space, exercise power, and make decisions about their lives in defiance of the politics of place enacted by the coal companies.

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[73] Ronald Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 56, see also pages 54-57; John Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*, 53-55.
[74] Compare Ronald Eller and John Gaventa with Dwight Billings and Kathleen Blee, *The Road to Poverty*, 269-280; Richard Callahan, Jr. *Work and Faith in the Kentucky Coal Fields*, 70.
[75] David Alan Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields: The Southern West Virginia Miners, 1880-1922* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 93.

Religious and theological traditions were a significant site for the place of power in coal camps *and* remains so in the 'Coalfields' today. There is a wide literature in Appalachian studies scholarship on the important place of Christianity and churches in Appalachian communities. Dwight Billings explores how for many union miners religion functioned as an "oppositional discourse and practice," despite efforts of coal companies to control this discourse through company churches.[76]

In what could be described as a proto-liberation theology, miners crafted spiritual place in opposition to company-controlled churches. Historians and sociologists describe them as "miner-preachers" and observe how unionism influenced their theology and how the union often functioned as church. Rev. Hugh Cowans observes, "Moses, he was a good man, a great union organizer. All them people living in slavery, he went down there and he helped them get organized." In a similar vein Delbert Jones reflects, "I think they got the principle of the union from Christianity. And, to be honest with you, I think just as much of my union as I do religion."[77]

*Beyond the Anthropocene*        Still today, southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky are commonly referred to as the Coalfields. This act of naming, much like the

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[76] Dwight Billings, "Religion as Opposition: A Gramscian Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology* 96, no. 1 (July 1990): 15-22. As Callahan describes, while speaking against the worst abuses of the company town and industrial capitalism, mainline denominations and institutional church structures were often more allied with the coal companies and were more interested in offering "moral improvement" to mountain people than critiquing the systemic sources of regional poverty. Such patterns continue today as outlined in the example of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston (West Virginia) in chapter five below. See Callahan, 89-97; See also David Alan Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion in the Coal Fields*, 146-155. For an analysis of the role of religion in contemporary struggles against the coal industry in Appalachia see Joseph D. Witt, *Religion and Resistance in Appalachia.*

[77] Both quoted in Alessandro Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 90, for further examples see pages 91-21; see also David Alan Corbin, *Rebellion*, 155-166; Richard J. Callahan, Jr. *Work and Faith in the Kentucky Coal Fields*, 162-167; Dwight Billings, "Religion as Opposition," 2-3, 27.

naming of company towns before, positions the politics and sense of place within a logic of extraction. In this articulated sense of place, Appalachia=coal, and nothing can grow in a coalfield. An alternative politics of place seeks to uncover "what manages to live despite capitalism."[78] At the same time and by extension, bringing Appalachia out of the Anthropocene means more than challenging the fossil fuel industry. It also means thinking about how capitalism exploits land and labor more broadly.

We can and should think more creatively about Appalachia's future beyond providing workers for green energy jobs or hi-tech industries that do nothing to fundamentally alter structures of power that maintain corporate control of places. Drawing on the work of Dwight Billings, a politics of place that is responsive to the context of the Anthropocene and critical of the logic of extraction should reject "capitalocentric" discourses and cultivate relationships of exchange that escape or exist on the borders of capitalist modes of production and exchange.[79] Education in faith can challenge the politics of place that constructs Appalachia as the Coalfields and foster a politics of place in which Appalachia is God's Creation and part of the body of the crucified God.[80] Understanding the Earth as

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[78] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015)*, viii.

[79] Dwight Billings, "Rethinking Class Beyond Colonialism," *Journal of Appalachian Studies*, vol. 22, no. 1 (Spring 2016), 59-62. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing draws attention to 'pericapitalist sites' to refer to "'noncapitalist' forms" of exchange "in the midst of capitalist worlds." By drawing on the example of mushroom foragers, Tsing explores how capitalist supply chains often rely on and interact with non-capitalist forms of production and exchange. By entering into ambiguous spaces, we can discover other forms of economic activity that could thrive in the ruins of capitalism. Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, 62-66, 134. As described previously, Catholic economists have drawn attention to what they define as a 'civil economy' as another possible post-capitalist future. This post-capitalist future draws on older forms of exchange that pre-date capitalism. At the same time, this model could be critiqued for its failure to adequately engage the role of colonialism in so-called civil markets.

[80] The identification of Creation as God's body is developed by ecofeminist theologians such as Sallie McFague and Ivone Gebara. See for example, Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*, trans. David Molineaux (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999); James Cone, "Whose Earth Is It,

God's body interrupts the instrumentalization and exploitation of Creation and helps to

envision possible economic futures that question the inevitability of capitalism.[81]

*Cultural Commodification in Appalachia: From Home Missions to Blue Highways*

Based on the scholarly work of Henry Shapiro and later elaboration by Allen Batteau,

among others, it is generally accepted by scholars of the region that 'Appalachia' exists

primarily as an idea.[82] It is the literary invention of local color writers and popular

travelogues of the late 19th century.[83] In this section, I reflect on the ways in which

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Anyway?" in *Risks of Faith: The Emergence of a Black Theology of Liberation, 1968-1998,* (Boston: Beacon, 1999), 138-145. Jürgen Moltmann speaks of 'the crucified God,' asking the questions "to what degree is God himself [*sic*] 'concerned in' or 'affected by' the fate of Jesus on the cross? Did he suffer there in himself or only in someone else?" (p. 202). For Moltmann, the answer is the former, and this provocation forms the basis for a theology in and after Auschwitz. Moltmann asserts, "the death of Jesus on the cross is the *centre* of all Christian theology. It is not the only theme of theology, but it is in effect the entry to its problems and answers on earth" (p. 204, see also p. 284). Today, we are also in need of a theology in and after the Anthropocene. Indeed, in *The Crucified God*, Moltmann notes, "the vicious circles of poverty, force and alienation are now bound up in a greater circle, the *vicious circle of the industrial pollution of nature*" (p. 331). Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, trans. R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993 [1973]. Such a theology in and after the Anthropocene would place Moltmann's Christocentric theology of the cross in dialectical tension with Tinker's Creation-centered theology, explored above. Anti-MTR activist, Judy Bonds identified Earth "as God's body" while also speaking of the interconnection of the human body and nature, "we talk in human, living parts—the mouth, the head, the spine or backbone of the mountain, the finger ridge. We speak the language of a living, breathing world…this landscape is a living, breathing, part of me. I consider it something to protect, like I would my own body." Quoted in Joseph Witt, *Religion and Resistance in Appalachia*, 143.

[81] For examples of post-capitalist possibilities see Michael Shuman, *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Bill McKibben, *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future* (New York: Holt, 2007); Dwight Billings, "Rethinking Class Beyond Colonialism," 61-62. These resources explore how economies that are local in scale and which prioritize participation over consumption or production and membership over growth. They demonstrate how economies that are shaped by worker self-directed enterprises, co-operatives, credit unions, local currencies, land trusts, and community supported agriculture can shape economic futures in such a way that citizens of a place have a greater hand in determining their own economic futures in ways that prioritize community, place, and citizen agency.

[82] Henry Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind: The Southern Mountains and Mountaineers in the American Consciousness, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978); Allen Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990).

[83] The local color movement in U. S. American literature flourished in the decades following the U. S. Civil War (1861-1865) reporting from which coupled with a burgeoning newspaper and magazine industry along with the increasing availability and popularity of railway travel drew attention to regional cultures that were vanishing in a rapidly 'modernizing' United States. These regional cultures were often presented wistfully as reminders of and remainders from a bygone era. See Henry Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 5-16.

Appalachia's history illuminates extraction as a cultural process in which the commodification of culture serves the logic of extraction. Appalachia has emerged with consistency since its invention as a stage upon which America enacts its cultural anxieties and somewhere on the cutting room floor rests "the next Appalachia, an Appalachia waiting either to be packaged and sold for federal grants and the evanescent attention of popular audiences, or once again to be enlisted in a struggle for America's soul."[84] In the third phase of the Anthropocene, as commodification of land, relationships, and culture becomes increasingly pervasive, it is helpful to reflect on how the production and consumption of culture influences our sense and experience of the politics of place.

*Nature and the idea of Appalachia*          Appalachia was a particularly unique instance in the local color and travel sketch oeuvre. Unlike many of the other U. S. regional cultures described, Appalachia was not separated by

> ethnic, geographic, or chronological distance. The mountaineers were native-born, white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant. The mountain region was not only in America, but in that part of America which had been settled by the first generation of frontiersmen, hence where the rude conditions of the frontier ought long ago to have given way to the more sophisticated and 'civilized' conditions of modern life.[85]

Writers perplexed by this paradox turned to the land itself, explaining the arrested development of the region as a result of the mountainous landscape. Regional poverty

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[84] Allen Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia*, 18. Indeed, theologian Nancy Pineda-Madrid reflects on the ways in which "'packaged' images of suffering" disseminated through the media and commercial interests appeal powerfully to human emotional and moral sensibilities. However, they present us with "essentialized, naturalized, or sentimentalized" representations, reduce the complexities of societal transformation, reinforce the status quo of power, and reaffirm the moral authority of the consumer of these images rather than challenge him or her by provoking a moral, ethical, or political dilemma. See Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering + Salvation in Ciudad Juárez* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 20-26.
[85] Henry Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 17.

and the unique mountain culture were explained by the geographic *isolation* of Appalachia from the rest of America.[86] In this sense nature and place were seen primarily as *impediments* to progress. Writing in 1901, Ellen Churchill Semple suggests, "in consequence of his remoteness from a market, the industries of the mountaineer are limited. Nature holds him in a vice here." [87] For Semple and others, civilization overcomes nature; at the same time, nature constantly haunts civilization and its designs. The British historian, Arnold Toynbee, described the people of the region as "no better than barbarians," representing "the melancholy spectacle of a people who had acquired civilization and then lost it."[88] Whiteness and racial identity are implicated in Toynbee's account. Indeed, it wasn't that mountaineers, who were identified uniformly as Anglo-Saxon Protestants, so much lacked culture, but they were stuck in an earlier iteration of culture, which was simultaneously idealized and problematized.

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[86] Historians and sociologists working in the 1970s focused much of their efforts on demonstrating that the mythical Appalachia of literary discourse did not match historical or contemporary fact. In a review of this literature, Ronald L. Lewis, demonstrates that "Appalachia was neither unusually isolated, physically or culturally, nor was its population uniformly more homogeneous than that of other sections of rural America." See Ronald L. Lewis, "Beyond Isolation and Homogeneity: Diversity and the History of Appalachia," 22. As David Whisnant suggests, what is at issue here is less the truth or falsehood of these different narratives but the conditions of their emergence and the uses to which they are put in constructing a specific politics of place, determining who belongs, who gets to speak with authority, and what structures of power do these narratives elaborate or question. David Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region*, 25th anniversary edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009 [1983]). This analysis is also echoed by Allen Batteau in *The Invention of Appalachia*.
[87] Quoted in Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 40. The quote comes from an oft-cited article by Semple, "The Anglo-Saxons of the Kentucky Mountains: A Study in Anthropogeography," *Geographic Journal* (London) 17 (June 1901): 588-623.
[88] Dwight Billing, "Introduction," in *Confronting Appalachian Stereotypes: Back Talk From an American Region*, eds. Dwight Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 13; see also Ronald Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers*, 226. Toynbee is writing in 1947. Contemporary cultural productions rely on this trope as well. In the film *Deliverance* even as a hydro-electric dam seeks to civilize the landscape (and by implication the people), claiming it for modern America's energy needs, wild nature—human and more-than-human—threatens in the form of violent waters and violent hillbillies.

Today, defenders of mountain top removal mining (MTR) frequently invoke the refrain that MTR creates the flat land necessary for economic development that central Appalachia lacks so severely. The wildness of both the people and the landscape can be smoothed over in a way that makes Appalachian nature and culture look just like the rest of America.[89] MTR to some extent represents the apotheosis of the Anthropocene. As the Book of Job makes clear, power over Earth, its systems, and life in these places belongs to God (Job: chapters 38-42).[90] However, increasingly humanity claims this power over nature. MTR prompts theological questions of power over place and the place of (human) power. As Scott notes, "as some local industry supporters put it, 'God put the coal here' for 'us' to take and use, in a kind of Manifest Destiny; it would be derelict of us as Americans not to use the coal that God in his wisdom put here in the mountains to make our economy strong."[91] On the other hand, anti-MTR activists such as Judy Bonds develop a very different place for God in the mountains. As she states, "these mountains don't belong to anyone but God…In my heart I can feel God's anger. I can just imagine tears running down His face at what He sees happening to His creation."[92]

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[89] Bryan T. McNeil, *Combating Mountaintop Removal: New Directions in the Fight Against Big Coal* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 11-12; Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 84, 176-177.

[90] This extended discourse, in which God questions Job, can serve as a fundamental spiritual text for the Anthropocene. Today our answer to many if not all of God's questions would be a resounding 'yes.' What doesn't change, however, is the human lack of wisdom behind our powers over Earth and her systems. Indeed, returning to Wes Jackson's argument for an "ignorance based world-view" we do well to reflect on Job's final admission, "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know" (42: 3). In religious educator Thomas Groome's terms, while humanity might have knowledge and power what we lack is true *connation*, or wisdom. Groome, *Sharing Faith,* 26-32.

[91] Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 177. For further examples of this line of thinking, see Joseph Witt, *Religion and Resistance in Appalachia*, 136-144.

[92] Quoted in Joseph Witt, *Religion and Resistance in Appalachia*, 126. Coal companies have adopted the habit of referring to natural disasters such as floods, which have resulted in, for example, burst impoundment dams, resulting in hundreds of deaths in coal mining communities, most notoriously in the 1972 Buffalo Creek disaster in Logan County, West Virginia, as an "act of God." A legal decision later found Pittston Coal Company responsible and awarded damages to victims and their families. After a

*Relationship among places in an imagined landscape*       Appalachia became a

fertile field for missionaries, federal dollars, and student volunteers all seeking to

integrate and uplift the poor folk of the hills into the American social, cultural, and

economic mainstream. Literary accounts of Appalachian poverty drew the attention of

religious denominations and the region became a focus of missionary activity through the

establishment of schools and churches to provide material relief and social reform.

Missionary and settlement schools did much good in the region, providing "a superior

basic education" and supporting the material and health care needs of families. Indeed,

the popularity of many of these schools and their long waiting lists attests to the extent to

which local people viewed them favorably. Nevertheless, their effectiveness was limited

by their focus on and approach to culture at the expense of the socio-political uses of

similar incident, often referred to as "the great Appalachian flood" in 1977 it was determined by an investigative report from the non-profit Appalachia—Science in the Public Interest that "strip mining had played 'a significant role' in the latest [1977] disaster." This pattern of coal companies claiming the legal category "act of God" to exonerate themselves of responsibility and then investigations uncovering negligence and liability has continued with regularity, most notoriously in connection to Massey Energy, which claimed that an impoundment burst in Martin County, KY in October 2000 was an "act of God" only later to be issued citations for willful and criminal negligence. This charge was later reduced to a $55,000.00 fine when the Bush Administration attempted to cover up the incident by narrowing the scope of the investigation. See Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground*, 249-251; Gerald Stern, *The Buffalo Creek Disaster*: *How the Survivors of One of the Worst Disasters in Coal-Mining History Brought Suit Against the Coal-Company—and Won* (New York Vintage: 2008 [1976]), 10-16. Reflecting on natural disasters in El Salvador, liberation theologian, Jon Sobrino suggests the concept of "anthropodicy" to help answer the question "where is God?" In this development of the traditional category of theodicy, Sobrino challenges us to turn the problem of evil, suffering, and tragedy back on ourselves. Sobrino is reflecting on a series of earthquakes occurring in El Salvador in 2001. Sobrino observes, "if it is technically possible to build earthquake-resistant housing, if we have the knowledge and resources to build it but do not, then humanity does not want to do it." See Jon Sobrino, *Where is God: Earthquake, Terrorism, Barbarity, and Hope*, trans. Margaret Wilde (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 25-28. How much more true is this in the case of flash flooding that results from surface mining, or slurry impounds that burst as a result of skirting federal or safety regulations, or the lack of such regulations in the first place? What are we to say to the climate refugees who have lost their homes due to drought, fire, and flood or those who live with the toxic pollution of sacrifice zones? Climate change and the so-called natural disasters that result confront us not with God's indifference but our own. Indeed, they confront us with our own acts of crucifying Earth, of crucifying God.

culture and the interests served by those definitions. In particular, Appalachian people were excluded from this process of cultural production and from defining their culture and interests on their own terms.[93]

In their own way, much like local color writers, missionaries capitalized on the idea of Appalachia. Shapiro notes, "the interest in Appalachia generated by the descriptions of the local-color writers was consciously used by the agents of denominational work in the region to support their claim to attention from churches' boards and societies, and to financial support from their membership."[94] Settlement schools, informed by the methods and ideas of progressive educators such as Jane Addams and Danish folk schools, blended cultural romanticism, progressive educational principles, and modern middle class values.

As David Whisnant suggests, if missionaries helped institutionalize that idea of Appalachian cultural otherness for northern philanthropists, then settlement schools

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[93] David Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine,* 90.

[94] Henry Shapiro, *Appalachia on Our Mind*, 57. Indeed, while missionaries often provided and continue to offer much needed emergency services across the region, these programs often seem to serve the interests of the organizations who sponsor them and do little to create and support systemic change or grassroots institutions in mountain communities. As Robert Lupton suggests in *Toxic Charity*, these programs, despite good intentions often reinforce the power relationships and systemic barriers that create poverty in the first place. In a similar vein, Ronald Eller uses the representative example of the well-known Christian Appalachian Project, which provides home repairs, food banks, used clothing stores, and many other direct services. The organization has come under criticism for its high administrative overhead and use of regional stereotypes in fund-raising efforts. As a Catholic Worker and friend, who hosts student groups in the region, has commented to me, these programs often function as just another extractive industry in the region. Students come into the region and take people's time, stories, and emotional energy. For those of us who are committed to experiential learning and the role of church organizations in responding to poverty, these critiques offer a prophetic challenge for the shape of our programs. They point to a need to attend to the ways in which such service and immersion programs might replicate the logic of extraction. Educators in faith should scrutinize the extent to which such programs are based on colonial models in which charity organizations come in to "save" the poor." Do the business models and economic responses to poverty practiced by such programs reinforce the logic of capitalism? Do our cultural assumptions, narratives, and relationships exploit the stories of those we encounter for our own emotional, financial, or educational returns? See Robert Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Christians Hurt Those They Help (And How to Reverse It)* (New York: HarperOne, 2011); Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground*, 121-126.

taught mountain people how to be Appalachian. For example, handicrafts programs were

an important component of the settlement school curriculum and presented as a "counter

to dehumanized and dehumanizing industrial production."[95] In the process, Appalachian

people became the commodities they were creating. The 'traditional' culture of the

mountains became a popular export for northern markets in the form of baskets, furniture,

quilts, and hillbilly records. Ironically, many of the cultural elements that were judged to

be most 'authentically' Appalachian were carefully curated to reinforce preconceived

conceptions of the region as an artifact of the Anglo-Saxon cultural traditions of the

American frontier.[96]

Like the benevolence work of missionaries and settlement schools, the federal

programs of the mid-twentieth century betrayed both region and class bias, favoring local

elites and industry over ordinary citizens and their concerns, which were often at odds.

Regional planners defined poverty in Appalachia in cultural terms rather than as a

consequence of economic structures, suggesting that isolation from mainstream American

society was contributing to a cycle of regional poverty, or a "culture of poverty."[97]

However, as Whisnant reflects, the War on Poverty faltered precisely on the

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[95] David Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 58.

[96] Many of which were never actually associated with the region or had long since fallen out of fashion. Morris dances, popular design elements imported from Sweden, the dulcimer, and old English ballads were consciously revived, introduced, or selected over the cultural expressions that represented the contemporary reality and interests of mountain people such as mail order instruments, especially banjos and guitars, and modern songs that reflected the contemporary issues of feuding, railroads, and coal mining. David Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine*, 51-68, 78-81, 97-101, 183-184.

[97] The concept of a 'culture of poverty' is developed by the anthropologist Oscar Lewis to explain poverty in 'underdeveloped' countries and regions. At the center of Lewis' theory is a tension between 'primitive' or 'traditional' and 'modern' societies. Lewis' theory, which was rooted in and appealed to the liberal middle-class of the mid twentieth century, suggested that 'the poor' of the 'third world' were not inherently inferior to those people in modern societies; rather, their poverty was the result of a cultural disconnect that deprived them of the skills, attitudes, and behaviors to succeed in the modern world. While the theory was initially applied to third world contexts, it found a ready application to explaining poverty in the U. S. in

mistaken assumption that Appalachia had problems because it was not integrated into the larger economy, when in fact its problems derived primarily…from its integration into the national economy for a narrow set of purposes: the extraction of low-cost raw materials, power, and labor, and the provision of a profitable market for consumer goods and services.[98]

Poverty was defined as a technical and managerial problem for economic *development* experts rather than one of political and economic *exploitation* and structured inequalities. The focus on Appalachia as culturally impoverished served to obscure the political institutions and conflicting economic interests that shaped regional issues.[99] Regional planners discounted the opinions and perspectives of citizens, particularly as these were often at variance with their own approach to regional development. Funding for things such as health and community services and the deeper structural problems that concerned

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the context of post-World War II prosperity and especially in resource rich areas of the nation like Appalachia, which was, incidentally, predominantly white, making widespread poverty thrice strange. The poor were not to 'blame,' but could be educated in such a way that they could overcome their poverty and find a place for themselves in the modern world. The theory was convenient for liberal attitudes because it offered no indictment of the world as it was and allowed middle-class, anti-poverty 'experts' to provide the needed guidance and services without calling into question the social, economic, and cultural systems of extractive capitalism. However, beneath the rhetoric of cultural modernization was the extraction of cultural identity. Poor people were viewed as incapable of generating their own solutions to the problems that faced them, which often were the result of colonial and capitalist socio-economic patterns that were the shadow side of modernity. Descriptively, Appalachia, like many other poor places, is characterized as fatalistic, inward looking, present-oriented, traditionally minded, suspicious of authority, and familial, among other traits—all of which are viewed as incompatible with 'modern' societies. For an excellent general description of the theory and its influence in the United States see, Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge*. For a particularly influential rendition of the 'culture of poverty' in Appalachia see Jack Weller, *Yesterday's People*: *Life in Contemporary Appalachia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky), 1995 [1965]. A contemporary rendition, which has been equally influential and roundly critiqued by regional scholars is J. D. Vance, *Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2016). Critiques of Vance include Elizabeth Catte, *What You are Getting Wrong About Appalachia* (Cleveland: Belt Publishing, 2018); Anthony Harkins and Meredith McCarroll, eds., *Appalachian Reckoning: A Region Responds to Hillbilly Elegy* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2019).

[98] David Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia*, revised ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994 [1980]), 129.

[99] Amanda Fickey and Michael Samers, "Developing Appalachia: The Impact of Limited Economic Imagination," in *Studying Appalachian Studies: Making the Path by Walking*, eds. Chad Berry, Phillip Obermiller, and Shaunna Scott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 127-130; Donald Edward Davis and Chris Baker, "Fixing Appalachia: A Century of Community Development in a 'Depressed' Area," in *Studying Appalachian Studies: Making the Path by Walking*, eds. Chad Berry, Phillip Obermiller, and Shaunna Scott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 99-101.

most citizens such as the dominance of low-wage industries, inequitable taxation, and environmental damage as a result of strip-mining, were largely ignored. Highway construction, which was a hallmark of the Appalachian Regional Commission, focused more on the transportation of goods—consumer products or fossil fuels—in and out of the region rather than connecting the region internally in a way that served the needs of residents.[100]

*Cultural Power in Appalachia*        Local color literature, culture of poverty theories, and, most recently, the contemporary re-invention of Appalachia in J. D. Vance's *Hillbilly Elegy* serve to deny a place for Appalachia in the American cultural landscape as anything other than a cultural relic or a cultural aberration. On the other hand, educational programs have often contained some element of viewing Appalachia's distinctive culture as an asset. Activist Judy Bonds would often say to young people when giving talks in schools, "never be ashamed of who you are and where you came from."[101] Bonds, like many other grassroots activists in central Appalachia, proudly embraced the hillbilly label reversing its negative connotations to signify independence and resilience against the exploitation of extractive industry. West Virginia's flag reads—'mountaineers are always free.' As Rebecca Scott elaborates, the figure of the hillbilly "makes the place legible" in these political struggles.[102] As much as the invention of Appalachia has served to empower the purveyors of middle-class values and to reinforce

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[100] David Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer*, 134-136, 154-7. See also, Amanda Fickey and Michael Samers, "Developing Appalachia," 125-126; Ronald Eller, *Uneven Ground*, 90-100.
[101] Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 64.
[102] *Ibid.*, 64.

a logic of extraction, Appalachia's exceptionalism has also been presented variously in educational programs as a source of pride, political resistance, and as a cultural and economic asset.

The Foxfire method, Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute (AMI), and contemporary youth-based programs such as the Highlander Center funded Stay Together Appalachian Youth (STAY) have all sought to mobilize Appalachian cultural identity in various ways to promote a *lived* sense of self and place which is dynamic, heterogenous, and complex. The Foxfire method focuses on Appalachian culture heritage such as log cabin building, woodworking, identifying and gathering wild medicinal and edible plants, folk tales, and "other affairs of plain living."[103] The work of the AMI and STAY are much more overtly politicized and seek to promote activist identities and engage youth in cultural and political *change*. At the same time, they rely on the idea of Appalachia as culturally distinctive, unique, and somehow 'other' than the rest of America, reinforcing

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[103] The Foxfire method was developed in the late 1960s in Rabun Gap, a small community in the Appalachian region of northern Georgia by Eliot Wigginton, a high school English teacher. In an effort to engage his students he developed the idea of a student-produced magazine, which involved students as cultural researchers and journalists. In a departure from the model of cultural *intervention* adopted by settlement schools, Wigginton allowed students to identify topics through conversations with parents, grandparents, and relatives. At the same time, the decision to focus on cultural *heritage* rather than contemporary social and political issues to some extent helped to reify and reinforce a static and commodified view of Appalachian culture. Indeed, the project gained national attention and its success as a pedagogy and its timing at the height of media attention on the region during the War on Poverty resulted in a popular series of published books, a play, and a non-profit foundation. If media attention fixated on the cultural and economic degeneracy of the region, then Foxfire tapped into American nostalgia for a simpler and romanticized past at a time of rapid cultural change. The phrase quoted above, which appeared on the covers of the books, became an iconic reference to the series for those familiar with it. See Allen Batteau, *The Invention of Appalachia*, 12-14, 190-193; J. Cynthia McDermott and Hilton Smith, "Eliot Wigginton: Foxfire—No Inert Ideas Allowed Here," in *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions,* eds. Thomas Smith and Clifford Knapp (New York: Routledge, 2011), 262-271; Eliot Wigginton, ed. *The Foxfire Book: Hog dressing, log cabin building, mountain crafts and foods, planting by the signs, snake lore, hunting tales, faith healing moonshining, and other affairs of plain living* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1972).

the same cultural and political dynamics only in the key of radical politics. As one AMI student participant observes,

> I developed an identity as an Appalachian. Before I knew where I was from, but I didn't have any feelings of pride. It wasn't an important part of my identity. [The process of producing a documentary] gave me something to identify with and be passionate about. It gave me something to want to fight for and to want to make change for.[104]

As we have seen, in the Anthropocene culture can become another commodity, or resource, to be exploited by the powerful, playing on human emotions of sympathy or nostalgia. How can culture be taken up and reclaimed as a source of liberation?

*Beyond the Anthropocene*     Is Appalachia exceptional? To what extent does the 'idea of Appalachia' reinforce dominant patterns of visibility and invisibility in the region and limit creative solutions to old problems? Does it limit the landscape of our imaginations and draw borders around how we frame or 'place' regional issues? Our politics of place and our relationship to places is influenced to large extent, as Dwight Billings suggests, by the ideas we hold "about what and where Appalachia is and what kind of people [we] imagine live there."[105] These questions ask us to reckon with how broader social, political, ecclesial, and economic forces make use of Appalachian culture to serve their own dominant interests.

This history of cultural extraction directly confronts models of service learning, a hallmark of religious education and faith formation. These often rely uncritically upon

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[104] Katie Richards-Schuster and Rebecca O'Doherty, "Appalachian Youth Re-envisioning Home, Re-making Identities, in *Transforming Places: Lessons from Appalachia,* eds. Stephen L. Fisher and Barbara Ellen Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2012), 86-87.
[105] Dwight Billings, "Teaching Region: Appalachia," in *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters*, eds. Dwight Billings and Ann Kingsolver (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018), 230.

dominant cultural representations of marginalized communities to appeal to the moral sympathies of the privileged. The result is an over-simplification of the complexities inherent in the politics of place. Romanticized, but inaccurate, visions of the simplicity and good-will of the poor provide a self-congratulatory counter-narrative to the oppression and moral turpitude of industrial capitalism. By identifying with the former through acts of service, those who participate in service-learning are able to, at least in their own eyes, unproblematically distance themselves from identification with the latter. As noted above, the service-immersion and missionary industries often function as another extractive industry[106] in Appalachia and other sacrifice zones, reinforcing the logic of extraction at the cultural level. The challenge is to attend in critical fashion to representations of a culture and a place with which we are presented and the interests they might serve, asking who has authored them and under whose direction. Further, we need to supplement those images with lived experience of the place itself.

*Conclusions*

Thinking critically about those social, economic, cultural, and political systems that produce injustice and lead to violence requires attention to place as a nourishing habitat. Echoing again theologian George Tinker, attention to cultivating kinship with Creation is foundational to and must precede the work of justice and peace. By extension, such kinship is central to Christian identity and the human covenantal relationship with God. Climate change is a result of our failure to take place seriously. Similarly our failure to take Creation seriously has led to the violence of resource wars, the displacement of

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[106] Again, I owe this formulation to my friend, a Catholic Worker in West Virginia, who has given much of their life's vocation to these types of programs. Their critique, like mine, comes from a deep love of and a belief in these programs.

peoples, and social injustices. It has led us to view places like Appalachia as nothing more than 'the Coalfields.'

Restorative justice with Earth and reconciliation with Creation begins by thinking critically about our own places and the various politics of place that have been used to define power *in* place and give or deny power *to* place. Pedagogies of place not only think critically about how we define place but also invite us to be active participants in creating place. People of faith are invited to actively bring a theology of the land and a theology of Creation into this praxis and to place our primary allegiances with Creation and the God of Creation, seeking right relationship with all beings. Educators also need to attend to how education promotes human psycho-social development. In the next chapter I turn specifically to examining how the logic of extraction has negatively impacted youth development. I explore solutions by asking how a bioregional mindset, committed to creation kinship, might promote and contribute to positive youth development.

## Chapter Two

## Happy in the Land: Growing up in the Anthropocene

*"Happy are those who consider the poor;*
*the LORD delivers them in the day of trouble.*
*The LORD protects them and keeps them alive;*
*They are called happy in the land."*—Psalm 42: 1-2

*"At its best, teaching is a caring profession."*—bell hooks*, Teaching Community*[1]

In their study into the developmental lives of adolescent girls in Lincoln County, WV, Linda Spatig and Layne Amerikaner share the following lines of a composite poem written by participants in a community-based youth development program called the Girls' Resiliency Program, "I love it./I'll leave some day." As Spatig and Amerikaner reflect, "it was not uncommon to hear the young people speak about their love for Lincoln County and then to declare—almost in the same breath—with regret and seeming resignation that they cannot stay because there are no jobs. According to the girls, their parents have the same conflicted desires for them."[2] This outmigration trend is not new

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[1] bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 86.
[2] Linda Spatig and Layne Amerikaner, *Thinking Outside the Girl Box: Teaming Up with Resilient Youth in Appalachia* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014), 27. George Towers observes how regional stereotypes shape both self-understanding and relationship to place among adolescents in West Virginia. Towers found that these stereotypes played differentially based on the part of the state in which adolescents lived. Young people from outside the coalfields (the southern part of the state where coal mining is the dominant industry and where poverty rates are the highest) when asked to describe the various regions of the state and their desirability as places of residence used negative stereotypes about the region as a way to describe coalfield communities and distance themselves from these associations. For example, one student said, "it is terribly poor and hillbillyish down there"; another said, "it has a reputation for being nothing but rednecks and welfare people." In this narrative, the coalfields are sacrificed for inclusion in an ideal America. By contrast, youth from the coalfield region challenged Appalachian stereotypes and explained the poverty in their home state as stemming from structural causes such as pollution and lack of jobs.

for Appalachian youth. As historian Elizabeth Catte observes, "for more than 70 years, West Virginians have experienced both the economic push to leave and, for many, a fierce desire to stay. West Virginia is currently the only state shrinking from both natural population decline—there are more deaths than births—and out migration." [3] In Appalachia, behavioral, socioeconomic, and environmental factors create challenging environments for young people to make an empowered decision to stay.

Appalachian individuals smoke, experience obesity, and struggle with addiction at significantly higher rates than the national average. [4] According to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the 2017 per capita income in the Appalachian region was $41,155 compared to the national average of $51,640. [5] From 2013-2017 the poverty rate in Appalachia was 16.3% compared to the national rate of 14.6%. [6] Statistics for

George Towers, "West Virginia's Lost Youth: Appalachian Stereotypes and Residential Preferences," *Journal of Geography* 104, no. 2 (2005): 81.

[3] Elizabeth Catte, with poetry by Doug Van Gundy, and pictures by Matt Eich, "A Fierce Desire to Stay: Looking at West Virginia through Its People's Eyes," *The Guardian*, May 7th, 2019, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/may/07/a-fierce-desire-to-stay-looking-at-west-virginia-through-its-peoples-eyes (accessed September 5th, 2020); See also Patrick J. Carr and Maria J. Kefalas, *Hollowing Out the Middle: The Rural Brain Drain and What it Means for America* (Boston: Beacon, 2009), 1-4; John Alexander Williams, *Appalachia: A History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 329-330.

[4] Michael Hendryx, "Health and the Physical Environment," in *Appalachian Health and Well-Being*, eds. Robert Ludke and Phillip Obermiller (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 47-66.

[5] The discrepancy is heightened when comparing central Appalachian states with the national average. In the same year, per capita income in West Virginia (the only state placed entirely within the Appalachian region) was $38,479; in Kentucky, $40,597; and Tennessee, $45,517. At the same time, many states with Appalachian counties do not fit this narrative. The per capita income in New York for 2017 was $64,540; Virginia was $55,105; and in Pennsylvania it was $53,300. However, the picture changes when considering only the Appalachian counties in these states and their 2017 per capita incomes. In Appalachian New York it was $41,100; in Appalachian Virginia, $36,382; and in Appalachian Pennsylvania, $46,631. The discrepancy carries when considering Appalachian and non-Appalachian counties in states located within central Appalachia. Compared to the state averages noted above, Appalachian Kentucky had a 2017 per capita income of $32,368 (the lowest in the region) and Appalachian Tennessee was $40,412 for the same period. See Appalachian Regional Commission Data Reports available at arc.org: https://www.arc.gov/reports/custom_report.asp?REPORT_ID=78 (accessed February 2nd, 2020).

[6] When breaking down the statistics to focus on central Appalachian states and Appalachian and non-Appalachian counties within states a similar pattern emerges as that described in the discussion on per capita income in fn. 5. For example, poverty rates in the central Appalachian states of West Virginia and

unemployment rates in 2017 match the unfolding picture. In Appalachia the unemployment rate was 4.8% compared to 4.4% nationally with central Appalachian counties faring much worse: 5.2% in West Virginia and 6.7% in Appalachian Kentucky.[7] In the period covering 2013-2017, 86.4% of Appalachians had completed high school compared to the national average of 87.3% and 23.7% had a college education compared to 30.9% nationally.[8]

Appalachians also score lowest on self-reported measures of wellness in terms of mental health and life satisfaction. Since the 1990s central Appalachia has experienced a dramatic rise in substance abuse, particularly in relation to the non-medical use of prescription drugs.[9] Additionally, a recent Gallup study identifying the 10 "most miserable states in the USA" contains six states with Appalachian counties, including West Virginia, Kentucky (the top two), Ohio, and Tennessee. As *USA Today* reports, West Virginians have a more "negative outlook about their future" than residents in any other state. Further, "just 44.8% of residents described themselves as thriving, the lowest

Kentucky are 17.8% and 18.3%. When comparing Appalachian and non-Appalachian New York poverty rates are 16.4% and 15.1% respectively. See ARC, "Poverty Rates, 2013-2017," https://www.arc.gov /reports/custom_report.asp?REPORT_ID=77 (accessed February 2nd, 2020).

[7] ARC, "Unemployment Rates, 2017," https://www.arc.gov/reports/custom_report.asp?REPORT_ID=23 (accessed February 2nd, 2020).

[8] Again, the picture is sharpened by focusing on central Appalachia and the Appalachian counties in specific states. 85.9% of West Virginians had high school diplomas in this period and 19.9% had completed a bachelor's degree. In Appalachian Kentucky these figures are 77.8% and 14.7% compared with 85.2% and 23.2% for Kentucky as a whole. The pattern isn't perfect; in Appalachian New York these figures are 90% and 26.2% compared to New York as a whole with figures at 86.1% and 35.3% (note the superior high school completion rate in Appalachian New York); however, generally, the pattern is maintained. ARC, "Education—High School and College Completion Rates, 2013-2017" https://www.arc.gov/ reports/custom_report.asp?REPORT_ID=79 (accessed February 2nd, 2020).

[9] Ronald D. Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 242-244; David Collins, Melissa Harris Abadi, Knowlton Johnson, Steve Shamblen, and Kirsten Thompson, "Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs Among Youth in an Appalachian Population: Prevalence, Predictors, and Implications for Prevention," *Journal of Drug Education* 41, no. 3 (2011): 310-11.

in the nation. West Virginia also had the lowest score for overall emotional health" and the highest rates of blood pressure, cholesterol, and obesity. In Kentucky, 30% reported that "health issues prevented them from going about their normal lives." Further, Kentucky tied West Virginia for reliance on prescription drugs, "with 19.3 prescriptions filled per capita in 2011." [10] Of course, these trends need to be placed in the sociohistorical context discussed in chapter one, but they illuminate some of the factors that enter into a young person's decision to stay or leave the region. They also influence the developmental pathways of adolescents.[11]

The issue of outmigration impacts adolescent development in sacrifice zones across the United States where communities experience a combination of economic marginalization and environmental degradation. Furthermore, social and cultural dynamics often make places like Appalachia hostile or unsafe for those from marginalized identities, particularly for people of color or LGBTQ youth in rural

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[10] Ashley C. Allen, Thomas C. Frohlich, and Alexander E. M. Hess, "Report: The Most Miserable States in the USA," *USA Today*, February 27, 2014, http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2014/02/23/most-miserable-states/5729305/ (accessed February 27, 2014). Michael Hendryx suggests that discrepancies in health, well-being, and quality of life in Appalachia compared to the rest of the nation does not have to do with the lack of access to services providers. There are on average similar numbers of service providers compared to elsewhere in the nation; however, geographic, socio-cultural, and economic barriers as well as other environmental factors do exist in comparison to other national regions. See also Susan, Keefe, ed. *Appalachian Cultural Competency: A Guide for Medical, Mental Health, and Social Service Professionals* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005); Susan Keefe and Lisa Curtin, "Mental Health," in *Appalachian Health and Well-Being*, eds. Robert Ludke and Phillip Obermiller (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 223-250; Joel Halverson, et al, "Health Care Systems," in *Appalachian Health and Well-Being*, eds. Robert Ludke and Phillip Obermiller (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 89-108.

[11] Scientific research highlights the fact that poverty brings with it a variety of emotional stressors, which have an especially strong impact on young people. The combination of "genetic, social, psychological, behavioral, and physical environmental" stressors have biological and neurological effects that "impair the body's capacity to regulate, repair, and improve physical function." Scientists refer to the cumulative effects of these burdens as a person's "allostatic load." See Hendryx, "Health and the Physical Environment," in *Appalachian Health and Well-Being*, 48). The weight of these burdens interferes with executive functioning, making it very hard for young people to do well in school and can lead to emotional distress and risky behaviors. It also can have a detrimental impact on their emerging self-concept.

communities, further complicating the decision to stay or leave. Focusing on Midwestern farming communities, Jeanne Hoeft and colleagues comment, "'will I stay or will I leave?' may be one of the central developmental questions for young adults raised in the Heartland's small towns."[12] Place-based pedagogies respond with another question, *what does it take to encourage and make it possible for young people to stay? What role do educators have in this process?* The future of places like central Appalachia depends on how we respond. Further, the future of religious institutions, which are experiencing a similar exodus, also depends upon it. As I will show in this chapter, working for place-based justice is not only beneficial for communities but also for the developing person.

I believe that cultivating a sense of commitment to, and justice for, our places is an appropriately Christian response to the Anthropocene's extractive value structure. To be a Christian is to be committed to the common good and to nourish just relationships within our common home. To this end, education in faith should nourish place-based values. Indeed, it is particularly well-equipped to do so. Again, our faith is grounded in God, Creator of Heaven and Earth. It is also committed to nurturing God's Kingdom of Justice and Peace.

Unfortunately, education in sacrifice zones often works in the opposite direction. In a study of one small town in Iowa, Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas found that educators and youth development programs in rural communities often reinforce a logic of extraction by

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[12] Jeanne Hoeft, L. Shannon Jung, and Joretta Marshall, *Practicing Care in Rural Congregations and Communities* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 31.

focusing their efforts on "preparing the most talented young people to leave and succeed" somewhere else.[13]

Decisions to stay, leave, or come home are complex and young people should not feel shame for leaving any more than they should for staying. Place-based education does not make these decisions for young people. However, it teaches the value of investing in the places you call home, remembering that all places are connected. A young person who moves from a central Appalachian town to a large New England city, for example, can still practice justice for Appalachia. In their new place they can practice values that reflect a preferential option for sacrifice zones. Young people who learn place-based values are engaged in their watersheds, their civic communities, and their religious congregations. They value collective identities and participate in the significant publics in their place, and they are active defenders of the land and the more-than-human communities in their bioregions. In the context of education in faith, they see their Christian identity and vocation to discipleship as inseparable from, and grounded in, these place-based commitments.

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[13] Patrick Carr and Maria Kefalas, *Hollowing Out the Middle*, 161. Carr and Kefalas identify 4 categories of young people in small towns like the one under study. The 'achievers' are intelligent and ambitious young people who are most likely to leave; 'stayers' are those who transition to adulthood quickly after high-school and marry, raise families, and work blue-collar jobs, never leaving their hometown. 'Seekers' simply can't wait to get away from the confines of small-town life. Finally, there are the 'returners' who fall into two sub-categories. First are those achievers that return with skills acquired at college and high ambitions after experiencing disillusionment with city life. Second are the boomerangs, who view their time away for military service or college as temporary. When they return, they settle into lives resembling those of the stayers. Carr and Kefalas emphasize that educators and those who work with youth tend to place most of their time and attention upon the success stories—those who are destined to leave; indeed, they encourage them to do so. At the same time, they neglect and provide few resources to those most likely to stay. State and local policies and programs tend to focus on luring educated achievers back to these communities and offer little in the way of supporting and resourcing those who stay. There is an ironic logic at work that emphasizes individual success stories at the expense of communal solidarity. See Carr and Kefalas, *Hollowing Out the Middle*, 19-26, 145-149, 155-172.

*Chapter outline*    First, I discuss the role of place in psychological and social development. I take an 'ecological' approach to adolescent development. Such an approach takes into account the myriad settings in which development occurs and how these interrelate and change over time. This approach provides nuance and complexity to more linear models, which focus on 'ages' and 'stages.' Second, I introduce Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory, which applies this perspective to adolescence. I emphasize and critically analyze 'resilience' and 'intentional self-regulation' (ISR), two core constructs within PYD theory. I suggest how a PYD approach might reframe our perspectives on and engagements with adolescent faith. Along the way, I remain attentive to how these theories can be vulnerable to appropriation by the logic of extraction. Finally, I emphasize the importance of a social justice perspective grounded in principles of movement building and community organizing. I suggest a vision of movement-building-as-pedagogy to nurture alternative spaces of empowerment within oppressive contexts and unjust systems.

*Placing Human Development*

Sharon Daloz Parks observes that one of the dominant and enduring metaphors for conceptualizing human development has been that of the journey. In a time of global environmental destruction and erosion of civic institutions, it is perhaps urgent that educators and other caring professionals give greater attention to "incorporating into our understanding of human development an imagination of becoming at home…becoming is not so much a matter of leaving home as it is undergoing a series of transformations in

the meaning of home."[14] It is important that a place-based education in faith begins with a place-based understanding of human development.

Indeed, the more salient question for the developing person is, as Wendell Berry suggests, not 'who am I' but "where are we?"[15] Reframing our understanding of the developing person around this question shifts our attention in two ways. First, the word 'where' turns our attention to place, or geography. Second, the word 'we' grounds our identities and being in relationships. This question, and these words taken together, troubles the myth of modern, Western, individualism, returning us to a deeper collective consciousness and commitment. The Anthropocene has taught us that I *am* because of what I have *achieved*. It suggests that my happiness is in my own hands whether that comes through hard work, attending to studies, putting in extra hours at the office, or 'self-care' practices. Berry's question invites us to consider the possibility that it is in the community of creation and within the web of life that we have our being and becoming. We are who we are through relationships. Thriving is a communal affair that requires we direct our energy to the places in which we dwell.

*The Ecology of Human Development*

Young people bring their developmental lives with them into the classroom. The same is true for educators! As educators in faith an awareness of and sensitivity to the "developmental ecologies" of the students with whom we are learning/educating is a significant component of creating an engaging, empowering, and supportive learning

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[14] Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams: Mentoring Young Adults in Their Search for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 51; see also pages 64-65, 94-95.
[15] Quoted in Jack Baker and Jeffrey Bilbro, *Wendell Berry and Higher Education: Cultivating Virtues of Place* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017), 18-19.

environment. This fact also suggests that learning happens not only in the classroom, but also in the myriad relationships, events, institutions, and contexts in which we interact daily. Therefore, it is appropriate to think of the whole place and community as both classroom and educator.[16] Educators in faith should pay particular attention to how we invite young people to bring the resources of faith to the questions, challenges, and opportunities that accompany their own becoming at home in the world. The stories, symbols, and practices of their faith tradition offer tools for crafting an answer to this vexing question, *where are we?* How will we support adolescent efforts to make a place, or better, a home for themselves within their life's geography?

*Developmental science, pedagogy, and the logic of extraction*        The language of human developmental science is shaped by the social, cultural, and economic values of the Western societies that gave birth to this discourse and often reflect the interests and assumptions of dominant classes and groups in these places. These assumptions and

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[16] L. S. Vygotsky, "Interaction Between Learning and Development," in *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes,* eds. Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner, and Ellen Souberman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978 [1935]), 79-91. One of Vygotsky's most significant contributions to educational and developmental practice and theory is the notion of Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD), Vygotsky defines this principle as "*the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." Ibid.*, 86. Vygotsky continues, "learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his [*sic*] environment and in cooperation with his peers…properly organized learning results in mental development and sets in motion a variety of developmental processes that would be impossible apart from learning…developmental processes do not coincide with learning processes. Rather, the developmental process lags behind the learning process." *Ibid.*, 90. Cognitive development and knowledge generation result from situated, social, and relational processes, suggesting the importance of apprenticeship, mentoring, and collaborative learning environments comprised of learners from a diversity of ability levels and with diverse life-experiences as crucial structures of the learning environment.

interests influence how we imagine what a healthy journey from childhood to adulthood

looks like. Erica Burman observes,

> if childhood is natural then not all children partake of the category. Actual, real children often fail to live up to our phantasised investments. And the children who transgress this model most are those who most deviate from the white, middle-class, Northern children that formed the sample for the generation of the scientifically naturalized model of child development…This means that Southern children, minority black children, working-class children the world over, especially girls (since the culturally privileged model of the playing child is really a boy)…all violate the model of the happy, playing, discovering child.[17]

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[17] Erica Burman, *Developments: Child, Image, Nation* (London: Routledge, 2008)*,* 157. Carol Gilligan famously exposed the male-centered bias of the research conducted by the major figures of developmental theory such as Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lawrence Kohlberg. Gilligan notes that their theories of the lifecycle are based on studying the lives of boys and the social worlds they inhabited and would inhabit as adults. In these theoretical models, healthy development is based on the acquisition of the types of social, emotional, and cognitive skills needed to navigate those worlds and relationships effectively. Girls' development was considered against the backdrop of this male dominated (and we should add anthropocentric, Western/white, middle-class, capitalist) world and on this basis judged as a deviation from the norm without considering the differences in the social worlds they were expected to inhabit and how these might shape development. As Gilligan observes, "in Piaget's account (1932) of the moral judgement of the child, girls are an aside, a curiosity to whom he devotes four brief entries in an index that omits 'boys' all together because 'the child' is assumed to be male, in the research from which Kohlberg derives his theory, females simply do not exist. Kohlberg's (1958, 1981) six stages that describe the development of moral judgement from childhood to adulthood are based empirically on a study of eighty-four boys…Although Kohlberg claims universality for his stage sequence, those groups not included in his original sample rarely reach his higher stages…only if women enter the traditional arena of male activity will they recognize the inadequacy of this moral perspective and progress like men toward higher stages where relationships are subordinated to rules (stage four) and rules to universal principles of justice (stages five and six)." See Gilligan, 18. It is too simple a reading of Gilligan to distinguish male and female developmental tasks. Indeed, Gilligan continues, "only when life-cycle theorists divide their attention and begin to live with women as they have with men will their vision encompass the experience of both sexes and their theories become correspondingly more fertile." See Gilligan, 23. In other words, developmental theory must identify and theorize *through* the tension between autonomy and connection and ask how different developmental ecologies shape these needs. Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), especially pages 11-23. Another often cited example is differences in parenting styles based on context. While most adolescent developmental theory recommends an "authoritative" style of parenting in which parents offer informed guidance and sound advice, this is contingent on certain socio-cultural factors. Young people of color in the U. S. and those from higher-risk environments, for a complexity of hypothesized reasons, tend to benefit more from an "authoritarian" style of parenting. In other words, healthy child development follows multiple pathways toward a variety of ends. See Urie Bronfenbrenner and Pamela A. Morris, "The Bioecological Model of Human Development," in vol. 1 of *The Handbook of Child Psychology*, eds. William Damon and Richard Lerner, 6th ed. (Wiley, 2006), 817-818; Isaac Prilleltensky, Geoffrey Nelson, and Leslea Peirson, "The Role of Power and Control in Children's Lives: An Ecological Analysis of Pathways toward Wellness, Resilience, and Problems," *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology* 11 (2001): 150-151.

The logic of extraction's colonial narrative, its tendency to emphasize growth-based market solutions, to focus on individual-based interventions rather than community-driven solutions, and to privilege the voice of experts at the expense of local knowledge leads to a focus on deficits within so-called marginalized communities. This is a comfortable position for educators and other development professionals because it reinforces our own experience of the world and allows us to retain the lion's share of power. Developing pedagogies that promote positive *and* liberative developmental pathways for young people is critical for challenging the logic of extraction that produces sacrifice zones.

Much modern pedagogy has been influenced by cognitive-developmental psychology's "child-centered" perspective. Jean Piaget has been especially influential in this regard. Rather than viewing the child as an incomplete adult, Piaget emphasizes the qualitatively distinct character of the ways in which a child knows and interprets their world. Children are active, knowing persons with unique perspectives, interests, and concerns which educators and other care-givers should seek to understand on a child's own terms if we are to support not only their learning but also their growth toward adulthood.[18]

At the same time, child-centered approaches have certain limitations and should be complemented with a critical analysis of the role of place in a child's development. Because Piaget is concerned with the general structures of knowledge, his approach to

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[18] Erica Burman, *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology,* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 243-246.

cognitive development is that of an "essentially 'decontextualized' knower." [19]

Developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner's "bioecological model of human development" seeks to provide a corrective. Three elements of his theory are instructive for place-based educators 1.) attention to persons in context 2.) attention to power and agency in shaping development 3.) the role of relationships between persons as well as across contexts. Note that this schema mirrors the definition of place offered in the introduction.

*Persons in context*        Place matters in shaping the socio-historical or external circumstances of our lives as well as our internal histories or developmental pathways. Bronfenbrenner and Morris describe development in terms of

> progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment…it is a basic premise of ecological systems theory that development is a *function of* forces emanating from multiple settings and from the relations among these settings [and across generations].[20]

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[19] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 9; see also Erica Burman, *Deconstructing*, 243-244; L. S. Vygotsky, "Interaction Between Learning and Development," 79-80.

[20] Urie Bronfenbrenner and Pamela A. Morris, "The Bioecological Model of Human Development," 797, 817. See also Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development*, 12-13. Bronfenbrenner describes five nested developmental ecologies. The most immediate setting is the *microsystem*, composed of face-to-face settings and interpersonal relationships in which the developing person participates directly. For an adolescent, this would include but not be limited to the family, school, peer groups, a youth ministry group, and so forth. Second, is the *mesosystem,* or the interaction between two systems in which a person directly participates. For example, how does participation in a youth ministry program at church influence a developing adolescent's home-life and vice versa? The third ecological system is the *exosystem*, this refers to systems in which the developing person does not directly participate but are connected to those settings in which they do participate directly. For example, what impact does a parent's work life have upon family life? Or how might the ministerial formation being undertaken by an educator in faith influence a youth ministry program? Fourth, is the *macrosystem*, referring to the broader economic, cultural, political, and I would add natural ecologies and ecclesial structures, that influence and mark out the realm of the possible within these settings. More recently, Bronfenbrenner adds a fifth ecological system, the *chronosystem*, which describes how relationships to these ecologies change over time. Indeed, an adolescent relates to their parents very differently than they did as a child. However, these earlier interactions will have an

This emphasis on environmental influences and the importance of context for learning and development is not unique. However, Bronfenbrenner is perhaps unique in the extent to which he allows the concept of environment to provide a framework for restructuring developmental theory as whole. In particular, Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasizes the *dynamic and active* relationship between the person and the material content of their environment.

By material content I refer to the structural factors that shape a person's environment. Bronfenbrenner notes that "objects, activities, and especially other people send out lines of force, valences, and vectors that attract and repel, thereby steering behavior and development."[21] This material content is shaped by socio-economic and cultural-political structures that give access to or deny opportunities for healthy and empowered development. Peter Scales and Nancy Leffert notes that young people

> need adequate food, shelter, clothing, caregivers who at the minimum are not abusive or neglectful, families with adequate incomes, schools where both children and teachers feel safe, and economically and culturally vibrant neighborhoods—not ones beset by drugs, violent crime, and infrastructural decay.[22]

It is necessary that developmental psychologists attend not only to internal factors that might influence the development of a child, but attend to the influence of access to or lack of social and political power within a community, which requires attention to the

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influence on later interactions within the family and will also influence the ways in which an adolescent interacts in other settings.

[21] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development*, 23.

[22] Peter Scales and Nancy Leffert, *Developmental Assets: A Synthesis of the Scientific Research on Adolescent Development*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Search Institute, 2004 [1999]), 11. See also Isaac Prilleltensky, Geoffrey Nelson, and Leslea Peirson, "The Role of Power and Control in Children's Lives," 147-150, including table 1.

social, political, and economic policies that effect community, family, school, and natural environment in a place.

Scales and Leffert emphasize the identification and cultivation of "external developmental assets," which they place under four broad categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time.[23] These include

- social class and the cultural-political policies and systems that shape socioeconomic life;

- community infrastructure such as social services and youth-serving programs and the ability to access these without stigma;

- a caring and supportive school environment that is well-funded and resourced;

- the quality and safety of a neighborhood as it relates to things such as neighborhood violence, pollution, the presence of green spaces;

- and family situation and home-life.

It is important to note that these factors do not *determine* young people's developmental outcomes. As will be explored further below, when communities mobilize their strengths, they empower resistance to a logic of extraction and nurture positive developmental outcomes in the face of structural oppression. As Prilleltenky and colleagues reflect,

> favourable contexts created by the presence of adequate resources, values, policies and programmes are likely to result in wellness for children and their families…children whose maturation process is characterized by economic security, formal and informal supports, recreation opportunities, affective bonds, access to health care, high quality child care, cognitive stimulation, and caring and compassion develop stress-resistant traits…This is because their reservoir of

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[23] Peter Scales and Nancy Leffert, *Developmental Assets*, 2-3 (table 1), 6 (table 2).

positive experiences is rich enough to withstand adverse circumstances.[24]

The attention to identifying and mobilizing community strengths as well as organizing for social change points to the inseparability of biological and psychological characteristics of a young person, on the one hand, and the geographic, contextual, and interpersonal settings in which they live, on the other. At the center of nurturing resilient communities is providing young people opportunities to play significant and empowered roles within these developmental ecologies.[25]

Oftentimes, person and environment are imagined as essentially distinct with the environment providing a variable backdrop for fixed and uniform developmental processes. In the bioecological model of human development (or as it is sometimes called, developmental systems theory), the person is included in and part of the ecologies they inhabit. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner includes settings in which children do not directly participate (exosystem and macrosystem) and the interrelationship between settings (mesosystem).[26] Ontologically (in their being) persons are *placed*. *Who* we are is inseparable from *where* we are. This leads to a greater focus on the active role people play within significant settings.

*Agency in development*          Second, this place-based perspective aims to challenge deficit thinking that *blames* persons for their circumstances or behaviors or which views persons as *victims* of circumstance. While it is true that a person's

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[24] Isaac Prilleltensky, Geoffrey Nelson, and Leslea Peirson, "The Role of Power and Control in Children's Lives," 150. See also Peter Scales and Nancy Leffert, *Developmental Assets*, 13-14

[25] Peter Scales and Nancy Leffert, *Developmental Assets*, 11-13; Richard Lerner, *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, 2004), 64, 77, 81-83.

[26] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development*, 21-22.

development is to some extent determined by internal (biological), external (contextual or environmental), and inter-personal (relational) factors, it is also true that persons are to some extent "agents of their own development."[27] Rather than framing development around a series of age-based stages with accompanying 'developmental tasks,' Bronfenbrenner focuses on what he calls "ecological transitions." Development is the result of changes in the important immediate and distant settings that influence our lives and the process of responding and adjusting to these shifting material circumstances.[28] A parent's job loss, changing schools, having a best friend move, being passed over for a job, or witnessing a much loved area of woods be raised as timber are all changes in our world that invite response and lead to personal change.

In adolescence the number and complexity of ecological settings and relationship to them greatly and rapidly expand, making this a time of significant development. More recently, the model has given greater attention to both the biological factors (brain and pubertal development being particularly salient during the adolescent years)[29] that influence how we respond to these changes and to processes or more fully "proximal processes" which influence our relationship to our environment. The latter refers to the

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[27] Urie Bronfenbrenner and Pamela A. Morris, "The Bioecological Model of Human Development," 797.

[28] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development*, 26-29.

[29] For a helpful summary of research surrounding brain development in the adolescent years and the implications of these changes on adolescent social, emotional, and behavioral health and well-being see the very accessible summary and footnotes in Theresa O'Keefe, *Navigating Toward Adulthood: A Theology of Ministry with Adolescents* (New York: Paulist, 2018), 78-83; for further discussion and summary of pubertal and neurological development in the adolescent years and the implications for positive youth development see, Theresa O'Keefe, "The Same but Different: The Culture in which our Adolescents Live," *Journal of Youth and Theology* 7, no. 2 (2008): 43-44; Christopher Napolitano, et al., "The Development of Intentional Self-Regulation in Adolescence: Describing, Explaining, and Optimizing Its Link to Positive Youth Development," in *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, eds. Richard Lerner, Jacqueline Lerner, and Janette Benson (Burlington: Academic Press, 2011): 20; Jacqueline Lerner, et al., "Positive Youth Development," in R. M. Lerner, M. A., Easterbrooks, and J. Mistry, eds., *Handbook of Psychology, Volume 6: Developmental Psychology*, editor-in-chief: I. B. Weiner, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley), 366. A summary of this material is offered in fn. 72 below.

"enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment" such as "comforting a baby…reading…athletic activities…caring for others in distress…making plans…and acquiring new knowledge and know how."[30] Caring and supportive relationships are crucial elements in promoting resilience even in the midst of unstable environments such as sacrifice zones.[31] This brings us to the third point.

*Developing together*          Finally, one of the more difficult aspects of developmental systems theory to grasp in the highly individualistic societies of the capitalist West is its uniquely relational ontology (theory of being) with a focus on "dyads" as "one of the basic units of analysis."[32] As Bronfenbrenner continues, "a dyad is formed whenever two persons pay attention to or participate in one another's activities." This can be through observation or joint activity.[33] Attention to dyads draws our attention to the place of power and the importance of voice in developmental relationships.[34] As the ecological metaphor suggests, development is a reciprocal process in which boundaries are blurry and indistinct. Connection is more the rule than differentiation.

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[30] Urie Bronfenbrenner and Pamela A. Morris, "The Bioecological Model of Human Development," 797.
[31] *Ibid.*, 803-808, 820.
[32] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development*, 5; Urie Bronfenbrenner and Pamela A. Morris, "The Bioecological Model of Human Development," 815-817. Eric Burman notes that this insight is often misrepresented in interpretations and applications of Bronfenbrenner's theory, particularly in international development contexts. Burman analyzes influential interpretations that place the child at the center of the ecological system, returning the model to the abstract and individualistic framework that Bronfenbrenner's theory was meant to challenge. See Erica Burman, *Developments*, 284, fn.5. See also Erica Burman, *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*, 122; Erica Burman, "Continuities and Discontinuities in Interpretive and Textual Approaches to Developmental Psychology," *Human Development* 39 (1996): 330-349.
[33] Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development*, 56.
[34] For a helpful discussion of the role of power and voice in the developmental lives of children through the use of developmental systems theory Isaac Prilleltensky, Geoffrey Nelson, and Lesla Peirson, "The Role of Power and Control in Children's Lives," 143-158. For discussion of the related concept of voice see Linda Spatig and Layne Amerikaner, *Thinking Outside the Girl Box*, 51-60.

As Bodrova, Leong, and Akhutina observe, our development is embedded in social interactions and our responses to significant others in our lives. As they explain, "to develop self-regulation, children need to have an opportunity to engage in other-regulation. Other-regulation implies that children act both as subjects of another person's regulatory behaviors and as actors regulating another person's behavior."[35] Relationships are both educative and shapers of development. Learning involves social relationships and the cultural, political, and economic norms that govern these interactions as much as it does conceptual knowledge and cognitive skills. Education also demands attention to our emotional and spiritual lives and how these are disciplined or liberated through their placement within socio-cultural, economic, and political structures.

*Developing in Faith*

What does all of this mean for education in faith? How are we as educators in faith to create learning environments that support and engage young people in cultivating nourishing and resilient spiritual ecologies? First, it is important to remember that faith does not happen in a vacuum. Our spirituality and our relationship to religious institutions is influenced by and influences how we relate to and understand other environments that we inhabit directly or indirectly. We should not assume that mature faith will look the same for each young person. Given the unique dailiness of each young person's life, faith development will be tremendously varied. It will not follow a predictable path or lead to the same destination. What we can best hope is that access to the Christian tradition will

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[35] Elena Bodrova, Deborah Leong, and Tatiana Akhutina, "When Everything New is Well-Forgotten Old: Vygotsky/Luria Insights in the Development of Executive Functions," in *Thriving in Childhood and Adolescence: The Role of Self-Regulation Processes, New Directions for Childhood and Adolescent Development*, eds. R. M. Lerner, J. V. Lerner, E. P. Bowers, S. Lewin-Bizan, S Gestsdottir, and J. B, Urban. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 133 (Fall 2011): 18.

provide an orientation to and inform how they relate to people and systems within the places they call home. As our relationship to important settings change, and as the lives of supportive others in our lives change too, our faith will also be transformed. It can also serve as a resource for helping us to discern how best to navigate these ecological transitions.

Second, education in faith must be thoroughly relational. It should be grounded in the cultivation of relationships *within and across* the many contexts young people inhabit. More time should be spent on nurturing relationships than teaching doctrines. This means among peers but also across generations and institutions. Mentoring relationships between peers and with adults are important. Further, these relationships should be across institutions. This allows young people to become connected to their communities in ways that are meaningful to them and provide opportunities to explore what it means to bring their faith identity into other settings. For example, an exploration of *Laudato Si* might connect young people to nonprofits working for ecological justice in their community. It might invite them to connect with people in their community or in nearby communities experiencing the impact of toxic chemical exposure, and it might lead them to share these concerns with civic and church leaders to advocate for change. For example, they might conduct an energy audit of their parish or create a proposal for how their parish can move toward utilizing solar energy. They might work collectively to pressure their diocese to divest from fossil fuels.

Finally, young people should be empowered to reflect upon how their emergent sense of identity and their growing awareness of issues of class, race, gender, sexual

orientation, geography, and land ownership advantages them or disadvantages them within the significant settings in which they live. They should be empowered to think about these in relationship to their bioregional community, civic community, and ecclesial community. Finally, they should have opportunities to connect with or create collectives around these issues. Education should be explicitly concerned with building power. In this way it takes seriously the growing agency of adolescents, which is crucial for their development. Educational events are opportunities to create access to communal structures of decision making. If young people are invited to take an empowered place *within* their communities and *within* their faith tradition then they are more likely to stay in these places and contribute to them.

*Positive Youth Development*

Before turning to Positive Youth Development theory, I would like to provide a brief outline of the conventional picture of adolescence and how this has influenced the ways in which we understand the faith lives of adolescents. In 1904, G. Stanley Hall first proposed adolescence as a distinct developmental period in the human lifecycle. According to Hall, the hormonal changes associated with puberty made this a time of "storm and stress" in a person's life, and, because it was biologically-based, the tumult was inevitable.[36] This myth has persisted in academic and popular discourses about

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[36] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education,* Volume 1 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904), xiii-xvi. Hall's approach emphasized adolescent storm and stress as the inevitable result of biological changes marking the adolescent period. Others emphasize external, sociological factors such as changes in U. S. society since the 1960s, including a turn toward socio-cultural individualism, the breakdown of social institutions, and cultural fragmentation. Chap Clark, *Hurt 2.0: Inside the World of Today's Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011) is an example of the approach which focuses on socio-cultural factors. However, economic structures and categories such as consumerism, capitalism, neoliberalism, and colonialism are not considered in a systematic fashion by Clark.

young people and is often regarded as a defining characteristic of the adolescent years. According to a 1997 study,

> fully 75% of youth think adults in their communities do not value them, according to Search Institute data. They evidently are right: a national survey of U. S. adults reported that more than 60% did not think youth would make the country a better place to live, and 20% felt they would make the country worse.[37]

In the language of developmental scientist, Richard Lerner, youth are often viewed as "problems to be managed."[38] Too often we focus on what young people *lack*. This then influences how we frame what they *need*. Indeed, youth development programs tend to focus on preventing problem behaviors such as delinquency, alcohol and drug use, and unsafe sexual activity with individual young people, specific groups of young people, or within 'youth culture.'

Typical interventions involve creating spaces for adolescents aimed to prevent these types of behaviors. They focus on "recreation and sports, academic achievement, workforce preparation, and/or providing a safe after-school environment."[39] What is often missing from these interventions is attention to the material, socio-political, economic, and bioregional structures of the places young people call home. Second, these programs generally give insufficient attention to young people's agency within these structures. As Richard Lerner emphasizes, telling youth what *not* to do does little in the way of supporting them in cultivating a sense of their place in the significant settings of their

[37] Peter Scales and Nancy Leffert, *Developmental Assets*, 11.
[38] Richard Lerner, *Liberty: Thriving and Civic Engagement Among America's Youth* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 1, 110.
[39] Wendy Wheeler, "Youth Leadership for Development: Civic Activism as a Component of Youth Development Programming and a strategy for Strengthening Civil Society," *Handbook of Applied Developmental Science: Promoting Positive Child, Adolescent, and Family Development Through Research, Policies, and Programs*, eds. Richard M. Lerner, Francine Jacobs, and Donald Wertlieb (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2003), accessed online at http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/ 9781452233642.n43, online pagination page 8. See bibliography for print pagination.

life.[40] However, if we shift our attention to systems-based interventions, then a different relationship between young people and significant adults in their lives begins to emerge in which youth become active stakeholders in their communities and bioregions and partners in movement building.

*The conventional picture of adolescent faith*      A similar deficit perspective is sometimes evident in research surrounding the faith lives of adolescents, for example, in the widely influential National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR). Christian Smith defines the faith of young people as "moral therapeutic deism," a highly self-referential, instrumental, and individualistic form of faith that amounts to a "benign 'whatever-ism.'" Smith observes that theirs is a "'least-common-denominator' religious faith" and young people are "incredibly inarticulate about their faith. They know very little of the substantive belief content of their religious traditions. They can only explain specifically how and why religion is important and influential in their lives with the greatest of difficulty, if at all."[41] What is at issue here is *what* the NSYR study chose to measure. In particular, the NSYR study focuses on traditional markers of religious belonging such as theological orthodoxy and attendance at Sunday services informed by a somewhat evangelical Protestant perspective.

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[40] Richard Lerner, *The Good Teen: Rescuing Adolescence from the Myths of the Storm and Stress Years* (New York: Crown, 2007), 34.

[41] Christian Smith, "Is Moralistic Therapeutic Deism the New Religion of American Youth?: Implications for the Challenge of Religious Socialization and Reproduction," in *Passing on the Faith: Transforming Traditions for the Next Generation of Jews, Christians, and Muslims,* ed. James Heft (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006), 61-69.

Alongside this narrative of religious illiteracy is one of disengagement and exodus from traditional religious and ecclesial structures, an outmigration from religious institutions not dissimilar to the outmigration of youth from sacrifice zones. Sociologists of religion note that disengagement from religious communities and identities is on the rise, a phenomenon sometimes described as being "spiritual but not religious" or "believing without belonging."[42] The religiously unaffiliated, given the unfortunate, negative designation, "nones" are predominantly young adults and constitute "25 to 30 percent of the population under thirty." The takeaway for those of us who work with adolescents is that they are likely to grow up to disaffiliate from religious denominations and are increasingly less likely to be raised in a 'religious household.' Despite their exodus from institutional forms of Christianity "about half of the unaffiliated group still say they believe in God or understand themselves to be spiritual."[43] For educators in faith, these statistics might be alarming. However, they raise important insights for how we educate in faith and, from my perspective, serve more as an indictment of religious institutions and their structures of power than the usual bogeymen of secularism, religious pluralism, and cultural fragmentation.

As Tom Beaudoin suggests, what Smith and others define as religious illiteracy is a "misreading of everyday faith" stemming from a "conception of personal religious identity as derivative of official conceptions of identity. Institutions and their representatives get to define what counts as authentic faith." For Beaudoin, this tendency

[42] Grace Davie, "Believing without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain," *Social Compass* 34, no. 4 (1990): 455-469; Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

[43] Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening* (New York: HarperOne, 2012), 86.

to emphasize the deficits of adolescent faith betrays "anxiety regarding the maintenance of religious power."[44] The NSYR narrative misses the reasons for departure from traditional markers of belonging and the inadequacy of current structures of religious institutions (including their power structures and theologies) for life in the Anthropocene. Further this narrative also misses the myriad ways in which young people creatively remain *within* their traditions or invent new forms of religiosity to make do with or subvert institutional shortcomings.

Grace Davie offers a much more sympathetic reading of what is variously termed "ordinary," "implicit," or "common" religiosity.[45] While this ordinary religiosity is most often heterodox from the point of view of institutional faith, Davie emphasizes, "there is, in fact, no real gap between orthodox theologies and wider patterns of believing. The relationship between the two is a complex one, but it is better described as a continuum than as a dichotomy."[46] Indeed, from a place-based perspective, educators in faith should be mindful how various contextual factors influence how people live and express their faith and how they grow in faith.

A place-based education, with its focus on building collectives and community and bioregional engagements can be well-suited to challenge privatized forms of faith

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[44] Tom Beaudoin, *Witness to Dispossession: The Vocation of a Post-Modern Theologian* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2008), 80-81.

[45] Grace Davie, "Believing without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain"; Grace Davie, "Believing without Belonging: A Liverpool Case Study," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 81 (January-March 1993): 79-89; Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945*, chapter 5.

[46] Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945*, 76. Davie offers a case study focusing on the outpouring of public religious sentiment and ritual expression in Liverpool, England following a tragedy at Hillsborough football stadium in Sheffield. She concludes that it would be "difficult to reconcile everything that happened in Liverpool in the aftermath of Hillsborough with conventional Christian teaching. On the other hand, such teaching was respected; it was 'added to' rather than rejected in the emergent amalgam of faith which Liverpool people found such innovative ways of expressing." See Grace Davie, "Liverpool Case Study," 88. See also Grace Davie *Religion in Britain: A Persistent Paradox*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), chapter 4 for further examples.

encouraged by the value structure of the Anthropocene, particularly neoliberalism, without dismissing them. By nourishing and teaching *for community and for place matters* we can encourage public faith that is connected to communities and institutions, which is key for shifting power. However, this means that denominations need to take ordinary faith seriously, to understand it on its own terms, and to understand its sources and the concerns to which it seeks to give voice.

Denominations do not need to be fearful of, resistant to, or resentful of new patterns and modes of religious expression. We can see them as an asset and engage them as efforts to seek genuine connection with God in the midst of the Anthropocene. Such an approach lets people know they have a place in the Church. Further, these expressions very often can advance and develop the *sensus fidelium* (sense of the faithful). Jeff Astley challenges professional theologians to take these contributions seriously, noting that engaging with what he calls "ordinary theology" is not necessarily "the same as agreeing with it." Rather, it empowers people to work out their faith identities personally and within supportive communities.[47] What is the ordinary faith of sacrifice zones? How do the structures of the Anthropocene (colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism) and the reality of climate crisis bring specific questions, opportunities, and shifts to and for religious engagement? As educators in faith it is our unique role and responsibility to

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[47] Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening, and Learning in Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 122, 47; from a somewhat different angle Martyn Percy challenges churches to examine their own "implicit," or unstated theology. Percy defines implicit theology as "the basic-but-nascent theological habits (e.g., language, culture, worship, practice, etc) that more properly account for the daily life of churches, congregations, and denominations. On the other hand, it is guessing at the hidden meanings in structures and practices that on the surface appear to be benign and innocent." Martyn Percy, *Shaping the Church: The Promise of Implicit Theology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 2.

serve as gatekeepers who facilitate dialogue and build community between and in the midst of so-called heterodox theologies and more traditional expressions of faith.

*Toward an asset-based perspective on adolescence* Positive Youth Development (PYD) theory, cultivated by Jacqueline and Richard Lerner, challenges the conventional perspective on adolescence, suggesting that young people ought to be regarded as "resources that can be developed in ways that serve both them and society in mutually beneficial ways."[48] PYD theory identifies five sets of behaviors that can be nurtured towards this end: competence, confidence, connections, character, and caring and compassion. [49] When these five "C's" are positively developed a sixth "C," contribution, is able to emerge, which Lerner defines as involving "a combined moral and civic commitment to contributing to society in manners reflective of [a young person's] individual strengths, talents, and interest."[50] When a young person contributes positively to society in this way "they develop toward a future characterized by the sorts of contributions to which they have become committed" and can be said to be "thriving."[51] Educators in faith can benefit from a serious engagement with PYD theory by attending to the *systems*, especially ecclesial structures, that form the settings of adolescent faith. Positive spiritual development is not so much about whether or not youth conform to our

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[48] Richard Lerner, *Liberty*, 11.
[49] Richard Lerner, *Liberty*, 111-112; See also Richard Lerner, *The Good Teen*, 35. Competence is defined as the ability to skillfully negotiate the demands of social, academic, cognitive, and vocational tasks. Confidence describes the individual's sense of self-esteem, identity, and belief in their own self-worth and efficacy. Connection describes the quality of relationships with persons and institutions. Character refers to behaviors, moral and spiritual development, and respect for socio-cultural mores. Caring and compassion refers to empathic feeling and a commitment to social justice.
[50] Richard Lerner, *Liberty*, 4-5.
[51] *Ibid.*, 10; see also pages 130-142.

own expectations of belief or practice; rather, it depends upon young people having a place within the Church. It means they are empowered to contribute to the Church in meaningful ways, including at the level of decision making. Finally, it means they have opportunities to find support within the Church from mentors in the spiritual life.

*An asset-based perspective on adolescent faith*        Just as PYD flips the script on youth development, so too we need to flip the script on education in faith. Returning to the question I pose in the introduction to this dissertation, *where* is faith to be found. Diana Butler Bass observes that patterns of religious formation and instruction in modernity have tended to begin with belief, moving to behaviors, and then belonging. We assent to a body of doctrines (*orthodoxy*), behave according to those doctrines (*orthopraxis*), and it is on these grounds that we determine who belongs within a religious tradition. [52] This pattern is reflected in dominant approaches to religious education. As Thomas Groome notes,

> until quite recently, the typical mode of religious education was a very didactic process of a teacher *telling* (usually children) what to believe and how to live. It did little to actively engage participants or to draw upon their own lives—their experiences, or what I will call here their praxis. The dominant pedagogy was memorizing catechism questions and answers (Catholic) or Bible verses and stories (Protestant).[53]

While the twentieth century brought advances in pedagogy, both secular and religious, to be explored in chapter four below, approaches to both pedagogy and institutional faith identity that prioritize right belief persist. At its best education in faith explores *how* God

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[52] Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion*, 201-204.
[53] Thomas Groome, *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 266.

is present in our communities and bioregions and provides trustworthy mentors who radiate God's presence in the lives of young people. Questions of praxis emerge as we work together to discern God's will. This requires active listening and an acknowledgement of *who* is, or isn't amongst us, and what it means to create space for them at the table. It is only then that we come to belief.

We *believe* because we have experienced God as active in a community and its praxis. This was what led people to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah! Bass suggests that Christian religious *institutions* need to reverse course, and return to, or reawaken to, an earlier pattern of religious commitment that begins with belonging and only then moves to behaving, and finally believing. We begin to *behave* in certain ways not because we are told that 'this is what the Church teaches,' but because we find them life-giving and empowering within the unfolding of our relationship with God. We place our faith in institutions and their practices *because* we see these communities as spaces of liberation.[54]

The Good News of the Gospels, and the version of the good life they suggest, is primarily one of welcome, inclusion, and empowerment through the offering of place, voice, and power to those who have been denied these most fundamental of human developmental needs. For educators in faith, I suggest that this is a turn to a pedagogy grounded in "right hospitality," or *orthoxenia*, which stands in marked contrast to xeno*phobia*, or fear of the other. Christians are those who are committed to learning this art of communing and dwelling together, perfecting the difficult praxis of becoming kin

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[54] Diana Butler Bass, *Christianity After Religion*, 204-209.

despite the divisions set by the logic of extraction. Christians practice jubilee. As theologian Nancy Pineda-Madrid emphasizes,

> how our communities respond to suffering matters. Through our collective choices, we can become more or less humane, more or less responsive to God's grace…Liberation theologians, like Gustavo Gutiérrez and Jon Sobrino, have extended our understanding of sin to include social sin. If sin is both individual and social, then so must be salvation.[55]

Education in faith, working from a place-based perspective, is well equipped to promote understanding and healing in places of suffering, creating movements that nurture capacities in young people to work for socio-political transformation and in turn renew the life of the Church.

*PYD and the logic of extraction*        While PYD theory helpfully challenges a deficit-perspective regarding the lives of adolescents, we need to be attentive to the ways in which PYD might reproduce, unintentionally, the logic of extraction. Lerner bases the concept of contribution on the "idea of America" as a society based on and characterized by principles of "social justice, equity, democracy, and individual rights and responsibilities."[56] Lerner goes on to define contribution as a result of the development of behaviors consistent with these ideals in order to "structurally *maintain* it."[57] Many people struggling to survive in America's sacrifice zones do not experience "America" as a liberating ideal worth striving for. Given the extractive histories of colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism and the ways in which they have threatened the very

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[55] Nancy Pineda-Madrid, *Suffering + Salvation in Ciudad Juárez* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 10.
[56] Richard Lerner, *Liberty*, 15.
[57] *Ibid.*, 131, emphasis added.

possibility of life on our planet, American ideals may not seem worth contributing to maintain. What is to be done?

*Key Concepts in PYD Theory*

How is it that some people are able to function and even thrive despite pervasive systems and conditions that impede well-being and development? In what follows, I examine two concepts central to PYD theory, resilience and intentional self-regulation (ISR). I also acknowledge how caring professionals should be sensitive to the ways in which these concepts and pedagogies that utilize them may unintentionally reproduce the logic of extraction. Acknowledging these limitations within PYD theory is not a rejection of the theory but an invitation to its more socially just practice. In the final section below, I will attend to how some practitioners have begun to draw upon a social justice framework informed by activist social movements and community organizing to advance PYD theory, research, and practice in this direction.

*Resilient youth*        While it is not possible to highlight the myriad organizations through which Appalachian young people are cultivating their own voice within regional narratives, often in opposition to older and more dominant discourses, and taking control over their place within regional socio-political systems, I will lift up one example. It is my hope that such movement building becomes instructive for educators in faith. The Church not only needs to recover its own genesis as a social movement but to collaborate with other social movements as spaces of learning and development, asset-building, and what I will call *positive* risk-taking.

Founded in 2008, The STAY Project, which stands for Stay Together Appalachian Youth, is a youth-led social movement in central Appalachia. STAY was a response to feelings among young people that "they didn't know how to participate in movements for social change, that there were few access points for them as young people, and few opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge that would allow them to contribute to social change efforts." STAY operates by

- having youth ask each other what they want and need in order to stay and work in their home communities,
- connecting them with the resources and skills they need to make their visions for Central Appalachia come true,
- recognizing that there are young leaders in the region who already [are] creating change.[58]

STAY's annual Appalachian Love Story campaign creates an opportunity for Appalachian youth (with a particular emphasis on low-income youth, youth of color, and LGBTQ youth ages 14 to 30) to use social media and other platforms to narrate and share their own relationship to Appalachia. The STAY Summer Institute is a youth planned and led conference and gathering in which young people come together to build community, share skills, and organize for social justice.

In a 2015 radio interview conducted by Bill Wireman on Kentucky-based nonprofit Appalshop's WMMT 88.7 FM community radio station, Carmen Davis, then a recent

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[58] STAY Project, "What Is Stay," https://www.thestayproject.net/what-is-stay.html (accessed September 6th, 2020), see "What We Do" and "Our History" subsections. Other examples of Appalachian Youth Movements include High Rocks Academy, which aims to "educate, empower, and inspire" girls ages 12-29 (https://highrocks.org/); Appalshop's Appalachian Media institute, (https://www.amiappalshop.org/), See also Katie Richards-Schuster and Rebecca O'Doherty, "Appalachian Youth Re-envisioning Home, Re-making Identities," in *Transforming Places: Lessons from Appalachia,* eds. Stephen Fisher and Barbara Ellen Smith (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 78-91; and the Girls' Resiliency Program (For a book-length treatment of this organization see Linda Spatig and Lyane Amerikaner, *Thinking Outside the Girl Box: Teaming Up with Resilient Youth in Appalachia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014). Se Bibliography for mission statements of Appalachian Youth Movements.

college graduate, shares her Appalachian love story, providing insight into how STAY has transformed the perspectives of many young people in communities like her hometown in Wise County, VA. As Davis shares,

> we have so many youth who feel like they have to leave and it's important for us to stay and build those communities and, you know, prove that there's reasons to be here…We need a lot…more economic stability and diversity and also more inclusive spaces for youth and for, you know, youth of color…queer communities…especially in small towns you can feel really unsafe sometimes because everyone knows everyone and everyone has expectations of you…last year was my first year at STAY, and I'm pretty uncomfortable in big spaces. I'm a pretty shy and quiet person, but the whole time I felt completely welcome and it allows you to meet people, to know you're not alone...It gives you a lot of hope to be in that kind of environment.[59]

While Davis expresses a desire and commitment to stay, other Appalachian youth involved with STAY are less certain about where their futures will take them. Joe Tolbert of Knoxville, TN expresses

> I am one of those ones that still haven't determined an answer to that question just for the simple fact that my job prospects are more fruitful elsewhere, which is sad to say, but no matter if I stay or if I leave I will always be involved in anything that is aimed at bettering Appalachia because STAY has increased my connection to it in a real way…even though I may not stay I know that I won't be gone for forever...I'm invested whether I am physically here or elsewhere.[60]

In another WMMT interview, interim STAY coordinator Lou Murrey observes that STAY is about "changing the narrative about who's here…challenging the idea that there's a brain drain...we're trying to make lives and do what we can in our communities here." As young people from this and other Appalachian movements suggest, these

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[59] WMMT and STAY Project, interview by Bill Wireman, "Appalachian Love Stories, Episode 1: Carmen Davis," on WMMT 88.7, February 23, 2015, https://www.wmmt.org/appalachian-love-stories-episode-1-carmen-davis/ (accessed September 7th, 2019), comments beginning at 2:12.
[60] WMMT and STAY Project, interview by Rance Garrison, "Appalachian Love Stories, Episode 2: Joe Tolbert," on WMMT 88.7, June 11, 2015, https://www.wmmt.org/appalachian-love-stories-episode-2-joe-tolbert/ (accessed September 7th, 2019), comments begin at 12:40.

organizations create space for young people to narrate their own identities related to the region. In particular, they create an opportunity for perspectives of women, people of color, and queer people to insert often unheard perspectives into old conversations about regional issues such as extractive industry, economic development, and ecological damage. Founding member Willa Johnson continues, "love is a choice and when we choose to stay that is an act of love…love is hard work and it takes effort sometimes and it's not always pretty...we are unlearning and making a choice to unlearn our biases."[61] STAY models what I am calling movement-building-as-pedagogy and is especially instructive for educators in faith seeking to nourish public, empowered, and place-based pedagogies that bring the increasingly privatized faith lives of young people into an institutional and collective consciousness that is also critically aware. How can we as educators in faith build spaces that help young people stay within the Church?

Developmental scientists would likely describe the Appalachian youth mentioned above as "resilient" (recall the program mentioned at the outset of this chapter—the Girls' *Resiliency* Program). Ann Masten describes resilience as "the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability, or development."[62] Resiliency studies suggest that wellness is not so much the

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[61] Mountain News and World Report, hosted by Ada Smith, "Reflections," interview by Rachel Garringer with STAY Project members, with Lou Murray, Willa Johnson, and Katelyn Damron, on WMMT 88.7, February 9th, 2018, https://www.wmmt.org/mtn-news-reflections/ (accessed September 6th, 2020), comments begin at 1:23; See also, Mountain News and World Report, hosted by Rachel Garringer, "10 Years on STAY," on WMMT 88.7, August 7th, 2018, https://soundcloud.com/mountainnews/10-years-of-stay, (accessed September 6th, 2020); Mountain News and World Report, interview by Rachel Garringer, "Reckoning with the Past, Organizing for the Future," on WMMT 88.7, February 21st, 2020, https://www.wmmt.org/mtn-news-reckoning-with-the-past-organizing-for-the-future/ (accessed September 6th, 2020).

[62] Ann S. Masten, "Global Perspectives on Resilience in Children and Youth," *Child Development* 85, no. 1 (January/February 2014): 6; see also Ann S. Masten, "Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in

absence of risk-factors such as class-background, marital discord, or elements of instability in the home and other significant settings in a child's life. More significant are the presence of assets that serve as "protective factors" in a child or young person's life.[63] Resilience is an effort to understand what are those "protective factors" or "developmental assets" that can be nurtured at the personal and communal level. Norman Garmezy emphasizes that protective factors are not the *absence* of risk or its opposite; rather, these developmental assets "operate indirectly" in the face of risk factors mitigating their impact.[64] Educators should take away from this the importance of creating space for engagement with and attention to the emotional states of their students. As I will stress below, this is not simply about learning how to regulate or control emotions, but to be self-reflective about and to learn to listen to emotional states: a positive engagement with and channeling of emotions such as joy, anger, and lament are particularly important for adolescence. Learning to engage these emotions in supportive settings can be a resource for collective empowerment and liberation.

Three broad categories of protective factors identified by resiliency research are 1.) personal temperament and skills or personal assets that modify stressors; 2.) a cohesive, supportive, and nurturing family life; and 3.) sources of external support such as peers, mentors, and youth organizations.[65] Given the amount of time youth spend in school, this is a particularly important ecological setting. Garmezy asks two questions of schools,

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Development," *American Psychologist* (March 2001), 228; Richard M. Lerner, Michelle B. Weiner, Miriam R. Arbeit, Paul A. Chase, Jennifer P. Agans, Kristina L. Schmid, and Amy E. A. Warren, "Resilience Across the Life Span," *Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics* (2012): 275-277.
[63] Norman Garmezy, "Children in Poverty: Resilience Despite Risk," *Psychiatry* 56 (1993): 127-130; Norman Garmezy, "Resiliency and Vulnerability to Adverse Developmental Outcomes Associated with Poverty," *The American Behavioral Scientist* 34, no. 4 (March 1991): 421-424.
[64] Garmezy, 428; See Peter Scales and Nancy Leffert, *Developmental Assets*, 5-10.
[65] Norman Garmezy, "Resiliency and Vulnerability," 421-422.

"what is the function of school to a society in crisis? To what extent can the school serve as an agent for the adaptation of its children?"[66] For educators in faith seeking a place-based praxis, I'd like to offer a slight gloss on these questions, what is the function of education in faith in the context of the Anthropocene? To what extent can faith serve as a source of liberation for all beings? How can a faith community—Church—actively engage its youth and include them as full members?

*Resilience and the logic of extraction*        While resiliency theory provides an antidote to the youth as problems to be solved narrative, it risks reproducing the logic of extraction if it does not place an analysis of power at the center of its methodology. As Isaac Prilleltensky and colleagues emphasize, maladaptation cannot be separated from maldistribution. [67] Indeed, critiques the "psycho-centric bias" in therapeutic and educational interventions aimed at fostering resilience, referring to a "tendency to concentrate on the cognitive and emotional sources and consequences of

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[66] *Ibid*., 425. Research also demonstrates the importance of spiritual traditions, practices, and community for nurturing personal and collective resilience and PYD. See Pamela Ebstyne King, Drew Carr, and Ciprian Boitor, "Religion, Spirituality, Positive Youth Development, and Thriving," in *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, eds. Richard Lerner, Jacqueline Lerner, and Janette Benson (London: Elsevier, 2011): 161-195; Amy Eva Alberts Warren, Richard Lerner, and Erin Phelps, eds. *Thriving and Spirituality Among Youth: Research Perspectives and Future Possibilities* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2012). The fact that religious belonging contributes to PYD and human wellbeing should not be dismissed as a "therapeutic turn" or an instrumentalizing of faith. Indeed, Wendy Farley defines theology as "pain seeking understanding." See Wendy Farley, *Gathering Those Driven Away: A Theology of Incarnation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2011), 1. Theology is a serious investigation into human suffering and an effort to attend to and hear both the cries of the poor and Earth and to work for God's Kin-dom. As educators in faith, the question 'will there be faith' depends in large part on our ability to offer not only a source of meaning but a response to pain in the lives of young people. This also means allowing the discursive and institutional structures of our traditions an openness to the *sensus fidelium* among young people. On this topic see also Mike Martin, *From Morality to Mental Health: Virtue and Vice in a Therapeutic Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), especially pages 10-12, 60-67, 150-151, 184-190. For a critique of this therapeutic perspective, especially as it pertains to the lives of adolescents see Christian Smith, "Is Moralistic Therapeutic Deism the New Religion of American Youth?"

[67] Isaac Prilleltensky, Geoffrey Nelson, and Leslea Peirson, "The Role of Power and Control in Children's Lives," 150.

powerlessness…framed in terms of reduced coping, self-esteem and self-efficacy, depression, anxiety, and the like." Prilleltensky calls for more systems-based interventions, which analyze, respond to, and intervene in the material sources of powerlessness and social stigmatization. The effort to regain self-esteem must be complimented by the effort to regain socio-political power.[68] For educators in faith this means attending to the dynamics of ecclesial power and authority structures within local faith communities—to what extent, for example, are young people included in decision making processes within a diocese or parish? One simple approach can be to involve young people on parish councils, boards of directors, and various diocesan offices as well as local faith-based nonprofits and civic groups to which the Church is connected (or which are significant to the young person—in these cases young people explore what it means to bring their faith into those settings and to allow those groups to speak back to the Church when necessary). On a broader level, given that adolescents are among the laity, we must attend to, and advocate for, an increased role for the laity within the church.[69]

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[68] Isaac Prilleltensky, Geoffrey Nelson, and Leslea Peirson, "The Role of Power and Control in Children's Lives," 144, see also pages, 144-146. Ann Masten similarly emphasizes "the importance of a social justice agenda directed at changing the context rather than expecting a child to adapt to injustice." Additionally, Masten emphasizes the need to contextualize definitions of resiliency, emphasizing that protective strategies might look different given cultural and other contextual factors. Masten, "Global Perspectives on Resilience," 13-14.

[69] This is a point made forcefully by Leonardo Boff in his text *Church: Charism and Power.* As Boff describes with particular relevance to education in faith, "the distinction between the laity and the hierarchy, between the Church *discens* and the Church *docens* is only justified when the purpose of each is safeguarded. Therefore, one must say, as Vatican II did *not*, that collegiality involves not only the bishops and priests but also the laity…This leads to the idea of democracy, with the difference that ecclesial power is understood as derived from a sharing in the power of the Spirit and the risen Christ, active in the community, and not simply derived from the people alone." Leonardo Boff, *Church: Charism & Power, Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church,* trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: Crossroad, 1985 [1981]), 155. See also Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*,

*Intentional self-regulation*　　　　Masten emphasizes that "the great surprise of resilience research is the ordinariness of the phenomena. Resilience appears to be a common phenomenon that results in most cases from the operation of basic human adaptational systems."[70] Resilient youth are able to

> make decisions about how to act in ways that meet personal needs and environmental demands…strategic thinking and executive functioning need to be accompanied with actions required for turning life goals into reality, that is, into successful personal adjustment and ecological adaptation.[71]

Developmental scientists describe this capacity crucial to development as intentional self-regulation (ISR).

In Western societies, adolescence describes a period of significant biological, social, and contextual changes in the life of a person, creating new demands, roles, and responsibilities which the developing person must navigate.[72] ISR has been identified as a crucial skill-set helping the individual to successfully adapt to these changes promoting

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trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986 [1977]); Joerg Rieger and Kwok Pui-lan, *Occupy Religion: Theology of the Multitude* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), chapter 6.

[70] Ann Masten, "Ordinary Magic," 227, see also pages 234-235.

[71] Lerner, et al., "Resilience Across the Life Span," 283-284.

[72] These changes include neurological developments such as the growth of the prefrontal cortex; ability to engage in metacognition, or to think about thinking; and the sharpening of long-term planning skills. Young people are also introduced to contextual changes such as new school environments or entry into employment and biological changes such as the onset of puberty and sexual maturation. These changes also impact the socio-emotional lives of young people through greater relevance of peers and peer pressure, and changing relationships to parents, other significant adults, and social institutions as young people seek to balance a desire for greater autonomy with the need to experience belonging and recognition. Taken together, these changes and expansions in the ecologies of adolescents make intentional self-regulation an important skill for thriving, particularly in adverse circumstances. See, Christopher Napolitano, et al., "The Development of Intentional Self-Regulation in Adolescence: Describing, Explaining, and Optimizing Its Link to Positive Youth Development," in *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, eds. Richard Lerner, Jacqueline Lerner, and Janette Benson (Burlington: Academic Press, 2011), 20; Jacqueline Lerner, et al., "Positive Youth Development," in R. M. Lerner, M. A., Easterbrooks, and J. Mistry, eds., *Handbook of Psychology, Volume 6: Developmental Psychology*, editor-in-chief: I. B. Weiner, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley), 366; Theresa O'Keefe, "The Same but Different: The Culture in which our Adolescents Live," *Journal of Youth and Theology* 7, no. 2 (2008), 43-44.

success later in life. The central insight advanced by studies of ISR and the related "delay of gratification" construct is that navigating the demands of life requires more than the development of cognitive skills. Indeed, the development of social and emotional competencies is critical and perhaps *precedes* or is a condition for success in school and in life, particularly for navigating adversity.[73]

Most famously this theory is advanced by "the marshmallow test," a longitudinal study devised and conducted initially by Walter Mischel and Yuichi Shoda. This laboratory setting study involved leaving a child alone in a room with a marshmallow or other favorite treat. If the child could resist the desire to eat the marshmallow for 15 minutes, when the researcher returned to the room the child would get two marshmallows. These studies found that children who were able to delay gratification longer "were described more than 10 years later by their parents as adolescents who were significantly…more academically and socially competent, verbally fluent, rational,

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[73] For example, A study by Brittany Rhoades and colleagues examined the impact of emotional learning, particularly attention skills, on academic performance in a three-year study from preschool to 1st grade. They examined the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics, receptive vocabulary, emotion knowledge, attention skills, and academic competence. They found that emotional knowledge in preschool, mediated by attention skills in kindergarten, was a significant predictor of first grade academic performance. Brittany L. Rhoades, Heather K. Warren, Celene E. Domitrovich, and Mark T. Greenberg. "Examining the Link Between Preschool Social-Emotional Competence and First Grade Academic Achievement: The Role of Attention Skills," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 26 (2011): 182-191. See also Mark T. Greenberg, Roger P. Weissberg, Mary Utne O'Brien, Joseph E. Zins, Linda Fredericks, Hank Resnik, and Maurice J. Elias, "Enhancing School-Based Preventions and Youth Development Through Coordinated Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning," *American Psychologist* 58, nos. 6 and 7 (2003): 466-474; Susanne A. Denham and Chavaughn Brown, "Plays nice with others": Social-Emotional Learning and Academic Success, *Early Education and Development* 2, no. 5 (2010): 652-680; Joseph. A. Durlak, Allison. B. Dymnicki, Rebecca D. Taylor, Roger P. Weissberg, and Kriston B. Schellinger, "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions," *Child Development* 82, no. 1 (2011), 406; Maurice J. Elias and Dominic C. Moceri, "Developing Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning: The American Experience," *Research Papers in Education* 27, no. 4 (2012), 423-434.

attentive, planful, and able to deal well with frustration and stress."[74] Self-regulation becomes a more complex process in the adolescent years as ecologies become more complex and decisions more consequential. Adolescent ISR involves a three-fold process of "the selection of positive goals, optimizing one's chances of attaining one's goals through using effective strategies of resource recruitment and/or the cognitive skills reflected in executive functioning, and compensating when goals are blocked or when strategies fail." This set of skills is referred to as selection, optimization, and compensation or (SOC).[75]

Research suggests that the development of these strategies is an effective way to practice ISR and promote PYD. Pedagogies should include activities and curricula that promote these socio-emotional skills alongside cognitive and intellectual skills; however, the relationship between the components becomes more complex and variable with age and context, so it is important that these programs are designed with an awareness of developmental theory.[76] Given these complexities, Edmond Bowers et al. developed and tested the "GPS to Success" tool as a way for mentors and young people to assess their progress and identify areas of focus for growth.[77]

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[74] Yuichi Shoda, Walter Mischel, and Philip Peake, "Predicting Adolescent Cognitive and Self-Regulatory Competencies From Preschool Delay of Gratification: Identifying Diagnostic Conditions, *Developmental Psychology* 26, no. 6 (1990), 978; see also Walter Mischel, Yuichi Shoda, Philip Peake, "The Nature of Adolescent Competencies Predicted by Preschool Delay of Gratification," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 54, no. 4 (1988): 687-696.

[75] Edmond P. Bowers, Christopher M. Napolitano, Miriam R. Arbeit, Paul Chase, Samantha A. Glickman, Richard M. Lerner, and Jacqueline V. Lerner, "On a Pathway Towards Thriving: Evaluating the Effectiveness of the 'GPS to Success' Tools to Promote Positive Development and Intentional Self-Regulation in Youth," *Journal of Youth Development* 8, no. 3 (Winter 2013), https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2013.82 (accessed September 6th, 2020), PDF page 19; see also Christopher Napolitano, et al., "The Development of Intentional Self-Regulation in Adolescence," 24-25.

[76] Christopher Napolitano et al., "The Development of Intentional Self-Regulation in Adolescence," 26-31.

[77] Edmond Bowers, et al., "On a Pathway Towards Thriving."

*Self-regulation and the logic of extraction* Person-centered interventions such as GPS to Success and popular "self-care" tactics can unintentionally reinscribe certain aspects of a logic of extraction by depoliticizing the experiences of children and youth, placing the burden of care on individuals, particularly children themselves, often in the face of profound systemic oppression. Megan Boler examines the ways in which self-regulation and emotional literacy curricula might serve to reinforce the logic of extraction by dehistoricizing and taming powerful and often uncomfortable emotions. This approach teaches young people "to take 'responsibility' and learn 'self-control.' Thus the social, economic, and political forces that underlie these youth crises are masked, and the individuals are blamed for lack of self-control."[78] What is overlooked is that "rules of middle-class politeness may not serve the cultural context of inner-city children's material lives—not only that, to use middle-class skills of politeness in some contexts could conceivably put one at risk."[79] Boler does not dismiss the importance and prospects of emotional literacy programs. Discussing, highlighting, and analyzing emotional responses by and with young people can illuminate relationships of power that contribute to injustice. As Erica Burman observes,

> if we are really to become interested in children's emotional experiences, rather than in trying to manage them or make uncomfortable emotions disappear, then we have to engage with them, and with our own responses to them...all learning involves emotions such as fear, insecurity, and anxiety—the denial of which will only make them stronger.[80]

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[78] Megan Boler, *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 86.
[79] *Ibid.*, 94.
[80] Erica Burman, *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology,* 277; see also Megan Boler, *Feeling Power*, 82-83. Educators in faith have a rich resource in the theological category of lament. Claire Wolfteich asks the questions, "Can prayer be full of rage? Is there something problematic in mingling worship with political protest? Can we even raise our fists in protest to God? We may feel uncomfortable with prayer that is angry, raw, demanding, doubting, unsanitized." See Claire E. Wolfteich, *Lord, Have Mercy: Praying for Justice with Conviction and Humility* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: 2006), 82. Nevertheless, as

Recent empirical research lends support to these insights.

Commenting on the marshmallow test, a recent study by Tyler Watts, Greg Duncan, and Haonan Quan hypothesize that "interventions that successfully boost early delay ability might have no effect on later life outcomes if associations between gratification delay and later outcomes are driven by factors unlikely to be altered by child-focused programs (e.g., socioeconomic status [SES], home parenting environment)."[81] Their study sets out to expand the scope of Mischel's initial experiment, which drew from a small sample from a single preschool on a university campus.

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Wolfteich continues, the Psalms are filled with prayers of angry protest and deep sorrow by a "people who believe they have been wronged, certainly by their enemies, but also by the one whom they still proclaim to be their King and their God" (p. 83). These psalms of lament, however, typically end "on a note of hope." Cries of despair are a first act of resistance and a hope against hope that God is a God of justice and reconciliation. As Wolfteich concludes, "the psalms do not solve the problem of why suffering happens, but they do offer us a way to name the suffering and stay engaged with the world and God" (pages 84-85). As educators in faith, deep engagement in the socio-emotional lives of the young people with whom we learn does not mean the control of emotions but their purposeful engagement within communities of supportive and equally committed others struggling in faith, hope, and love toward a just and reconciling social order. Drawing on the work of womanist theologian, Jamie Phelps, Bryan Massingale defines justice in terms of visceral emotional response and "passion" as opposed to a cool, rational deliberation based on abstract principles. Beyond orthodoxy or orthopraxis, the struggle against injustice must also seek ortho*pathy*. See Bryan Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), 131-137, 203 fn. 17. Finally, Bruce Rogers-Vaughn argues that a critical component of pastoral care with persons struggling against depression is to assist them in giving their depression a political voice and to provide avenues for them to offer their suffering as a public witness. Drawing on empirical research, he asserts that depression has biological as well as ecological roots. He finds that neoliberal capitalism, a component of what I call a logic of extraction, reduces the self and one's sense of self to contribution to the market economy and results in social alienation by dismantling collectives and the shared narratives of meaning they produce and maintain. The social character of human existence, a central principle of Catholic Social Teaching, is replaced by the market character of neoliberal polity. He finds in depression, "the final cry of souls diminished under these conditions" and as "witness to the veiled oppression of today's global hegemony." For Rogers-Vaughn a crucial element of pastoral care means giving *voice* to these powerful emotions and connecting individuals to networks of meaning and belonging that restore social and political power. Bruce Rogers-Vaughn, "Blessed Are Those Who Mourn: Depression as Political Resistance," *Pastoral Psychology* 63 (2014): 503-522.

[81] Tyler W. Watts, Greg J. Duncan, Haonan Quan, "Revisiting the Marshmallow Test: A Conceptual Replication Investigating Links Between Early Delay of Gratification and Later Outcomes," *Psychological Science* 29, no. 7 (2018), 1160.

Drawing from a larger and more diverse sample, Watts, et al. found that the association between delay of gratification and adolescent academic achievement and socioemotional behaviors fell in terms of statistical significance in the presence of controls for the child's background, including socio-economic status (SES), mother's educational attainment and measures of intelligence, the child's cognitive ability and temperament, and quality of home environment. They found that among children from nondegreed mothers, those who completed the delay-of-gratification task were from a higher SES background, had mothers with higher cognitive test scores, and had higher scores on home assessments, suggesting the importance of contextual factors. Among children of nondegreed mothers, the return for delay of gratification on age 15 achievement was "driven by differences between children who managed to wait at least 20 [seconds] and those who did not." The significance of this finding is that 20 seconds is far too short a time to employ any ISR techniques, suggesting that something other than self-regulation strategies is at play in determining later life outcomes in the lives of these children.[82] While this study calls into question the significance of delay of gratification for promoting positive developmental outcomes, this does not mean that socio-emotional intelligence or ISR is unimportant; rather, it suggests that these skills should be directed toward socio-political goals. Perhaps a critical skill to accompany ISR is critical consciousness and the development of socio-*political* skills and developmental assets. In

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[82] *Ibid*., 1167, see also pages 1163, 1172-1175. These findings also comment upon an acknowledged limitation in studies of adolescent ISR. As Christopher Napolitano, et al. note, "research examining the SOC-PYD relation is generally limited with respect to contextual influences…We suggest that future research on the ISR-PYD relation continue to include measures from the various levels of adolescents' contexts. As these relations between an individual's ISR skills, contextual factors, and positive development presumably also vary at the exosystemic level (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), we further suggest that future research includes cross-cultural samples as well." See Napolitano, et al., "The Development of Intentional Self-Regulation in Adolescence," 31-32.

what follows I will examine how education in faith and parish communities can nourish a movement-building-as-pedagogy approach in working with young people.

*Activism and Movement Building in Youth Faith Development*

Adolescent spiritual ecologies can benefit from an engagement with youth-based activism and community organizing. Educators in faith committed to a place-based practice of education can conceive of their work through a lens of movement-building. Scripture scholar Richard Horsley emphasizes the extent to which Jesus' ministry was one of the renewal of village life disrupted by the socio-economics of Roman imperialism. Jesus sent out those initiated into this renewal movement to spread the Good News,

> charged to expand Jesus' own mission of exorcism, healing, and preaching the kingdom, these workers were apparently also, in effect, carrying out what might be called 'community organizing'…Jesus' mission of the renewal of Israel was focused not on individuals but on people involved in families and village communities. These fundamental social forms were beginning to disintegrate. This is what Jesus addressed in his renewal of the Mosaic covenant.[83]

We could call these efforts to imagine and enact other ways of being placed as instances of a logic of jubilee. In contrast to extractivism, which takes without regard for the integrity of the whole, jubilee is concerned with returning or giving back, recognizing the interdependence and reciprocity upon which all life depends. Community and covenant

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[83] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers: Conflict, Covenant, and the Hope of the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 136. See also Joerg Rieger and Kwok Pui-lan, *Occupy Religion: Theology of the Multitude* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012); Alexia Salvatierra and Peter Heltzel, *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Books, 2014).

rather than conquest and capital are the organizing principles of this way of being placed.[84]

More recently, Pope Francis has lent his support to social movements. In 2014 he convened the first World Meeting of Popular Movements (WMPM), departing from the approach to human and community development described by Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* where the primary agency is with managerial elites and experts and where privilege is given to "public authorities," "industry," and "international agencies" as "the primary agents of development."[85] During the second WMPM, held in Bolivia in 2015, Pope Francis remarked, "the future of humanity does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. It is fundamentally in the hands of the peoples and in their ability to organize…keep up your struggle and, please, take great care of Mother Earth."[86] Educators in faith can contribute to the development of young people by

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[84] The law of jubilee and the principles of a sabbath for the land are described in detail in chapter 25 of the book of Leviticus. Jesus, reading from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, offers a concise summary of the law of jubilee, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4: 18-19). Leviticus instructs that every 7th year the land was to be left to lie fallow, and every 50 years, once a generation (the 7th cycle of 7 years), debts were to be forgiven, slaves set free, and land was to be redistributed. This practice is an acknowledgement that the land belongs, ultimately, to God and is a counter point to imperialist land ideologies. See Norman Habel, *The Land is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), chapter 6; Ched Myers, *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics* (Washington, DC: Tell the Word, 2001); Ellen Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Readings of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 92-94; Jonathan McRay, "The Transfigured Earth: Bioregionalism and the Kingdom of God," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice,* ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 68-69;

[85] Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* [1967]*, in Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David J. O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, expanded ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010 [1992], no. 14. The United Nations had named the 1960s the "decade of development" and the writing of Paul VI and the Bishops of Latin America should be placed in the context of this wider conversation about 'development.'

[86] Pope Francis, "Participation at the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements: Address of the Holy Father," July 9, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/july/documents/papa-francesco_20150709_bolivia-movimenti-popolari.html (accessed February 3rd, 2020), no. 4.

engaging them in such movement building and in reflecting together on how such involvement shapes our collective sense of what it means to be Church.

If Christians are to work toward justice in our communities and bioregions then we must begin to examine critically the ecclesial and theological buttresses of the three C's that support a logic of extraction: colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism. For example, as Christian activist Mark Van Steenwyk notes,

> 81 percent of white evangelicals who cast their vote did so for Trump. And the same is true of 60 percent of the white Catholics who voted. And, lest mainliners feel off the hook, 58 percent of Protestants, in general, voted for Trump. It is easy to see the ways in which current social injustices reflect the commitments of conservative white Christianity.[87]

In reporting these statistics, Van Steenwyk stresses, "this isn't another effort in the continuing criticism of conservative Christianity; we need to challenge progressive Christianity."[88] Moving beyond a model in which individual Christians join secular or faith-based social movements, Van Steenwyck is challenging Christians to disrupt the binary of religion and politics so unique to Enlightenment modernity, challenging people of faith to speak truth to power not only to secular authority but also ecclesial authority. By paying attention to the radical witness of popular social movements Christians can challenge and transform their own institutions too, demanding that they conform ecclesial power to the demands of the Gospel. As Van Steenwyck continues,

> if we want to confound and disrupt the narratives of oppression, we need to raise our angry voices in the pews as well as the streets….I don't mean that figuratively. I'm not advocating that we send strongly worded proposal to our denomination's national assemblies. I'm not suggesting that we start or join a justice committee in our church. I'm not even suggesting that we withhold tithes until our churches

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[87] Mark Van Steenwyk, "Take the Politics of Disruption to Church," *Sojourners,* February 21st, 2017, https://sojo.net/articles/take-politics-disruption-church (accessed on September 20th, 2019).
[88] *Ibid.*

demonstrate a willingness to take the radical message of Jesus seriously (though that last one would be a great start). I literally mean we should disrupt our churches. Just as Black Lives Matter has employed a politics of disruption to raise the national alarm about racist policing. Just as the water protectors at Standing Rock have created a human barrier against pipeline construction. So too, should we disrupt and confound any and every congregation that fuels militarism, economic exploitation, sexism, racism, Islamophobia, or transphobia.[89]

A public theology, a place-based theology, and place-based pedagogies of Christian religious education address the Church *ad extra* (that is, in its relationship to the wider public sphere) but also to the Church *ad intra* (in its internal workings and institutional life). Young people's faith development and their sense of place as Christians depends on a serious engagement with the Church as an institution shaped by structures that regulate its internal life and its relationship to wider publics.

This is a controversial proposal, which leads to a deep questioning of the purpose and goals of education in faith, but I think it provides a hermeneutic key to the question I proposed at the outset of this dissertation, *where is faith to be found*? The answer I believe is in the struggle for a Church that takes seriously its self-understanding as the People of God, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

It strikes me that the exodus of young people from our churches is less a result of secularism, cultural pluralism, or social fragmentation and has more to do with the struggle to locate faith, hope, or love in many mainstream ecclesial settings. To take a brief, confessional detour, this conviction was born of the pain I felt when charges of sexual harassment and evidence of gross exploitation and misuse of diocesan funds were brought against the 'Bishop,' Michael Bransfield, of my home Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston in West Virginia. I was doubly frustrated to learn that these activities were

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[89] *Ibid*.

widely known and actively covered-up for years, including by Archbishop William Lori, the Metropolitan tasked by Pope Francis with overseeing the investigation into Bransfield's activities. Lori redacted from the investigative report submitted to the Vatican the names of Bishops who received monetary gifts from Bransfield, including his own. Lori himself received $10,500.00 from Bransfield over the years. I began asking myself, how can I educate for faith in this context?[90] How can I educate for faith when young LGBTQ Catholics witness the firing of LGBTQ teachers? How can I educate for faith when young white adolescents wearing "Make America Great Again" hats and self-righteous smirks surround an Indigenous elder at the March for Life of all things? *Where is faith to be found*?

Over the last year, despite these stories, I have fallen deeply in love again with the Church. Where and how? It has been in the stories I have read and the direct witness I have seen from people young and old who refuse to let the above stories be the truth of their Church. The Catholic Committee of Appalachia and the Morgantown, WV based Lay Catholic Voices for Change in my home diocese have spoken publicly and staged protests, pressuring the Diocese to release information and make institutional changes, including an audit of Diocesan funds.[91] Many examples could be given of young people

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[90] See Michelle Boorstein, Shawn Boburg, and Robert O'Harrow, Jr, "W.Va. bishop gave powerful cardinals and other priests $350,000 in cash gifts before his ouster, church records show," *Washington Post*, June 5, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/a-wva-bishop-spent-millions-on-himself-and-sent-cash-gifts-to-cardinals-and-to-young-priests-he-was-accused-of-mistreating-confidential-vatican-report-says/2019/06/05/98af7ae6-7686-11e9-b3f5-5673edf2d127_story.html (accessed July 11th, 2020). For further details regarding the Bransfield case see chapter five, fn. 57.

[91] Michelle Boorstein, "Facing Financial Boycott, West Virginia's Catholic Diocese Agrees to Hire New Auditor and Make Findings Public," *Washington Post*, July 17th, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2019/07/17/facing-financial-boycott-west-virginias-catholic-diocese-agrees-hire-new-auditor-make-findings-public/ (accessed September 6th, 2020); Lay Catholic Voices for Change, Open Letter to Archbishop William Lori, July 9th, 2019, https://s3.amazonaws.com/wvmetro-uploads-prod/2019/07/Lori-

protesting the firing of LGBTQ educators and school counselors. In one example from 2018,

> over 600 students at a Catholic secondary school in Germany have protested the dismissal of a popular teacher whose contract renewal was rescinded when he disclosed his intent to marry his male partner. Students at Gymnasium Mariengarden in the town of Borken assembled outside the school with a rainbow of balloons. They held a banner that said, in German, "Mariengarden Ist Bunt" ("Mariengarden is colorful").[92]

These faithful individuals are unsettling the logic of extraction, decolonizing the Church, and daring to "become the church they wish to see in the world"[93] and perhaps in the process bringing about its renewal, enacting jubilee.

As educators in faith we can connect young people with models and mentors, both living and dead, in their community and beyond who serve as a cloud of witnesses. Theresa O'Keefe defines these as "robust relationships" in which a young person feels themselves to be

> known well and loved fully. It is a relationship that the adolescent cannot easily ignore, but that over time develops an intrinsic value. A robust relationship invites the adolescent to discover himself [*sic*] as a person, unique and valuable, by

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letter-July-9-2019-final-edition-1.pdf?x43308 (accessed September 6th 2020). Lay Catholic Voices for Change, Open Letter to The Most Reverend William Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston (DWC), June 12, 2019, https://www.change.org /p/archbishop-william-lori-bring-accountability-and-healing-to-west-virginia-s-catholic-church (accessed September 6th, 2020); see also Peter Feuerherd, "After Pressure from Lay Group, West Virginia Diocese Agrees to Audit," *Ncronline.org*, July 19th, 2019, https://www.ncronline.org/news/accountability/after-pressure-lay-group-west-virginia-diocese-agrees-audit (accessed September 6th, 2020); Michael Iafrate, "WV Catholics Conduct Holy Week Witness at St. Joseph Cathedral Chrism Mass," Catholic Committee of Appalachia blog, entry posted April, 20, 2019, https://www.ccappal.org/blog/wv-catholics-conduct-holy-week-witness-at-st-joseph-cathedral-chrismas-mass (accessed September 6th, 2020);Michael Iafrate, "WV Catholic Group Receives Reprimand from Archbishop Lori," Catholic Committee of Appalachia blog, entry posted July 11th, 2019, https://www.ccappal.org/blog/wv-catholic-group-receives-reprimand-from-archbishop-lori (accessed September 6th 2020).

[92] Lindsay Hueston, "German Students Protest When Gay Teacher Is Not Re-Hired at Catholic School," *Newwaysministry.org,* December 6th, 2018, https://www.newwaysministry.org/2018/12/06/german-students-protest-when-gay-teacher-is-not-re-hired/ (accessed September 6th, 2020).

[93] Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories that Shape Us, A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia* (Spencer, WV: Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 2015), 57.

drawing him to take chances and be vulnerable for the sake of new discoveries both in himself and in the world.[94]

Through these relationships young people discover themselves as valued members of communities to which they belong and call home. Further, they build relationships with trusted adults who create space and opportunities for young people to discover and take their place within these valued institutions. They are empowered to discover not only their social value as assets to their communities, but to nurture their own vocation, sense of purpose, and values within those places. O'Keefe draws a connection between these mentoring relationships and adult models in faith to the communion of saints. These trusted adults serve as models and guides in Christian discipleship and public witness for justice.[95]

Place-based education is especially concerned with setting up and foster these types of relationships, serving to integrate young people into the Church and their community as Christian disciples. Through such relationships participants learn together what it means to be Church as they explore their faith. Further, it is through building community that they identify with their faith. Place-based pedagogy gives special attention to the *local* cloud of witnesses. In Appalachia, people like Judy Bonds, Becky Simpson, and Larry Gibson join the cloud of witnesses that includes Dorothy Day, St. Francis, Sr. Dorothy Stang, and James Cone. Further, young people should be given the space to name and identify the living saints in their daily lives. In my own life I name Linda Hall, Jeannie

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[94] Theresa O'Keefe, *Navigating Toward Adulthood: A Theology of Ministry with Adolescents* (Mahwah: Paulist, 2018), 67.
[95] *Ibid.*, 70-73, 132-136.

Kirkhope, Christopher Pramuk, among so many more who have taught me and inspired me by turns to be a disciple of Christ and of my watershed.

At the same time, place-based education intentionally aims to link these one-to-one relationships with a collective consciousness. Young people should also be able to identify *movements that matter*: the Catholic Committee of Appalachia, STAY, the Girls' Resiliency Program, Christians for the Mountains, and on and on in sacrifice zone after sacrifice zone. This is especially important in the context of neoliberal societies. As noted in chapter one, neoliberalism dismantles and co-opts collectives, socializes for competition as opposed to collaboration, and instrumentalizes the value of the human person and more-than-human beings. It leads to an increasing sense of loneliness and disengagement from civic and religious institutions. All of which threatens the ability of young people to cultivate a commitment to their places and the institutions that serve them.

As educators in faith awaken to the place that movement building might have in and for the life of the Church we can learn what this might mean for adolescent faith development from a growing body of research that has begun to explore the learning and developmental outcomes associated with youth-based activism and community organizing, suggesting new avenues and conceptual shifts for PYD.[96] The Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing defines youth organizing as

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[96] Roderick Watts, Derek Griffith, and Jaleel Abdul-Adil, "Sociopolitical Development as an Antidote for Oppression—Theory and Action," *American Journal of Community Psychology* 27, no. 2 (1999): 255-271; Shawn Ginwright and Taj James, "From Assets to Agents of Change: Social Justice, Organizing, and Youth Development," *New Directions for Youth Development* 96 (Winter 2002): 27-46; Wendy Wheeler, "Youth Leadership for Development: Civic Activism as a Component of Youth Development Programming and a Strategy for Strengthening Civil Society," in *Handbook of Applied Developmental Science: Promoting Positive Child, Adolescent, and Family Development Through Research Policies, and*

a youth development and social justice strategy that trains young people in community organizing and advocacy, and assists them in employing these skills to alter power relations and create meaningful institutional change in their communities…employing activities such as community research, issue development, reflection, political analysis, and direct action…within youth organizing, marginalized youth find companionship, structure, and a critical framework for studying and understanding the world around them—connecting their public and private life.[97]

Activism and organizing expose youth, particularly marginalized youth, to educational and developmental opportunities that may be denied them by mainstream social institutions. In particular, an activist oriented pedagogy seeks to *reclaim* assets where dominant institutions have sought to constrain them. It engages the place of power and politics in identity development. In other words, it invites youth to *place* their emergent identities. Third, it reimages the concept of "risk" as something positive and generative. There is 'cost' to discipleship as Dietrich Bonhoeffer famously said. Finally, it undermines capitalist narratives of the powerful, autonomous individual and locates power and identity within collectives. Focusing on collectives also troubles narratives about youth as disconnected and alienated from civic or religious institutions, their bioregions, and one another.

Within this literature critical consciousness is imagined as a significant educational and developmental outcome to the extent that it supports positive development. Indeed, I would suggest the possible inclusion of critical consciousness as a 7th C of PYD. Research has attempted to understand how critical consciousness is developed and the

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*Programs*, eds. Richard Lerner, Francine Jacobs, and Donald Wertlieb (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 491-506; Roderick Watts and Constance Flanagan, "Pushing the Envelope on Youth Civic Engagement: A Developmental and Liberation Psychology Perspective," *Journal of Community Psychology* 35, no. 6 (2007): 779-792.

[97] Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing, "An Emerging Model for Working with Youth: Community Organizing + Youth Development = Youth Organizing," *Occasional Papers Series on Youth Organizing* 1 (2000): 9.

types of outcomes it supports. This work draws upon and expands the theoretical work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, which will be explored at length in chapter four below. As operationalized by Matthew Diemer, et al., critical consciousness "represents oppressed or marginalized people's critical analysis of their social conditions and individual or collective action taken to change perceived inequalities." The development of critical consciousness depends on the complex interplay of critical reflection on social inequality, a commitment to egalitarianism, and critical action. [98] This process of reflection and action is critical for establishing a collective vision for a just society and building communities and institutions for the discernment and enactment of this vision. Together young people and adult allies work together to contemplate, analyze, respond, and engage in the process of sociopolitical change.

Involvement in social movements and youth organizing groups are important spaces for the cultivation of critical consciousness. Organizing boycotts, attending protests, engaging in direct action, and participating in other practices aimed at building grassroots political power might not be the vision of civic engagement or 'extracurricular' activity that we imagine for young people. However, these activities support marginalized and oppressed young people in achieving many of the outcomes we desire for adolescence more generally in large part by giving them an experience of agency *and* winning victories that make their places more equitable through an interrogation and redistribution of power. In this sense they can be regarded as *positive* risks. Critical consciousness has been associated with "career development, school engagement, and healthier sexual

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[98] Matthew A. Diemer, Luke J. Rapa, Catalina J. Park, and Justin C. Perry, "Development and Validation of the Critical Consciousness Scale, Development and Validation of the Critical Consciousness Scale," *Youth and Society* (June 2014), 2.

behavior among oppressed and marginalized adolescents (Diemer, Hsieh, & Pan, 2009), and political involvement (Diemer & Li, 2011)."[99] John Rogers and Veronica Terriquez found that involvement in youth organizing can promote the development of academic skills, intellectual interests, college attendance, and civic participation. At the center of this research are the rich mentoring relationships youth participating in the organizations studied experience. As they note, many youth organizing (YO) groups

> offer direct academic support and create opportunities for young people to acquire skills and develop intellectual interests in the context of campaigns. Second, YO groups provide members with holistic and culturally relevant college counseling and guidance. Third, YO groups encourage members to see college-going as connected to a broader political and community empowerment agenda.[100]

Parissa Ballard and Emily Ozer find that activism supports positive developmental outcomes for youth and their communities. Activism can serve as a channel for giving youth a positive experience of perceived control especially for young people who experience oppression. At the same time, "activism makes demands on time, resources, and emotions, potentially creating stressors instead of reducing stress." Additionally, "activism can place youth in public situations where they might experience backlash for expressing their views…[which] might disempower young people and damage their mental health and well-being."[101] Given these concerns, adults have an important role to play as mentors and sources of support and wisdom within movements. What is

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[99] Anita J. Thomas, Rabiatu Barrie, John Brunner, Angela Clawson, Amber Hewitt, Gihane Jeremie-Brink, and Meghan Rowe-Johnson, "Assessing Critical Consciousness in Youth and Young Adults," *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 24, no. 3 (2014), 486.

[100] John Rogers and Veronica Terriquez, "'It Shaped Who I Am as a Person': Youth Organizing and the Educational and Civic Trajectories of Low-Income Youth," in *Contemporary Youth Activism: Advancing Social Justice in the United States,* eds. Jerusha Conner and Sonia Rosen (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016), 149.

[101] Parissa Ballard and Emily Ozer, "The Implications of Youth Activism for Health and Well-Being," in *Contemporary Youth Activism: Advancing Social Justice in the United States,* eds. Jerusha Conner and Sonia Rosen (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2016), 227-230.

significant here is that these mentoring relationships do not remain at the individual one-to-one level but are occurring within the context of social movements aimed at social transformation.

Belle Liang and colleagues explain that mentoring programs limit themselves and their potential through a tendency to "focus most intently on the mentor-youth dyad and to pay less attention to the social ecologies (e.g., families, youth organizations, and neighborhood communities) of the youth and the role that these may play in the mentoring process."[102] Liang and colleagues suggest a model, which they term Youth-adult partnership (Y-AP), that aims to introduce principles of community psychology to PYD theory and practice. Y-AP recognizes that the positive development of the person and of their community are reciprocal processes and positive *youth* development is related to positive *community* development. They suggest "a shift in the mentoring field, from a 'therapeutic' approach in which individual youth are targets of the intervention to a more socially transformative approach wherein mentors and youth forge collaborative partnerships that promote positive youth development at individual *and* societal levels."[103]

Adults can support youth activists in a number of ways. One of the most significant of these is giving young people the opportunity to lead. As Watts and Flanagan note, "adults need to be in the background, monitoring, mentoring, facilitating, but not being in charge. Young people want support from adults in the form of dialogue, coaching, and providing

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[102] Belle Liang, Renée Spencer, Jennifer West, and Nancy Rappaport, "Expanding the Reach of Youth Mentoring: Partnering with Youth for Personal Growth and Social Change," *Journal of Adolescence* 36 (2013): 257.
[103] *Ibid.*, 259.

connections to sources of institutional, community, and political power."[104] This means letting young people have access to both decision-making power and project creation, including developing goals, identifying targets, and discerning tactics and strategies.

In describing a Social Justice Youth Development approach, Shawn Ginwright and Taj James observe that involvement in social movements and youth organizing promotes a set of outcomes associated with advancing social transformation for justice such as examining the root causes of injustice, developing intersectional and collective identities, changing policies in their schools and communities, and mobilizing youth culture as an asset.[105] In the face of the massive systems of injustice in the Anthropocene it is essential that educators in faith work with *and* learn with young people to promote deep structural change in our world and Church.

*Conclusions*

In this chapter I have explored how place shapes human development. Supporting adolescents on their journey to adulthood does not follow a predicable path and what is needed in one place can be very different than another. Further, how adulthood is understood and defined can also vary. In sacrifice zones like central Appalachia there are many environmental factors that can impact the prospects for healthy development in young people. However, if we are attentive to the places young people call home and how relationships to these settings change during the adolescent years then we can empower young people to work for transformation of their place.

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[104] Roderick Watts and Constance Flanagan, "Pushing the Envelope on Youth Civic Engagement," 782.
[105] Shawn Ginwright and Taj James, "From Assets to Agents of Change."

I also challenge the common myths associated with the adolescent years and adolescent faith. Contrary to the dominant view of adolescents as a time of "storm and stress," I suggest that educators ought to view adolescents as assets within their civic and ecclesial communities. To this end, an important role of education is to connect young people to opportunities to build relationships with adults and to contribute meaningfully to institutions and to create them where they are lacking. This means we must trust young people while apprenticing and modelling through our own lived faith as they grow into more significant social and public roles.

Finally, I emphasized a model of pedagogy-as-movement building. Especially in marginalized places like sacrifice zones it is important that mentoring relationships occur within the context of movement building and contribute to a collective sense of self. One-to-one mentoring relationships should connect young people to learning about and working to care for their watershed, to change unjust policies in their communities, and to nurture new initiatives in their parishes. In this way, mentors serve to connect young people and empower young people to have a voice in their places. They come to understand their faith in light of this work.

To this end, in the next chapter I turn explicitly to theology, examining how we can draw on Judeo-Christian scripture and tradition to guide active engagement with/in our places.

**Chapter Three**

**All Creatures Great and Small: Jesus' Place-Based Pedagogy**

*"I will remember the land."*—Leviticus 26: 42

This chapter seeks to name the relationship between a sense of place and a sense of faith. How do these inform each other and how is God calling us to live in response and opposition to the Anthropocene's logic of extraction? Just as Pope Francis challenges us to listen first to the cry of Earth and the cry of the poor,[1] I focus attention on what education in faith and the practice of discipleship look like within sacrifice zones such as central Appalachia. These questions are particularly salient during the adolescent years as young people begin cultivating a sense of self and a religious identity that is their own and begin to discern their relationship to their home communities and bioregion. Place-based education in faith nurtures in young people a collective sense of agency through a supportive community as they discover their vocation, develop toward adulthood, and take on new social roles in church, society, and Creation.

Human development processes occur in dialogue with our places. Drawing on insights from postmodern geography, Halvor Moxnes notes that identity emerges through a "dialogue between 'self' and 'place.'"[2] Education in faith introduces into this dialogue

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[1] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, 49.
[2] Halvor Moxnes, "The Construction of Galilee as a Place for the Historical Jesus—Part II," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 31 (2001): 74, see also page 75.

what Thomas Groome calls the "Christian Story/Vision"[3] in hopes that young people will find there empowering resources for personal, communal, and bioregional transformation. Indeed, God very clearly calls us to a particular way of being in relationship with Creation, and it is for us as educators in faith to work with young people to discern what this means in our present context, given the ongoing realities of colonization, resource extraction, and climate change.

The logic of extraction influences young people's sense of place and identity in ways that are detrimental to a positive sense of self, the formation of strong inter-personal relationships and communal belonging, and a sense of care and kinship with more-than-human beings.[4] These structures are also alienating them from the natural world and

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[3] Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, The Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1991), 215-217.

[4] Juliet Schor demonstrates how consumer culture, through the aggressive marketing techniques of corporations, impact the developmental lives of children and adolescence. Schor describes this as the "commercialization of childhood." Children today are facing more mental and emotional health issues, engaging in more risky behaviors, and are less physically healthy. Schor's research points to the negative impact of a young person's values, relationships, and self-esteem based on their level of involvement in consumer culture. Juliet Schor, *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture* (New York: Scribner, 2004), see especially pages 13-14, 35-37, 64-65, 167-175. Allison Pugh offers similar findings, but with a slightly different focus. Pugh explores how consumer culture influences children's sense of belonging and the ways in which they define and understand what it means to care and be cared for. In particular, children learn to equate caring and being cared-for with provisioning of needed and desired goods and consumer products. Popular toys and other consumer products and experiences provide children with symbolic and social capital among their peers as they seek belonging and acceptance. Parents who resist their child's desires for specific consumer objects unwittingly put their children in an awkward social position with peers and may even lead children to feel they aren't cared for. Allison Pugh, *Longing and Belonging: Parent, Children, and Consumer Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009)*,* see especially pages 4-10, 50-53, 64-65, 172-174, 212-214. Sherry Turkle offers thoughtful reflection on the influence of technology, particularly communication technologies such as texting, smart phones, and the pervasive presence of social media in young people's lives. Turkle finds that these devices and ways of relating influence adolescent development, self-image, social relationships, and emotional health. Technology presents to us a series of paradoxes regarding connection, identity, and sense of place that we are only now beginning to understand, especially as they relate to the developmental lives of adolescents. Despite being more connected than ever before, people, especially young people, express feelings of loneliness and isolation. For teens today "technology has become like a phantom limb, it is so much a part of them. These young people are among the first to grow up with an expectation of continuous connection: always on, and always on them. And they are the first to grow up not necessarily thinking of simulation as second best. All of this makes them fluent with technology but brings a set of new

perhaps have contributed to the deep silence in the United States about the ongoing reality of colonization, a profound ignorance of our bioregions, and the peoples whose land we as settlers occupy.[5] If the logic of extraction is influencing the developmental pathways of young people by shaping how they develop a sense of self and of place, then education in faith can assist in awakening young people to an awareness of being placed in communities and bioregions that does not depend upon the maps drawn by, and the sense of place encouraged by, the logic of extraction.

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insecurities. They nurture friendships on social-networking sites and then wonder if they are among friends. They are connected all day but are not sure if they have communicated…they come to accept lower expectations for connection and, finally, the idea that robot friendships could be sufficient…technology makes us busier than ever and ever more in search of retreat…technology reshapes the landscape of our emotional lives, but is it offering us the lives we want to lead?" (17). Second, as young people engage in the complex process of identity formation they are often doing this on a very public stage through social media while constant connection makes it difficult for young people to experience the opportunities for separation that allow them to cultivate "inner resources." They long for connection with parents and friends who are similarly distracted by their devices. These supportive others are often "physically close, tantalizingly so, but mentally elsewhere" (243, 267). Finally, devices and social media put a buffer in between ourselves and others, removing the "friction" essential to forming the ties that bind with those we care about most deeply (13). See Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, revised and expanded 3rd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2017), see especially pages 13, 171-179,186, 242-243, 266-277, 293, 296. On the concept of "friction" see also Richard Gaillardetz, *Transforming Our Days: Spirituality, Community, and Liturgy in a Technological Culture* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 19-26, 42. While these risks to adolescent development are concerning, PYD theory, explored in chapter two, chooses to focus on resilient youth—those who thrive despite risks. This perspective illuminates what can go *right* in a young person's life. Interestingly, these young people seem to have a different sense of place that is less influenced by the material and spatial practices of extractivism. They are connected to their communities and given the opportunity to play significant social roles. They are stakeholders in their community and cultivate these roles through rich relationships with peers and adults, allowing them to develop the inner resources necessary to contribute in increasingly significant ways to the places they belong.

[5] Regarding the connection between young people and the natural world, including the ways that technology and climate change might be influencing this relationship, see Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, updated and expanded ed. (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2008 [2005]). The weakening of young people's sense of connection to and familiarity with the natural world may be influencing the developmental pathways of young people, including "diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of physical and emotional illness" (36). Louv sees the influence of technology on our daily lives as a contributing factor. Young people spend more time with devices mediating their experiences of the natural world. He also suggests that environmental education, with its focus on environmental destruction on the one hand and abstract concepts on the other has both led to a fear of and disconnection from the natural world. If young people are to develop a sense of kinship with their bioregion educators must foster pedagogies that emphasize familiarity with and love for a young person's immediate environment. See pages, 49-54, 64-70, 134-145.

We also need to identify how extractivism has influenced, and continues to influence, the ways in which we tell the Christian Story, propose its Vision (of life for all), and how we understand God's will for Creation.[6] On the one hand, educators in faith should attend to how socio-economic, political, and ecological factors are influencing adolescent faith. On the other hand, educators in faith must reflect on the ways in which their own faith praxis is impacted by extractivism. How do the values and structures of the Anthropocene influence our hopes for young people, our vision of adolescent development, the pedagogies and methods used to educate young people, and the shape of the faith we seek to pass on? Is the faith we share with young people one that promotes extraction or *jubilee*? If we are to understand how God is calling us, as leading learners and student-learners alike, to negotiate the relationship between our emerging identities and the places we call home, we can do no better than consider how Jesus negotiated this task and ask what the Jesus Movement of the first century might mean for us today in the context of the Anthropocene.

A place-based perspective brings the historical Galilee into the interpretive framework as much as the historical Jesus. Galilee is much more than a *context* that functions as a backdrop or container for the activities of the historical Jesus. Place, as noted above, is a hermeneutic category. Moxnes explains,

> it is not, then, a matter of constructing Galilee as a place for the historical Jesus in conformity with a straightforward, objective picture drawn directly from textual

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[6] Theologians observe the ways in which structures such as consumer capitalism and technological devices exercise an influence on our spiritual development. Indeed, while Christianity can be a powerful resource for critiquing the Anthropocene it has at times contributed to a logic of extraction. For examples, Lynn White Jr, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1203-1207; Richard Gaillardetz, *Transforming Our Days*; Tom Beaudoin, *Consuming Faith: Integrating Who We Are With What We Buy* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 2003); Mark Wallace, *Finding God in the Singing River: Christianity, Spirit, Nature* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005).

and archaeological evidence. There needs to be an attempt at an hermeneutical interpretation recognizing the role of the interpreter as well as the role of the ancient inhabitants of Galilee in encoding their space with meaning…In this perspective it is not a matter of putting Jesus into a fixed place. Rather, Jesus was himself part of the Galilean community, involved in creating and recreating space.[7]

The same is true today. Learning communities such as a theology classroom, youth ministry group, or parish community are also engaged consciously or not in this practice of interpreting space and thereby bringing place into being, mapping out the geography of our lives together and with all of Creation. Of course, as educators in faith we approach the Jesus of history as the Christ of faith. The way that Jesus inspired the Movement he brought into being with his friends, reveals to us something of the mystery of God, of God's Creation, and the meaning of salvation.

*Discerning a Theology and Pedagogy of Place in the Biblical Tradition*

Bringing the lens of place to education in faith, I attend to two separate ways of imagining the place of Galilee in Jesus' time. The first is its location within the ruling Roman Empire, which reads Galilee through a logic of extraction. Galilee becomes an ecological sacrifice zone in which land and labor serve to benefit to the imperial project. I explore how the extractivism practiced by the Roman Empire impacted the land; how it influenced relationships between places, particularly the relationship between urban centers and rural villages; and how power circulated within and among these places. Rome's logic of extraction is based on *conquest and control of land* through violent military intervention; *extraction of natural resources*, particularly through systems of taxation; and power characterized by pyramids of *patronage and influence.*

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[7] Halvor Moxnes, "Galilee—Part II," 75.

By contrast, I examine how Jesus, drawing upon his Jewish tradition, builds a movement to resist Roman power by imagining place through an oppositional set of what geographers refer to as "material-spatial practices." This concept brings into view how social relations, political systems, technological developments, and economic structures all work to "bring place into being." Things such as "systems of land use, transportation, and communication…and the domination and control of space" through patterns of taxation and legal codes educate us about place *and* bring place into being. Further, ideological systems including religious and spiritual practices, beliefs, and institutions work to reinforce, justify, or challenge these structures.[8] These systems create and map the human-nature, socio-economic, and cultural-religious landscapes of our lives.

Jesus' pedagogy actively engages people he encounters with questions of place and belonging. Using the image of the Kingdom and Reign of God,[9] Jesus challenges those who gather around him to imagine their communities within a different framework than that offered by the Roman Empire. Scripture scholar, Halvor Moxnes, understands the Kingdom of God as an "imagined place," by which Moxnes means, "a vision of how a real place might be imagined differently."[10] I refer to these principles and practices as a logic of the biblical notion of jubilee, which can be characterized by three elements. In

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[8] *Ibid.*, 75, see also page 70.

[9] I use the formulation Kingdom *and* Reign of God to highlight both the geographic or spatial dimensions of this concept *and* the event character of God's rule. In the definition of place I develop earlier in this dissertation I suggest that there is an interrelationship between structures of power and our sense of place. Power relations are one of the things that bring place into being. Ruling always takes place. Later, I will explore the image of the Kin-dom of God as a more precise way of appreciating the unique vision of place imagined and enacted by Jesus and the Jesus Movement. For a discussion of the distinction between "the Kingdom" and "the Reign" of God see Gerhard Lohfink, *Jesus of Nazareth: What He Wanted, Who He Was*, trans. Linda Maloney (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2012), 24-26.

[10] Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place: A Radical Vision of Household and Kingdom* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 109.

the first place, jubilee images *kinship* with the land and one another; *cooperation* and *mutual support*; and *healing* of the social body through practices of *nurturing empowerment*. In the midst of dislocation, Jesus proclaims the creative power of God. The Kingdom and Reign of God is an expression of God's saving will for all Creation.

*Land and Labor from Extraction to Jubilee*

In chapter one, I explored the modern logic of extraction operative through colonization, capitalism, and consumerism. To appreciate Jesus' cultivation of a new sense of place, we first need to set the Movement he inspired within the broader context of changing human relationships with the land, which contributed to the growth of empires through socio-economic and political-cultural structures informed by a human/nature binary. Although the form differs, extractivism is not new. Indeed, it is at least as old as the shift from hunter-gather societies toward more settled modes of human existence. The agricultural revolution led to immense changes in socio-economic and political-cultural structures. The domestication of plants and animals allowed for the production of dependable food supplies and surpluses. This, in turn, made possible advances in human material culture through the flourishing of written language and the cataloguing of knowledge. The development of craft skills resulted in new socio-economic and political structures. These generated new forms of human culture, particularly in terms of how humans understood themselves and their sense of place. Domestication and more permanent modes of settlement brought undeniable benefits. Nevertheless, these benefits were not enjoyed with equity and it was not often a smooth transition.

*Agriculture, Empire, and the Human/Nature Binary*

As societies shifted from small hunter-gather societies to urban-agricultural empires they faced challenges related to biophysical health, distribution of resources, and increasing social stratification. First, the shift toward more urban-centered societies had an impact on human biophysical health and development. J. Donald Hughes explains,

> with agriculture, human populations became larger and more concentrated, but they did not become healthier…the farmers of the New Stone Age [Neolithic] were shorter than the hunters of the Old Stone Age, suffered more from bad teeth and bones, caught more communicable diseases, and died at an earlier age on average. This was true of both men and women.[11]

Second, José Pagola observes that new and more intense forms of domination and exploitation arose.

> One of the most characteristic features of the agricultural societies of the Roman Empire was the enormous inequality of resources between the great majority of the peasant population and the small elite who lived in the cities. That was the case in Galilee. The village peasants sustained the country's economy; they worked the land and produced enough to support the ruling minority. The cities didn't produce; the elites needed the labor of the peasants. So they used different mechanisms to control the production of the rural areas and obtain the maximum possible benefit from the peasants.[12]

Finally, stratification of social relationships was echoed in an increasing imbalance in human-nature relationships. We tend to think of environmental issues as contemporary

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[11] J. Donald Hughes, *Environmental Problems of the Greeks and Romans: Ecology in the Ancient Mediterranean*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014 [1994]), 29. Wes Howard-Brook notes, urbanization, which depended upon extraction and expropriation of resources tended to benefit urban elites, while for the many endemic disease was a "direct function of urban crowding, lack of sanitation, and epidemics caused by the relationship between surplus food and rats and other carriers of disease." See Wes Howard-Brook, "*Come Out, My People!" God's Call Out of Empire in the Bible and Beyond* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), 411. See also Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, revised edition (New York: Penguin, 2011); Jared Diamond, *The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn From Traditional Societies* (New York: Penguin, 2012).

[12] José Pagola, *Jesus: An Historical Approximation,* trans. Margaret Wilde, 4th ed. (Miami: Convivium, 2013 [2009]), 41; see also Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers: Conflict, Covenant, and the Hope of the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 26-29.

concerns, and while ancient societies certainly did not think in terms of modern-day environmentalism or ecological justice, ancient urban-agricultural societies experienced many of the same environmental issues familiar to us today, albeit on smaller and more localized scales. As populations grew and urban centers developed so too did environmental problems such as overgrazing, deforestation, soil depletion, and pollution.[13]

Ancient empires, in a pattern that echoes the emergence of modern empires, constantly sought to expand their reach into new territories in search of natural resources to sustain growing urban populations. It was in this context that Rome took control of Palestine in 63 BCE with traumatic effects for both people and land. Rome functioned

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[13] J. Donald Hughes, *Environmental Problems of the Greeks and Romans,* 1, 28-33; Micah Kiel, *Apocalyptic Ecology: The Book of Revelation, the Earth, and the Future* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2017), 38, 65-68. It would be reductionistic to regard Roman attitudes to the land as uniformly exploitative. Indeed, Romans displayed a combination of religious awe and reverence, scientific curiosity, and philosophical critique of imperial excess. Despite these complex attitudes the Roman imperial socio-economic system had a definite negative effect on the natural and social ecology of the regions to which its influence extended. While it is well beyond the scope of this chapter to address these complex attitudes and perspectives, helpful overviews can be found in Hughes, *Environmental Problems,* chapter 4; Lukas Thommen, *An Environmental History of Ancient Greece and Rome*, trans. Philip Hill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 [2009]), 76-89. Similarly, modern tropes of the 'noble savage' on the one hand and a 'culture of poverty' on the other can be found in the ambivalent Roman attitudes toward rural peasants. Despite a sense of cultural pride in the peasant origins of Roman society, Rome's urban elite displayed an attitude of superiority in relationship to rural villages. Indeed, as John Dominic Crossan describes, Roman dismissal of the Jesus Movement's claim of Jesus' divinity had more to do with Jesus' peasant origins. Crossan quotes the Greek philosopher Celsus, "I must deal with the matter of Jesus, the so-called savior, who not long ago taught new doctrines and was thought to be a son of God…taking its root in the lower classes, the religion continues to spread among the vulgar: nay, one can even say it spreads because of its vulgarity and the illiteracy of its adherents." The Greeks and Romans adopted a practice of deifying many of their emperors. In view of this, Crossan suggests that "it is not absurd, in Celsus's mind, to claim that Jesus was *divine*, but it is absurd to claim that *Jesus* was divine." Through this claim, the Jesus Movement upends the Roman imperial ideology. See John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 30. Similarly, but from a different perspective and with different conclusions in mind than those of Crossan, Sean Freyne presents the relationship between the Jesus Movement and Herodian rule in Palestine as a conflict of values between the rural peasantry and Roman elites within Galilee, including a critique of the Judean elites located in Jerusalem who benefitted from the imperial arrangement at the expense of rural villages. See Sean Freyne, "Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee," in *Galilee and Gospel: Collected Essays* (Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2002 [1996]), 197-199.

through what Richard Horsley describes as a "military-agribusiness complex."[14] Warfare then and now has a significant impact on bioregions and communities. In the context of Roman conquest, crops and buildings were appropriated, trampled, or simply destroyed by occupying soldiers. Deforestation was a result of the need for wood to build cities and their fortifications and other tools of war. Farming families were killed or pressed into slavery. Those who survived conquest were drafted as labor and drawn into the imperial economy through systems of taxation. In other words, peasant communities were thoroughly sacrificed in the imperial conquest of lands and peoples and their sense of place was radically transformed.[15]

*Rome, Galilee, and the Jesus Movement*

According to the Gospels, Jesus was from the village of Nazareth, located in the fertile foothills of lower Galilee. Archaeological evidence suggests that Nazareth had a population between 200 and 400.[16] As Pagola indicates, "Galilee was an agrarian society. Jesus' contemporaries lived by farming, like most people in the Roman Empire of the first century. According to Josephus, 'the whole region of Galilee is devoted to farming, and there are no idle lands.'"[17] Mark's Gospel (6: 3) tells us Jesus was a *tekton*, commonly translated as carpenter.[18] This would have placed Jesus in precarious economic circumstances and should not be confused with the image of modern middle-class independent contractors or craftspersons. Jesus' socio-economic position more

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[14] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 26-27.
[15] Hughes, chapter 9; Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: The Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 18-31.
[16] José A. Pagola, *Jesus*, 55-56.
[17] *Ibid.*, 39.
[18] In Matthew's Gospel Jesus is identified as "the carpenter's son," but in Jesus' historical context a son typically shared in his father's trade. John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 24.

closely resembled that of a day laborer, depending to a large extent on imperial building projects such as those at Tiberias and Sephorris for employment. He would have been one step away from the world of beggars, thieves, prostitutes, and those who took on culturally objectionable occupations. It is possible that his household had lost their ancestral lands for inability to pay taxes imposed by Rome.[19]

While Jesus was not a farmer, he displays intimate knowledge of the life of the peasant farmers who constituted the majority of the Galilean population, and he demonstrates a sensitivity to the land itself. Elizabeth Johnson observes,

> his preaching is filled with references to the processes of seeds growing, vineyards bearing fruit, and fig trees leafing out, and to the ways of wandering sheep, foxes, and nesting birds. Jesus knew how to read the clouds to predict the next day's weather. Speaking movingly of the beauty of wildflowers and the vitality of birds of the air, he encouraged listeners to learn from them lessons of trust…Jesus whole ministry was centered on the coming of the reign of God…this means nothing less than the flourishing of all creation.[20]

With his preaching and parables, Jesus is not using local color to teach complex theological ideas to simple country people. Rather, he is engaging them with reflection upon some of the most pressing socio-economic issues and concerns of peasant village communities in Galilee and the ways in which the traditional values, social structures,

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[19] John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 23-26; John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 43-46. Crossan, Burton Mack, and other historical Jesus scholars suggest that these urban centers exposed Galileans to Hellenistic cultural influences. On these grounds, Crossan associates Jesus' preaching on the Kingdom with Cynic ideals. See, for example, Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography*, 113-122. However, others such as Horsley and Freyne relate Jesus' teachings to Jewish prophetic ideals, critiquing "the assumption that close proximity to an urban culture meant assimilation of the ideas prevalent among the urban elites by the peasants." Sean Freyne, "Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee," 197-198. Indeed, we can suspect that given the socio-economic impact of the Roman Empire Jesus was likely to be critical of the urban culture which was displacing and disrupting Galilean life. In this context Israel's own cultural traditions of prophetic critique of imperial power were likely to be much more resonant in peasant villages than ideas imported from the vastly different Greco-Roman culture of urban centers.
[20] Elizabeth Johnson, *Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2018), 82. See also José Pagola, *Jesus*, 57-58.

and material base of these communities was threatened by Roman exploitation. Jesus' parables open up critical conversations about key issues of life, in light of faith, with those who hear them. He crafts conversations that concern how these systems are transforming local people's values, relationships, and communities.[21] As Freyne notes,

> the tensions between these two types of economic system [the rural village economy and the urban imperial economy] and the increasing dominance of the latter in Herodian Galilee generated the social situation that many gospel parables depict—day laborers, debt, resentment of absentee landlords, wealthy estate owners with little concern for tenants' needs, exploitative stewards of estates, family feuds over inheritance etc. In these vignettes we can catch glimpses of both systems in operation and the clash of values that are inherent.[22]

Through his parables Jesus shows himself to be an astute student of his place. He judges the impact of Rome's logic of extraction as contrary to God's own hopes for God's people. His parables and public ministry open up space to imagine place and his hearers' relationship to place differently through the logic of jubilee.

*Land and Labor in the Kingdom of God*

Jesus' hopes for Galilee are grounded in a jubilee faith in the Creator-liberator God's covenantal relationship with Israel. This faith shapes Jesus' sense of place, much as it shapes that of Israel throughout history. While it is not possible to cover in detail, it will be helpful to consider some of the basic contours of the traditions that shaped Jesus' vision of the Kingdom and Reign of God, giving particular attention to how they imagine the human-land relationship.

The Torah provides the faithful a "counter-narrative" to the creation myths of near eastern empires under which Israel experienced subjection and domination.[23] Israel's

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[21] José Pagola, *Jesus*, 125-127.
[22] Sean Freyne, "Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee," 196.

creation narratives cultivate a sense of faith-in-place that critiques that of conquering powers such as Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. Far from legitimizing imperial power or justifying the violence, oppression, and ecological consequences of urbanization, Israel's Story/Vision of Creation is a criticism of imperial ambition. For Israel, the world does not begin in violence, but through the creative activity of a loving God (Genesis chapters 1 and 2).[24]

However, as the Genesis narrative continues it moves from loving kinship between God, humans, and the rest of Creation to exile from Eden, Cain's murder of Abel, the great flood, and the Tower of Babel. A social and spiritual order founded on reciprocity, kinship, and peace, is replaced with one characterized increasingly by violence, alienation from the land, and suffering for both land and the people who work it. The narrative suggests that this rupture is the result of human ambitions and the failure to live within the limits set by the Creator-liberator God. As Freyne reflects,

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[23] Wes Howard-Brook, *"Come Out My People,"* 19. Howard-Brook's approach is representative of what Sean Freyne describes as a shift in Pentateuch studies away from source criticism toward a focus upon narrative criticism. Rather than seeking to unearth the early history and traditions of the Israelites, this approach views the completed text as "ideological statements of post-exilic Judah rather than historical reminiscences from the period of the Judges and the early monarchy." This approach sheds light on "the 'Israel' that Jesus and his contemporaries might have envisaged on the basis of those master-narratives." See Sean Freyne, *Jesus, A Jewish Galilean: A New Reading of the Jesus-story* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 63. For another example of this narrative, empire-critical approach see Laurel Dykstra, *Set Them Free: The Other Side of Exodus* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002).

[24] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 27-29; Wes Howard-Brook,*"Come Out My People,"* 17-21; Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories That Shape Us, A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia* (Spencer, WV: Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 2015), 38. In myths such as the Sumerian *Gilgamesh Epic* and the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*, elements of which can be found in the Biblical narrative, the foundational acts are those of violence. In *Enuma Elish*, the creatures of the earth have as their origins Marduk's murder of his mother Tiamet. As a reward for usurping the power of his mother, the other gods give Marduk the gift of a city. Marduk then murders his step-father Kingu and creates humans as servants of the gods. Howard-Brook explains, *Enuma Elish* "makes The City the center of the world and the king the embodiment of the chief god, in this case Marduk. Even more: it equates the structure of hierarchical urban empire with the 'divine order.'" See Wes Howard-Brook,*"Come Out My People,"* 18, see also pages 17-21; For a similar comparative reading of Genesis and *The Gilgamesh Epic* see John Dominic Crossan, *God & Empire: Jesus Against Rome, Then and Now* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 49-65.

the idea of the human struggle with the environment finds expression in the difficulties encountered both in generating life and sustaining it. As the narrative of the primordial history unfolds, this struggle leads to violence and bloodshed…the larger context shows that the redactors of the Pentateuch were deeply conscious of the fractured and ambiguous situation in which humans find themselves in their relationship with the natural world…Disobedience has turned what was intended as a blessing into a curse, resulting in alienation between them and the earth and between humans themselves, when harmony and bliss was their intended lot. These stories anticipate Israel's story, as this will unfold in the subsequent narrative of her precarious occupation of the land.[25]

Reflecting on their own experiences of imperial domination and later imperial ambitions, Israel apprentices itself to the Creator-liberator God, who through covenantal bonds teaches Israel a way of being in the land that is attentive to the cries of the oppressed and respects the gifts of Earth. Israel's vocation is to be a people set apart who live in the land in a manner characterized by justice and kinship with one another and the land that sustains them. Israel is called to live and worship through a logic of jubilee and to place faith in God above all else.[26] Land is not a possession to be jealously guarded but a gift offered in love to be shared with generosity.

At the same time, these accounts do little to acknowledge or to confront the historic and ongoing reality of settler colonialism and its impact upon people and the land. As Osage scholar Robert Allen Warrior points out, conquest and settlement of the land of the Canaanites is the other, often unaccounted, side of this narrative. YHWH promises Moses, "I will bring you out of the affliction of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites,

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[25] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 28-29.

[26] Walter Brueggemann, *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), 69-77, 85. In the context of covenant economics, Jesus' admonition "call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven" (Matthew 23:9) has resonance with the covenantal prohibition against human kingship over Israel in 1 Samuel 8: 7-9, 19-20 in which "the LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for *they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them*"…But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, "No! but we are determined to have a king over us, so that we also *may be like the other nations* and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles."

the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exodus 3:17). Warrior suggests, "the Canaanites should be at the center of Christian theological reflection and political action. They are the last remaining ignored voice in the text, except perhaps for the land itself."[27] At the recent Amazon Synod, the participating Catholic Bishops take steps toward confronting settler privilege by foregrounding the perspective of primary peoples and calling for a "preferential option for indigenous peoples" within the Church.[28]

God's covenant with the Israelites, which promises land and descendants, is conditional upon Israel upholding the laws and codes set forth in the covenant. It demands a unique relationship with place. In other words, these are not abstract, disembodied principles. Israel's relationship to God is tied to its public, collective life in a specific place.

These covenantal demands include the land itself as subject and participant in the covenant. We read in Leviticus,

> if you follow my statutes and keep my commandments and observe them faithfully, I will give you your rains in their season, and the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit…but if you do not obey me, and do not

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[27] Robert Allen Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today," *Christianity and Crisis* (September 11, 1989): 264. Based on archaeological evidence and written accounts, the historical events and the later biblical narrative are likely very different. Laurel Dykstra summarizes the various problems the archaeological record poses for the biblical account. As Dykstra explains, biblical historians have developed three principle theories to suggest a more likely history of the origins of Israel. These positions are the gradual settlement of the region by various nomadic groups over an extended period who gradually formed into a confederated group of tribes, a sudden conquest of the region supported by some groups within Canaan, and a peasant rebellion by various groups within the region against exploitative city-states (Laurel Dykstra, *Set Them Free*, 5-9). Warrior and Dykstra stress that regardless of their accuracy, these narratives have an undeniable symbolic power which has shaped history in places far beyond the geography of the near-east. Christian theology is particularly guilty of misappropriating these narratives, which as I show in my chapter 1 above, have served as a justification for centuries of Christian colonial projects. See Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians," 24-25; Dykstra, *Set Them Free*, 19-21.

[28] Amazon Synod, *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology* (2019), par. 27-28.

observe all these commandments…your strength shall be spent to no purpose: your land shall not yield its produce, and the trees of the land shall not yield their fruit (26: 3-4, 14, 20).

Human and bioregional health are connected. The land, just as those who work it, are not to be valued for what they produce but derive their value as a result of their giftedness from God. The human task is to carefully discern and respect this balance. In contrast to the imperialist logic of accumulation and sacrifice of land and labor, the logic of jubilee teaches us the value of rest, pause, and stillness. Norman Habel comments,

> the first and perhaps most important condition that the Israelite tenants must observe is keeping the land sabbath. More precisely, it is the land itself that must keep the sabbath…It is as if YHWH is addressing this law to the land itself, a land that is capable of responding to the way the Israelites handle it…The land is a living reality with rights so be respected.[29]

Indeed, the rhythm of sabbath rest sets the parameters of covenantal economics and informs the values that define Israelite society.

Sabbath laws regarding both days and years govern every aspect of Israel's way of being placed and dictate the structure of socio-economic life. A brief overview

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[29] Habel, 102-104. This pattern can also be discerned in God's initial covenant with Noah, "as for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark…I will remember my covenant between me and you and every living creature of all flesh" (Genesis 9: 9-10, 15). It is also a prominent theme in the prophetic literature. For example, in Jeremiah, "take up weeping and wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard; both the birds of the air and the animals have fled and gone…Why is the land ruined and laid waste like a wilderness, so that no one passes through? And the LORD says: Because they have forsaken my law that I set before them, and have not obeyed my voice, or walked in accordance with it, but have stubbornly followed their own hearts and have gone after the Baals, as their ancestors taught them…Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard, they have trampled down my portion, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it a desolation; desolate it mourns to me. The whole land is made desolate, but no one lays it to heart" (Jeremiah 9: 10-14, 12: 10-11). For further analysis see Norman Habel, *The Land is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), especially chapters 5 and 6; John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2003), 46-47. Ellen Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 17-20 and chapter 2, especially pp. 39-41; David Horell, *The Bible and the Environment: Toward a Critical Ecological Biblical Theology* (Durham: Acumen, 2012), 42-48.

demonstrates their significance, scope, and purpose, and the way in which they function as a place-based source of wisdom and learning that opposes the social and ecological effects of extractivism. In Exodus, God instructs,

> for six years you shall sow your land and gather its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave the wild animals may eat. You shall do the same with your vineyard and with your olive orchard. Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest, so that your ox and your donkey may have relief, and your homeborn slave and the resident alien may be refreshed (22: 10-12).

Sabbath laws provides several mechanisms to provide for social justice in the context of an agrarian, peasant village society. While space does not permit a detailed exegesis, it will be helpful to briefly outline some of the principal features of socioeconomic relations based on a logic of jubilee.

Sabbath laws provide for the freeing of slaves after six years of service "worth the wages of hired laborers." At the same time, there are several contingent elements of this provision related particularly to marriage (Exodus 21: 1-11; Deuteronomy 15:12-18). Second, these laws legislate the cancellation of debt to members of the Israelite community after seven years, a provision which did not, however, apply to foreigners (Deut. 15: 1-2). Third, they provide rest for the land and those who labor upon it, including domesticated animals (Exodus 23: 10-13; Leviticus 25: 1-7). As Habel notes, this provision seems to relate particularly to the land itself, leaving open the difficult question of how food security would be sustained in an agricultural society if such legislation was effected. Horsley proposes that the practice was likely implemented in a

staggered fashion with different villages or families practicing it on their own cycle of observance, making lending possible when necessary.[30]

The practice of "gleaning" instructed farmers to leave the edges of fields, orchards, and vineyards unharvested and to not gather any of the harvest which had been dropped. Gleaning allowed provisions for the poor, the alien, the widow, and the orphan. There was also a strong counsel to lend generously to any member of the community with need. While such practices may have been much help to those with an immediate need, Horsley notes that such provision would not suffice to make up for harvests inadequate to feed poor families due to drought and other damage to crops and later to taxes and tithes taken by rulers."[31] In such situations, starving families were easily forced into borrowing, debt, potential land loss, or slavery (Lev. 19: 9-10; 23: 22; Deut. 15: 7-8; 24: 19-22). Finally, sabbath laws prohibited the taking of interest from fellow Israelites. While these laws guarded against exploitation, encouraged fair dealings, and preserved a spirit of generosity, this would not have been a sufficient guard against the threat of mounting debt in an economy where borrowing and lending were central. (Exod. 22: 25-27; Lev. 25: 35-37; Deut. 23:19).[32]

It is unclear to what extent the sabbatical legislation was put into practice. Horsley suggests that references elsewhere in the historical and prophetic literature to practices of debt cancellation, the release of debt-slaves, and the return of land to next of kin suggest

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[30] Norman Habel, *The Land is Mine*, 101-104; Richard Horsley, *Covenant Economics: A Biblical Vision of Justice for All* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 41, see also pages 35-49.
[31] Horsley, *Covenant Economics*, 41, see also 39-40.
[32] Richard Horsley, *Covenant Economics*, 41-42, 44, see also pages 57-63.

that these laws were implemented to some extent.[33] In similar fashion, Habel suggests the

fallow year was likely practiced in some fashion for the simple fact that it makes good

agricultural sense, preserving the productivity of fields and health of the soil.[34] Many of

these legislative practices can be found in the legal codes of other near eastern societies,

suggesting that Israel probably implemented them to some degree. Such practices would

have been crucial to address the precarious circumstances of families in a village

economy and to assure the strength of the socio-economic fabric.[35] What is unique about

Israel's framing of these practices is their covenantal character. Israel relates these

practices to their divine origin and God's kingship. God is positioned as a "divine

landowner" from whom Israel holds the land in trust and sound agricultural principles are

related to a divine demand for social justice.[36]

> Once a generation, after seven cycles of sabbath years a jubilee year was proclaimed,
>
> > you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land
> > to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you,
> > to your property and every one of you to your family…You shall observe my
> > statutes and faithfully keep my ordinances, so that you may live on the land
> > securely. The land will yield its fruit, and you will eat your fill and live on it
> > securely (Lev. 25: 10, 18-19).

There is general agreement that the jubilee year was more than likely never put into

practice and other sabbatical legislation was practiced only sporadically or inconsistently.

Nevertheless, there is equal agreement that this "does not negate the significance of the

jubilee as an ideological symbol of a radical land reform program promoting the rights of

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[33] *Ibid.*, 38-39, 45, 47.
[34] Norman Habel, *The Land is Mine*, 102-103.
[35] Richard Horsley, *Covenant Economics*, 35-36, 48-49.
[36] Norman Habel, *The Land is Mine*, 99-101; Richard Horsley, *Covenant Economics*, 38-39; Walter Brueggemann, *The Land*, 58-62.

the peasant."[37] Indeed, the reference to these ideals throughout the prophetic literature and their centrality to the Jesus Movement are clear testimony to their power as an imaginative-utopian ideal, guiding movements of resistance, liberation, and renewal even into the present day. Indeed, at the center of this legislation is a refusal of imperial values of accumulation, bondage, and exploitation of the land. Generous sharing and mutual support, healing and hospitality, and care for the land are to be the hallmarks of Israel's sense of place.

In the following section, I turn to an analysis of how Jesus utilizes these values in his own ministry. How can we introduce them into education in faith today to nourish faith, hope, and love in global sacrifice zones where an extractive logic continues to shape the sense of place even of those who call these places home?

*Jesus' Kingdom Pedagogy*

Jesus turns Israel's Story/Vision of God's Kingdom and Reign into a program for the renewal of village life in Galilee, instituting covenantal economics in the midst of imperial domination. Quoting from the prophet Isaiah to define his mission, Jesus says, "the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4: 18). As Richard Horsley notes,

> "The kingdom of God" was thus a political, or rather more comprehensively a political-economic, as well as religious symbol. It was rooted in the exodus withdrawal from the imperial system of servitude to the divine powers that determined the Egyptian political economy. God's direct rule of Israel, which

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[37] Norman Habel*, The Land is Mine*, 108, see also pages, 97-98, 104-108; Richard Horsley, *Covenant Economics*, 47-48.

excluded human kingship, was articulated and structured as a functioning polity by the Mosaic covenant. After the rise of the monarchy and subjection to later empires, the direct rule of God remained the ideal for the Israelite people as a whole and for village communities whose local interaction was still governed by the principles of the Mosaic covenant…The coming of the kingdom means sufficient food and a cancellation of debts, even a mutual cancellation of debts in village communities, as articulated in the Lord's Prayer (Luke/Q 11: 2-4). Those who are hungry now will be filled, while those who are full now will go hungry (Luke/Q 6: 20-22). Another qualification for entry into the kingdom of God is observance of the covenantal principle against economic exploitation (coveting, leading to fraud in lending); it will be impossible for the exploitative wealthy to enter (Mark 10: 17-25).[38]

This would have been good news to village communities and a threat to the entire socio-economic and political-cultural system upon which imperial power was based, undermining the ideological apparatus upon which it depended.

In the context of the Anthropocene it is necessary to highlight the importance of the land in this covenantal tradition and discern how this theme is present in Jesus' ministry of covenant renewal. For Jesus the Kingdom of God is a political, economic, social, spiritual, and *ecological* reality. The Kingdom takes *place* and includes a vision for living on the land in light of God's saving will for Creation.[39] Jonathan McRay suggests, "if the

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[38] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 100-101.

[39] This goes against the grain of typical ways of imagining Jesus' relationship to the territorial expectations of Judaism. W. D. Davies in the influential study, *The Gospel and the Land*, expresses, "the land, Jerusalem, and the Temple were taken up into a non-geographic, spiritual, transcendent dimension, even though in their transcendence they also impinged upon or invaded this world through the community of God and his [*sic*] Christ. They became symbols especially of eternal life, of the eschatological society in time and eternity, beyond space and sense." See W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 366. Davies finds that "for the holiness of place, Christianity has fundamentally, though not consistently, substituted the holiness of the Person." Davies, 368. What Davies doesn't take fully into account is how the Jesus Movement inhabited and made use of space. Indeed, in light of the dominant, imperialist ideology of Christianity from the 3rd century to the present it is all the more important that as we think about the Jesus Movement we attend to a theology of the land within it. Davies suggests Christianity lacks territorial ambitions or concerns. With this claim, Davies is curiously dismissive of Christian conquest and colonization and views the crusades as something of an exception, failing to mention the relationship between Christianity and modern imperialism which I discuss in chapter one. See Davies, 375. This legacy of interpretation is also the foundation of Lynn White's claim that Christianity has been the most

kingdom of God is an embrace of life, then it must also be grounded in the land. Territorial borders may be erased, but the need to sustain our lives from the earth is not…Without this grounding, we lose the ability to imagine healthier and more just ways to inhabit actual places."[40] If Jesus' ministry was focused especially on the dislocations of household and village life under the policies of the Roman Empire and his ministry aimed at the renewal and revision of these structures so central to rural life, then implicit in this vision must be a sense of kinship with creation. For McRay, the Kingdom of God and the biblical vision of salvation must include a "transfigured earth."[41]

Pope Francis similarly insists on the rights of Earth. He calls us to learn from indigenous experience and wisdom and rediscover our own faith in the Creator-liberator God who opposes the extractivism and instrumentalism of empire. In words that echo Leviticus, Pope Francis stresses,

> it must be stated that a true 'right of the environment' does exist, for two reasons. First, because we human beings are part of the environment. We live in communion with it, since the environment itself entails ethical limits which human activity must acknowledge and respect…Second, because every creature, particularly a living creature, has an intrinsic value, in its existence, its life, its beauty and its interdependence with other creatures.[42]

Kinship values and covenantal relationships, formed through a logic of jubilee, model a way of being in place today in the midst of extractivism. They teach us the inescapable

ecologically destructive religion in history. A more nuanced reading of Christianity's ecological legacy would suggest that this is the result of a *specific* theology of the land rather than a lack of a theology of the land. See Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis," 1205-1206.

[40] Jonathan McRay, "The Transfigured Earth: Bioregionalism and the Kingdom of God," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016), 62.

[41] Jonathan McRay, "The Transfigured Earth," 72. Micah Kiel's reading of the Book of Revelation suggests a similar vision of salvation as including a renewed earth in opposition to the effects of Rome's logic of extraction. Michah Kiel, *Apocalyptic Ecology*, 18-27, 65, 84-88.

[42] Pope Francis, Meeting with the Members of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization, New York, USA, September 25, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150925_onu-visita.html (accessed August 29, 2020).

truth, which we forget at our own peril, that we belong to each other and to our places. They unmask the extractive mentality in which relationships are reduced to instrumental measures and an individualistic ontology (sense of being) as contrary to God's hopes for Creation and human relationality. Our value is much more than our ability to produce for, or participate in, the market. Our true value lies in the gift we are to our community. Education in faith is the ongoing discernment and embracing of this value in ourselves and in all beings, of being placed in a way that allows us to participate and share in this giftedness.

*Responding in Faith*

Educators in faith concerned with the impact of extractivism today will benefit from paying attention to Galilee as a historical *place* for the historical Jesus. What emerges when we begin to teach not only the story of *Jesus* of Nazareth, but Jesus of *Nazareth*? Something of this is suggested by the concept of "deep incarnation," developed by Niels Gregersen, which seeks to place the incarnation of God in Jesus in wider ecological and evolutionary context. As summed up by Elizabeth Johnson, deep incarnation

> indicate[s] the radical divine reach in Christ through human flesh all the way down into the living web of organic life with its growth and decay, amid the wider processes of evolving nature that beget and sustain life…The saving God became a human being, who was part of the wider human community, which shares the membrane of life with other creatures, all made from cosmic material, and vulnerable to death and disintegration.[43]

A meaningful approach to deep incarnation in light of sacrifice zones might ask how God is revealed uniquely to us in bioregions in which life has been impacted negatively by

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[43] Elizabeth Johnson, *Creation and the Cross*, 184-185, see also pages, 183-194; Matthew Eaton, "Beyond Human Exceptionalism: Christology in the Anthropocene," in *Religion in the Anthropocene*, eds. Celia Deane-Drummond, Sigurd Bergmann, and Markus Vogt (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 202-217; Denis Edwards, *Deep Incarnation: God's Redemptive Suffering with Creatures* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2019).

instrumentalist, objectifying, and exploitative systems. The incarnation is experienced as Good News not only for suffering humanity but for suffering bioregions. God was incarnate not only among the poor but in an ecological sacrifice zone! Our response in faith extends to a ministry of healing for our places too. Learning, then, begins with and is framed by relationships that prepare us, for good or ill, to both participate in *and shape* the communities and bioregions we call home. This means that education in faith requires sinking deep roots with/in our bioregions and our communities. What is the Story/Vision of our places and how does it map onto the Story/Vision of Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom? Discerning this makes possible thinking with a logic of jubilee in response to dominant extractive discourses.

A critical evaluation of Roman imperialism's attitudes toward land and labor is a helpful starting point for faith formation in the context of the Anthropocene. Attending to how Jesus and his community were influenced by and responded to the material-spatial practices of Roman rule can inform our own response in discerning God's will today. How is God at work, restoring life in this place, and how are we as disciples called to share in this vocation? Through the incarnation, God reveals not only God's response to humanity but God offers a response to *all of Creation*. God reveals to us something about our own places and how we might live justly and lovingly in them today.

*Relationships among places from Extraction to Jubilee*

Sociologists have long noted the impact of urbanization processes on rural communities. These influences can occur in two ways. First, these processes are considered in terms of how they impact networks of belonging and the socio-economic

structures within urbanizing communities. Second, urbanization can be considered from the perspective of rural communities as they are drawn into socio-economic relationships with urban centers through processes of economic development and globalization.[44] Of particular interest here is how such networks and processes of urbanization contribute to the formation of sacrifice zones. In this section I observe how the increasing dominance of urban centers impacted Galilean socio-economic and political-cultural life and the human-nature relationship. What impact did it have on the Galilean sense of place, in other words, what types of material and spatial practices became increasingly untenable as a result of these spatial transformations? Then, how did the Jesus movement seek to make possible both a renewal and transformation toward more sustainable lifeways? How did the Jesus Movement seek to teach another way of thinking about and relating to place informed by a faith in Creator-liberator God and a sabbath-informed logic of jubilee?

*Urbanization and the Social Networks of Galilee*

The first century Jewish historian, Josephus, describes Galileans as fiercely independent people, hostile to Herodian urbanization projects. The rebuilding of Sepphoris and the construction of Tiberias by Herod Antipas caused particular enmity among Galileans.[45] Urbanization projects undoubtedly had a tremendous impact on the

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[44] Additionally, sociologists studying rural communities emphasize the significance of social and symbolic capital, which operate in subtle and often unseen ways to structure access to power. Social capital is concerned with networks of relationships within and between communities, including decision making processes and ability to participate in these networks, patterns of inclusion and exclusion that establish community boundaries, access to information and communication networks, and levels of trust and mutuality. See David Brown and Kai Schafft, *Rural People & Communities in the 21st Century: Resilience & Transformation* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2011); Cornelia Butler Flora, Jan L. Flora, and Stephen P. Gasteyer, *Rural Communities: Legacy and Change*, 5th ed. (Boulder: Westview, 2016).

[45] Sean Freyne, "Urban-Rural Relations in First-Century Galilee: Some Suggestions from the Literary Sources," in *Galilee and Gospel: Collected Essays* (Boston: Brill Academic, 2002 [1992]), 52-54. Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great, appointed tetrarch of Galilee in 4BCE, after the death of his father.

socio-economic structures, cultural-political values, and institutions of Galilean villages. In this section, I examine these impacts.

*Cultural-political impacts of urbanization* Culture served as an important instrument of political domination in the Roman empire. Stereotyped views of "barbarian" cultures were counterposed to the civilizing influence of Greco-Roman cultural institutions. Wes Howard-Brook notes that as Roman society colonized lands and peoples it was confronted with the challenge of

> how to expand into new territory without weakening the character of Roman citizens. But such migration and mixing were inevitably a result of the disruption of war and conquest. Thus, from the start, Rome sought simultaneously to achieve two conflicting goals: the embrace of the 'other' into Roman identity and the distancing of Roman identity from the purported 'vulgar' elements of other cultures.[46]

By adopting the values of Greco-Roman cultures, the elites of conquered peoples could maintain their own privilege. However, the presence of Greco-Roman cultural institutions did not mean that they were universally embraced.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the degree of influence has perhaps been overstated by some scholars. The average Galilean seemed to identify, at least on a symbolic level, with Judaism and its socio-cultural institutions.[47] Archaeological

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[46] Wes Howard-Brook, *Empire Baptized: How the Church Embraced What Jesus Rejected, 2nd-5th Centuries* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2016), 17.

[47] José Pagola, *Jesus*, 48-49, especially fn. 56. Sean Freyne highlights archaeological evidence of Jewish ritual purification pools called *mikwaoth* that have been discovered throughout Galilee and can be dated to the Roman period. Evidence of a Judean presence throughout Galilee challenge the suggestion by Crossan that the region had been strongly Hellenized. Freyne, "Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee," 191, 197-198; see also Richard Horsely, *Jesus and the Powers*, 64. While Jerusalem retained a symbolic importance in the Galilean imagination, Freyne highlights tensions between the rural peasantry and the Roman and Jewish urban elites. See Freyne, *Jesus*, 44, 82-83, 134. Compare with, John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 194-199.

evidence also supports literary accounts of "large-scale devastation and deportation" when the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel around 732 BCE.[48] This complicates the picture presented by Horsley who suggests a continuous and distinctive Israelite presence in the region during this period. For Horsley, the Hasmonean expansion that followed the Maccabean revolt against the Hellenistic Seleucid Kingdom in 167 BCE was viewed by Galileans as an aggressive and oppressive act of colonization.[49] By contrast, Freyne suggests that Jerusalem remained an important cultural symbol for Galileans, shaping their sense of place, social/symbolic networks, their relationship to the land, and their own territorial hopes.[50] The presence of a faith colored by the traditions of Judaism does not mean that there was no conflict between Galilee and Jerusalem. Popular faith traditions, local theologies, and movements that evolved within rural peasant communities played a role in Galilean faith. These were in tension with the official traditions produced by scribes and the priestly aristocracy of the Jerusalem temple whose compromises were producing the socio-economic conditions that made living this faith increasingly difficult.

Indeed, urbanization and the influence of Roman and Herodian political culture was transforming the cultural values of Judaism, especially through the temple-state. As Freyne continues, the Herodians of these new urban centers "represented new elite and retainer classes, replacing the old Hasmoneans who had resisted Herod and had paid the price eventually. The new cities, even when the majority of their inhabitants were Jewish,

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[48] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 15.
[49] Richard Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995), 25-29, 39-52; Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 15-16; See also José Pagola, *Jesus*, 48, especially fn. 53.
[50] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 82, 93-96, 109; see also José Pagola, *Jesus*, 47-51.

were alien to and parasitical on the surrounding territory."[51] Conflicts between Galileans and the temple-state aristocracy were less a matter of religious tensions, having more to do with the Herodian influence and accommodations among the temple aristocracy to Roman values.

*Socio-economic impacts of urbanization*        As rural Galilean villages were drawn into the socio-economic networks of imperial power and its logic of extraction, life became increasingly determined by outside influences and the interests of local elites allied with these interests. Living the covenant became increasingly difficult and the logic and practice of jubilee was colonized by an extractive mentality. Literary evidence of the period suggests that unlike the Judean peasants to the south, who had been subjected to the aggressive urbanization projects of Herod, many Galileans were still living on their ancestral lands. This would have begun to change as a result of Herod Antipas' urbanization projects. Ancestral lands were gradually transformed from subsistence farms into large monocropped estates, like those immediately to the south in the Judean hill country controlled by absentee landlords. The produce of these estates would have been destined for imperial granaries or urban markets as luxury items for elites, leaving little to support a household let alone a neighbor in need. This arrangement, needless to say permitted no rest for the land or those who worked it. Additionally, cities served as administrative centers of the empire and facilitated collection of taxes and tribute,

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[51] Freyne, *Jesus*, 134.

allowed for increased political control over the territory, and exploited the natural resources of this fertile region.[52]

The heavy burdens of taxation would have led to a spiral of debt that alienated people from their ancestral lands. Horsley describes a three-layered system of political and economic control in Galilee at the time of Jesus consisting of "tribute to the Romans and taxes to Herod on top of the tithes and offerings to the temple-state."[53] This system of taxation strained the resources of peasant households and placed tension upon the socio-economic fabric of village communities as well as their cultural traditions and practices.

As is the case in modern sacrifice zones, antagonism between rural peripheries and urban centers in Galilee was a

> direct result of the elites drawing off the resources of the countryside, but without any productive reinvestment. Thus political rebellion against Rome quickly degenerated into a social revolution, in which impoverished Jews from the countryside turned on their own aristocracy…we are surely seeing the symptoms of a peasantry frustrated with centres which were not prepared to offer the kind of solidarity between town and country that might have been expected but which was not in fact forthcoming.[54]

It is in this context of the disintegrating social fabric of the countryside with its desperate socio-economic circumstances, threat to ecological stability, and the extraction of wealth and resources that the Jesus movement takes shape.

Given the significance of urban centers on Galilean socio-economic and political-cultural structures, the absence of any reference to Tiberias and Sepphoris in the Gospels is intriguing. If the scriptural accounts are to be believed, Jesus avoided these cities.

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[52] Sean Freyne, "Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee," 194-196; Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 118, 148-151; Richard Horsley, *Covenant Economics*, 82-91; José Pagola, *Jesus*, 40-47.
[53] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 32. Pagola suggests that the total amount of "tributes and taxes probably amounted to a third or a half of many families' production. See José Pagola, *Jesus*, 43.
[54] Sean Freyne, "Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee," 193.

Freyne dismisses suggestions that Jesus avoided them because of their "pagan ethos." As noted above, there was a large population of observant Jews living in these cities. It is also unlikely that Jesus avoided them "for strategic reasons, especially in view of the fate of his mentor, John the Baptist…there is no suggestion that Jesus was a fugitive, and he could have easily been captured in Galilee had the occasion arisen at any time in his public ministry and had the administration so wished." Freyne concludes by suggesting that Jesus avoids these centers on principle.[55] By refusing to enter these cities Jesus refuses to acknowledge their power to determine Galilean life, denying any material and symbolic relationship between them and the villages of the countryside. Jesus re-maps Galilee based on an alternative socio-symbolic network in which the household and village community are central. Jerusalem, on the other hand, retained a symbolic value that these centers could not match, and Jesus draws upon the symbolic power of Jerusalem in his own effort to re-map and reclaim power within Galilee.[56]

*The Galilean Household and the Kin-dom of God*

In agrarian peasant economies such as Galilee the household and the village community are the primary units of socio-economic life and the source of a person's identity. Moxnes explains that "to a Mediterranean mind in the first century, 'household' and 'self' were not two separate entities, but two aspects of the same condition."[57]

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[55] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 144; Sean Freyne, "Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee," 196.
[56] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 151. Against the grain of much historical Jesus scholarship, Freyne suggests that John's Gospel might have some value in understanding Jesus' relationship to Jerusalem. Freyne observes, "the opening of Jesus' lament for Jerusalem—'How often?'—hints at a far greater preoccupation with the city than just one casual visit would suggest. Here the Johannine framework of a three-year public ministry and several visits to Jerusalem including a ministry in Judea also, sounds far more realistic, despite the fact that in its present form the Fourth Gospel has exploited the symbolism of those visits for its own theological purposes." See Freyne, *Jesus*, 115.
[57] Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 57.

Cooperation, mutual sharing, and support were integral to the structure of peasant village life and the covenantal values that governed socio-economic relations among the people of Israel. Economic pressure created tension in these communities "as villagers became mutually indebted and unable to repay one another, perhaps because obligated to repay outside creditors first. Still-viable villagers, seeing their neighbors going under, would have become reluctant to help them as outside demands took a toll on their harvests."[58] Urbanization disrupted the fundamental forms of social life and value structures in rural villages, resulting in profound social, psychological, material, and existential dislocation. Galilean peasant communities were inexorably uprooted from kinship networks and drawn into a sense of place determined increasingly by the Roman presence.

*Cultural-political landscape of the Kin-dom*　　　　　Jesus' project of covenant renewal in the Galilean countryside includes a questioning of the household unit. The Gospels present Jesus in tension with his own household and the household as a place of meaning and identity more generally. Pagola notes, in a Jewish household at the time

> reputation was everything. The ideal was to uphold the honor and position of the family group…Jesus put the honor of his family at risk when he left. His vagabond's life, far from home, without fixed employment, performing exorcisms and other strange healings, and proclaiming a disturbing message without authorization, brought shame to the whole family.[59]

Indeed, upon hearing about his itinerant ministry his family says "he has gone out of his mind" (Mark 3: 21). Later, his family attempts to bring him back to his household, to which Jesus responds, "'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking at those

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[58] Horsley, *Covenant*, 110; Freyne, "Jesus and the Urban Culture of Galilee," 205-206.
[59] José Pagola, *Jesus*, 61-62, see also pages 58-60.

who sat around him, he said, 'here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (Mark 3: 33-35; Cf. Matthew 12: 46-50; Luke 8: 19-21).[60] Jesus' response establishes a new household on the basis of fictive kinship. Moxnes notes, the Jesus Movement "is not a group that is added on to the family, an extension of family like relations…the idea is one of substitution. There is here a reversal of the 'natural order.' Fictive kinship is the only kinship."[61] In addition to challenging the traditional boundaries and bonds that circumscribe the household, Jesus questions the patterns of socio-economic and related gender roles and relationships that operate within the traditional Galilean household.

*Socio-economic landscape of the kin-dom*        Jesus' critique challenges those who benefit socially, economically, and culturally from the household's relationship to imperial structures of domination. In particular, Jesus must have been attuned to the ways in which the commercial economy of Rome was transforming Galilean values specifically and Jewish values more broadly. In the call narratives, and in many other encounters, Jesus speaks to young men who benefit from the imperial economy. He calls them from their fishing nets (Mark 1: 16-20; Matthew 4: 18-22; Luke 5: 1-11) and their role as tax collectors (Matthew 9: 9-13; Mark 2: 13-17; Luke 5: 27-32).[62] He challenges those who have amassed fortunes through exploitation to give it all up for a way of living

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[60] Other Gospel passages also place Jesus in tension with the traditional household structure include Mark 10: 28-31, Luke 9: 59-62, Luke 12:52-53.

[61] Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 60.

[62] See Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 48-53; Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home,* 41. Freyne also describes the significance of the fishing industry to the Roman economy and the importance of this industry in the lake region of Galilee. Freyne suggests that even a day laborer like Jesus would have found ready employment in the lake region and Caphernaum, where the Gospels tell us Jesus lived following his rejection in his hometown.

that does not depend on extraction but points instead toward jubilee sharing and trust in God (Mark 10: 17-31; Luke 12: 13-21, 33-34; 19: 1-9). He invites them to divest totally from the model of household management dictated by the logic of extraction and join in family-like relationships with some of the most marginalized and culturally objectionable people in the society of his time (children; women—Jesus interacts lovingly with and speaks words of hope for prostitutes, barren women, and widows; the sick and possessed; the poor and displaced) creating a new household economy outside of the hierarchies and networks of empire.[63]

This transformation also has implications for masculine identity and the patriarchal structure of the household. The Jesus Movement challenges the available "countermasculinities" of the day, namely the spaces of social banditry and revolutionary social movements. By bringing young men into relationships of compassionate care, interdependence, and service to others through acts of feeding and healing, Jesus' challenge to imperial economics includes a challenge to dominant models of masculinity, which, as ecofeminists today point out, in their own way participate in and perpetuate the violence of extractivism.[64]

However, as noted above, the young men that Jesus calls to leave their households

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[63] Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place*, 92-95.

[64] *Ibid.*, 96-97, see also page 64. Ecofeminism is an epistemological and hermeneutical movement which connects violence against women and violence against Earth. Especially among indigenous women, but in sacrifice zones throughout the world, it is women who are often most intimately involved in the day-to-day tasks of procuring and preparing food, caring for children, and other domestic labor, which within the logic of extraction is not counted as work. Urban cultures developed a mind-body dualism as the powerful became increasingly separated from the production of everyday life. The turn toward viewing the land and its inhabitants as commodities led to viewing those who were closest to the land, and most involved with the tasks of daily survival, likewise as commodities on the one hand and disposable on the other. Helpful resources on ecofeminist theology include, Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999); Mary Judith Ress, *Ecofeminism in Latin America* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2006).

do not seem to have been in a marginal position in society (e.g., poor or 'sinners,' sick, etc.), but well integrated into their place in the house and village structure. Therefore, by leaving to follow Jesus they experienced the effects of separation: they became displaced; they were stripped of that which defined their position and status. They entered into a liminal stage, outside the known and accepted structure of their household and village society.[65]

Stepping into such a liminal social space upends typical social relations, particularly between fathers and son, which would have been at the center of social and economic life.

Patriarchal privilege and the image of the male head of house are critiqued in parables such as the Prodigal Son (Luke 15: 11-32) in which a young man breaks with his household, asking for his portion of inheritance. Eventually, the son returns home, having spent the inheritance "on dissolute living." Filled with shame, he is surprised to be received with a joyful welcome. His father, who sees him coming, "ran and put his arms around him and kissed him," exclaiming "get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." The father in this story behaves with total disregard for expected male roles. Traditional values of honor and shame expressed through patriarchal authority, which were central to village socio-economic patterns, are disregarded. Authority is reimagined through patterns of self-giving love. As Moxnes explains, "in this way Jesus must have made his audience reflect on their conceptions of fathers and of God as father."[66] Our relationships with each other bring specific kinds of places into being.

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[65] Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place,* 71.
[66] *Ibid.,* 123.

*Place without Margins: The Household of God*

Jesus not only offers a place to the homeless, the socio-economic and cultural refuse, in a society where the pressure of the logic of extraction was increasingly treating people as disposable, but locates God and faith in the context of the everyday struggles to make ends meet in a sacrifice zone. Feminist scholars of the third world and working class, womanist, ecofeminist, and *mujerista* theologians, offer an epistemological (theory of knowing) proposal in contrast to patriarchal (male-centered) forms of knowledge and justice work. They place focus on the home and the work of homemaking as the hermeneutic (interpretive) key to the practice of liberation and the formation of liberative community. Too often theoretical work and the praxis of justice fails to take into account

> the concrete problems we face in poor neighborhoods: the work women of the popular sectors do in order to survive and the destruction of the environment in which they live. Theoretical critiques often fail to show any awareness of the extreme inadequacy of the food the poor eat, of their unhealthy housing situations, and of the very bad water and air, especially in the outlying areas of the large cities…it is women first of all who have to take responsibility for daily life, for family survival, for child care, and for health and nutritional needs.[67]

Homemaking refers to the dailiness of our lives, what Ada María Isasi-Díaz calls *lo cotidiano*, or "the everyday."[68] It is wild weeds in the garden (Luke 13: 18-19), seeds scattered on the ground (Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23), yeast leavening bread in the kitchen (Luke 13: 20-21), and lost coins waiting to be swept out from under the bed (Luke 15: 8-10). By connecting household imagery to the political expectations of the Kingdom and Reign of God, Jesus is making a statement about the micro-interactions, practices, and

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[67] Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water*, 12.
[68] Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "*Mujerista* Discourse: A Platform for Latinas' Subjugated Knowledge," in *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, eds. Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 46-51.

decisions that shape our dailiness. As Isasi-Díaz notes, too often "we consider the decisions that deal with structural issues, the ones that we believe impact society at large, and tend not to think about *lo de todos los días*—what happens in the dailiness of our lives and of the whole human race."[69] However, the hermeneutics of third world and working class women, challenge us to identify the relationship between the personal and political, the micro and macro, domestic work and the supply chains of empires.

Seforosa Carroll explains, "the home does not exist in private isolation since it embodies relationships, which inevitably extend into the public, political and economic spheres."[70] For the wealthy and culturally privileged, day to day tasks of eating, transportation, child care, and the health and safety of the family are rarely considered. The privileged rarely interrogate their own "dailiness."[71] By calling the privileged out of their material and spatial securities, Jesus forces them to interrogate their own dailiness and its effects. Further, by anchoring his sense of faith and relationship with God in the place of the home Jesus accords the knowledge of the oppressed, especially women, a dignity and privilege it is often denied by those within formal institutionalized networks of knowledge and power. God reaches into and is made known through the most intimate and personal aspects of our lives and with great consequences for the wider ecologies in which we live. In challenging the socio-economic, cultural-political, and existential space of the household Jesus is not rejecting but transforming it based on a logic of jubilee.[72]

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[69] *Ibid.,* 55.
[70] Seforosa Carroll, "Homemaking: Reclaiming the Ideal of Home as a Framework for Hosting Cultural and Religious Diversity," in *Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies: Storyweaving in the Asia-Pacific*, eds. Mark G. Brett and Jione Havea (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 222.
[71] Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "*Mujerista* Discourse," 55.
[72] The position of Isasi-Díaz and Horsley contrast with Moxnes and Crossan on this point.

Isasi-Díaz suggests that Jesus reimagines the traditional image of the Kingdom of God as what we might more accurately call "the Kin-dom of God."[73] Jesus' use of imperial discourse is ironic. By using a familiar concept in an unfamiliar way, Jesus shocks his listeners to imagine new kinds of social space and thus a new type of polity. Jesus extends the covenantal values associated with the political unit of the Kingdom of God into the realm of everyday life and interactions. We begin to see the wider consequences for our interpersonal lives on the quality of the communities we create. This means giving attention to who is included and excluded, what relationships, connections, and networks are valued; whose voice is heard and who gets to participate in public life; what counts as knowledge?

*Responding in Faith*

Galileans faced challenges about how to construct their identity and sense of place in a world in which older values and material practices were becoming difficult to maintain. Urbanization was changing the material and symbolic structures of community life but also the sense of place which gave shape to these. How does faith call us to respond to the socio-economic and cultural-political networks in which we are enmeshed today? What impact do these relationships and the values they promote have upon our communities, our relationships, and our vocational discernment? What messages do they communicate about what it means to live in a sacrifice zone like central Appalachia, and the position of these places within wider local, regional, national, and global networks of

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[73] Ada María Isasi-Díaz, "The Kin-dom of God: A *Mujerista* Proposal," in *In Our Own Voices: Latino/a Renditions of Theology*, ed. Benjamín Valentín (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010).

belonging? These are questions with which a placed-based education in faith seeks to wrestle.

As we place Galilee, we are given insight into how the Jesus Movement responded to experiences of dislocation from the networks of meaning and the material practices that sustained households and communities as they were drawn into the Roman logic of extraction. We can set these alongside many of the feelings and questions experienced by young people in sacrifice zones today. The praxis of Jesus can lend them hope for resistance and jubilee. The Jesus Movement, when considered from this perspective, grounds spiritual life in the daily interactions and material relationships with Earth and one another that make life possible. Concrete resistance to extraction is made possible through a pedagogy and praxis of jubilee organized around concrete jubilee values:

- individual and communal praxis of prayerful contemplation with/in Creation,
- evangelical simplicity,
- the cultivation and recovery of Indigenous ways of knowing to promote self- and collective determination,
- joyful celebration of life through artistic expression,
- generous sharing and redistribution of resources through networks of mutual aid,
- physical and psychological care and support to offer healing from the wounds of extractivism,

- and public witness, movement-building, and organizing to dismantle unjust structures.[74]

Faith can and should be sensitive to the material and symbolic networks that shape young people's sense of place and belonging, their values and aspirations.

Extractivism fractures relationships between God, self, others, and Creation. Or better, it reshapes them through a different set of values. As Jon Sobrino has put it, we must confront the fact that "the rich world is not humanizing the poor…globalization has not 'globalized' the good. Exclusion is increasing, not inclusion; trivialization proliferates and humanness is not emerging; the cruel division among peoples is widening, and a universal embrace is nowhere in sight."[75] Education in faith thinks critically about these relationships and their effects in light of God's own revelation of God's self. The words of Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso on racism can be equally applied to place-based education proclaiming God's Kin-dom amid extractive economies, which disproportionately effect the poor, people of color, and Indigenous communities. With reference to Our Lady of Guadalupe he notes, "only a woman such as this young, brown, mestiza empress, born on the edges of empire and who revealed herself anew on the edges of empire, could have convinced our people of the nearness and tenderness of God…Guadalupe teaches us how we might go about repairing the sin of racism. *She*

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[74] Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 14-28; James Perkinson, *Political Spirituality in an Age of Eco-Apocalypse: Communication and Struggle Across Species, Cultures, and Religions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 176; Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home*, 41; Ched Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology: Theological, Hermeneutic, and Practical Reflections," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 205; Agape Community, "About Us: Who We Are," https://agapecommunity.org/about/ (accessed July 11th, 2020).

[75] Jon Sobrino, *Where is God? Earthquake, Terrorism, Barbarity, and Hope*, trans. Margaret Wilde (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 98.

*shows us that our deepest identity is not given to us by empire, or politics, or the economy of the colonist, but is a gift from God.*"[76]

### Political Power from Extraction to Jubilee

Like many modern-day empires, Rome consolidated its power by drawing local elites into imperial political networks through practices of patronage and clientage. These practices worked both vertically and horizontally. On the vertical level, those at the top provided positions and resources to clients for development projects in exchange for their loyalty. At the horizontal level, the system functioned through mutual exchange of favors similar to cronyism in modern politics or clericalism in ecclesial life. In those areas of the empire that had yet to be fully inculturated into Greco-Roman society more coercive forms of control took place through client kings. In response to rivalry among the Hasmonean high priests following the Roman conquest of Palestine, the Romans installed Herod as a client king ruling over the region in 40BCE. Herod subsequently replaced the Hasmoneans with his own clients. Effectively, the Jerusalem Temple began to function as an organ of the imperial power structure.[77]

### Judaism and Roman Power

Galileans and Judeans were by no means passive victims of Roman domination and exploitation. Philosophical schools and popular movements emerged as a result of a succession of imperial occupations in Palestine, surfacing tensions among different social groups within Galilean and Judean society. Each group attempted to maintain a

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[76] Bishop Mark Joseph Seitz, *Night Will be No More: Pastoral Letter to the People of God in El Paso* (2019), https://www.hopeborder.org/nightwillbenomore-eng, no. 52-53 (accessed September 18th, 2020), emphasis added.
[77] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 25-34; Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 133.

distinctive sense of Jewish identity in the context of imperial domination. At the center of the ideologies developed by these groups is the belief in God's creative and liberating activity in history, expressed especially through a belief in YHWH's divine kingship.

Some of these groups remained highly invested in the dominant institution of the Temple, despite, or perhaps, because of their persecution by Herod at the outset of his reign. At one end of the spectrum were the conservative Sadducees who depended on Rome to maintain their privileged position with the Temple aristocracy. The Pharisees and scribes also adopted an attitude of accommodation toward Rome. Freyne notes that the Pharisees emerged during the Hasmonean period as a politically influential "radical party of opposition within an apocalyptically inspired world-view." They were strongly opposed to the influence of Hellenism on Jewish culture. Following a period of persecution, they "had settled for a 'retainer' role as political operators, content to function within the existing system rather than lead a religiously motivated revolution."[78] Like the Sadducees, the Pharisees were largely an urban movement centered in Jerusalem. However, unlike the Sadducees, they saw themselves as representing the interests of peasant villages like Nazareth with the power brokers of Rome.

Jesus shared many of the Pharisees' beliefs and objectives such as a desire for the preservation and renewal of village life and its traditions. Pharisaic Judaism, which is the source of contemporary Rabbinic Judaism, sought to extend covenantal principles beyond the Temple into the everyday life of the household. The importance of the household in Jesus' ministry has been noted above. Jesus also shared certain theological perspectives with the Pharisees such as the resurrection of the body and their respect for the scriptural

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[78] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 132-133.

traditions of Israel. Jesus emphasizes, "do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill" (Matthew 5:17). Indeed, Jesus is portrayed as a passionate student of the law (Luke 2: 46-47) and a deeply knowledgeable and skilled teacher of Israel's traditions (Mark 1: 21-22). Finally, like Jesus, the Pharisees had a critical attitude toward the Herodians and refused to take an oath of allegiance to Herod. This point is suggested by the Gospel of Luke when some of the Pharisees warn Jesus that Herod wants to kill him (Luke 13: 31).

At the same time, the Gospel accounts place the Jesus Movement in strong opposition to the Pharisees. While this likely reflects later conflict between the Pharisees and Christians following the destruction of the Temple in 70CE, there must have also been tension between the Pharisees and the Jesus Movement during Jesus' lifetime.[79] Indeed, the Pharisees probably would have seen the Jesus Movement as undermining their own efforts to curry favor with the political establishment of the time on behalf of peasant communities. Jesus teaches and heals on the authority of God and the direct inspiration of God's Spirit acting within him (Mark 11: 27-33; Matthew 21: 23-27; Luke 20: 1-8) upending the dominant power relations in both household and wider society, leading people to imagine a new locus, or place, for political and religious power and authority. Indeed, the Pharisees "wanted to arrest him, but feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet" (Matthew 21: 46; Mark 3: 1-6). The Pharisees likely would have seen the Jesus Movement as undermining their efforts to preserve a distinctive sense of cultural identity in the assimilationist context of Roman occupation and urbanization.

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[79] Thomas Rausch, *Who is Jesus: An Introduction to Christology* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2003), 56; Brennan Hill, *Jesus the Christ: Contemporary Perspectives*, new ed. (New London, CT: Twenty Third Publications, 2004 [1991]), 14-17; José Pagola, *Jesus*, 320-323.

In particular, the Pharisees are scandalized by Jesus' willingness to "eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners" (Luke 5: 30). Jesus is critical of the Pharisees' legalistic application of the law, explaining that "the sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath" (Mark 2: 27). Jesus places tradition in service to healing a social body damaged by extraction, providing the displaced a sense of belonging in a new place, or better, a place reimagined. Jesus explains, "those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke: 31-32).

Finally, Jesus is perhaps most critical of the Pharisees for their accommodation to the extractive logic of the temple-state.[80] Jesus accosts the Pharisees and scribes who benefit from these arrangements at the expense of peasant households. In a harsh rebuke of the system of sacrifices and tithes that maintain the temple-economy, Jesus exclaims,

> [the Pharisees] tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they are unwilling to lift a finger to move them…they love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi…You lock people out of the kingdom of heaven…you tithe mint, dill, cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith (Matthew 23: 1-36; Luke 11: 39-52).[81]

Ultimately, Jesus' perspective shares much more in common with popular messianic and prophetic movements within Judaism that emerged among peasant villages in the countryside as a response to the Roman conquest.

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[80] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 104-105.
[81] For another example see Jesus' 'cleansing of the Temple': Mark 11: 15-19; Matthew 21: 12-17; Luke 19: 45-48; John 2: 13-25.

*Popular Movements in Judaism under Roman Domination*

Jesus' life is framed by decades of protests and revolts in Galilee and Judea, directed at both Romans and their collaborators among the Herodian ruling classes and high-priests.[82] Inspired by Israelite popular imagination, revolts broke out across Judea and Galilee in 4BCE following the death of Herod. In some cases these movements managed to control portions of the countryside and gain political independence for months or years. Revolts broke out again in 66CE in the countryside and Jerusalem itself, ultimately leading to the destruction of the Temple by Roman military forces. These popular movements drew upon categories from the Israelite popular religious imagination, taking the form of messianic movements, modelled on the stories in which peasants "anointed" David as a popularly elected king against the colonizing power of the Philistines.[83] In similar fashion, prophetic movements arose in the mid-first century modeled on the actions of Moses and other prophetic figures. These prophets led mass movements of Judean and Galilean peasants "into the wilderness in anticipation of new divine acts of deliverance." [84] Messianic and prophetic movements were violently and brutally suppressed by Roman military forces, which burned cities and crucified hundreds of rebels to regain control of the countryside.[85]

As Horsley emphasizes, these movements draw attention to the relationship between religion and politics in the ancient world, which is very different than our contemporary, post-Enlightenment separation of church and state. The world was seen as alive with

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[82] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 35-39.
[83] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 37, 49-52; Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 82.
[84] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 52.
[85] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers,* 81-86; Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 49-54.

powers, and "in contrast to the term *gods/God* in modern Western society, associated mainly with a separate religious sphere of life, the powers of ancient civilizations were usually inseparably political-economic and religious-cultural and environmental-natural." These powers enacted significant influence over people's lives and control over them was a crucial component of public life and personal and collective agency. [86] These movements and the Roman response to them must have had a profound impact on Jesus' own imagination and sense of place.

Jesus proclaims that God's Kin-dom is drawing near and challenges all people to prepare themselves to receive and live according to the Good News of blessing and liberation (Mark 1: 10, 15; Matthew 4:17; 25: 31-46; Luke 4: 18-21; 8: 1; 10: 1-12; 17: 20-37). Jesus' vision is one of blessing to the poor, hungry, despairing, and those who are oppressed. Jesus addresses the anxieties people felt in their day to day lives (Mk 12: 1-8; Matthew 5:3-10; Luke 6: 20-49; 16: 1-8; 12:22) and critiques those who experience privilege and comfort and who are complicit with the extractive logic of empire (Luke 6: 20-26). He calls them into a new way of being community together based on covenantal principles of jubilee (Matthew 6: 24; 22: 37-39; 25: 31-46; Lk 6: 27-42). Early Christians interpreted Jesus and the Movement he inspired in the context of these messianic and prophetic movements that drew upon Jewish apocalyptic expectations of God's creative and liberating activity within history. Jesus is remembered and described by friends and enemies alike in such prophetic and messianic term. Jesus asks his friends, "'who do the crowds say that I am?' They answered, 'John the Baptist; but others, Elijah' and still

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[86] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 12-13.

others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen.' He said to them, "but who do you say that I am?' Peter answered, 'The Messiah of God'" (Luke 9: 18-20).

Jesus reminds us that spiritual life is not separate from, but embedded in, our material lives and relationships. It brings place into being. As political and liberation theologians have emphasized, religion, as that which 'binds us,' or that to which we 'pledge our allegiance,' remains a powerful *political* force today. Enlightenment values have masked the formative power of the founding myths and narratives we tell that are the sources of ultimate meaning and systems of moral-cultural praxis. Religion, again understood as that which 'binds us,' is always entwined with socio-economic, cultural-political, and environmental power, with social and symbolic capital. Maps of power and maps of the sacred overlap. Where power is located so too one can find the divine.[87] As Jesus explains, "the kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17: 21). Spiritual life is concerned with reading our interior landscape of prayer and related communal acts of worship, discerning how that which we define as sacred connects to the landscapes of the communities and bioregions which sustain us.

*Power in the Kin-dom of God*

Jesus is sensitive to how those who are disempowered are easily tempted in their struggles for liberation to adopt the power relations and methods of dominator-extractive logic. A central theme in the Gospel of Mark is what scholars refer to as the messianic

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[87] Wes Howard-Brook, *"Come Out, My People,"* 5-7; Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological View,* trans. Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993 [1991]), 180-192; William Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Discovering the Liturgy as a Political Act in an Age of Global Consumerism* (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 31-46; Michael Budde, *The Borders of Baptism: Identities, Allegiances, and the Church* (Eugene: Cascade, 2011); Mark Van Steenwyk, *unKingdom: Repenting of Christianity in America*, 2nd ed. (Eugene: Cascade, 2020).

secret. Jesus instructs people who have come to identify him as the messiah to not share this proclamation (Mark 1: 43-45; 4: 11; 5: 43; 7: 36; 8: 27-3; 9: 9). Why is Jesus so reluctant to be identified with this prophetic title? Howard-Brook suggests that the messianic secret is a rebuke of a messianism that is too closely associated with models of power informed by the extractive logic of "the religion of empire."[88] Jesus is remembered as one who taught a different form of power.

The story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus gives further insight into popular messianic expectations and how they influenced the understanding and reception of Jesus and his Movement. The disciples describe Jesus as "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people…we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24: 19, 21). Many messianic movements hoped that liberation and renewal of Israel would come through some combination of a military victory over Rome, a renewal of the Davidic monarchy, and the restoration of the temple. The Gospels intentionally seek to credential Jesus as an heir to David (Matthew 1: 1; Luke 2: 11). However, they also explain that Jesus and his Movement represent a pattern of liberation and decolonization based on a logic of jubilee. When the tradition is read through this lens, it is still possible to proclaim Jesus as the anointed one, the Christ, who liberates and decolonizes—a liberation that occurs through breaking bread rather than conquest (Luke 24: 25-27).[89]

In the wilderness encounter with the devil, Jesus resists the temptation to replicate the extractive logic that defines define imperial power relations (Luke 4: 1-13). He rejects the

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[88] Wes Howard-Brook, *"Come Out My People,"* 402-403.
[89] *Ibid.*, 388-390; Elizabeth Johnson, *Creation and the Cross*, 74-79.

temptation to individual material security when the devil suggests that Jesus "command this stone to become a loaf of bread." He resists the devil's offer of militaristic power and territorial sovereignty over "all the kingdoms of the world." Finally, Jesus is challenged to invoke the name of God for his own personal safety and well-being. Jesus' response to the power of empire is a model of power that depends on people forming inclusive communities grounded in love and care, creating new networks of solidarity with those at both the geographic and socio-cultural margins of Galilean and Judean life, and the free sharing of material resources. This is a model of shared power-*with* aimed at nurturing faith, restoring hope, and instilling loving bonds. Three characteristics of Jesus' ministry are instructive for understanding jubilee power: shared table fellowship, itineracy, and healing and exorcism.[90]

*The power of shared table fellowship* Jesus' practice of shared table fellowship was "a strategy for building or rebuilding peasant community on radically different principles from those of honor and shame, patronage and clientage. It was based on an egalitarian sharing of spiritual and material power at the most grass-roots level."[91] Marshall Sahlins observes, "food dealings are a delicate barometer, a ritual system as it were, of social relations, and food is thus employed instrumentally as a starting, a sustaining, or a destroying mechanism of sociability."[92] Meals provide insights into significant socio-cultural relationships that bond and divide persons in a given context.

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[90] Wes Howard-Brook, *"Come Out, My People,"* 422-423.
[91] John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 113.
[92] Quoted in Halvor Moxnes, "Meals and the New Community," *Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok* 51-2 (1986-7), 158; see also Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," *Daedalus* 101, No. 1 (Winter, 1972), 61.

Indeed, "eating is not merely a sign of something else, but is among the most fundamental forms of social action there is; meals do not merely encode society, they are society, or a part of it."[93]

Jesus' parables and practices of eating upend the existing social hierarchies, divisions, boundaries, and the attached obligations and relationships of power characteristic of his socio-cultural context. In his analysis of Luke's gospel, Moxnes emphasizes the extent to which the meal traditions of Christians contrast with the meal traditions of Greco-Roman society and Pharisaic Judaism. In the first case, Moxnes observes that in the Hellenistic culture of the period, ethics was based on love for one's friends rather than care for the poor through works of charity. Furthermore, the patron-client relationship constituted one of the basic divisions of social life, defined by reciprocity between the patron and a given client through exchange of economic resources for loyalty and honor. In the second instance, adherence to purity laws defined social interaction.[94] As noted above, the meal practices of the Pharisees are characterized by a concern with purity through scrupulous adherence to dietary and Sabbath laws; the meals of the Jesus community present a social order structured around "*almsgiving* and *hospitality*."[95] Moxnes observes how the author of Luke, through his characterization of Christian meals, redefines purity "as a matter of

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[93] Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5; see also Dennis Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 241-247; 279; John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 66-70, 76-77.
[94] Halvor Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom: Social Conflict and Economic Relations in Luke's Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 118-33.
[95] *Ibid.*, 109.

social relations and behavior toward others."[96] Ritual purity is placed in tension with the alternative criteria of a logic of jubilee (Compare Luke 11: 39; 12: 13-34; 14: 33).

By contrast, Jesus eats with sinners and holy men, rich and poor, women and men alike and without discrimination. The parables of the wedding banquet and the great dinner express the way in which meals within the Jesus Movement upended social hierarchies (Lk 14: 7-24). Jesus offers these parables over a meal with Pharisees "when he noticed how guests chose the places of honor." Jesus begins with an invitation to humility: "when you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by the host…go and sit down at the lowest place." Jesus continues with a vision of radical hospitality and inclusion, which dismantles the economy of patronage with an economy of free gift giving.

> When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous (Lk 14: 12-14).

The patron-client relationship is effectively reimagined as a loving and justice-bringing one between God, the patron, and human beings, the clients.

In a social-economic and political-cultural system that was constantly taking from people and Earth, the meals and fellowship of the Jesus Movement were remembered as joyful and celebratory occasions where people ate and drank their fill. Jesus is accused by his detractors of being a "glutton and a drunkard" (Luke 7: 34; Matthew 11: 19). By extension, the feedings of the multitude illustrate an economy of mutual and free sharing

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[96] *Ibid.*, 112.

of resources (Mark 8: 1-10; Matthew 14: 13-21). Jesus' practice of table fellowship corresponds to what Andrea Smith calls a "fun revolution" that "engage[s] our whole selves and give[s] us as much as we give the movement…by starting to build the world we want to live in, we create a revolutionary movement that is sustainable over the long-term." This means prioritizing day to day needs of people in communities as much as larger political and educational goals. Equally revolutionary acts include providing "massage therapists, daycare, good food, and so on, [making the] work an act of celebration."[97]

The Christian reimagining of the social structures of purity and patronage within the ritual space of the meal brought those outside the community in and encouraged the redistribution of goods within the community, providing a vision of social and economic equality among all before God.[98] By connecting his vision of the Kin-dom of God to these practices, Jesus imagines and works to create communities that operate on principles of "radical egalitarianism" and joyful, inclusive fellowship.[99]

*The power of movement*        Crossan describes the itinerant character of Jesus' ministry as integrally related to Jesus' practices of eating and another dimension of the radical egalitarianism that characterized the Jesus Movement.[100] Those with whom Jesus

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[97] Andrea Smith, "The Indigenous Dream—A World without an 'America,'" in *Theological Perspectives for Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness: Public Intellectuals for the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, and Rosemary Carbine (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 10-11.

[98] Halvor Moxnes, *The Economy of the Kingdom*, 134, 137-8. For example, Dennis Smith demonstrates how the question of ranking at table is one in which the most honored positions are determined by the criteria of service and humility. See *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 264-267.

[99] John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 71-74.

[100] John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 99; José Pagola, *Jesus* 98-99.

interacts through teaching and healing are not bound to him as client to patron. The relationship is not hierarchical; it creates no obligations; it is not transactional; rather, it is offered as free gift. Further, this power is available anywhere and to anyone who will enter into egalitarian and mutually empowering relationships (Mark 10: 17-31; Matthew 19: 16-30; Luke 12: 13-34).

Jesus not only heals but commissions others to do the same, inviting people to discover themselves as blessed by God by calling them to participate in this ministry of healing, "he called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits…They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them" (Mark 6: 6b-13).[101] In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus commissions the twelve as well as a group of seventy. As noted, the twelve seem to be made up of young men like himself. Some of them were in positions of relative economic security or at the very least in occupations that were entwined with the extractive economy of Rome: fishermen, tax collectors, or day laborers.

By calling people into lives of voluntary simplicity and radical service, Jesus imagines social relationships anew. He calls those "who live because of oppression," whose "access to food, clothing, shelter, education, and employment…is predicated upon violent systems of extraction and exploitation," into a deeper awareness of the effects of extractivism by which they benefit to various degrees.[102] Rather than jealously guard their position, however precarious, they are called to *conversion.* They are challenged to

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[101] Crossan notes that the Markan construction of an inner circle of twelve is likely a later construction of the author of that Gospel, symbolic of the renewed Israel Jesus' followers believe was coming into being as a result of his activities. See John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 108-109.

[102] Laurel Dykstra, *Set Them Free*, 50.

learn, or better *un*learn, and take up a new lifestyle and identity grounded in solidarity with the displaced.

Simon Peter, a fisherman, proclaims himself "a sinful man" (Luke 5: 8) and Matthew is a tax collector (Matthew 9: 9-13). When criticized by the Pharisees for his friendship with Matthew Jesus responds, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice. I have come to call not the righteous but sinners." As they struggle to learn they often fall into old pattern of dominator thinking, for example, debating who is greatest among them (Mark 9: 33-34; 10: 35-37; Luke 22: 24-27). Conversion is a long process!

The commissioning of the seventy (Luke 10: 1-20) follows a series of teaching and healing episodes that form the core of Jesus' public ministry (6: 17- 9: 62). Jesus moves from city to city and village to village, teaching and healing (Luke 4: 42-44; Mark 1: 35-39). As a result, "his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee" (Mark 1: 28). Crowds begin to surround him everywhere he goes (Mark 3: 7; Cf. Mark 2: 4-7; 11: 18, 32; 12: 12). While the twelve may have been relatively integrated into the imperial socio-economic and cultural-political world, we can image that the seventy may have been from the most marginal social positions: the blind, the crippled, the mentally ill, prostitutes, and beggars. Within the Jesus Movement their life finds a new purpose as they are empowered to imagine their communities and lives differently beyond the extractive logic of empire. More significantly, they are empowered to participate in and contribute to this re-mapping of society. They are sent out to teach, heal, and share whatever they have with others. Indeed, based on a critical reading of the Gospel material, Crossan suggests that "missionaries were not some specific closed group sent

out on one particular mission at one particular time. They were predominantly *healed healers*, part of whose continued healing was precisely their empowerment to heal others."[103] In moving from place to place, Jesus refuses to hold on to power. He acts something like a community organizer, inviting others to bring God's Kin-dom into being in their own places and through their own agency.[104]

*The power of healing* Jesus' ministry of healing and exorcism brings people into their own power. Richard Horsley observes, "most people today think of Jesus as primarily a teacher. The earliest Gospel, Mark, however, presents Jesus primarily as an exorcist and healer."[105] Pagola explains,

> the sick people Jesus met suffered the afflictions one would expect in a poor and underdeveloped country: there were blind people, paralytics, deaf mutes, people with skin diseases, the mentally ill. Many were incurable, abandoned to their fate, and left without means of earning a living; they hobbled through life as beggars, constantly confronted with misery and hunger.[106]

However, pushing Pagola's analysis in a more liberationist and decolonial direction, it is probably more accurate to interpret many of these conditions as the *results* of development.

As the Gospel of Matthew recounts, "then Jesus went about the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them,*

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[103] John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 109.
[104] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 135-136. See also Alexia Salvatierra and Peter Heltzel, *Faith-Rooted Organizing: Mobilizing the Church in Service to the World* (Downers Grove, Il; InterVarsity Press, 2014), 48-64. Indeed, it is the "iron rule" of community organizing to never do "for others what they could and should be doing for themselves." See Edward Chambers, *Roots for Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action, and Justice* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 77, see also pages 100-108.
[105] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 109.
[106] José Pagola, *Jesus*, 158.

*because they were harassed and helpless*, like sheep without a shepherd (9: 35-36, emphasis added). [107] Jesus' encounter with the Gerasene demoniac, in which the possessing force is identified by the name "Legion…for many demons had entered him," also illuminates the socio-political dynamics related to demonic possession (Luke 8: 26-39). The name calls to mind the legions of the occupying Roman forces and the many sources of oppression that resulted from Rome's presence in Galilee.[108]

Medical anthropologists describe the phenomenon of possession as a psychological response to oppression, similar to PTSD, and an act of resistance to trauma-causing social and cultural forces. At the same time, the charge of demonic possession was used to stigmatize and control persons who may be viewed as deviant or dangerous.[109] Indeed, the charge of possession is used to discredit Jesus and his ministry (Luke 11: 14-23). In response to the accusation we are told that Jesus "knew what [his accusers] were thinking and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house falls on house.'" Freyne suggests that Jesus' words take aim at a Herodian Galilee increasingly

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[107] Wes Howard-Brook notes, the word for "disease" that the Gospel writer uses, *nosos*, echoes passages in the Septuagint which refer to "all the dread diseases [*nosous*] of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 7: 15; see also 28: 59-60; Exodus 15: 26). The passage reflects, on the one hand, all of the "physical ailments that are a direct function of urban crowding, lack of sanitation, and epidemics caused by the relationship between surplus food and rats and others carriers of disease. On the other hand, it points to the social oppression upon which empire is founded, including slavery and despair." Wes Howard-Brook, *"Come Out My People,"* 410-411.

[108] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 121-129.

[109] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 148; Halvor Moxnes, *Putting Jesus in His Place,* 136-141, Richard Horsley, *Jesus and the Powers*, 113-117, 121-129. For a similar reading of how the category of mental illness functions in contemporary socio-cultural discourses and medical practices see Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage, 1965); Dany-Robert Dufour, *The Art of Shrinking Heads: On the New Servitude of the Liberated in the Age of Total Capitalism,* trans. David Macey (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2008 [2003]. For an early literary illustration from a feminist perspective see Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," in *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories*, ed. Robert Shulman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1892]), 3-19.

divided amongst itself. Indeed, upon Herod's death Galilee was divided into three administrative units among Herod's surviving sons.[110]

Jesus' exorcisms take on a new political significance in this light. Jesus' ability to effectively bring these powers under his control made him a threat to other political-religious institutions, their authority over people, and their ability to demand respect and obedience. Jesus' exorcisms restored dignity and identity to those whose socio-cultural lives had been disrupted by the economic and political forces of empire. It is crucial then that Jesus paired his exorcisms with a new vision and experience of being placed for those who had been dislocated—socio-economically and culturally—by the forces of imperial power. Jesus claims power over the imperial forces in the name of the God of Israel and redirects people's identity by giving them a place within the hoped for Kin-dom of God.

People in Galilean villages very likely felt trauma, depression, anxiety, and despair over their situation. As Horsley notes, these feelings would have been compounded by the fact that "Galileans and others of Israelite heritage explained their suffering as punishment for their own or their parents' sins in violation of covenant commandments."[111] Medical anthropology distinguishes between disease and illness. In this distinction, a disease is biomedical fact and an illness is the psycho-social response to the former. Using a contemporary example, Crossan explains, "think, for example, of the difference between curing the disease or healing the illness known as AIDS. A cure for the disease is absolutely desirable, but in its absence, we can still heal the illness by

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[110] Sean Freyne, *Jesus*, 148-149
[111] Richard Horsley, *Jesus and Empire*, 109.

refusing to ostracize those who have it, by empathizing with their anguish, and by enveloping their sufferings with both love and respect."[112] Liberation and community psychologists connect depression, anxiety, addiction and other psychiatric and behavioral conditions to socio-economic structures. Forms of displacement associated with globalization, capitalism, and climate change are producing higher levels of mental distress in persons.[113]

Drawing on present day examples, extractivism impacts both individual and political bodies as well as physical, mental, and emotional health. Farming communities in the rural Midwest experience the effects of the corporate takeover of agriculture and the decline of small family farms. Appalachian communities are impacted by mountain top removal coal mining, natural gas fracking, or plastics production. Communities home to working-class people of color are exposed to toxic chemicals in the air and water due to factories or waste management facilities. In many 'developing' nations people are displaced due to hydroelectric dam construction. Finally, and more recently, climate refugees face the effects of rising oceans, drought, floods, and other forms of extreme weather that lead to displacement. In the Gospel of John we read, "Can anything good

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[112] John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus*, 81; José Pagola, *Jesus*, 163-175.

[113] For excellent discussions on this topic see Nick Higginbotham, Linda Conner, Glenn Albrecht, Sonia Freeman, and Kingsley Agho, "Validation of an Environmental Distress Scale," *EcoHealth* 3 (2007): 245-254; Bruce Alexander, *The Globalisation Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Carl Hart, *High Price: A Neuroscientist's Journey of Self-Discovery That Challenges Everything You Know About Drugs and Society* (New York: Harper, 2013); Bruce Rogers-Vaughn, *Caring for Souls in a Neoliberal Age* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014); Philip Browning Helsel, *Pastoral Power Beyond Psychology's Marginalization: Resisting the Discourses of the Psy-Complex* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Susan Clayton, Christie Manning, Kirra Krygsman, and Meighen Speiser, *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association and EcoAmerica, 2017); Glenn Albrecht, *Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019). For a helpful introduction to liberation psychology from one of its founding theorists see, Ignacio Martín-Baró, *Writings for a Liberation Psychology*, eds. Adrianne Aron and Shawn Corne (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

come out of Nazareth" (John 1: 45). These sentiments are echoed in sacrifice zones today through culture of poverty discourses that instill shame and despair in, and direct disgust at, those who call these places home. It could just as easily be said, 'can anything good come out of Appalachia?'[114] Jesus' proclamation of the Kin-dom responds to these feelings of powerlessness and despair. As educators in faith concerned with the healing of places impacted by extractivism, it is essential that we respond to the emotional and mental toll that extractivism has upon our students, their families, and the broader ecologies of their lives.

*Responding in Faith*

Power structures play an important role in shaping our communities, our faith, and their interrelationship. A place-based perspective on education in faith brings these dynamics into focus. Jason Cervone describes the "confluence" of neoliberal market fundamentalism and religious fundamentalism through a shared mistrust of public institutions. In both cases, small but powerful groups have been able to take control of and commodify public institutions, offering market-based solutions to socio-political problems. In education this has taken the form of charter schools and vouchers for private schools, which appeal to religious fundamentalists seeking to provide their children with a 'religious education.'[115] Ironically, the social imagination of neoliberalism is deeply at

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[114] See also Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home*, 43.
[115] Jason Cervone, *Corporatizing Rural Education: Neoliberal Globalization and Reaction in the United States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 57-62, 78-88. Likewise, Nel Noddings critiques the increasing privatization of public schools, noting "the promise of voucher advocates is that the market will work to drive out unsuccessful schools, as it drives out other unsuccessful businesses. But schools are not businesses, even if they can profitably use some business management techniques. Schools, like homes, should be centers of stability and community…it is the economically poorest schools—not necessarily the educationally poorest—that would be driven out…Privatization, by its own rationale, would convert education from a public good to a consumer good." As such it is profoundly *anti*-democratic. Nel

odds with Christian values *and* is "particularly destructive to working class rural communities insofar as they '[spew] out stories inculcating a disdain for community, public values, public life, and democracy itself.'" [116] Cervone argues for "critical pedagogy [that connects] education to social movements and justice."[117] As educators in faith, it is essential to attend to the ways in which religious education imagines students' relationship to public institutions that structure power relations in the communities they call home. Again, we can attend to how power is imagined *with*in the Jesus Movement.

Many young people today in rural communities and other sacrifice zones are sold the false promises of neo-liberalism and extractivism. The practices of pedagogy to which they are exposed, the values they learn, and visions of success with which they are presented reinforce the progress narratives and definitions of success associated with

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Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, 2nd ed. (New York; Teachers College Press, 2005), *xxi-xxii*. Noddings recognizes that many young people such as minority children in urban districts and many rural school districts have been neglected in public education and schools should be more responsive to the differing needs and interests of young people and how they learn. A degree of choice for parents and children should exist within public education. At the same time, Noddings rejects vouchers for religious schools on the grounds that "public funding in a liberal democracy should not be used to support schools that, because of their religious or ideological beliefs, undermine the democracy's social agenda…We could insist, of course, that schools commit to teaching the fundamentals of democracy as a condition of licensing, but it would be very difficult to monitor their compliance, and nominal compliance could easily mask a whole way of life that promotes a different story." Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, *xxii-xxiii*. I suggest that educators in faith are right to support opportunities that provide access to a religious education to those who might not otherwise be able to afford such; however, they should be wary of adopting questionable means to this end. Supporting what Jason Cervone calls the "corporatization" of schools through dismantling public institutions is ultimately contrary to a very Catholic commitment to the common good. While it is not the subject of this dissertation to suggest the means by which this is to be achieved, I believe it is essential that Catholic education advocate strenuously for the preservation of institutions that serve the common good. For further discussion of negative impact of corporate influences over schooling on the development of young people, particularly as it relates to their moral development, character development, and values see Juliet Schor, *Born to Buy*, chapter 5. In chapter five I will address the theme of corporatization as it relates to education in faith and the relationship between Catholic institutions and the structures of extractivism, discussing the financial relationship between Catholic institutions and extractive industry in the case of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia.

[116] Jason Cervone, *Corporatizing Rural Education*, 49.

[117] *Ibid.*, 62, see chapter 3 for Cervone's proposal.

modernity, capitalism, and accumulation. They are taught to think of power and success in individualistic and competitive terms. As bell hooks notes,

> in modern schooling the messages students receive is that everything that they learn in the classroom is mere raw material for something that they will produce later on in life…College as it is envisioned by mainstream culture is seen as a stop on a journey with an endpoint that is always somewhere else. College demands delayed gratification. This is a primary reason many students are chronically disgruntled, frustrated, and full of complaint.[118]

It is essential that public schools and faith-based educational institutions work together to educate for a logic of jubilee and an ethic of life.

*Conclusions*

As we seek to navigate and find faith in the midst of the Anthropocene's modern logic of extraction, it is tempting to either despair entirely or conform our own hopes and expectations to the logic of extraction, seeking success and security on the terms defined by dominant values, or we can place our faith elsewhere and imagine our places *beyond* their sacrifice to extractivism. The Story/Vision of the Kin-dom of God offers communities living with the consequences of extractive logic and imperial power an imagination, a hermeneutic, and a praxis that confronts directly the logic of extraction.

Educators in faith must play an important role in this process of re-storying, re-vising, and thereby re-placing. An intentionally place-based pedagogy helps young people connect their Christian vocation to the dailiness of their lives. It provides a space and community for critical reflection, creating spaces in which the skills necessary to identify an extractive mentality and discern its effects can be cultivated. Finally, it apprentices

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[118] Bell hooks, *Teaching Community*, 166. For powerful reflection on the impact of neoliberal values among rural youth and the influence of schools in contributing to this process see the previously cited work by Jason Cervone, *Corporatizing Rural Education*.

young people in learning and honing practices which allow them to live jubilee values of simplicity, hospitality, contemplation, sharing, making, and celebrating. These values constitute a crucial accompaniment to acting for justice in our places. Together we learn to place our hopes in the promises of the Creator-liberator God, remaining faithful to those promises by living them out in joy-filled community.

Place-based education in faith offers a pedagogy that draws a classroom of young people, or youth in a youth ministry program, into an experience of themselves as empowered actors working collectively toward more egalitarian relationships both with one another, Creation, and their community. In this way, their relationship with and image of God is also transformed as they experience God as the God of Creation. Their relationship with their bioregion and community becomes one based not on exploitation and competition, but of kinship, care, and collective responsibility. In contrast to the neoliberal vision that sacrifices places to the god of the market we can imagine instead for young people and their places the blessings of new life.

# Chapter Four

## A Logic of Jubilee: Educating for Faith in the Anthropocene

*"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people."*—Acts of the Apostles 2: 44-47

The global climate crisis and the localized impacts of extractive industry and climate-related disasters will require new approaches to educating in faith. Climate scientists warn that even with drastic action now, we will be grappling with the effects of climate change and environmental destruction for quite some time.[1] How are we called to be disciples in a future that despite our best efforts may be marked by resource wars, mass migrations, climate disasters, and food shortages? The recent global COVID-19 pandemic provides something of a cautionary tale and a glimpse of possible responses to the public health and humanitarian challenges of climate change, underscoring the importance of robust public health institutions, infrastructure, and investment in social programs. As global supply chains have also been strained, the pandemic points to the importance of localized economies and means of production. Decades of economic

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[1] David Orr, *Dangerous Years: Climate Change, the Long Emergency, and the Way Forward* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 36; Gerald Ens, "Faithful Practices on a Dying Planet: How might the church survive or die faithfully amid catastrophic climate change?" *Canadian Mennonite* 31, no. 17, September 25, 2019, https://canadianmennonite.org/stories/faithful-practices-dying-planet?fbclid=IwAR05P8yV_87 xsgN_QUCHXkVOJHAus8NoEdxUZApTEDeXxSeZHY-Drx0Oeuo (accessed March 6th, 2020); Debra Dean Murphy, "Reading the Creation Story in a Dying World," *Christiancentury.org,* October 16, 2019, https://www.christiancentury.org/article/faith-matters/reading-creation-story-dying-world?fbclid=IwAR19gOcftPJP00MnpVLO8G7qEyU25E_0aW6RH-4KoU958PYEOpoAypWTY2Q (accessed March 6th, 2020).

globalization, the underfunding of social services, and a lack of affordable healthcare and other services that promote well-being have made it difficult for the United States to respond effectively to the pandemic. The market has been prioritized over the common good of communities. An ethic of hyper-individualism has also made many in the United States resistant to adopting personal practices that place responsibility to the wider community over individual rights and convenience.[2] How will we respond to powerful systems that seek to capitalize on and profit from ecological, health, and humanitarian disasters? What does faith look like in a world turned into a sacrifice zone? What does an education in faith entail for those who are asked to bear the costs of the extractive lifestyles of the few? Educators in faith will play an important role in forming consciences to prepare for the challenges of the climate crisis.

In this chapter I return to focus on the places in which faith is lived and the task of educating for a faith that does justice in sacrifice zones and in the midst of climate catastrophe. As Thomas Groome highlights, education in faith must enable young people "to *critically* appropriate the faith community's Story/Vision to their own lives and contexts."[3] A Christian response to humanity's exploitation and abuse of Earth requires examining our lives and faith traditions for the ways in which they have been co-opted by an extractive mindset and structures. Critical evaluation is also an invitation to recover

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[2] Laurie Goering, "Health Experts Call Virus Pandemic a Window into Future Climate Threats," *Reuters.com*, March 31, 2020, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-climate-change-trf/health-experts-call-virus-pandemic-a-window-into-future-climate-threats-idUSKBN21I3IC (accessed July 17th, 2020); Lizzie O'Leary, "The Modern Supply Chain Is Snapping: The Coronavirus Exposes the Fragility of an Economy Built on Outsourcing and Just-in-Time Inventory," *Theatlantic.com*, March 19th, 2020,https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/supply-chains-and-coronavirus/608329/ (accessed July 17th, 2020).
[3] Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, the Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1991), 250. Emphasis added.

and reimagine elements of the Christian Story/Vision in hopes of moving toward a new global epoch of ecological kinship.

In *Laudato Si* Pope Francis recognizes that educators have a unique role to play in responding to the climate crisis.[4] It is necessary that we equip young Christians from their earliest formation to nurture a love for the places they call home, grow into a faith that does justice, and locate hope even amidst damaged places. To this end, and inspired by the covenantal vision of the Kin-dom of God,[5] which includes all of Creation, I propose a vision of theology as faith seeking belonging.[6]

The Judeo-Christian Story/Vision of liberation from slavery, hope for a new relationship to land based not on exploitation, and the Jesus Movement of resistance to the Roman Empire give expression to a belief that there will be a place for those impacted by extractive systems. Faith is our ongoing and unfolding commitment to this Story/Vision, expressed in relationship to and responsibility for those human and more-than-human beings whose places have been damaged, destroyed, and/or denied by a logic of extraction. Educating in faith is the task of discerning together how to bring this Story/Vision to life in our own places. It is the radically inclusive and excessive sharing that is communion. Ecological wisdom reminds us that our lives are joyfully and

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[4] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, no. 202.

[5] The formulation "Kin-dom of God" is borrowed from the thought of Ada María Isasi-Díaz. See chapter 3 for a discussion of Isasi-Díaz's development and use of this way of speaking about God's Kingdom.

[6] A gloss on Anselm's definition of theology as "faith seeking understanding," which Anselm outlines in *The Prosologion* written around 1077-1078. See *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, ed. And trans. Eugene Fairweather (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1956), 69-93. Pastoral theologian, Gregory C. Ellison II reflects, "belonging may be the most fundamental human need. Studies have shown the need to belong is so important that without it, 'people suffering mental and physical illness, and are rendered incapacitated.'" Gregory C. Ellison, II, *Cut Dead But Still Alive: Caring For African American Young Men* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2013), 22. Ellison is quoting Kipling D. Williams, et al.

inescapably interwoven. Education in faith as part of the project of the Kin-dom of God is a common and shared belief in the possibility of belonging.

In contrast to the logic of extraction, the Judeo-Christian covenant into which Christians are baptized invites disciples into a logic of jubilee. The principles of sabbath and jubilee, explored in chapter 3 above, are an effort to cultivate a just and sustainable relationship with the land out of concern for the community's most vulnerable members. I identify three characteristics of jubilee logic: *kinship* with the land and one another; socio-economic relationships grounded in *cooperation* and *mutual aid*; and *healing* of the social body through practices of *nurturing empowerment* that center the experiences and agency of the community's most vulnerable members.

Jubilee is lived through concrete practices of

- individual and communal *prayerful contemplation* with/in Creation,
- *evangelical simplicity*,
- the *cultivation and recovery of Indigenous ways of knowing* to promote self- and collective determination,
- *joyful celebration* of life through artistic expression,
- generous sharing and redistribution of resources and land through *networks of mutual aid*,
- *physical and psychological care and support* to offer healing from the wounds of extractivism, and
- *public witness*, movement-building, and organizing to dismantle unjust structures.[7]

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[7] Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 14-28; James Perkinson, *Political Spirituality in an Age of Eco-Apocalypse: Communication and Struggle Across Species, Cultures, and Religions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 176; Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories That Shape Us, A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia* (Spencer, WV: Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 2015), 41; Ched Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology: Theological, Hermeneutic, and Practical Reflections," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 205; Agape Community, "About Us: Who We Are," https://agapecommunity.org/about/ (accessed July 11th, 2020).

Just as in Jesus' time, these values require a conceptual shift. They challenge Christians to unlearn extractive ways of understanding relationships with one another, the land, and God. They challenge us to envision alternative social, cultural, economic, political, and ecclesial structures for our common life. Finally, they challenge us to adopt new habits in our daily life. Only by committing to a pedagogy of jubilee can Christians experience a conversion of heart that unsettles these extractive systems and become aware of God's saving will for Earth, which includes us.

*Progressive Education*

In this chapter I suggest how educators in faith (parents, pastors, lay ministers, classroom teachers, and community leaders and organizers) can work in coalition to continue Jesus' healing and teaching ministry with a preferential option for ecological sacrifice zones. I ground a pedagogy of jubilee within what is commonly referred to as "progressive education." This approach centers on the learner and their social world. It is "progressive" in that it focuses on the ongoing, cumulative growth and development of the person in relationship to their social environment as the outcome and purpose of education. Healthy development of both person and community are mutually related.[8]

Educator John Dewey defines "teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience."[9] In other words, education is a process of bringing subject matter into dialogue with our personal, lived experience. Knowledge arises from and begins with experience. As Dewey notes, educators should

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[8] See especially John Dewey, *Experience & Education* (New York: Touchstone, 1997 [1938]), chapter 1; Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*, 2nd ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005), introduction. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos, 30th anniversary ed. (New York: Continuum, 2000 [1970]), chapter 3.
[9] John Dewey, *Experience & Education,* 87.

utilize the surroundings, physical and social, that exist so as to extract from them all that they have to contribute to building up experiences that are worth while…the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources.[10]

At the same time, our own experiences are enriched as we reflect upon them in light of past wisdom and traditions of learning which Dewey well labels "the funded capital of civilization."[11] This process of integrating experience with traditions of knowledge and wisdom increases our ability to act as social agents, enabling learners to improve the quality of life with/in the neighborhoods, bioregions, and sociocultural contexts where they live and to which they are connected.[12]

As Dewey laments, too often "children are not regarded as social members in full and regular standing. They are looked upon as candidates; they are placed on the waiting list."[13] However, when educators begin with the assumption that students bring into the classroom experience-based knowledge that contributes to the learning environment, the dynamics of a classroom shift from a deficit approach in which the teacher is an expert to a strengths-based approach where students view themselves as having something to contribute. Place-based education intentionally seeks to integrate young people into their wider social world as transformative agents within their place. Adults within the community play an important role in supporting youth learning and agency in partnership with classroom teachers. As adults engage in mentoring relationships with young people,

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[10] *Ibid.*, 40, see also page 48.

[11] John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed (1897)," in *The Essential Dewey: Pragmatism, Education, Democracy*, volume 1, eds. Larry Hickman and Thomas Alexander (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 229.

[12] John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Free Press, 1966 [1916]), 343-345.

[13] *Ibid.*, 54.

it is important that young people be regarded as assets to and important stakeholders within the community. They should be given a role in shaping its future and empowered to see themselves in this positive light.[14]

Catholic educators in faith committed to place-based education have a rich theological resource in the concept of the *sensus fidelium*, or the sense of the faithful, which can guide their pedagogy. This concept, which is an important element of understanding the nature of the Church developed at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), stresses the presence of the Holy Spirit both as a source of authority and an animating presence in the life of the Church. Experience, in other words, serves as a source for developing theological truth. Our personal sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*), which each of us possesses by virtue of the Spirit's presence in our lives, is enriched by, and enriches, the community of faith (*sensus fidelium*). In the intimate spaces where we wrestle with our faith, we learn how to articulate that sense and to allow ourselves to be transformed by relationships grounded in sharing faith. Human culture and our experience of everyday life become resources offering the metaphors, language, and idioms, which translate that essential message again and again. By virtue of the Spirit's activity, which blows where it will (John 3: 8), experience and the ordinary affairs of human life and culture offer their own authority to which the Church itself must be receptive.[15]

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[14] Gregory Smith and David Sobel, *Place-and-Community-Based Education in Schools* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 51-59; Scott D. Wurdinger, "Turning Your Place into Projects," in *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Pedagogy and Place-Based Education: From Abstract to the Quotidian*, eds. Deric Shannon and Jeffery Galle (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 38-42.

[15] *Lumen Gentium* (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church [1964]), in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, completely revised translation in inclusive language, ed. Austin Flannery, OP, ed. (Northport, NY/Dublin: Costello/Dominican, 1996), no. 12. For helpful theological discussion of the concept see especially the work of Jean-Marie. R. Tillard. Jean-Marie R. Tillard, *Church of Churches: The Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. R. C. de Peaux (Collegeville:

The *sensus fidelium* is especially relevant for place-based education in faith because of the attention it gives to the importance of the local Church—the parish and diocese where a person experiences their faith and participates in the life of the Church in the concrete—for the life of the Church universal. As William Clark notes in his ethnography of the local Church, heavily hierarchical and rigid conceptions of authority can frustrate the formation of community among otherwise committed Christians, leading to disengagement from the Church. Clark highlights that "it is in the gritty realities of day-to-day human community…that the Spirit, often unseen and unacknowledged, forges with us the love that 'is the bond of church unity.'"[16] It is through the concrete interactions and experiences of parish councils, peace and justice committees, bible studies, and other parish groups with each other and with the diocese and hierarchy that the tradition is concretized, shaped, challenged, deepened, and enlivened.

Following the definition of place I develop in the introduction above, this attention to local expressions of faith needs to also recognize how a given local Church is connected to other local expressions of faith. Essential to the task of each local Church is the communication of its own particular, concrete experience of God in its daily life to each other Church in its daily life.[17] To be Church is to be in communication with others, sharing in the roles of teaching and learning. Laity and clergy are each *both* teachers and learners. Likewise, each local Church is *both* teacher and learner. For this mutuality to be

Michael Glazier, 1992 [1987]), 142-144; Jean-Marie R. Tillard, *L'Église locale: Ecclésiologie de communion et catholicité* (Paris: Les éditions du cerf, 1995), 35, 90.

[16] William Clark, *A Voice of Their Own: The Authority of the Local Parish* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 86, see also page 75.

[17] Tillard, *locale*, 90; Tillard, *Church*, 142, 144.

realized Christians must be attentive to power relations within and among places.[18] How do legacies of colonialism, clericalism, and the marginalization of women (and others) from the Church limit the full expression of the sense of the faithful? It is crucial to attend to *which* traditions of knowledge and *whose* wisdom is given attention in this process of integrating experience and tradition, which we call the sense of the faithful.

Finally, to flesh out a place-based understanding of the local Church that engages the three components of a hermeneutic of the land (see introduction), the local Church should also approach itself in relationship to its specific bioregion or watershed. To this end, Ched Myers cultivates a model of "watershed ecclesiology."[19] Myers offers a *Creation-*centered (rather than person or church-centered) vision of congregational life with implications for how we make our way in a world of sacrifice zones. Myers stresses that

> local congregations are ideally situated to become centers for learning to know and love our places enough to defend and restore them. But first we must inhabit our watersheds *as church*, allowing the natural and social landscapes to shape our symbolic life, mission engagements, and material habits. In some traditions, the older model of parish-as-*placed*-community still survives—though atrophied by market-driven member transiency and commuter mobility—and can be nurtured

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[18] See especially Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, trans. Robert Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986 [1977]), 23, 31-33; *Church: Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church*, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: Crossroad, 1985 [1981]), 138-141. In the pluralistic context of a democratic society and in "post-modern" settings in which faith is often expressed beyond institutional walls and their structures, theologian Tom Beaudoin suggests expanding the concept of *sensus fidelium* to also embrace the "*sensus infidelium* (the sense of the unfaithful)." Beaudoin explains, insisting that "the term *infidelium* is not meant to cast aspersions on those who identify as nonreligious by resurrecting the disparaging term *infidel*." Rather, "people (or forms of pop culture) who profess to know little or nothing about the religious may indeed form, inform, or transform religious meaning for people of faith…Those who are thought 'unfaithful' can greatly influence and even teach religious individuals, traditions, and institutions." See Tom Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998), 33-36. This insight is essential for place-based education in faith, which necessarily moves beyond the walls of the institutional church in its collaborative work of teaching and learning, often involving those beyond the Christian tradition.
[19] Ched Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology: Theological, Hermeneutic, and Practical Reflections," in *Watershed Discipleship: Reinhabiting Bioregional Faith and Practice*, ed. Ched Myers (Eugene: Cascade, 2016).

back into vibrancy.[20]

The local Church, committed to a place-based ecclesial imagination is sensitive to its relationship with/in the wider bioregional and human communities in which it is located. Second, it attends to its relationship with other local Churches (and communities of faith) and cultivates relationships with them. Finally, it attends to structures of power within and between local Churches (and communities of faith) and the bioregional and human communities in which they are situated.

In this chapter I bring together two approaches to progressive education that are particularly significant for cultivating a place-based education in faith with a preferential option for ecological sacrifice zones. First, I turn to Nel Noddings' application of feminist care ethics to progressive education. Second, I draw upon Paulo Freire's education for critical consciousness. I examine how place-based approaches to education develop and critique the approaches of Noddings and Freire. Placed-based education furthers their work, and progressive educational principles more generally, with particular attention to the relationship between ecological and social justice. I ask how educators in faith can incorporate these insights into their own practice.

The progressive legacy raises questions and challenges for the task of educating in faith and to a large extent has framed debates about handing on the faith in the modern and postmodern period. What is the relationship between experience and tradition or faith and culture? Place-based education in faith, by reading the eras of modernity and postmodernity as two phases of 'the Anthropocene,' prompts new ways of framing these old questions. What is the relationship between Creation and the human person or

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[20] *Ibid.*, 210.

between faith and nature? I take up these questions in the second section of this chapter. I draw upon the work of Horace Bushnell, C. Ellis Nelson, James Westerhoff, and Thomas Groome. I give particular attention to three key social settings for educating in faith: the family, the parish, and the school. I offer examples for responding in faith to the reality of climate change and environmental toxicity based upon insights from place-based education. Finally, I propose summer camps as a potentially significant social ecology for adolescent education in faith.

### Progressive Education in a Place-Based Perspective

As described in chapter 3, Jesus' jubilee pedagogy brings people into a new understanding of self through a healing and empowering vision of God's saving will for place and community. The Jesus Movement unsettles the maps of empire and the sense of place they foster. Jesus' way of being with people draws attention to two key characteristics of a pedagogy with/in sacrifice zones. First, I examine a pedagogy of care, developed by Nel Noddings, as a starting point for educators in faith. Second, I examine Paulo Freire's education for critical consciousness.

### Ethics and Pedagogy of Care

As described in chapter 3, for Jesus healing was often a precondition for empowering agency. Acts of healing allowed people to reclaim their dignity, restored them to the social body, and empowered them as agents of healing in the lives of others. In other words, care is at the center of Jesus' ministerial and pedagogical praxis. As a framework for ethics, care shifts attention from a preoccupation with individual rights toward the more relational category of responsibility. Care does not replace, rather it informs and

directs, the struggle for liberation. Cristina Traina suggests, care provides a "wider moral framework into which justice should be fitted. Care seems the most basic moral value. As a practice, we know that without care we cannot have anything else, since life requires it."[21] As Traina summarizes, "instead of impartiality and rights" an ethic of care emphasizes "particularity, relationship, and the intense nurture that all small children need to become the rational, autonomous adults that liberal theories of justice take for granted."[22] This ethic underscores the human person's fundamental vulnerability and dependency on others and asks that we place relationships at the center of moral reasoning. Second, caring is a set of practices but also a virtue that must be cultivated through relationship.[23] What implications does a care ethic have for pedagogy?

Contemporary research suggests that social and emotional learning (SEL) is a crucial precondition for cognitive development and academic success. SEL refers to the coordinated and integrative effort to promote a range of prosocial behaviors and emotional skills in students to accompany and support cognitive development such as those identified through research conducted by The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.[24] Research demonstrates that

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[21] Cristina Traina, "Facing Forward: Feminist Analysis of Care and Agency on a Global Scale," in *Distant Markets, Distant Harms: Economic Complicity and Christian Ethics,* ed. Daniel Finn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 182. Traina is quoting Virginia Held. See also Lisa Tessman, *Burdened Virtues: Virtue Ethics for Liberatory Struggles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 81-83.

[22] Traina, 179.

[23] *Ibid.*, 180-181.

[24] Mark T. Greenberg, Roger P. Weissberg, Mary Utne O'Brien, Joseph E. Zins, Linda Fredericks, Hank Resnik, and Maurice J. Elias, "Enhancing School-Based Preventions and Youth Development Through Coordinated Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning," *American Psychologist* 58, nos. 6 and 7 (2003): 466-474; Maurice J. Elias and Dominic C. Moceri, "Developing Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning: The American Experience," *Research Papers in Education* 27, no. 4 (2012), 423-434.

"effective mastery of social-emotional competencies is associated with greater well-being and better school performance whereas the failure to achieve competence in these areas can lead to a variety of personal, social, and academic difficulties."[25] As Elias and Moceri observe, it is crucial to take an ecological perspective and recognize the impact of wider, systemic influences on a child's learning. Race-ethnicity, family situation, socio-economic status (SES), geography, student-teacher relationships, peer relationships, and self-image can all impact academic performance.[26]

What is needed is greater understanding of how place enters into and is an important factor in social and emotional learning and development. This means being attentive to the ways in which the logic of extraction leads to patterns of exclusion and violence often resulting in traumatic experiences that impact the social and emotional learning and development of young people. Care is often lacking in sacrifice zones. Growing up in ecological sacrifice zones brings a unique set of social and emotional challenges related to persistent poverty, environmental pollution and destruction, and the painful effects of negative stereotypes related to class, race, and/or geography. Scholars are just beginning

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[25] Joseph. A. Durlak, Allison. B. Dymnicki, Rebecca D. Taylor, Roger P. Weissberg, and Kriston B. Schellinger, "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions," *Child Development* 82, no. 1 (2011), 406. See also Susanne A. Denham and Chavaughn Brown, "Plays nice with others": Social-Emotional Learning and Academic Success, *Early Education and Development* 2, no. 5 (2010): 652-680; Brittany L. Rhoades, Heather K. Warren, Celene E. Domitrovich, and Mark T. Greenberg. "Examining the Link Between Preschool Social-Emotional Competence and First Grade Academic Achievement: The Role of Attention Skills," *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 26 (2011): 182-191.

[26] Maurice J. Elias and Dominic C. Moceri, "Developing Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning: The American Experience," *Research Papers in Education* 27, no. 4 (2012): 423-434. NB: Race-ethnicity in and of itself does *not* affect a child's ability to learn. Rather, it is when race-ethnicity is compounded with certain factors such as low SES, geography, hegemonic and culturally insensitive classroom practices and curricula, teacher biases, and language that students struggle. These compounding factors are more often present in students of certain racial-ethnic backgrounds—i.e. students who do not fit the US 'norm' of physical and cultural whiteness.

to develop constructs and engage in research that can assist educators in faith to understand the ways environmental destruction impacts social-emotional well-being.

Increasing research attends to the affective dimensions of how people and communities respond to the logic of extraction. The term *solastalgia*, introduced by environmental philosopher Glenn Albrecht, describes

> the pain or distress caused by the ongoing loss of solace and the sense of desolation connected to the present state of one's home and territory. It is the existential and lived experience of negative environmental change, manifest as an attack on one's sense of place. It is characteristically a chronic condition, tied to the gradual erosion of identity created by the sense of belonging to a particular loved place and a feeling of distress, or psychological desolation, about its unwanted transformation. In direct contrast to the dislocated spatial dimensions of traditionally defined nostalgia, solastalgia is the homesickness you have when you are still located within your home environment.[27]

In a related vein, evolutionary biologist, E. O. Wilson has proposed the "biophilia hypothesis" to describe an

> innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms. Innate means hereditary and hence part of ultimate human nature…the multiple strands of emotional response are woven into symbols composing a large part of culture…when human beings remove themselves from the natural environment, the biophilic learning rules are not replaced by modern versions equally well adapted to artifacts. Instead, they persist from generation to generation, atrophied and fitfully manifested in the artificial new environments into which technology has catapulted humanity.[28]

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[27] Glenn Albrecht, *Earth Emotions: New Words for a New World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), 38-39. See also Glenn Albrecht, "Solastalgia" *Alternatives Journal* 32, nos. 4/5 (2006): 35; Glenn Albrecht, Gina-Maree Sartore, Linda Connor, Nick Higginbotham, Sonia Freeman, Brian Kelly, Helen Stain, Anne Tonna, and Georgia Pollard, "Solastalgia: The Distress Caused By Environmental Change," *Australasian Psychiatry* 15, No. 1 (2007): 95-98. Glenn Albrecht, "The Age of Solastalgia," *Theconversation.com*, August 7, 2012, http://theconversation.com/the-age-of-solastalgia-8337 (accessed July 13th, 2017); Jeannie Kirkhope, "Solastalgia in Appalachia," *Sojourners (Sojo.net)*, October 4, 2017, https://sojo.net/articles/ solastalgia-appalachia (accessed September 22nd, 2020).

[28] E. O. Wilson, "Biophilia and the Conservation Ethic," in *The Biophilia Hypothesis,* ed. Stephen Kellert and E. O. Wilson (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993), 31-32.

An increasing body of empirical research lends support to these constructs and sheds light on how education in faith might play a role in healing the trauma associated with climate crisis and environmental destruction and pollution.[29]

Adolescents are aware of climate change and feel anxiety about how it will impact their future. Young people, like many adults, worry about pollution's impact on their health; they are anxious about the possibility of climate-related disasters; those who have survived climate-change related disasters may experience post-traumatic stress and fear of recurrence; they may mourn the loss of home, cherished objects or places, and experience distress at forced migration.[30] While each young person will respond to these experiences differently, like all social and emotional experiences they enter into the classroom and impact learning and development.

Education about climate change and environmental crises should involve more than teaching facts concerning climate change and the impacts of extractivism. It should empower young people to become aware of their own climate-related emotions and emotional responses. Second, education should enable young people to engage climate-

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[29] Attempts to verify these constructs through empirical research include Nick Higginbotham, Linda Conner, Glenn Albrecht, Sonia Freeman, and Kingsley Agho, "Validation of an Environmental Distress Scale," *EcoHealth* 3 (2007): 245-254; Keith Zullig and Michael Hendryx, "A Comparative Analysis of Health-Related Quality of Life for Residents of U. S. Counties with and without Coal Mining," *Public Health Reports* 125, no. 4 (July/August 2010): 548-555; Michael Hendryx and Kestrel A. Innes-Wimsatt, "Increased Risk of Depression for People Living in Coal Mining Areas of Central Appalachia," *EcoPsychology* 5, no. 3 (Sept. 2013): 179-187; Eva Gifford and Robert Gifford, "The Largely Unacknowledged Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 72, no. 5 (2016): 292-297; Susan Clayton, Christie Manning, Kirra Krygsman, and Meighen Speiser, *Mental Health and Our Changing Climate: Impacts, Implications, and Guidance* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association and EcoAmerica, 2017).

[30] A review of several studies is offered in Molly Young Brown, "Supporting Children Emotionally in Times of Climate Disruption: Teaching Practices and Strategies," in *Education in Times of Environmental Crisis: Teaching Children to be Agents of Change*, ed. Ken Winograd (New York: Routledge, 2016), 196-197; Maria Ojala, "Preparing Children for the Emotional Challenges of Climate Change: A Review of the Research," in *Education in Times of Environmental Crisis: Teaching Children to be Agents of Change*, ed. Ken Winograd (New York: Routledge, 2016), 210-211.

related emotions in such a way that they are able to respond to the ethical and moral dimensions of the climate crisis, working for justice and developing a sense of themselves as social agents with a responsibility toward distant and proximate others. Indeed, as Maria Ojala notes, "research suggests that reflection on negative emotions (through writing, drama, or art, for example), especially in socially supportive settings, can lead to increased feelings of control, and thereby can help prevent worry or anxiety from devolving into despair and depression."[31] When we engage emotions in the classroom and build positive, nurturing communities with students they begin to learn how to extend that care to others. When intellectual work is placed in service of enhancing our ability to create communities of loving-concern we create contexts where hope can take root.[32]

There are many simple pedagogical moves that educators can adopt. Ojala finds that, first, it is important that educators open a dialogue around young people's climate-related emotions and take them seriously, allowing them to name these for themselves (see Freirean pedagogy below) and how they intersect with their socio-economic and political-cultural contexts. Second, it is important to incorporate an orientation toward the future that encourage young people to think through "probable, preferable, and possible

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[31] Maria Ojala, "Preparing Children for the Emotional Challenges of Climate Change," 214-215.

[32] Another resource educators and other caring professionals can draw upon is the emerging field of ecotherapy, which aims, on the one hand, to understand the benefits of positive experiences of time spent outdoors. On the other hand, ecotherapy aims to heal negative effects related to experiences of environmental distress and climate-disaster related trauma. While it is important not to confuse classroom learning and therapeutic settings, educators seeking to attend to social and emotional learning within the classroom that is sensitive to the impact of ecological trauma, environmental pollution, and the increasing alienation of people from natural settings can draw upon ecotherapeutic strategies, which can promote positive social and emotional development and in turn create atmospheres conducive to learning. See Martin Jordan and Joe Hinds, *EcoTherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice* (London: Palgrave, 2016); Andy Fisher, *Radical Ecopsychology: Psychology in the Service of Life*, 2nd ed. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2013).

futures in a creative, critical, honest, and constructive manner…it is important to show connections between global futures, on the one hand, and personal and local communities on the other hand."[33] Third, perspective taking can allow students to conceptualize the sometimes geographically and temporally distant effects of the climate emergency. What are the effects of climate change in other places and for future generations? Finally, it is important to share success stories and create opportunities to learn from and act alongside adults in their community who are working for ecological justice and policy change with an eye toward collective engagement around environmental problems.[34]

The work of Nel Noddings can be especially instructive for educators in faith seeking to apply an ethic of care and integrate social and emotional learning into their pedagogy. Noddings proposes organizing the curriculum around "centers of caring" in which education becomes a process of learning how to care for self (in mind, body, and spirit), other persons, other living beings, physical objects, and ideas.[35] Caring is not so much a set of individual capacities, behaviors, or competencies; rather, "caring is a way of being in relation" with three key dimensions relevant to pedagogy.[36] Caring begins when we give another our full attention. Second, we are motivated to respond to their needs. Third, the other must recognize and receive our response as caring. Just because we think we are being caring toward another does not mean our actions are being interpreted as caring. In addition to these three dimensions of a caring relationship, care must have a dimension of

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[33] Maria Ojala, "Preparing Children for the Emotional Challenges of Climate Change," 214-215.

[34] *Ibid.*, 215-217.

[35] Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, 46-48. For an application of Noddings' care ethic to outdoor education see Jamie Burke, Carrie Nolan, and Alison Rheingold, "Nel Noddings' Care Theory and Outdoor Education," *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education and Leadership* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 3-13.

[36] Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*, 17, 21.

continuity. In other words, a person must be able to connect a given instance of care to prior experiences of care and an expectation of future care. In education, the continuity of care, experienced through sustained caring relations, is essential to building trust between teachers, students, among peers, and with other significant adults in a student's life.[37]

Schools imagined as centers of care would become "multipurpose institutions" within a community, nurturing life and wellness in the community through practices of hospitality. Schools could "rent space to organizations compatible with education…[such as] child care groups, art and music studios, even veterinary hospitals and florist shops…The basic guiding idea is to make the school into a family-like center of care." Such a relationship between schools and communities would promote stability and a sense of belonging in the lives of young people.[38] While Noddings' proposal is ambitious, place-based educators in faith can draw inspiration from it within their own classrooms and for their curriculum design, emphasizing education in faith as nurturing positive relationship with God, self, and others (including more-than-human others) in place. Situations of faith education should surely have 'care' permeating the whole environment as well as the pedagogy.

Feminist ethicists caution against adopting essentializing definitions of caring and motherhood that exploit and undervalue the unpaid labor of women, especially women of color and women in the 2/3rds world. At the same time, Traina responds to the

> contemporary tendency to take refuge in personal rights claims that excuse us from attention to others' needs for caring…Globalizing a care ethic does not imply that one must care compassionately, affectively, and directly for persons half a world away…Our job is not to do the caring work ourselves but to enable just caring

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[37] *Ibid.*, 15-17, 64.
[38] *Ibid.*, 66-67.

work…Have we voted, donated, purchased, and collaborated in ways that improve the possibilities for just caring in places near and far?[39]

Ultimately, liberation and justice provide a critical counterweight to caring relationships and guard care from the distortions of an oppressive, self-sacrificial servility.[40] For example, as womanist theologian, Jacquelyn Grant comments, "black people's and black women's lives demonstrate to us that some people are more servant than others."[41]

Caring relationships have cultural-political and socio-economic dimensions, the burdens of which are rarely distributed with equity. Caring professions are often undervalued in society and capitalist economies tend to privatize and monetize the public goods that help us to better care for others such as "access to education, libraries, parks, health care, decent housing, respite care, recreation programs, and other resources."[42] Likewise, emotional intelligence curricula and other models aimed at cultivating prosocial behavior often do little to address the underlying causes of social and emotional distress and trauma in the lives of students, effectively asking them to "police themselves" and take personal responsibility for disciplining their emotional reactions to socio-economic, political-cultural, and ecological oppression and dislocation.[43] A pedagogy of care, then, must be informed by a commitment to justice.

*Ethics and Education for Critical Consciousness*

The Catholic tradition challenges us to view "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world…as a constitutive dimension of preaching

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[39] Traina, 182-184.
[40] Tessman, 65-68.
[41] Jacquelyn Grant, "The Sin of Servanthood and the Deliverance of Discipleship," in *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil and Suffering,* ed. Emilie Townes (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 204.
[42] Traina, 181.
[43] Megan Boler, 86-87. See also Bruce Rogers-Vaughn, *Caring for Souls in a Neoliberal Age* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2016), chapter 5.

the Gospel."[44] Using very similar language, Pope Francis extends action on behalf of justice to include justice for all of Creation, noting "living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience."[45] A logic of jubilee identifies as sinful all of those things which build-up the extractive empires of this world, which oppress, dominate, exclude, and destroy.

Noting the centrality of the Kin-dom of God in Jesus' preaching, liberation theologians have illuminated how personal sins stem from, are rooted in, and are perpetuated by social, cultural, and economic structures and vice versa. While Jesus does not use the modern language of structural analysis his preaching of the Kin-dom of God in opposition to the empires of the world, he nevertheless draws attention to the social dimensions of sin. Indeed,

> with an essential relationship to the kingdom of God, Jesus cannot help but denounce certain features of social life that are inconsistent not only with the definitive kingdom but also with the anticipatory stage of it…sin is no longer seen as directed against God but rather against the kingdom of God. Divine filiation is broken because human brotherhood is broken…the real sinners are the persons with power who use it to secure themselves against God and to oppress others.[46]

Place-based educators in faith can use a Kin-dom lens to engage young people in a critical analysis of the modern-day sources of oppression that have brought us into the Anthropocene. In particular, students can begin to think critically about their own

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[44] Synod of Bishops, "Justice in the World (1971)," in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, expanded ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), 306.
[45] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si,* no. 217.
[46] Jon Sobrino *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1978 [1976]), 52-53.

relationship to these sources of oppression and how they have internalized the logic of extraction as its perpetrators or victims.

Educator Paulo Freire uses the term *conscientização* (commonly translated as conscientization) to describe a process through which teachers and students collaborate to cultivate critical awareness and seek solutions to the problems of society by questioning why these problems exist in the first place.[47] Educating for critical consciousness occurs through a dialogical process that Freire refers to as "problem-posing education" in contrast to traditional models of "banking education." In the latter model, education and knowledge move in one direction from the cultural world of the privileged through the teacher. Students are treated passively as an empty receptacle into which the teacher deposits information, which students are then expected to feedback to the teacher as requested through exams and other assignments.[48] This model reproduces and reinforces existing relationships of power and ways of knowing in Church and society.

By contrast, education for critical consciousness is a *dialectical and dialogical process* that seeks to reconcile fundamental conflicts of unequal and exploitative social relationships, including between the teacher and student in the classroom but also between the oppressed and their oppressors in society. This is accomplished through the *co-investigation* of themes drawn from the day-to-day experiences of students.[49] Through critical analysis of these themes, teachers facilitate conversations in which students and teachers together identify the taken for granted patterns of thought and language as

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[47] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 36-37, 97-109; Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness* (New York: Seabury, 1973 [1969]), 41-58.
[48] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 72, 79-86.
[49] *Ibid.*, 62-69, 71-86, 106.

mediated by our socio-economic and political-cultural contexts, which privilege some and oppress others. In particular, teachers and students co-investigate how these patterns and structures shape our view of the world, sense of self, relationships, and patterns of institutional belonging and participation, leading to a critical, historical awareness of reality.[50]

Liberative education addresses the challenge of exercising moral agency in the face of victimization and social structures (such as environmental destruction, racism, or economic exploitation) that limit agency and the ability to act with justice. Oppressive socioeconomic structures make it difficult to take responsibility for our own actions and their impact upon others. Critical consciousness is a recognition of the psychological, material, social, cultural, geographic, and ecological forces that impinge upon our lives to constrain or complicate our ability to act with justice. As moral agents we must take responsibility for our ways of knowing and for what we know. Educators have the responsibility to create the conditions in which liberating knowledge can take root.[51]

In white, Western patriarchy, banking pedagogy and hierarchical social structures form certain groups of people (often working-class, Indigenous, people of color, women, LGBTQ persons, immigrants, the differently abled, and people from religious traditions other than Christianity) to devalue their own perspectives, sociocultural traditions, and ways of knowing. Eventually, many come to accept the present order of things as natural. Adopting what Freire calls a "pathological" view of the self, they are treated as, and

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[50] *Ibid.*, 105-109.
[51] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudiem et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965)*, in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, expanded ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010) no. 31; Cristina Traina, "Facing Forward: Feminist Analysis of Care and Agency on a Global Scale," 184-189.

thereby come to view themselves as, less-than-human. The oppressed in this situation strive to model their own lives on that of the dominant group in an effort to be seen as human and claim their right to exist.[52] Likewise, this process of dehumanization allows the privileged to justify paternalistic or exploitative social relationships and structures.[53] Education for critical consciousness, then, has "humanization" as its purpose and chief learning outcome.

To this end, Freire coordinated literacy programs in rural areas of Brazil. As Freire reflects, "we rejected the hypothesis of a purely mechanistic literacy program and considered the problem of teaching adults how to read in relation to the awakening of their consciousness."[54] Coordinators presented learners with images and situations from everyday life and engaged them in a dialogical process of "decoding" these situations as a first step toward the acquisition of vocabular and reading and writing abilities. Freire stresses that it is vital that people learn to speak their own word, or name their own reality, as a first step toward liberation.

> We wanted a literacy program which would be an introduction to the democratization of culture, a program with men [*sic*] as its Subjects rather than as patient recipients, a program which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, one in which students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention.[55]

Literacy is more than understanding the mechanics of language. It means knowing how to "read" the cultural codes that organize relationships of power in the world. Education introduces us to a new relationship to the world in which we recognize our own agency

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[52] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 48, 74.
[53] *Ibid.*, 54-59.
[54] Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 43.
[55] *Ibid.,* 43; see also *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 88, 105-106, 137. The pedagogical process proposed by Freire is described in detail in *Education for Critical Consciousness* pages 42-58.

within our places. Subject matter serves as a lens to sharpen our ability to "read" our reality and act as co-creators within our places. Through this process, we come to realize that the 'problem' is located with/in social structures and the social dynamics that create and maintain oppression. In other words, we accept that these networks and structures of power are created and can therefore be recreated.[56]

Educators in faith need to pay critical attention to their own socio-economic, political-cultural, and geographic locations and those of their students as they teach them to read and apply the Christian Story/Vision in their own lives. From whose perspective do we read? Where do we place ourselves in the story? Drawing on a Freirean pedagogy, liberation theologians and others working within contexts of oppression have read their own existential situation and that of their community into this Story/Vision as a resource for "de-coding" present structures of oppression. As chapter 3 suggests, scripture and tradition serve as resources for imagining, acting for, and creating a liberating future. Each of us reads differently as a result of a variety of factors including socio-cultural standpoint, educational background, life experiences, and upbringing. In other words, we bring ourselves and our "place" to the Christian Story/Vision.

White people, especially those of the middle and upper class, must ask difficult questions about where they locate themselves in the Judeo-Christian Story/Vision. Activist and biblical scholar, Laurel Dykstra, for example, challenges white, first-world Christians to read the Exodus narrative through identification with Egypt. As Dykstra notes,

in Exodus it is the Israelites who die because of oppression and the Egyptians who

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[56] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 44-50, 60-61, 85.

live because of it…if I am to bring my own experience to Exodus, then I must identify with the Egyptians, the villains of the story. I must explore their traits and qualities…I identify with Egypt because for first-world Christians it is the best possible reading. It reflects our situation, accounts for power dynamics, and may even help us participate in the work of justice…Looking at how we resemble the villains in this story may not be comfortable or flattering; it may teach us things about ourselves that we would rather not know. My intention is not to blame or create bad feelings. It is to unmask destructive systems in which we participate, so that we can begin to dismantle the culture of domination in which we live. Knowing what we do, what is destructive and what is constructive, can help us to change the patterns of our behavior so that despite our privilege we may be part of God's liberation project.[57]

Developing a critical consciousness applies equally to the oppressed and the oppressor. In naming the positions of power we occupy and giving voice to our own experience we begin to work toward a new reality beyond domination, violence, and exclusion. As Freire stresses,

conversion to the people requires a profound rebirth. Those who undertake it must take on a new form of existence; they can no longer remain as they were. Only through comradeship with the oppressed can the converts understand their characteristic ways of living and behaving, which in diverse moments reflect the structure of domination.[58]

Conversion requires honest self-examination and a deep seeking after the ways in which we benefit, however slightly, from extractive patterns of thinking and being.

As Dykstra helpfully reflects, "perhaps some readers will object that I am identifying only with my privilege. It is true that as a low-income, queer woman, and a single parent in a culture that punishes poverty, difference, and femaleness, I am among those who die because of oppression."[59] Likewise, white people in ecological sacrifice zones such as

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[57] Laurel Dykstra, *Set Them Free: The Other Side of Exodus* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 51, 53. For a similar perspective see John Markey, *Moses in Pharaoh's House: A Liberation Spirituality for North America* (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2014).
[58] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 61.
[59] Laurel Dykstra, *Set Them Free*, 51.

Appalachia, particularly those of the working class, must attend carefully to the ways in which their response to experiences of socioeconomic marginalization and the effects of environmental toxicity might be the result of an internalization of a vision of the good life informed by settler, patriarchal, consumer capitalist futures. Thinking and being toward a logic of jubilee names the sources of suffering that we have experienced and at the same time confesses our own role in perpetuating or benefitting from these extractive systems.

For all its strengths, Indigenous scholars and those concerned with ecological justice have observed a few limitations in Freirean pedagogy and critical theory. Without rejecting the central commitments of critical pedagogy, they note that Freire's method, and critical theory more broadly, remains grounded in Western epistemological, ontological, and spiritual concepts and suppositions. Indigenous theologians, and theologians seeking to engage Indigenous worldviews, extend this critique to theologies of liberation. Again, without rejecting the central commitment to liberative justice, they challenge certain presuppositions of how the task of liberation is framed. I draw attention to two key challenges Indigenous and decolonial scholars pose that are instructive for place-based educators in faith.[60]

First, some 'ecocritical' and 'decolonial' pedagogies and approaches to critical theory comment on the anthropocentric orientation of critical pedagogy and theory, which tends to neglect the human/nature relationship. Freire explains that "dialogue is an I-Thou

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[60] For theological perspectives see especially, Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation*, trans. David Molineaux (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 25-65; George Tinker, *Spirit and Resistance: Political Theology and American Indian Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004), 2-6, 100-106; Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Eduardo Mendieta, eds, *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012); Christopher Tirres, *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Faith: A Dialogue Between Liberationist and Pragmatic Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 156-160; Lee Cormie, "Another Theology is Possible: Exploring Decolonial Pathways," *Toronto Journal of Theology* 33, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 261-278.

relationship, and thus necessarily a relationship between two Subjects."[61] The Freirean process of humanization is imagined as one in which an objectifying state of nature is left behind for the realm of culture, positing a fundamental "distinction between the world of nature and the world of culture; the active role of men [*sic*] *in* and *with* their reality." The natural world serves as backdrop in and for the world-creating role of human beings who alone are positioned as Subjects. To be not-human is to be object.[62]

Eve Tuck, Marcia McKenzie, and Kate McCoy note that Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and ordering the universe are informed by a *land-we* ontology (theory of being), noting that "relationships to land within Indigenous frameworks are not between owner and property, as typified in settler societies…property is an enabling concept in a settler colonial framework, with property and property ownership being individualized. Instead, land is collective." Indigenous ways of knowing and being revise the Cartesian "I think, therefore I am" in two complementary directions: "We are, therefore I am" and "Land is, therefore we are."[63] This perspective extends subjectivity and world-creation to more-than-human beings in covenantal inter-being. The Land is not resource but *source and co-creator*. The Land teaches and the Land knows. The Land is kin.

Attending to more-than-human subjectivities and cultivating a sense of human partnership with more-than-human beings only strengthens liberatory struggles against extractive logic. As Sandy Grande notes,

> expressions of profound anthropocentrism are not only unnecessary to the

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[61] Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 52.
[62] *Ibid.,* 46; see also Freire *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 97-100.
[63] Eve Tuck, Marcia McKenzie, and Kate McCoy, "Land Education: Indigenous, Post-Colonial, and Decolonizing Perspectives on Place and Environmental Education Research," *Environmental Education Research* 20, no. 1 (2014): 10.

imperatives of the critical project but also weaken its validity. To begin, it simply isn't true that humans are the only species to actively transform their social conditions…maintenance of the hierarchy between human beings and nature thus not only prohibits us from learning from 'all our relations,' but also reinscribes the colonialist logic that conscripts 'nature' to the service of human society.[64]

Place-based educators who are committed to a critical pedagogy can attend especially to the relationship between nature and culture, investigating with their students how ideologies of nature intersect with issues of class, race, gender, species-being, geography, and theology/spirituality. Jason Cervone notes,

> for rural students especially, they must understand how and why rural spaces are being produced in the United States, what capitalism wants those spaces for, and how to reclaim those spaces for themselves and their communities…Ecological, place-based education encourages educators and students to produce their own spaces in a manner that improves social and ecological life, as well as understand the relationship between places.[65]

Such an approach should be addressed to students beyond sacrifice zones as well, inviting them to analyze how their own places might be connected to and contribute to the creation of ecological sacrifice zones. How has theology and spirituality been complicit in this process? Learning about these connections can catalyze new relationships of solidarity; the recirculation of power across places; and the sharing of resources, skills, and knowledge.

A second theme worth considering is the relationship between progressive transformation of unjust societies and the conservation or recovery of Indigenous knowledge and culture. Tuck, et al. note that non-Indigenous educators must be

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[64] Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought*, 10th anniversary ed. (Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, [2004]), 115. See also Anne Benvenuti, *Spirit Unleashed: Reimagining Human-Animal Relations* (Eugene: Cascade, 2014).
[65] Jason Cervone, *Corporatizing Rural Education: Neoliberal Globalization and Reaction in the United States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 83, see also 82-84.

especially mindful not to romanticize Indigenous struggles through a univocal association with 'back to the land' or 'noble savage' stereotypes.[66] At the same time, Indigenous cosmologies (ways of understanding the universe) are informed by a different sense of temporality which is non-linear and non-successive. Rather, the spatial dimension of existence is prioritized over and informs the temporal. As George Tinker reflects,

> whether in capitalist or socialist guise, then, history and temporality reign supreme in the West…Of course Native Americans have a temporal awareness, but it is subordinate to our sense of place. Likewise, the Western tradition has a spatial awareness, but it lacks the priority of the temporal. Hence, progress, history, development, evolution and process become key notions that invade all academic discourse in the West, from science and economics to philosophy and theology. History becomes the quintessential Western intellectual device…The fundamental symbol of the Plains Indians' existence is the circle, a symbol signifying the family, the clan, the tribe, and eventually all of creation. Because it has no beginning and no end, all in the circle are of equal value.[67]

Indigenous and decolonial thinkers such as Tinker observe that the linear, successive, and developmental sense of existence that informs Western intellectual and spiritual traditions has underwritten the genocide of so-called primitive or premodern peoples. The history-as-progress narrative relegates the cultural and spiritual traditions of primary peoples to a static period of pre-history, the primitive, or the pre-civilized "stage" of human history. On this reading, because it is primitive, or pre-modern, it has no place, use, or wisdom to offer an ostensibly intellectually more sophisticated civilized, or "modern," period of humanity.[68]

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[66] Eve Tuck et al. "Land Education," 10-11.

[67] George Tinker, "The Full Circle of Liberation: An American Indian Theology of Place," in *Ecotheology: Voices from South and North*, ed. David Hallman (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1994), 221-222; see also Miguel De La Torre, *Embracing Hopelessness* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 60-67.

[68] George Tinker, "The Full Circle of Liberation," 221-222; George Tinker, *Spirit and Resistance*, 101, 105-106; Miguel De La Torre, *Embracing Hopelessness* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 58-63.

Such an attitude influences how we imagine solutions to the ecological, socioeconomic, cultural, and spiritual challenges facing our communities and bioregions. Quoting Baldwin, Tuck et al. question history-centered analysis driven by the

> teleological assumption that [settler colonialism] can be modernized away. Such an assumption privileges an ontology of linear causality in which the past is thought to act on the present and the present is said to be an effect of whatever came before […] According to this kind of temporality, the future is the terrain upon or through which [settler colonialism] will get resolved. It cleaves the future from the present and, thus, gives the future discrete ontological form.[69]

The praxis of liberation is tied as much to the wisdom of elders; learning traditional handicrafts and sustainable methods of land cultivation and animal husbandry; and a deeper knowledge of the cycles, patterns, and relationships that make up the web of life in and across bioregions.

Greater attention to a circular-spatial understanding of time encourages a cognitive shift in how we approach these challenges. Humans generally, and Western humans particularly, "lose their status of primacy and 'dominion'…American Indians are driven implicitly and explicitly by their culture and spirituality to recognize the personhood of all 'things' in creation."[70] Attention to conservation and recovery of 'traditional' knowledge does not lessen or eliminate a commitment to justice. As David Gruenewald notes,

> conserving and renewing cultural practices that contribute to the well-being of people and places may often require transforming existing practices. Race, gender, and class oppression, as well as ecologically damaging cultural patterns, need to be transformed in the face of those people and structures that would conserve them.

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[69] Eve Tuck et al. "Land Education," 16.
[70] George Tinker, "Full Circle of Liberation," 223.

Still, deciding what should be conserved suggests a trajectory for critical inquiry that may be missed when transformation is pedagogy's paramount goal.[71]

This approach is helpful for challenging the technocentric approaches that tend to preoccupy Western responses to climate change, ecological destruction, and social justice.

Reflecting on the impact of technology and social media on human, particularly adolescent, development, Sherry Turkle emphasizes the importance of recovering a sense of "sacred place" and the conservation and cultivation of "inviolate" practices. Learning traditional methods allows us to adopt more discerning and intentional applications of and relationships with technology in our lives. What are those aspects of our personal, professional, spiritual, and day-to-day lives that are "inviolate," that we will hold apart from technological simulation and preserve against automation?[72] In each case this means how do we approach the praxis of living, working, praying, and playing as a *craft*?

Turkle uses the example of hand-drawing for the architect or designer. It could also mean growing and preserving some of our own food, cultivating the know-how to make and the ability to repair certain household objects, or taking up a craft-skill or artistic skill for personal enjoyment or to supplement personal income. It can also mean resisting certain 'conveniences' such as machine powered tools and appliances. The preference for the handmade and the homegrown is "not about rejecting the computer" or any other modern convenience. It is an invitation to make sure that we come to these "with [our]

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[71] David Gruenewald, "The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place," *Educational Researcher* 32, no. 4 (May 2003): 10; see also Sandy Grande, *Red Pedagogy*, 112.

[72] Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*, revised and expanded 3rd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 277; see also Richard Galliardetz' use of the concept of 'focal practices,' a concept introduced by Albert Borgmann. Richard Gaillardetz, *Transforming Our Days: Spirituality, Community, and Liturgy in a Technological Culture* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 19-26.

own values" and the preservation and good of our community and Earth intact. "A sacred space is not a place to hide out. It is a place where we recognize ourselves and our commitments."[73] The intention here is not to romanticize the past. Rather, these practices are sources of self-determination and democracy, enacting liberation from and resistance to the oppressive and violent logic of extractivism. They immerse us in a way of being in place that depends not on mastery, conquest, and domination. They attune our praxis to patterns of apprenticeship, sharing, communing, and cooperating.

*Faith Seeking Belonging: The Socialization Theory of Educating in Faith*

In the context of climate change and with a preferential option for sacrifice zones, where and how can educators in faith begin to educate for jubilee care and justice? How do we nurture a sense of belonging with the human and more-than-human beings whose lives have been degraded and whose places have been destroyed through the logic of extraction?

Place-based education shares some commonalities with the so-called socialization approach to education in faith. This approach goes beyond an emphasis on direct classroom instruction and stresses instead education in faith as an immersive experience

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[73] Sherry Turkle, *Alone Together*, 277. In a similar vein anthropologist, Alexander Langlands reflects, "against a rising tide of automation and increasing digital complexity, we are becoming further divorced from the very thing that defines us: we are makers, crafters of things…today we stare at screens and we press buttons. When we made things, we accumulated a certain kind of knowledge, we had an awareness and an understanding of how materials worked and how the human form has evolved to create from them. With the severance from this ability we're in danger of losing touch with a knowledge base that allows us to convert raw materials into useful objects, a hand-eye-head-heart-body co-ordination that furnishes us with a meaningful understanding of the materiality of our world…fabrication, construction, energy, waste and by-product are largely monetary abstractions to a society of non-makers. It occurred to me that if we spent more time individually converting raw materials into useful objects, we might be better placed to contextualise the challenges that face a society addicted to excessive and often, conspicuous consumption. Perhaps more importantly, we might be a little bit happier." Alexander Langlands, *Cræft: An Inquiry into the Origins and Meaning of Traditional Crafts* (New York: Norton, 2017), 22-23; Gary Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1990), 60-61, 163-165; William Coperthwaite, *A Handmade Life: In Search of Simplicity* (White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2002).

in Christian environments and communities, what Urie Bronfenbrenner describes as 'social ecologies' (see chapter 2). As John Westerhoff notes, "teachers must be models of what they desire others to become; they are to be spiritual mentors and not instructors."[74] Community, fellowship, and experiential learning, become primary avenues for educating in faith.

Horace Bushnell, writing in 1867, was one of the earliest proponents of this approach, which he termed "Christian nurture," giving particular emphasis to the social ecology of the family as the site of education in faith. Bushnell stresses the importance of environment in the shaping of life and points to the "organic unity of the family" as playing a crucial role in a child's development. Much more than exerting "influence" over children, the family is united through genetic inheritance and "common cares, hopes, offices, and duties," making familial bonds especially powerful.[75] If parents want their children to be Christian then they should raise them in a home reflective of Christian values and rich with Christian practices. Religious formation is not about memorizing facts and assenting to their truth. Education in faith "should rather seek to teach a feeling than a doctrine."[76]

Bushnell criticized denominations, suggesting that they are too often "rent by divisions, burnt up by fanaticism, frozen by the chill of a worldly spirit, petrified by a rigid and dead orthodoxy."[77] However, more recent proponents of the socialization

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[74] John H. Westerhoff, III, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (New York: Seabury, 1976), 83. See further, Mary Elizabeth Moore, *Education for Continuity and Change: A New Model for Christian Religious Education* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1983), 46-51; Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 194-198, 473 fn. 22.

[75] Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nurture* (New York: Scribner's, 1883 [1876]), 100, 108; see also pages, 76, 88-89.

[76] *Ibid.*, 51.

[77] *Ibid.*, 51, see also page 52.

theory, such as C. Ellis Nelson and John Westerhoff, return attention to the congregation as the primary agent of educating in faith. Nelson notes, a socialization theory that puts the family at the center of educating in faith and Christian nurture risks legitimizing "whatever values, world view, and self-image the parents happen to have. Rather than turning religious education over to the parents exclusively, we must recognize that the parents are also under judgement and need their Christian understanding expanded and clarified while they fulfill their role as parents."[78] This shift in attention from the nuclear family unit toward the congregation reflects, perhaps, anxieties within Christian denominations associated with 'secularization' widespread since the 1960s. In particular, these concerns center on shifts in so-called traditional social values within the nuclear family, related especially to changing attitudes toward gender and sexuality.[79]

At its best, the socialization model of education in faith reminds us that faith always *takes place*. It is lived in families, local Churches, and within neighborhoods, communities, and bioregions. Faith is deeply relational and our developmental ecologies play an important role in its nurturance. At the same time, socialization is not enough. At most, the socialization approach may bring us to what theorist of faith development James Fowler refers to as "conventional" faith, which tends to mirror the perspectives and attitudes of significant others and trusted institutions in a person's life. [80] Socialization might initiate persons into a supportive community of faith but that alone is not likely to liberate persons, neither oppressors or the oppressed, from a logic of extraction.

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[78] C. Ellis Nelson, *Where Faith Begins* (Richmond: John Knox, 1967), 209.
[79] John Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?,* 13-16; C. Ellis Nelson, *Where Faith Begins*, 43.
[80] James Fowler, *Faith Development and Pastoral Care* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1987), 63-66.

Conventional faith is important to forming enduring social ties and group commitments, both of which orient us toward the common good, but it lacks a strong sense of personal agency within and capacity to critique these social ecologies which is necessary for what I will call a *decolonizing* faith. As Groome observes,

> the socialization paradigm gives little place to the role of critical thinking in faith formation. Its theorists often recognize the need for it but offer little suggestion for critically reflective education to encourage a dialectic between person and his or her faith community or between the faith community and its social context…wherever Christian religious education takes place—school, congregation, or family—it is to engage the very 'being' of participants as agents-subjects and include an activity of critical reflection…We cannot presume that our faith communities or our society are places of critical consciousness.[81]

Groome's observation is equally relevant for place-based approaches to education more broadly, which very often socialize learners into 'conventional' relationships with their places. In a social context such as the contemporary United States in which dominant social values are extractive, it is necessary to develop what Gruenewald calls a "critical pedagogy of place." Like Groome, Gruenewald draws on the work of Freire and other critical educators to address ways in which place-based education is "sometimes hesitant to link ecological themes with critical themes such as urbanization and the homogenization of culture under global capitalism."[82] How does political power operate and influence the construction of culture and our perceptions of place?

*Critical Creation-Centered Pedagogy: From Socialization to Decolonization*

Educating for jubilee requires that we adopt an alternative relationship to formative social ecologies. In light of the Amazon Synod's more recent invitation to a "preferential option for indigenous peoples," it is also crucial that educators in faith go further in de-

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[81] Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 194.
[82] David Gruenewald, "The Best of Both Worlds," 4.

centering Western ways of knowing and conceptualizing our relationship to places. Tuck, et al. use the concept of "land education" to signal a challenge to critical place-based educators. Land education is more responsive to Indigenous voices than other forms of critical place-based education.[83]

My suggestion for a *critical Creation-centered pedagogy* brings together the insights of Groome, Gruenewald, and Tuck, et. al. A critical Creation-centered education in faith moves from socialization, or enculturation, toward *decolonization* as the overriding purpose, task, and goal of educating in faith, which de-centers and unsettles. It aims at unlearning and offering reparation[84] for the ways in which faith traditions and theologies have contributed to the logic of extraction and seeks to remap our places with the jubilee vision of the Kin-dom of God in mind.

Modes of education in faith committed to decolonization would seek an alternative sense of place that aims toward a critical identification of how structures of colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism influence our relationships to faith and place. In particular it will de-center Christianity and ground itself in the experience, Story, and Vision of Earth and primary peoples, allowing them to respond to the extractive legacies of Christianity. The point here is not to *dismiss* Christianity but to open Christianity to understanding itself anew. Indigenous experiences and ways of knowing have something to teach Christians about the nature and character of God. To a certain extent, decolonization is a long overdue reversal of the traditional pattern of enculturation. Decolonial and

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[83] Amazon Synod, *Final Document, The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology*, no. 27. Eve Tuck, et al., "Land Education," 1-23.

[84] I understand reparation as enacting the biblical jubilee year. It is an effort to return and recirculate land and resources.

postcolonial approaches shift theological approaches from methods of critical correlation toward critical reconstruction.

In suggesting a move toward a decolonizing pedagogy for educating in faith, I draw attention to the insistence of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang that "decolonization is not a metaphor." Tuck and Yang explain,

> at a conference on educational research, it is not uncommon to hear speakers refer, almost casually, to the need to 'decolonize our schools,' or use 'decolonizing methods,' or 'decolonize student thinking.' Yet we have observed a startling number of these discussions make no mention of Indigenous peoples, our/their struggles for the recognition of our/their sovereignty, or the contributions of Indigenous intellectuals and activists to theories and frameworks of decolonization. Further, there is often little recognition given to the immediate context of settler colonialism on the North American lands where many of these conferences take place.[85]

Constructively, decolonization requires that those of us who occupy settler positions[86] enter into a difficult and conflictual process of *conversion* or *metanoia* that unsettles, displaces, and reorients our own relationships to the land, our ways of knowing, being, communing with the divine, and imagining the future. It means that we apprentice ourselves to Indigenous wisdom, traditions, concerns, and agency. It essential to reflect

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[85] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012): 2-3.

[86] See chapter 1 for a discussion of the concept of "settler colonialism," particularly in the Appalachian context. As a brief reminder, Tuck, et al. define settler colonialism as "a form of colonization in which outsiders come to land inhabited by Indigenous peoples and claim it as their own new home. Subsequent generations of settlers come to the settler nation-state for many reasons, under many circumstances—but at the heart of all those rationales is the need for space and land. This form is distinct from the exploitation colonialism that has been so deeply theorized in post-colonial studies, because, in settler colonialism, settlers come to the new land seeking land and resources, not (necessarily) labor" (Eve Tuck et al., "Land Education," 6). As it has evolved in the U. S. context, settler colonialism is constituted by a "native-slave-settler triad" which necessitates a critical examination of "chattel slaves (mostly from Africa) who were kept landless and made into property along with Indigenous land as part of the settlement process." Settler colonialism was and remains characterized by "large-scale monoculture and environmental degradation in areas around the globe and continue[s] to cover [its] tracks using Manifest Destiny—in discourse, practice, and relation—in the contemporary name of 'development' to justify settler colonialism past and present [and future]" Eve Tuck, et al., "Land Education," 4.

on, and take responsibility for, how resource extraction, the contemporary culture of disposability, violence against women and legacies of racism are the entangled products of colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism that persist into the present and limit our ability to image and act for a just future.

Rebekah Garrison challenges settlers, settler societies, and settler institutions to develop a praxis of "settler responsibility," grounded in respect for "other humans, their ancestral lands, histories, and sacred spaces." Such responsibility is committed to a collaborative praxis with primary peoples and imagines legislation, modes of production, land use and ownership, ways of narrating history, and naming geographic space that seek to undo settler privilege.[87]

Decolonization recognizes the ways in which socialization and schooling, including socialization into and education for faith, have served extractivism in a number of ways. Educators are called upon to reimagine existing curriculum, methods, and approaches. New approaches should center black, Indigenous, and more-than-human perspectives and critically interrogate settler colonial legacies. This approach cultivates "an integrative view of nature and people, histories, power relations, and community that can challenge settler colonial assumptions that undergird much of environmental education."[88] Decolonial land education actively interrogates ways in which schooling

> transmits a settler colonial land ethic and suggests that a limitation of much place-based education has been a lack of meaningful engagement of such colonial

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[87] Rebekah Garrison, "Settler Responsibility: Respatialising Dissent in 'America' Beyond Continental Borders," *Shima* 13, no. 2 (2019): 70-71; The Decolonial Horizons Collective: Sarah Fong, Rebekah Garrison, Macrena Gómez-Barris, and Ho'esta Mo'e'hahne, "Decolonizing Horizons: The Indigeneity and Decolonization Research Cluster of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California," *Amerasia Journal* 42, no. 3 (2016): 129-141.
[88] Tuck et al. "Land Education," 4.

legacies in education, including through conceptualizations of place. Land education…should involve an analysis of territoriality and settler colonialism; center Indigenous realities (e.g. include a history of the land as Indigenous, require that Indigenous peoples lead discussions regarding land education in communities, and be infused with Indigenous metaphysics); and destabilize the focus on the local (i.e. acknowledge how global histories and broader ideologies shape the local).[89]

For educators in faith this must extend to how we understand the categories and methods of faith education, including but not limited to our theology of Creation. Ecotheology, ministerial programs committed to creation care or stewardship, and Earth-honoring spiritualities must acknowledge the relationships of power and histories of violence that have produced our current environmental crisis and Christianity's role in creating, sustaining, and perpetuating these realities. These patterns have led to alienation from and the objectification of Earth and each other. They are violations of God's holy covenant.

Acknowledging and experiencing the sacramentality of and kinship with Creation must also include the holiness of Indigenous traditions as well as kinship and solidarity with primary peoples and their struggles. It must create space for attending to how Christians have participated in the erasure of Indigenous cultural and social traditions through land theft. It means centering Indigenous cosmologies (theories of the Universe), religious and spiritual traditions, ethical frameworks, ways of knowing, and relationships to the land as a norm against which we judge our own. It means reparation

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[89] Tuck et al., "Land Education," 3. Aldo Leopold defines a land ethic as "enlarge[ing] the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land." See Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac and Other Writings on Ecology and Conservation*, ed. Curt Meine (New York: The Library of America, 2013 [1949]), 172. A decolonial land ethic develops Aldo Leopold's land ethic in important ways by centering power relationships and calling for an integration and centering of indigenous experience and the experience of black and working-class communities who experience environmental racism or otherwise bear the disproportionate costs of extractive economies.

for these legacies, supporting efforts to repatriate land to Indigenous communities and centering Indigenous visions of future land use. The following examples illustrate how the 3 Cs of extraction: colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism have been present in schooling with implications for education in faith.

*Colonization and education in faith*        Educators in faith must reflect critically on the legacy of Church sponsored residential schools for Indigenous children in North America.[90] In Canada the legacy of residential schools was the subject of a 6-year inquiry conducted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, established in 2008 under the terms of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The Indian Residential School Survivor Committee (IRSSC) guided and advised the Commission's work.[91] The process involved interviews with approximately 6,000 indigenous persons most of whom

> survived the experience of living in the schools as students. The stories of that experience are sometimes difficult to accept as something that could have happened in a country such as Canada, which has long prided itself on being a bastion of democracy, peace, and kindness throughout the world. Children were abused, physically and sexually, and they died in the schools in numbers that would not have been tolerated in any school system anywhere in the country, or in the world…Ultimately, the Commission's focus on truth determination was intended to lay the foundation for the important question of reconciliation. Now that we know about residential schools and their legacy, what do we do about it?[92]

The summary report opens with a powerful confession of sin.

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[90] For the history of these schools, the role of the Catholic Church in their establishment, and the Church's cooperation with imperial-governmental power, see The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 43-128. PDF accessible at www.trc.ca.
[91] *Ibid.*, 23-24.
[92] *Ibid.*, *v-vi*

> For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as 'cultural genocide.'[93]

Educators in faith ought to explore with students how issues of territoriality and power are present in the Biblical tradition and throughout Christian history. How do they continue to influence our sense of faith and place today? [94] Engaging current conversations around the legacy of Catholic missionary evangelists such as St. Junipero Serra can enliven this topic for students.[95] Curriculum should aim to engage students in critical reflection on faith through a land-we ontology, drawing from historical legacies and current experience of place and community.

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[93] *Ibid.*, 1.

[94] A helpful resource can be found in Steve Heinrichs, ed. *Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2018). Educators will benefit from a study guide developed by the Student Christian Movement of Canada. Student Christian Movement of Canada, *Unsettling the Word: Study Guide,* vol. 1, https://www.commonword.ca/go/1552 (accessed September 26th, 2020).

[95] In the United States, recent protests organized by the Black Lives Matter movement have focused on the dismantling and removal of monuments to the Confederacy. These protests have been rightly extended to similar destruction of monuments to Catholic saints who are associated with the colonization of the Americas. See Alejandra Molina, "Who is St. Junipero Serra and Why are California Protesters Toppling his Statues?" *Americamagazine.org*, June 22nd, 2020, https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/06/22/who-st-junipero-serra-and-why-are-california-protesters-toppling-his (accessed July 18th, 2020); Alejandra Molina, "We Have a Story to Tell: Indigenous Scholars, Activists Speak Up Amid Toppling of Serra Statues," *Americamagazine.org*, July 8th, 2020, https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/07/08/we-have-story-tell-indigenous-scholars-activists-speak-amid-toppling (accessed July 18th, 2020). While some Catholic commentators rightly celebrated the removal of Confederate monuments others have been resistant to engaging in institutional self-critique and have been less supportive of the removal of monuments when light is shined on the Catholic Church's complicity with colonial violence. See for example, Massimo Faggioli, "We Need to Do More than Topple (Some) Statues, *Americamagazine.org* June 22nd, 2020, https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2020/06/22/statues-tear-down-catholic-protests (accessed July 18th, 2020); Michael Sean Winter, "Debate the Issues; Don't Destroy the Statues," *Ncronline*.org, June 24th, 2020, https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/distinctly-catholic/debate-issues-dont-destroy-statues (accessed July 18th, 2020). For a more critical perspective see Daniel Horan, "The Preferential Option for the Removal of Statues," *Ncronline.org*, July 8th, 2020, https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/faith-seeking-understanding/preferential-option-removal -statues (accessed July 18th, 2020).

*Capitalism and education in faith*          Sociologist, Juliet Schor notes the increasing influence of corporations within schools. Corporate sponsorship of education includes the sale of advertising space, exclusive contracts with vendors, and influence over the development of curricula. Schor ties this influence to "the chronic underfunding of schools. As budgets tighten, officials become more receptive to selling access to their students." [96] Underfunding of schools and the reliance on corporate patronage for educational funding is a particular concern in sacrifice zones like the coal-mining region of central Appalachia. As Jason Cervone observes, in ecological sacrifice zones, this "corporatizing" of education takes on a different tone. Students in sacrifice zones are not simply socialized to become good consumers, develop brand loyalties, see corporations as serving the common good, and seek market solutions to socio-political problems. Rather, they are often educated in such a way that they learn to accept the sacrifice of their communities to serve these ends.[97]

By way of an example, sociologist, Rebecca Scott reflects on the influence of coal companies over public education in central Appalachian communities where coal-mining is the prominent industry.[98] Scott describes a school field trip to a mountaintop removal coal mining site which she attended in Mingo County, West Virginia. The tour was facilitated by the company's president. During the tour he "stressed the technical

[96] Juliet Schor, *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture* (New York: Scribner, 2004), 90.

[97] Jason Cervone, *Corporatizing Rural Education*, 87-88.

[98] Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains: Extracting Nature and Identity in the Appalachian Coalfields* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 84-89. In chapter five I will address the theme of corporatization as it relates to education in faith and the relationship between Catholic institutions and the structures of extractivism, discussing the financial relationship between Catholic institutions and extractive industry in the case of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, West Virginia.

difficulties of MTR. He said that modern coal miners have to be computer literate and that special engineers had to be hired to carefully calibrate every inch of the valley fills."[99] Scott notes that "this kind of ritual visit to a coal mine…is a typical experience for area school kids." Experiences such as the one described by Scott socialize students, placing them within a field of social, political, economic, and ecological relationships.[100] Because coal companies pay low property taxes their contribution to the tax base in the form of "funding for schools, roads, and community infrastructure projects" is on a voluntary basis, creating a paternalistic relationship of patronage between coal companies and communities.[101]

Educators in faith and all of those responsible at the administrative level for Catholic schools should attend critically to institutional investments and charitable gifts for the ways in which they might contribute to or benefit from extractive economies. To this end, schools and dioceses might consider divestment from fossil fuels and reinvestment in cooperatives, credit unions, renewable technologies and companies working to promote the common good and work for social justice.[102] Students should be given opportunities

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[99] *Ibid.*, 84-85

[100] *Ibid.*, 87.

[101] Johanna Marie Haas, *Law and Property in the Mountains: A Political Economy of Resource Land in the Appalachian Coalfields* (PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2008), 94; Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 88-89.

[102] Edward Sloane, "The End of the World As We Know It: Divesting From Injustice and Re-investing in Another Possible World," *Patchquilt: A Publication of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia* (Summer 2018): 14-16. For information, practical resources, and toolkits for communities, schools, and parishes seeking to learn more about divestment see Go Fossil Free, "What is Fossil Fuel Divestment?," https://gofossilfree.org/divestment/what-is-fossil-fuel-divestment/ (accessed May 9th, 2018); Global Catholic Climate Movement, "Fossil Fuel Divestment Toolkit," https://catholicclimatemovement.global /divest-and-reinvest/toolkit/ (accessed July 18th, 2020). The movement for divestment continues to grow among Catholic universities and other institutions since the publication of *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis in 2015. To date "more than 150 Catholic institutions—including banks, universities, and foundations—have pledged to divest from fossil fuels." Molly Matthews Multedo, "Catholic Institutions Divest from Fossil

to engage in critical thinking about how the school itself is a *place* that often benefits from, depends upon, or is entangled in extractive economies.[103] In what ways can we resist resource extraction, work toward an equitable sharing of material resources, and nurture a responsible relationship to Earth? Values of simplicity and sustainability can serve to keep educational costs low to better serve those communities that have been displaced by capitalist economic logic.

*Consumerism and education in faith*        A friend and mentor of mine who is a Catholic Worker in central Appalachia often plays host and educator to students on immersion experiences in West Virginia. My friend once confided to me that at times she worries service and immersion trips are just another extractive industry in central Appalachia. While it is not done intentionally or with malice, students take an emotional toll on the people they encounter. Neighbors in her 'holler' and residents of the community often share their personal stories, their struggles, and their hopes. Meals and laughter are shared and bonds are forged over the course of a week, which is a typical length for such cultural immersion experiences. However, as students return to their lives promises to stay in touch or return are often broken. My friend's reflections should prompt educators in faith working in and seeking partnership with ecological sacrifice zones to think deeply about the extent to which a logic of extraction enters into our pedagogies, turning the lives and experiences of people in a place into commodities for

Fuels," *Yaleclimateconnections.org*, April 13th, 2020, https://www.yaleclimateconnections.org/2020/04/catholic-institutions-divest-from-fossil-fuels/ (accessed July 18th, 2020).
[103] Abbey Willis, "Queering Place: Using the Classroom to Describe the World," in *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Pedagogy and Place-Based Education: From Abstract to the Quotidian*, eds. Deric Shannon and Jeffery Galle (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 135-145

the spiritual and theological education of high school or university students who live elsewhere.

Through thick description of time spent at a representative example of a destination for tourists of the spiritual life Macarena Gómez-Barris uses a decolonial lens to examine the impact of "spiritual tourism" on Indigenous communities in Peru in ways that echo my friend's observations. Centro Paz y Luz is "a popular destination for spiritual tourism" owned and operated by Diane Dunn, "a white American 'ex-patriot.'"[104] Such experiences benefit the typically bourgeois, white U. S. Americans and Europeans who visit. In what Gómez-Barris describes as "new age settler colonialism," Indigenous peoples, their religious traditions, and the representatives of those traditions are "extracted from in order for subjects of late capitalism to become 'whole again,' remade away from consumer capitalism and its alienating force."[105] Spiritual tourist economies tend to reproduce patterns of colonization providing "little positive result for local communities."[106] The spiritual tourist economy too often "eschews the question of historical land inequality or working to change the structures of colonialism for the development of Andean native peoples…the central concerns of occupation, gentrification, and appropriation remain completely absented from the consequences of new age settler colonialism."[107]

Consumer capitalism has effects on how we experience our spiritual lives with implications for faith development and educating in faith. Theologian Vincent Miller well

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[104] Macarena Gómez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 50-52.
[105] *Ibid.*, 53, see also page 51.
[106] *Ibid.*, 43.
[107] *Ibid.*, 52-53.

describes commodification as both an economic *and* cultural process. The commodification of culture is

> a process in which the habits and dispositions learned in the consumption of literal commodities spread into our relationships with culture. This results in the liquidation of cultural traditions whereby the elements they comprise (beliefs, symbols, practices, and so on) are abstracted from their traditional contexts and engaged as free-floating signifiers, put to decorative uses far removed from their original references and connections with other beliefs and practices.[108]

Commodification is characterized in particular by a process of abstraction in which having supersedes being and value is located in things rather than relationships. As a result, the conditions of production and their attendant costs are hidden from view.[109]

A consumer society is a society of spectators in which automation, mass production, and mass consumption, reduce the value of traditional means of production and marginalize, erase, or actively take-over nonmarket means of sustaining life." [110] Commodification limits the ability of people to engage as active producers of social life. Commodification renders life passive, and consumerism isolates us from one another as the market and devices replace the richness of craft skills and localized forms of exchange passed on and encouraged through communal life.[111]

Additionally, consumerism and commodification privatize and thereby erode public goods such as water and other utilities, schooling, and land and seeds for growing food. Using the latter as an example, movements for food justice are often framed around the concept of 'sovereignty.' As Jennifer Ayers explains, when a community

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[108] Vincent J. Miller, *Consuming Religion: Christian Faith and Practice in a Consumer Culture*, (New York: Continuum, 2003), 32, see also page 72.
[109] *Ibid.*, 37-39.
[110] *Ibid.*, 42-44, 59-60, 117.
[111] *Ibid.*, 47-48, 51-52, 63.

can produce some of its own food, a community reduces its dependence on outside sources of food, thus moving beyond food security (in which food is provided) toward food sovereignty (in which food is produced). Food sovereignty means both that the community no longer looks solely to the presence of a corporate grocery store to provide for its food needs and that the community does not rely solely on emergency food ministries of charity for the provision of food. By doing so, the community participates in the movement for food *justice*.[112]

Sovereignty and self-determination can serve as generative themes to structure our relationship to personal faith development and our relationships to the spiritual traditions of others as we seek to liberate our spiritual development from the spiritual marketplace. Craft skills reground our spiritual development in the dailiness of living and in mutually supportive relationships with Earth and each other.

*Critical Creation-centered Pedagogy: Families, Parishes, Schools, and Camps*

What pedagogical practices can those of us responsible for education in faith (parents, pastors, classroom teachers, lay ministers, and community activists and organizers) adopt to contribute to a decolonizing process that makes a preferential option for sacrifice zones? How do those of us who are settlers in ecological sacrifice zones such as Appalachia join in relationships of solidarity with all of those impacted by the logic of extraction? How do we seek a future for our places beyond the sacrificial logic of

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[112] Jennifer Ayers, *Good Food: Grounded Practical Theology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 104-105, see also pages 88-97, 104-116; Robert Gottlieb and Anupama Joshi, *Food Justice* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 114-119. Seed sovereignty contests the ownership of patents on seeds by agribusiness corporations such as Monsanto and the required use by farmers of non-renewable patented seeds. Vandana Shiva, "The Seed Emergency: The Threat to Food and Democracy," *Aljazeera.com*, February 6th, 2012, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/02/201224152439941847.html (accessed September 26th, 2020); For a discission of "water poverty" and the effects of the privatization and commodification of water supplies see the Guardian Water Poverty study conducted by economist Roger Colton, *The Affordability of Water and Wastewater Service in Twelve U. S. Cities: A Social, Business, and Environmental Concern* (The Guardian: May 2020). The full report is accessible here, https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jun/23/full-report-read-in-depth-water-poverty-investigation (accessed September 26th, 2020). For a summary see Nina Lakhani, "Revealed: Millions of Americans Can't Afford Water as Bills Rise 80% in a Decade," *Theguardian.com,* June 23rd, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/23/millions-of-americans-cant-afford-water-bills-rise (accessed September 26th, 2020).

extractivism, and how does an education in faith contribute to this search for kinship with/in our places?

A critical Creation-centered pedagogy seeks answers by drawing on the Judeo-Christian logic of jubilee as outlined in chapter 3. This hermeneutic tradition recognizes that our relationship with God and God's saving will for us is dependent upon, entwined with, and radically inclusive of Creation. The same can be said of our relationships with each other. These relationships always *take place* and if we refuse kinship with/in our places it is not possible to nurture and preserve life or work for justice for our neighbors near and far.

I will explore the significant developmental ecologies that touch upon the faith development of young people, providing suggestions for incorporating a critical Creation-centered pedagogy within each of these settings. I give special attention to summer camps as a significant, but underappreciated, developmental ecology that can support place-based education in faith.

*Practicing Jubilee in Family Life*

Families can nurture a logic of jubilee in their homes in several ways. At the center of family life is the practice of home*making*. What does it mean to call a place *home* when our being in place is enmeshed with ongoing, dominant systems of colonization, capitalist exploitation, and wasteful consumerism? I suggest that a critical Creation-centered pedagogy requires that educators in faith (and I include parents here) attend to what Seforosa Carroll calls the "ideal of home" and "homemaking as practice."[113]

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[113] Seforosa Carroll, "Homemaking: Reclaiming the Ideal of Home as a Framework for Hosting Cultural and Religious Diversity," in *Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theologies: Storyweaving in the Asia-*

Carroll underscores three characteristics of home. First, home is a relational category. Second, home concerns dwelling. Finally, home requires intentional practices—behaviors and habits—that imbue the home with meaning. As Carroll summarizes,

> ideally, home is a place where one feels a deep sense of belonging and security, acceptance and connection, without fear or shame…it is where primary relationships, identity and notions of the other are formed, and hospitality is practiced…home (both as metaphor and as reality) and homemaking is essential to the task of Christian witness, discipleship, and global citizenship as those demand of us hospitality to the human and nonhuman other. It is the ideal of home that informs the continuing movement of homemaking as practice.[114]

Feminist economic theory illuminates the practice of home*making* by drawing attention to the interrelationship between the personal and political, the domestic and the public. Place (or bioregion), household, and wider socio-economic structures are interrelated. Indeed, the Greek term *oikos,* the common root of our contemporary English words ecology and economy carries the meaning house, dwelling, family, or belonging. By extension, the ancient term for economy is *oikonomia* and carries the meaning "household management."[115] Through interviews with homesteading families, Mark Sundeen suggests that "*household* might be defined as the intersection of family and work."[116] Christians can draw inspiration from Benedictine spirituality's unity of *ora et labora*, or prayer and work, to make explicit a faith perspective within practices of homemaking.[117] The rhythms and patterns of our lives and supposedly mundane affairs of

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*Pacific*, eds. Mark G. Brett and Jione Havea (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 219-221. See also Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1977), 56-57.

[114] Seforosa Carroll, "Homemaking," 219.

[115] *Ibid.*, 224.

[116] Mark Sundeen, *The Unsettlers: In Search of the Good Life in Today's America* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2017), 292; see also Rebecca Neale Gould, *At Home in Nature: Modern Homesteading and Spiritual Practice in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 19, 23-24, 33.

[117] Fred Bahnson, *Soil and Sacrament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), 21-24.

making a home are sacred expressions or acts of prayer that draw us into the inner life of God.

*Nurturing kinship with creation*      First, motivated by Christian faith, families can cultivate values of simplicity and a sense of connection to their places. Time of play and exploration nurtures in children a love of place and a curiosity about Creation. Parents can encourage children to get outside, limiting screen time with TVs, computers, or cell phones. Family hikes and other outdoor activities can be framed with God-talk and treated as acts of prayer.[118]

During times of family prayer, parents can intentionally lift up the natural world, particularly the needs of *the local environment* and invite young people to do the same. Parents can also highlight ecological themes in scripture or mention the ways in which Jesus sought to care for his place, inviting young people to think how they might do the same. Families can celebrate together the feast of ecological saints such as Sts. Isidore and Marie, the patron saints of farmers, or St. Francis of Assisi with intentional activities in the home or in the community. Parents can also invite young people to learn the stories of local 'saints,' people of faith and/or good will who worked for environmental justice even if they are not canonical saints. Appalachia, for example, has many witnesses to the sacrality of Earth worth celebrating and including, informally, in the liturgical calendar

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[118] Many of the ideas in the sections that follow are developed based on suggestions provided by Bill Huebsch, *Whole Community Catechesis in Plain English* (New London, CT: Twenty-Third, 2002), 68-76; Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, updated and expanded ed. (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2008 [2005]), 359-372; Thomas Groome, *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 207-230.

such as Judy Bonds, Larry Gibson, or Becky Simpson.[119] Noncanonical, more-than-human 'saints' such as the Wolf of Gubbio, whom St. Francis befriended, or species recently martyred as a result of human-caused climate change might also be acknowledged. Finally, a home altar can be adorned with icons of the local environment, rocks gathered from a stream, flowers from the garden, a candle poured with local beeswax, and images of witnesses to interspecies peace and ecological justice. Such practices help young people identify agents of God's Kin-dom in their own place and encourage them to see their own place, and all of creation, as holy.

*Nurturing cooperation and mutual aid in our communities*        The household should be viewed as an extension of the local community and bioregion. Families can "invite native flora and fauna into [their] life," planting their yard with native plants, installing a birdbath, bat house, or bee hives.[120] Families might consider adopting a vegetarian diet on Fridays, echoing the old Catholic tradition kept by their grandparents as a day of 'abstinence' from meat. At other times, they might purchase only local, ethically raised meat and eggs. Such abstinence from meat and factory farming of animals can be offered as a way of honoring and respecting the more-than-human beings who give themselves as food. Finally, as an act of resistance, a vegetarian diet bears

[119] Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *Telling Takes Us Home,* 46; Carol Davis, "Becky Simpson, the Mother Teresa of Appalachia," *American Profile* (Autumn 2000): 4.
[120] Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*, 359.

witness to the deleterious impact on Earth and the lives of more-than-human beings that results from industrialization of animal husbandry.[121]

Families can participate in the democratic process together, getting involved in local politics and community organizations or attending rallies, demonstrations, and protests related to local issues of social justice. Families can join or start cooperatives and resource or skill sharing networks with neighbors. Regular potluck neighborhood meals, clothing exchanges, and childcare cooperatives can deepen a sense of hospitality and jubilee sharing within a community. Finally, as they are able, families can 'green' their home, joining a solar co-op, installing a compost toilet, or growing some of their own food either in the yard or through a community garden.

*Nurturing empowerment and healing the social body*        Families can cultivate a sense of sabbath, extending parish prayer into the rhythms and practices of everyday life, with attention to a Sunday sabbath. Energy fasts on the sabbath can be an occasion to disconnect from technology, slow down, practice attentiveness to our place, and radical presence to one another. In other words, when we disconnect from devices, we begin to *reconnect* with each other.

Families might instead spend time re-skilling through acts of household production such as baking bread, preserving food grown in the family garden, and building or

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[121] Olivia Petter, "Veganism is 'Single Biggest Way' to Reduce our Environmental Impact on Planet, Study Finds," June 1st, 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/veganism-environment al-impact-planet-reduced-plant-based-diet-humans-study-a8378631.html (accessed July 18th, 2020); Roger Harrabin, "Plant-based Diet Can Fight Climate Change—UN," *Bbc.com*, August 8th, 2019, https:// www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-49238749 (accessed July 18th, 2020); Sabrina Barr, "Scientists Urge People to Eat Less Meat Amid Declaration of Climate Emergency," *Independent.co.uk*, November 5th, 2019, https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/vegan-vegetarian-meat-climate-emerg ency-scientists-environment-a9185956.html (accessed July 18th, 2020).

repairing objects for the home. As the demands of work allow, families might also decide to limit travel, or the use of automobiles, on Sundays. They might also resist making purchases or indulging in consumer spending, using this time instead to educate themselves on the conditions and costs of producing certain household items. These acts can help young people think more intentionally about their habits of consumption, their relationship with objects in the home, and how their decisions impact the lives of others. Families can also spend their sabbath sharing family stories, making art, and simply enjoying and celebrating the blessing of unstructured time together.

*Practicing Jubilee in Parishes*

Returning to Ched Myers model of "watershed ecclesiology," in this section I explore how the parish can be a setting for the practice of a critical Creation-centered pedagogy. All members of the parish, clergy and lay, young and old, male and female, human and more-than-human teach and learn together as they seek to become Christian disciples committed to a pattern of life centered on a logic of jubilee.[122]

*Nurturing kinship with creation*    A bioregional perspective can be represented in the ritual and symbolic life of the worshiping community. Art adorning the worship space can reflect bioregional symbols and come from the hands of local artists, encouraging reverence for a community's place. Kentucky artist, author, and homesteader, Harlan Hubbard, when asked by a local church "for a painting of the

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[122] Ched Myers, "Toward Watershed Ecclesiology."

Jordan, made them a painting of their own river, the Ohio."[123] Liturgical vessels and vestments can be the work of the congregation. Eucharistic elements can also reflect regional equivalents of wheat bread and grape wine. These can even be harvested from crops grown by parishioners. The paschal candle can be poured with locally sourced and sustainably harvested beeswax. Palms can be replaced with a bioregional equivalent for palm Sunday worship.[124] Finally, biblical, theological, and bioregional/watershed literacy can be woven into the life of a congregation through retreats and other prayer experiences that cultivate the connection between "soul and soil."[125] An example here is the Catholic Committee of Appalachia's "Cross in the Mountains" program. In this Lenten tradition, CCA coordinates opportunities in communities across Appalachia to pray the stations of the cross in places damaged by extractive industry and industrial pollution. [126] Congregations should also increase their knowledge of the Indigenous history of, and names for, the place where they worship, even integrating these into their congregational identity and prayers. They might begin worship with a "territorial acknowledgement" of the land they occupy, lifting up the names of the watershed and Indigenous community in their place.

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[123] Wendell Berry, "Foreword," in Ellen Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xii-xiii.

[124] For examples and inspiration see, Fred Bahnson, "The Priest in the Trees: Feral Faith in the Age of Climate Change," *Harper's Magazine* (December 2016), https://harpers.org/archive/2016/12/the-priest-in-the-trees/ (accessed May 21st, 2020); Salal + Cedar, "What is Salal + Cedar," http://salalandcedar.com/ (accessed May 21st, 2020). Many congregations associated with the Wild Church Network are also wonderful models from a variety of denominational settings. Wild Church Network, "About Us," https://www.wildchurchnetwork.com/ (accessed July 18th, 2020).

[125] Fred Bahnson, *Soil and Sacrament*, 11.

[126] Catholic Committee of Appalachia, "Cross in the Mountains," https://www.ccappal.org/cross-in-the-mountains (accessed May 21st, 2020).

*Nurturing cooperation and mutual aid in our communities*　　　　Church kitchens

and parish halls can provide opportunities "for re-skilling around cooking with local

foods and medicines, as well as fermenting, canning, and preserving. Here under-

deployed congregational elders can teach young adults the older arts of home

economics."[127] Congregations might also consider hiring a full-time ecojustice ministries

coordinator. Finally, dioceses could review their investment portfolios and examine how

they can 'green' their infrastructure. Along the way, these decisions should be made

through consultation with the laity.

Churches should reflect critically upon their relationship with land held as private

property, restoring portions to the commons for public use and to empower food

sovereignty. When possible land should be restored to its original peoples, or its future

use should be determined in consultation with them or their representatives. For example,

one denomination returned a portion of land to the Indigenous community from whom

they had stolen that land centuries early as a result of a broken treaty agreement.[128]

Active congregations might make meeting spaces available for use by primary peoples

and provide reparation through networks of mutual aid.

Jennifer Ayers provides examples of congregations and organizations such as Faith in

Place that are working to support food sovereignty in their community. Congregations

might consider hosting a farmer's market, coordinating a Community Supported

Agriculture program, or starting their own community garden project based on

community needs. Ayers stresses it is important that churches discern how they can offer

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[127] Ched Myers, "Watershed Ecclesiology," 214
[128] Terra Brockman, "Decolonized Sacred Land: How a Church Became the Home of an American Indian Organization," *Christian Century* (March 11, 2020): 22-25.

"a set of social and economic supports to farmers, including helping them establish markets for the food they grow and raise, interpreting to the broader community the value of purchasing goods from local farmers…these relationships also offer a set of social and ecological goods to the religious community." [129] By focusing on food sovereignty churches transform ministries of feeding the hungry in a way that addresses structural issues related to food insecurity, provides the food insecure opportunities to exercise greater social agency by growing their own food, and allows more socially and economically secure members of the community to exercise responsibility for their food choices through solidarity.[130]

*Nurturing empowerment and healing the social body* "Toxic tours" and "mission trips" held locally or elsewhere can serve as important first steps to educate congregations about the impacts of their consumer habits. Mallory McDuff provides examples connecting these activities to the Christian tradition of pilgrimage, drawing attention to nonprofits such as GreenFaith and Interfaith Power and Light.[131] The former hosts "toxic tours" which "aim to increase awareness of the inequitable distribution of pollutants in communities and the work of grassroots groups advocating for justice…the overall goal of these tours is to inspire people of faith to take concrete steps to mitigate

[129] Jennifer Ayers, *Good Food*, 88.
[130] Jennifer Ayers, *Good Food*, 88-97, 104-116; Fred Bahnson, *Soil and Sacrament*, 1-18. See also Valerie Volcovici, "The Decline of Coal Has West Virginia Turning to a 'Food Economy,' ed. Bruce Wallace and Frances Kerry, *Businessinsider.com* July 7th, 2015, https://www.businessinsider.com/r-after-coal-can-better-health-save-west-virginia-2015-7 (accessed September 26th, 2020); Katie Griffith, "Regrowing a Wasteland: West Virginia's Small Towns Find Creative Ways to Grapple With a Growing Problem of Food Insecurity," *Wvfocus.com*, July 2015, http://www.wvfocus.com/2015/07/regrowing-a-wasteland/ (accessed August 28th, 2015).
[131] Mallory McDuff, *Natural Saints: How People of Faith are Working to Save God's Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 106-110, 123-126.

these environmental injustices."[132] The latter has sponsored "pilgrimages" to mountain top removal coalmining sites so that people can "experience firsthand the devastating impacts of mountaintop removal on God's land and people…A pilgrimage is a journey for spiritual enrichment that involves travel to a place of meaning…A pilgrimage has the power to bring diverse people, beliefs, and faith traditions together around a sacred site based in a community."[133] Finally, parishes might partner with their local extension agency to support efforts at watershed restoration by cleaning up streams and supporting conservation efforts.

*Practicing Jubilee in Schools*

Educators can find ways to bring education in faith out of the classroom. This does not mean simply transferring the 'traditional,' teacher-centered classroom outside, although outdoor classrooms are a great suggestion! Place-based education transforms the existing curriculum with place-based goals in mind, integrating classroom learning with life in a place. Second, place-based education involves youth, members of the community, and partner organizations in this process at every step of the way.

Place-based teaching methodologies can be designed with the goals of positive youth and community development and ecological justice in mind. Teachers can ask how curriculum, methods, and projects aim to achieve the 6 Cs of PYD (see chapter 2): competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contribution. In terms of fostering *community* development, curricula and projects should be designed in response to community needs and foster social, economic, cultural, political, and ecological

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[132] *Ibid.*, 106.
[133] *Ibid.*, 125.

resilience for the *place* as much as individuals within the place. Indeed, these are interrelated.

David Sobel outlines "core strategies" for place-based educators and offers several concrete examples from across the curriculum. These strategies are based on two principles: "*maximize ownership through shared partnerships"* and *"engage students in real-world projects in the local environment and the community*."[134] Sobel suggests six strategies for schools seeking to foster place-based pedagogies: putting environmental educators into schools, involving community volunteers in collaboration with educators and school administrators to coordinate programs, connecting vision to action, addressing environmental justice issues through building consensus, providing opportunities for evaluation and professional development, and nurturing community exchange.[135] Place-based learning develops across the three basic dimensions of place as I define it in the introduction and should include attention to the more-than-human environment, the socioeconomics of a place, and issues related to citizenship and social justice.[136]

Community and place-based curriculum projects are often associated with STEM, history, or civics courses, but educators in faith can begin to imagine how the major themes of the theology or religion curriculum can be enriched by a place-based lens. This means engaging in a critical reading of the Christian Story/Vision with the theme of place in mind, asking how critical reading of scripture and tradition will inform present praxis

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[134] David Sobel, *Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities*, 2nd edition (Great Barrington, MA: Orion, 2013), 73.
[135] See David Sobel, *Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities*, 2nd edition (Great Barrington, MA: Orion, 2013), 72-131. See also Amy Demarest, *Place-Based Curriculum Design: Exceeding Standards through Local Investigations* (New York: Routledge, 2015).
[136] This schema is developed based on Gregory Smith and David Sobel, *Place and Community Based Education in Schools* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 44-59.

as disciples. Topics such as scripture, church history, catholic social teaching, Christian anthropology, the sacraments, ecclesiology, or Christology can begin with and find expression through connection to local issues, themes, and concerns with attention to the relationship between natural and built ecologies. In each case, educators can be sure to center the voice and experience of Indigenous peoples and sacrifice zones, recalling that all places are connected. If students do not live in a sacrifice zone they might critically interrogate the extent to which socio-economic structures in their own place and their personal consumption habits are dependent on or made possible by the existence sacrifice zones.

Ethnographic projects and mapmaking activities can serve as powerful methods to learn about our places. Michèle Sato, et al. describe a "social mapping" methodology that allows students to approach a place "from its margins."[137] Through observation, self-narration, and interviews students can understand how different social groups, including the more-than-human, make meaning in relationship to place. Students come to appreciate the ways in which these different meanings, relationships to, and understandings of place and land lead to social and economic conflicts.[138] Sato, et al. note that maps are statements of power relations and have been used throughout history as "weapons of imperialism."[139] By centering the stories of vulnerable groups and engaging in critical self-reflection students de-construct metanarratives of place, and social relations within place, and construct meaning with oppressed and displaced people.

[137] Michèle Sato, Regina Silva & Michelle Jaber, "Between the Remnants of Colonialism and the Insurgence of self-narrative in Constructing Participatory Social Maps: Toward a Land Education Methodology," *Environmental Education Research* 20, no 1 (2014): 106.
[138] *Ibid.*, 103.
[139] *Ibid.*, 106.

Together they imagine solutions to community and ecological issues that resist gentrification and develop their own perspectives on public policy solutions.[140] For education in faith, students can explore how Christian Story/Vision enters into these narratives historically and presently. What future roles are Christian disciples asked to play from the perspective of Earth and primary peoples?

Another possibility for integrating all three dimensions of place-based projects is school gardens. There are several examples of the use of agricultural projects from higher education that center on food and faith. One such model is the Farminary Project at Princeton University. As described in the Farminary Project mission statement,

> the Farminary Project at Princeton Seminary integrates theological education with small-scale regenerative agriculture in the conviction that the skills and character vital to faithful Christian leadership must be formed in direct relationship with God's good creation. Located at the Seminary's 21-acre farm, this project is a garden of innovation and an incubator for leadership…There is a profound correlation between the character of the agrarian, who cultivates the flourishing of life throughout an ecosystem, and the faithful Christian leader, who promotes wholeness and healing within the world that God loves. Like adept agrarians, Christian leaders must learn the pastoral sensibilities of nurturing seeds, persisting through seasons of slow growth, promoting bountiful harvest, and holding life and death in reverent wonder.[141]

There are many examples at the elementary and high school level of school garden projects that could easily be adopted by Catholic schools, drawing on the Farminary mission statement.[142] It is important that these projects are integrated across the

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[140] *Ibid.*, 106-112; La Paperson (K. Wayne Yang), "A Ghetto Land Pedagogy: An Antidote for Settler Environmentalism," *Environmental Education Research* 20, no 1 (2014): 118-120.

[141] Princeton Theological Seminary, "Farminary: Vision," https://www.ptsem.edu/discover/farminary /vision (accessed May 17th, 2020).

[142] For helpful guidance on "farm to school" programs in elementary and high schools see Lisa Chase and Vern Grubinger, *Food, Farms, and Community: Exploring Food Systems* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2014), chapter 10. Schools that might not have space on their own campus can partner with or start community gardens in cooperation with city or town government and other civic and nonprofit organizations. There are many fine examples of community garden projects in both urban and rural settings

curriculum so that students might consider and engage the same project from multiple disciplinary lenses. Schools might consider adopting block scheduling, team teaching, or planned time outside of the classroom as integral to the school week to give time for project-based learning.

As schools develop project-based curricula it is important that they collaborate with existing community organizations (such as a local rotary club, chamber of commerce, NAACP chapter, Black Lives Matter, Occupy movement, family resource networks, farmers' markets, community-based youth programs, or other issue-based groups) and support work already being undertaken. Teachers can bring community members into the classroom to share and be involved in the teaching, learning, and conversation taking place. Participation in town or city councils and boards, school sponsored community engagement events, or curriculum exhibitions can deepen these relationships, celebrate the work of students, and allow the community to learn from student projects.[143]

While not every school or community will want to focus on a farm or garden, the model can be applied to other community identified issues, themes, and projects. The important thing is that these are identified by youth (in conversation with a community's elders and most vulnerable members) and involve concrete action to promote social

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that can serve as inspiration. In cities, vacant lots and even highway underpasses have served as the sites of flourishing community garden projects. There is also the question of how the school as an institution exists in partnership with other local institutions. A school might consider a farm to school program or might elect to purchase food from local or regional farmers that work on small-scale farms and as much as possible limit itself to a seasonal menu in cafeterias. All of these decisions can be grounded in and discerned through prayerful engagement, asking how these decisions contribute to and reflect a logic of jubilee.

[143] Gregory Smith and David Sobel, *Place and Community-based Education in Schools,* 57-59, 120-129. Teacher involvement in community organizations should be considered as part of their professional development and lesson planning, and it should be considered as a part of their job description. Teaching loads should be adjusted to account for this.

agency and improve the health, well-being, quality of life, and opportunities for flourishing in a community. For educators in faith, the questions become: how does the scriptural and theological tradition help to guide such projects? How do such projects contribute to and inform the ongoing development of the life of the Church? How do they nourish the spiritual development of learners and the community at large? All of this requires that Catholic schools work with and be open to a variety of partners many of whom might be secular or with whom a school might not agree on every aspect of organizational mission. Working in broad coalitions is crucial to the health of a democratic community, requiring partnerships with all people of good will in achieving the common good.

In terms of physical plant, schools can prioritize building projects that follow principles of ecological design and invest in improvements that limit their ecological and carbon footprint. McDuff provides examples for congregations that can just as easily be applied to schools. Green improvements might include rainwater cisterns, geothermal heating, 'daylighting,' solar panel installation, compost projects for dining halls, water fountains with bottle refill stations, and the elimination of plastics in dining halls and their replacement with compostable or reusable cutlery and dishes. Schools might also seek LEED certification for buildings and consult with 'green' architects and builders. They can contract with local businesses for projects. All of this can be integrated into the curriculum and involve students in the planning, development, and implementation stages.[144]

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[144] McDuff, *Natural Saints*, 66-82; see also Stephen Kellert, *Building for Life: Designing and Understanding the Human-Nature Connection* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2005).

*Summer Camps as Jubilee Communities*

Kermit Moss and Jacob Sorenson observe that summer camps are often dismissed as significant to adolescent faith development. However, based on research from the Confirmation Project, [145] Moss and Sorenson emphasize, "Christian summer camp experiences were among the most consistently effective discipleship programs revealed in our study."[146] The findings of Moss and Sorenson suggest that camps provide more than a fun time away from home. Youth ministers and pastors should approach these experiences as educative. They might consider collaborating with educators to design these experiences with intention. Indeed, from their beginnings, educational theorists and developmental psychologists viewed camps as thoroughly educational and formative spaces.

G. Stanley Hall, one of the earliest theorists of adolescent development, "endorsed the summer camp ideal,"[147] connecting it to his theory of recapitulation, which "[proposed] that childhood play occurred in developmental stages, each of which corresponded to a stage in the human race. Recreation was not mere relaxation or idleness, he argued, but a

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[145] The Confirmation Project began in 2014 as "a three-year study of more than three thousand US congregations across five denominations (the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church [USA], and the United Methodist Church)." Kenda Creasy Dean and Katherine M. Douglass, "Introduction," in *Cultivating Teen Faith: Insights from the Confirmation Project,* eds. Richard Osmer and Katherine Douglass (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 3. The research was conducted by an ecumenical research team comprised of members of each of these denominations and the Baptist tradition. Utilizing a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods and a commitment to practical theological reflection this team sought to understand the state and impact of some of the most creative and innovative confirmation and confirmation equivalent practices operating in U. S. congregations today. See Richard Osmer and Katherine Douglass, eds., *Cultivating Teen Faith: Insights from the Confirmation Project* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 3-4, 127-128, 145-159.

[146] Kermit Moss and Jacob Sorenson, "Deep Rhythms of Faith Formation: Separation and Reintegration in Summer Camp and Retreats," in *Cultivating Teen Faith: Insights from the Confirmation Project,* eds. Richard Osmer and Katherine Douglass (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 71.

[147] Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 29-30.

critical facet of children's work toward the next level of development."[148] For Hall, the rural retreat that a summer camp provides is an ideal atmosphere for the socialization of youth by removing them from the negative influences of the city.

Leslie Paris notes that the first youth summer camps emerged in the late 19th century in response to the "antimodern anxieties" of a rapidly industrializing society. Camps expressed nostalgia for a pioneer ideal as "increasing numbers of Americans identified a return to nature as a palliative to the increasingly industrial world," providing a "basis for higher moral development." [149] At the same time, the camping movement betrays ambivalence about the value of 'civilization.' As noted, camps were thoroughly modern enterprises, influenced by the latest research in human development and educational theory.[150]

Camp directors gave great attention to measuring physiological, psychological, and behavioral health in campers and treated improvements in these areas as a major objective of the camp experience.[151] Additionally, many camp directors intentionally applied the principles of progressive education to their programs.[152] In connection with

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[148] *Ibid.*, 28. See also Lev Vygotsky, "The Role of Play in Development," in *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, eds. Michael Cole, Vera John-Steiner, Sylvia Scribner, and Ellen Souberman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978 [1933]), 92-104.

[149] Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature,* 18, 21, 25.

[150] *Ibid.*, 26-30.

[151] Bernard Mason, *Camping and Education: Camp Problems from the Campers' Viewpoint* (New York: McCall Publishing, 1930), 22-29; Lloyd Burgess Sharp, *Education and the Summer Camp: An Experiment* (New York City: Teachers College, 1930), 35-39.

[152] It is noteworthy that progressive educator, William Kilpatrick wrote the introduction to Hedley Dimock and Charles Hendry's *Camping and Character*, noting that "the summer camp as an educational agency has unusual possibilities. The contrast between it and the ordinary school is both stimulating and enlightening. The ordinary school is highly traditional and often forgetful of its educational purpose. The camp is a new venture and willing, at least at the best, to make a fresh attack upon the problem of education. The school intends, typically, to have its pupils deal only indirectly with life, learning about it from what others have to say. Camp is a place where life is in actual process." See Hedley Dimock and Charles Hendry, *Camping and Character: A Camp Experiment in Character Education* (New York: Association Press, 1931), vii.

the purposes of progressive education, camp directors sought to provide growth in character and moral development to prepare youth for participation in and contribution to democratic society. Through an engagement with the work of William Kilpatrick and John Dewey, Lloyd Burgess Sharp defines camping as "a series of purposeful, related experiences in real life situations, and is therefore an educational process."[153] Dimock and Hendry sought to foster a democratic culture through the active participation of youth in camp governance, scheduling, problem solving, and decision-making. Likewise, the interests of youth often informed the program and activities. Dimock and Hendry use the example of a group of senior campers wanting to build a log cabin. This project, decided on by the boys themselves, became their central activity and an occasion for learning and practicing a wide variety of practical and academic skills and for physical and character development.[154]

*Summer camps and educating in faith* In similar fashion, Kenda Creasy Dean observes that the power of Christian camps is their ability to encourage opportunities for young people "to describe their faith, out loud," cultivating what Dean refers to as "conversational Christianity." [155] Dean likens camps to a travel-abroad language immersion program where a distinctively Christian way of speaking, living, and relating can be practiced. They offer a "protected environment—namely, a space in which

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[153] Lloyd Burgess Sharp, *Education and the Summer Camp*, 36; see also Bernard Mason, *Camping and Education*, 7-10.
[154] Hedley Dimock and Charles Hendry, *Camping and Character*, 62-66, 104-106.
[155] Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 131-133.

articulate faith is encouraged."[156] Benor, et al. draw on multiple studies to make similar

points related to the role of overnight camps in Jewish identity development,

> Jewish summer camping has been identified as 'a unique educational setting poised to deliver powerful Jewish formative experiences to children, teens, and young adults.' The Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC)…makes this bold statement: 'the key to the Jewish future is Jewish camp. We know from research—nearly two decades' experience—that this is where young people find Jewish role models and create enduring Jewish friendships. It's where they forge a vital, lifelong connection to their essential Jewishness.'[157]

Camps provide young people critical distance from dominant socio-cultural influences within a richly-textured caring community, foster mentoring relationships with older peers and adults, and immerse young people in lives patterned on the rhythms of lived faith.[158]

Camps are highly ritualized spaces with their own symbols, language, practices, and traditions, which are enthusiastically maintained and passed on to new generations of campers by senior campers, counselors, and staff.[159] These ritual and symbolic practices and exchanges do much to incorporate young people into the world of camp, increasing its formative power. At camp, youth are less constrained by socially normative expectations, especially around gender. Youth also experience a degree of agency and decision-making typically not available in wider society.

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[156] *Ibid.*, 153-155.

[157] Sarah Bunin Benor, Jonathan Krasner, and Sharon Avni, *Hebrew Infusion: Language and Community at American Jewish Summer Camps* (New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark: Rutgers University Press, 2020), 6.

[158] Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian*, 132-135, 153-156; Kermit Moss and Jacob Sorenson, "Deep Rhythms of Faith Formation," 75-84; See also Sara K. Johnson, Jane A Goldman, Anita I. Garey, Preston A. Britner, and Shannon E. Weaver, "Emerging Adults' Identity Exploration: Illustrations From Inside the 'Camp Bubble,'" *Journal of Adolescent Research* 26, no. 2 (2011): 258-295.

[159] Bernard Mason, *Camping and Education*, 75; Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature*, 97-99, 102; Sarah Bunin Benor, et al., *Hebrew Infusion*, 7-9.

*Summer camps and critical education* At the same time, to what extent do camps form young people in a *critical consciousness regarding their faith and their place*? Camp experiences are often largely imagined and supervised by adults seeking to "direct [youth] into definite channels."[160] Indeed, as Paris notes, to a large extent, camps sought to "instill middle-class habits and American values" particularly in lower classes and immigrants.

> Camps were deeply segregated spaces, far more effectively segregated than the urban constituencies that sponsored them. Whereas urbanites were constantly reminded of a world beyond their own communities' borders, camps reflected the divisions of American society at large, socializing children in the ways of segregated democratic culture.[161]

Camps were particularly guilty of promoting various forms of racialized play that drew upon racist stereotypes of black and Indigenous people as representative of the 'primitive' culture that the camp experience sought to recreate. Most often "playing Indian" offered a ritualized and romanticized response to the cultural anxieties and health concerns that developmental scientists, educators, and parents shared regarding the effects of industrialism and urbanization on the lives of young people. Such play drew upon the trope of the "noble savage." As Paris explains,

> the racial connotations of primitive play were not entirely pejorative, inasmuch as they paid equivocal tribute to qualities deemed at risk in modern Children's busy lives: health, sincerity of feeling, simplicity, play. Such play further implied that white Americans might in some essential way be deficient in emotional range and vigor…In everyday camp practice, summer tans exemplified both the healthful possibilities of 'going' native and the promise of physical transformation…Camp leaders regularly promised that campers under their care would become bigger, stronger, and darker.[162]

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[160] Hedley Dimock and Charles Hendry, *Camping and Character*, 296.
[161] Leslie Paris, *Children's Nature*, 56, 59.
[162] *Ibid.,* 192-194.

On the other hand, the presence of camp minstrel shows and ethnic jokes reflected a growing anxiety "about sharing space with blacks at home" and "an increasingly heterogenous social order."[163] Despite the ambivalence of representations of Indigenous culture, racialized play at summer camps "taught campers their place in a racial hierarchy while it initiated them into a specifically American brand of racial nostalgia…they relegated so-called primitive people to fanciful, long-gone pasts…they elided the particular histories of colonial and racial oppression" and ritually served to "contain the threat that racial difference represented as a constitutive agent in white children's subjectivity."[164]

The typical summer camp has by and large moved beyond explicit patterns of racist play, segregation, and cultural appropriation. Despite this legacy, I believe camps can serve as a centerpiece for a critical Creation-centered education in faith. As intentional communities of jubilee, camps can provide a space for nurturing a sense of bioregional discipleship. While space does not permit their full exploration, I suggest four areas (for future study) where camp program directors can focus their attention: *times of prayer and contemplation throughout the day, learning traditional craftskills that contribute to the life of the camp community and are transferable to a camper's home community, opportunities for leisure and unstructured play, opportunities for intentional learning about and reflection on personal faith and denominational traditions, and service and hospitality to the wider community within which the camp is placed.* Rather than appropriate Indigenous knowledge and culture through a commodified sense of

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[163] *Ibid.*, 206.
[164] *Ibid.*, 191-192.

'Indianness,' camps can transform the colonial and racist legacy of "playing Indian" by engaging with and learning from Indigenous struggles against extractive industry and supporting Indigenous movements for land repatriation and sovereignty.

*Conclusions*

In this chapter I have sketched a vision of education in faith that nurtures young people's faith development through positive, just, and loving relationship with/in their place. Such education is grounded in experience with/in the local community, oriented toward justice, and attentive to the social and emotional dimensions of knowing. It engages both the natural and built environments that are present in a young person's place and explores how these are mutually related. This approach emphasizes learning through intentional practices and critical reflection in and across the significant settings of a young person's life with particular attention to the home, the church, the school, and their community and bioregion. Most importantly, critical Creation-centered pedagogy prioritizes ways of knowing and being beyond the dominant patterns of Western and human-centered traditions, giving preference to the wisdom of Earth and primary peoples.

The Judeo-Christian Story/Vision highlights distinctive patterns of living in relationship to Earth and community expressed in the Levitical code and the Jesus Movement. Place-based education in faith grounds itself in this 'jubilee' tradition and seeks to apply it in our own places. Ecological justice depends on our ability to nurture communities that pass on these commitments. The spiritual nurturance of the person and community occurs in ongoing conversation, crossing time and space, moving forward

and backward. Our knowledge of God occurs also in conversation with our bioregions. In the next chapter I bring the pedagogy outlined above more fully into the Appalachian context, bringing this dissertation full circle. I examine the place-based theology of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia and offer suggestions for utilizing CCA's work to inform adolescent education in faith.

**Chapter Five**

**Education in Faith 'Without Walls': A Critical Creation-Centered Pedagogy in Appalachia and Beyond**

*"Our Students combine their educational experiences into total educational programs that help them develop the skills, competencies and creative talents that they feel are most important to them…We have students learning cooperative management skills, developing community arts programs, designing training programs for paralegals, putting craft skills to work in local elementary schools and developing creative early childhood education programs."*—General Information Brochure, Appalachian University Without Walls, c.1973[1]

*"In God's grand story, everyone must find a place…Each of us, in the communities where we find ourselves, are called to become 'living pastorals': listening deeply with the heart, finding Christ's presence there, and then acting boldly, with others, for God's reign."*—Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home*[2]

This dissertation began in the place of Appalachia. I reflected on the historical and present experience of Appalachia as an ecological sacrifice zone impacted by extractive systems of colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism. In chapter two, I stressed the ways in which these systems produce negative developmental outcomes for young people for whom sacrifice zones like Appalachia are home. At the center of this dissertation is an invitation to educators in faith to adopt an approach to pedagogy that is sensitive to the importance of place in the developmental lives of adolescents, including their faith development. The Judeo-Christian Story/Vision insists that it is through partnership with

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[1] Cited in Helen M. Lewis and Monica Appleby, *Mountain Sisters: From Convent to Community* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 168. Appleby and Lewis together founded the AUWW program in 1972 through a Ford Foundation Fellowship grant.

[2] Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories that Shape Us, A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia* (Spencer, WV: Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 2015), 59.

all life in a bioregion that we come to experience God's saving presence. Significantly, within this approach, the land, the waters, and all beings with whom we share a place are agents and participants within the process of learning. Educating for and through kinship with Creation is crucial to empowering young people to develop a faith grounded in a preferential option for sacrifice zones.

Before concluding this dissertation, it seems appropriate, then, to return to Appalachia in light of the Judeo-Christian Story/Vision described in chapter three and the pedagogical vision of chapter four. Together these chapters offer a theological and pedagogical approach for bringing young people into a new relationship with place grounded in a lived relationship with the Creator-liberator God. Re-mapping the geography of our hearts requires that we return to place with the promise and vision of the Kin-dom of God and a logic of jubilee. A critical Creation-centered education in faith seeks to make this invitation accessible all members of a community so they are empowered to appropriate this vision into their own lives and sense of place.[3]

As educators in faith look to the future of sacrifice zones like Appalachia and motivated by the discussions and praxis suggested in this dissertation, The Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA) is an inspiring and significant example of the hope that faith can be found despite the logic of extraction and its ongoing dominance in the places we claim to love.[4] CCA's approach to ministry is captured in a series of pastoral letters

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[3] See Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, The Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1991), 250, 267.
[4] I would like to thank my friend and colleague, West Virginia activist and theologian Michael Iafrate, for his assistance in locating and alerting me to key primary sources for the following paragraphs. Michael has been a wonderful sounding board as I sought to clarify my own thinking about the contributions of the pastorals to theological pedagogy and education in faith. While I have yet to read it, Iafrate's own dissertation project, "Decolonizing Appalachian Theology: Liberation and Beyond in the Post-Vatican II

written between 1975 and 2015: *This Land is Home to Me: A Pastoral Letter on Powerlessness in Appalachia (1975); At Home in the Web of Life: A Pastoral Message on Sustainable Communities in Appalachia (1995); The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking our Place in the Stories that Shape Us, A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia (2015)*. While the bishops of the region signed the first two, for reasons that will be discussed below, their signatures were not sought for the third. These documents make a significant contribution to the development of a place-based approach to ecological theology. As such, CCA contributes to the development of cultivating place-based approaches to ministry and educating in faith.

At the same time, commenting on the legacy of *This Land is Home to Me* and its reception within the local Church in Appalachia, Brian O'Donnell, SJ notes that by and large little was done to catechize priests, ministers, or laity in a way that reflected the spirit of the pastoral, and, aside from a handful of experiments, parishes and the operation of Catholic schools and diocesan structures did not reflect the radical vision and action plans set forth in the pastoral.[5] I would extend O'Donnell's comment into the present. Indeed, the same could be said for all three of CCA's pastorals. Particularly in the context of recent Church documents such as *Laudato Si*, *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology,* and *Querida Amazonia,* what I call a logic of jubilee should

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Grassroots Appalachian Church," (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, St. Michael's College, forthcoming), promises to be a significant contribution to the ongoing conversation about Catholicism in the mountains. I would also like to thank Steve Dalton, research librarian at Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, for his assistance in pointing me towards and helping me to locate other helpful primary sources.
[5] Brian O'Donnell, SJ, "Recovering the Dream: The Birth and Reception of the Regional Pastoral Letter *This Land is Home to Me* by the Catholic Church in Appalachia," (ThM thesis, Weston School of Theology, 1986), 25.

become fundamental to and serve as a constituent component of all catechetical, religious education, ministerial formation, and spiritual development programs.

I suggest that this is the task going forward, and I hope this dissertation contributes a vision and approach for cultivating pedagogies that can make place-based catechesis and education in faith possible. I believe that the place-based approach to education described in the previous chapter in particular can serve to bring the theological and ministerial vision of CCA into pedagogical focus and enhance the possibilities for the reception and application of CCA's pastoral resources within Appalachia, making their vision more accessible in the lives of people of faith while also serving as a model for other bioregions. It is in this spirit that I return to Appalachia with the hope that faith can be found.

First, I include a brief overview of the founding of CCA. Second, I discuss the content and methodology of the Appalachian pastoral letters. Third, I discuss the way of being Church that has been characteristic of CCA as this organization has sought to give expression to the vision suggested by the pastorals. Along the way, I examine CCA's contribution to the development of a place-based ecological theology, addressing both the challenges and possibilities inherent in this approach. I also offer insights for educators in faith seeking to develop a theology with/in their own place in partnership with young people.

## The Founding of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia

With the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Catholic Church made a turn toward the so-called modern world. Leaving behind its formerly defensive posture, the

Church sought to emphasize solidarity with "the whole human family," the dignity of the human person, and to make a preferential option for the poor. The Church emphasized the importance of "reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in light of the Gospel."[6] It also encouraged a more active role for the laity in the life of the Church, immersing itself in local circumstances and seeking regional expressions of being Church informed by the lives, circumstances, and needs of people in specific, local places.[7] This willingness to listen and learn is tied to a commitment to pastoral praxis as integral to faith. As the World Synod of Bishops expressed it in 1971, "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation."[8] The Catholic Committee of Appalachia (CCA) is a powerful example of lay and ordained Catholics working to develop a mutual model of ministry in their place with a clear attention to renewed emphasis on the local Church.

The story of the pastorals is especially indebted to the ministries of Catholic lay and religious women, particularly those associated with the Glenmary Sisters (a religious order founded to work in Appalachia and the South), many of which preceded the

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[6] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965)*, in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, expanded ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), no. 4.

[7] *Lumen Gentium (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 1964)*, in *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, completely revised translation in inclusive language, ed. Austin Flannery, OP, ed. (Northport, NY/Dublin: Costello/Dominican, 1996), nos. 33-38; Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples, 1967),* in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, expanded ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), nos. 3-4; Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens (A Call to Action, 1971)*, in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, expanded ed. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), nos. 3-4.

[8] World Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World (1971)*, in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, expanded edition, eds. David O'Brien and Thomas Shannon (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010), 306.

founding of CCA and the composition of the Appalachian pastoral letters.[9] Indeed, some

of the most innovative forms of ministry that have occurred in the region are a result of

their efforts and the pastorals themselves are heavily indebted to their vision and

leadership. As Glenmary priest Les Schmidt observes, "the Glenmary Sisters were one of

the most prophetic elements in the church during the 1960s. They were [also] a moment

of threat for many bishops."[10] In 1967, forty-four women left the Glenmary sisters to

form FOCIS (Federation of Communities in Service). Their story is important to the

extent that FOCIS was envisioned more as a logical extension of and an alternative way

of living out their vows. Linda Mashburn states,

> several FOCIS members identified FOCIS as their church…for me it has always
> epitomized the best of what church is: the Body of Christ…When I visited a
> FOCIS household I felt I was visiting a wonderful young new church. I
> experienced the fellowship, and there was so much in common in how we
> perceived problems, possibilities and shared the hope, the work, everything. I felt
> totally at home.[11]

FOCIS modeled a new way of being Church rooted in place.

Today, the members of FOCIS are retired from their ministries; however, they have

carried their approach to being Church and community forward into retirement through

the founding of the ElderSpirit community in Abingdon, VA. In 1995, at the prompting

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[9] On the one hand, my own research and that of others confirms the central role that Vatican II played in many of the radical pastoral experiments of women religious in the 1960s. However, it is perhaps inaccurate to give full credit to the Second Vatican Council. Indeed, many women religious were prepared to 'receive' the Council in a unique way because of the curriculum of the Sister Formation Conference, founded in 1954 and inspired by the educational vision of Sr. Madeleva Wolff. The SFC was a non-canonical grassroots association that developed a college curriculum in which sisters studied the social and behavioral sciences at secular universities and engaged the progressive vision of the *nouvelle theologie*. See Mary Ann Hinsdale, *Women Shaping Theology* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2006); Amy Koehlinger, *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Edward Sloane, "Badass Nuns: Women Religious as the Hands and Feet of the Church in Appalachia" (unpublished paper presented at the Appalachian Studies Association Annual Conference, 2017).
[10] Quoted in Helen M. Lewis and Monica Appleby, *Mountain Sisters,* 59.
[11] Quoted in *Ibid.,* 221.

of FOCIS member Dene Peterson, the FOCIS Futures Committee was formed for FOCIS members to envision their future as they moved toward later life and retirement. They turned their attention to the 'co-housing movement,' an approach to intentional community that often includes a combination of "common facilities; private dwellings; resident-structured routines; resident management; design for social contact; resident participation in the development process; and pragmatic social objectives." In 1999 FOCIS members created a 501c3 and broke ground on the development of a community of 29 homes with several shared facilities. In 2006, 39 residents moved into the community.[12]

ElderSpirit is a mixed-income community, focusing on low to middle income persons. It is open to all elderly persons who seek to live in a community of mutual care, support, and spiritual accompaniment. ElderSpirit is organized around 6 core values, or dimensions of "late-life spirituality," developed by the community: inner work, caring for oneself, mutual support, community service, reverence for creation, and creative life. Members are active in the governance and maintenance of the community and nourished by a wide variety of community organized and sponsored activities that center around the community values.[13] ElderSpirit serves as a reminder that place-based education in faith

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[12] Anne Glass, "Aging in a Community of Mutual Support: The Emergence of an Elder Intentional Cohousing Community in the United States," *Journal of Housing for the Elderly,* 23 (2009): 285. Based on the study, residents at the time included 26 females and 7 males. 5 residents did not participate in the study. The gender of nonparticipants is not recorded in the study.

[13] Helen M. Lewis and Monica Appleby, *Mountain Sisters*, 242-247; Elder Spirit Community, "Late Life Spirituality in the ElderSpirit Community," 2007, under "Conceptual Model," https://www.elderspirit.net/ pages/vision.html (accessed on July 10th, 2020); Anne Leibig, "ElderSpirit Community: A Community of Mutual Support and Late-Life Spirituality," in *Community Psychotherapy and Life Focus: A Gestalt Anthology of the History, Theory, and Practice of Living in Community*, ed. Brian O'Neill (New South Wales, Australia: Ravenswood Press, 2009), 223-236; see also Emily Langer, "Small Virginia Community Was Organized by Former Catholic Nuns," *Washingtonpost*.com, December 9th, 2008,

remains relevant across the lifespan, producing positive outcomes in the lives of community elders. As persons move through the stages of life, it is important that their faith development continues to be nurtured through meaningful and transformative relationships to place in which dignity is affirmed and agency is empowered.[14] It is in the context of this experimental approach to ministry represented by FOCIS, and later by ElderSpirit, that the Appalachian pastorals were drafted and promulgated.

*An Outline of the Pastorals and Their Major Themes*

In 1970 Catholic members of the ecumenical Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA) came together to form a separate Catholic Committee of Appalachia to mirror the Appalachian ministries of many Protestant denominations. Following a 1973 meeting of CORA, CCA members developed the idea that the bishops of the region, which at the time included portions of 13 states with 26 bishops, should issue a joint pastoral letter to address justice issues of particular relevance to Appalachia.[15] CCA took a different approach than previous generations of missionaries and the federal programs of the War on Poverty. As Donald Edward Davis and Chris Baker observe, Appalachia had, for a

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/05/AR2008120503219.html?referrer=
emailarticle&sid=ST2008120801752&s_pos= (accessed July 10th, 2020).

[14] While not every place may have a community like ElderSpirit, all places have their elders. Indeed, the population of many Appalachian communities is increasingly composed of elders. Adolescent education in faith should intentionally engage young people in fostering meaningful connection with community elders through intergenerational projects, mentoring relationships, and mutual exchange aimed at empowering the agency of both the young and old. This type of exchange is central to the "Foxfire Method" of education developed in Appalachian northern Georgia. It is also emphasized by place-based educators more broadly. See J. Cynthia McDermott and Hilton Smith, "Eliot Wigginton: Foxfire—No Inert Ideas Allowed Here," in *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions,* eds. Thomas Smith and Clifford Knapp (New York: Routledge, 2011), 262-271; David Gruenewald, "The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place," *Educational Researcher* 32, no. 4 (May 2003): 3-12.

[15] A conversation and subsequent email exchange with former Glenmary sister and FOCIS member, Monica Appleby, describes the origins of CCA as an outgrowth of CORA. At the time, Appleby was the Field Coordinator of the Office of Appalachian Ministry of the Diocese of Wheeling. Monica Appleby, email message to author, September 29, 2020; See also Brian O'Donnell, SJ, "Recovering the Dream," 8.

century, been the object of economic development and social uplift programs "all of which were designed to bring the region out of poverty or to improve the economic and cultural 'backwardness' of its rural areas."[16] As noted in chapter one, these programs were designed with the belief that regional poverty could be overcome by integrating Appalachian communities into the American mainstream. By contrast, CCA adopted a grassroots approach echoing popular movements for liberation and was committed to a radical identification with the people and the place of the region—an impulse of the Appalachian *sensus fidei*.

Working with a commitment to dialogue, Chuck Smith, a Catholic Worker and then president of CCA living in West Virginia, describes the methodology and process of the pastorals,

> during mid-1973 [CCA] conducted over twenty sounding-sessions throughout Appalachia; church leaders, workers, union people, poor people, country people and city people discussed the nature of powerlessness in Appalachia and the role the church should take in its response to that powerlessness. From these ideas a draft for the pastoral letter was prepared and circulated for criticism, not only among the bishops but among poor people and church workers throughout the mountains. The letter went through three drafts and the bishops and others involved went through much soul searching to arrive at the letter as published.[17]

In addition to its grassroots method of composition, the tone and style of the document was a striking departure from typical ecclesial documents. As Dan Braccio notes, the style intentionally avoids "ecclesiastical jargonese" opting instead for a "free verse" style with the aim of utilizing "the language of the people" of Appalachia. "And it is written

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[16] Donald Edward Davis and Chris Baker, "Fixing Appalachia: A Century of Community Development in a 'Depressed' Area, in *Studying Appalachian Studies: Making the Path by Walking,* eds. Chad Berry, Phillip Obermiller, and Shaunna Scott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 88.

[17] Chuck Smith, "The Church of the Poor," in *Redemption Denied: An Appalachian Reader*, ed. Edward Guinan (Washington, DC: Appalachian Documentation, 1976), 87.

simply enough so that people with only an elementary education can read and understand most of it."[18] The documents, however, do not simply seek to enculturate the "plain people" of the region within the Catholic imagination or its theological traditions.[19] Indeed, through conversation with this place and the wisdom of the mountains they till the soil for news ways of being Church and thinking theologically.

They map an alternative geography of faith in which Appalachia makes a claim upon the church as well:

> the dream
> of the mountains' struggle,
> the dream
> of simplicity and of justice,
> like so many other repressed visions
> is, we believe,
> the voice of The Lord among us.
> In taking them up,
> hopefully the Church
> might once again
> be known as
> - a center of the Spirit,
> - a place where poetry dares to speak,
> - where the song reigns unchallenged,
> - where art flourishes,
> - where nature is welcome,
> - where little people and little needs come first,
> - where justice speaks loudly,
> - where in a wilderness of idolatrous destruction the great voice of God still cries out for Life.[20]

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[18] Dan Braccio, "My Home is Within You (Psalm 87:7): A Study of the Pastoral Letter on Powerlessness in Appalachia by the Catholic Bishops of the Region," (master's Thesis, Fordham University, 1977), 8. See also Brian O'Donnell, SJ "Recovering the Dream," 11.
[19] Catholic Committee of Appalachia, *This Land is Home to Me (1975) & At Home in the Web of Life (1995): Appalachian Pastoral Letters*, combined ed. (Martin, KY: Catholic Committee of Appalachia, 2007), 17-18. Reference is to *This Land is Home to Me*. While footnotes cite the combined edition (by page number), I will use *This Land* or *Web of Life* to clarify which pastoral letter is being cited.
[20] *This Land*, 36-37.

Promulgated in 1975, the first pastoral letter, *This Land is Home to Me*, focuses on the theme of power and powerlessness, and shows the influence of a theology of liberation:

> the living God,
> the Lord whom we worship,
> is the God of the poor…
> Not only in the liberation of a people
> is God revealed
> as the Living God,
> but also within Israel
> by defending all those
> who are victims of injustice…
> Thus, the God of Israel,
> who is also our God,
> is the God of the poor,
> because he frees the oppressed.[21]

The document tells the industrial history of the region and its effects upon the land and those who occupy it.[22] Participation in liberation from idolatrous economic structures that

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[21] *Ibid.*, 24. For analysis of the influence of liberation theology on the development of *This Land is Home to Me* see Alyssa R. Pasternak-Post, "'Dare to Speak': This Land is Home to Me From Idea to Promulgation (May 1973-February 1975 and Beyond)," (master's Thesis, University of Dayton, 2011), 13 fn. 13, 15-16, 43-46. My own examination of CCA's archives confirms the findings of Pasternak-Post.

[22] *This Land* is notable among early contributions to liberation theology for its incorporation of the land as a critical subject. Several copies of the second draft of *This Land* title the first section of the pastoral "The Cry of Land and Its People." See Catholic Committee of Appalachia Archives, Wheeling Jesuit University Appalachian Archive Box, brown file box labeled "Appalachian Archive," doc nos. 3, 12, and unnumbered copy, hereafter identified as "Appalachian Archive." The suggestion seems to first appear on Jim Jennings' copy of draft one (Catholic Committee of Appalachia, "Appalachian Archive," doc no. 6c), where it is handwritten above the suggested section title, "the land and its people." According to Joe Holland, Jennings was a USCCB official. The suggestion echoes a formula on an earlier draft, one version of which reads, "We Have Heard the Voice of the Land and Its People" (Catholic Committee of Appalachia, "Appalachian Archive," doc no. 2b. Cf. doc nos. 1 and 2A). The back and forth between various section titles, suggests a debate about this formula. However, in conversation with Fr. Les Schmidt, who was involved in the drafting process, and Joe Holland, the principal author, neither recall a debate, reasons why this formula was not ultimately used, or the genesis of the phrase. However, Holland recalls he was influenced at the time by the early ecotheology of Gibson Winter and Joseph Sittler. Additionally, Holland cites Justice in the World (1971) and the work of Gustavo Gutierrez as important sources influencing his writing of the pastoral. Indeed, Justice in the World references "listening to the cry of those who suffer violence" (see introduction, page 305). Joe Holland, email messages to author, July 20, July 29, August 25, 2020; Les Schmidt, email message to author, July 10, August 9, 2020. My own research has yet to locate a possible source for the phrase, "Cry of Land and its People," which may be unique. The phrase is interesting because it precedes the use of the similar "Cry of the Earth and Cry of the poor," which appears in the writings of Leonardo Boff and Pope Francis (See Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor,* trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997 [1995]); *Laudato Si,* no. 49). As such, it represents an early

sacrifice land and people is identified as integral to the mission of the Church in Appalachia and by extension everywhere. *This Land* is innovative too for its emphasis on grassroots structures as central to the process of social, and as will be shown below, *ecclesial* liberation.[23]

However, like much of Appalachian Studies at the time, *This Land is Home to Me* tends to imagine an unspecified 'poor Appalachian' subject who is rhetorically positioned as a white, rural, male subject. While *This Land* is notable for its attention to the voices and contributions of women in the work of justice, the history and voices of the primary peoples of the region are absent. The reasons for this lack of attention echo certain tendencies in Appalachian Studies scholarship at the time. As discussed in chapter one, Appalachian scholars and activists in the 1970s drew inspiration from the work of scholars in the 2/3rds world and popular movements of liberation and decolonization to theorize Appalachia as an "internal colony." In the process, local populations were positioned rhetorically as "indigenous" or "native" mountaineers victimized by "outsider" and "absentee" industrialists and landholders. While these discourses served to coalesce regional identity and build movements for justice they also oversimplified power relations within Appalachia and between Appalachia and the rest of the United

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ecojustice theology which "animates" the land, treating the land, which also cries out for justice, as a subject capable of responding to the pain inflicted by extractive industry. Consistent with the covenantal vision of Leviticus, it suggests that the people belong to the land—not the other way around. Although the final draft changes the heading to "the land and its people" and does not 'animate' Earth, restricting the cry to 'the poor,' (see *This Land,* 10) the latter insight remains. *This Land* is noteworthy for its attention to the damage to Earth systems resulting from extractive industry and the capitalist economy. As will be discussed later in this chapter, what remains unnamed is the settler colonial status of this imagined Appalachian subject.

[23] *This Land*, 34.

States. In particular the internal colony paradigm erased the settler colonial dynamics that set the stage for resource extraction.[24]

Recall that settler colonialism is defined as the process whereby "outsiders come to land inhabited by Indigenous peoples and claim it as their own new home."[25] In the United States, settler colonial social structures were formed through a "native-slave-settler triad" involving "the forced labor of stolen peoples on stolen lands…settler colonialism 'works' by making Indigenous land into property, and designating the bodies of slaves as property, or chattel."[26] *This Land,* like early Appalachian Studies, is a significant milestone in critically analyzing how the logic of extraction operates and is an important resource for articulating a theological and pastoral response to such extractivism. At the same time, more recent Appalachian Studies scholarship challenges white people in particular to think about how extractive industry and its operative logic maps on to regional identities as they relate to settler privilege, race, gender, and class.[27]

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[24] Stephen Pearson, "'The Last Bastion of Colonialism': Appalachian Settler Colonialism and Self-Indigenization," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 37, no. 2 (2013). See also Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains: Extracting Nature and Identity in the Appalachian Coalfields* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 29, 32-33, 212-215, 227-228 fn. 5; Shaunna Scott, Phillip Obermiller, and Chad Berry, "Making Appalachia: Interdisciplinary Fields and Appalachian Studies," in *Studying Appalachian Studies: Making the Path by Walking*, eds. Chad Berry, Phillip Obermiller, and Shaunna Scott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 26-32. Barbara Ellen Smith, "Representing Appalachia: The Impossible Necessity of Appalachian Studies," in *Studying Appalachian Studies: Making the Path by Walking*, eds. Chad Berry, Phillip Obermiller, and Shaunna Scott (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 44-48.

[25] Eve Tuck, Marcia McKenzie, and Kate McCoy, "Land Education: Indigenous, Post-Colonial, and Decolonizing Perspectives on Place and Environmental Education Research," *Environmental Education Research* 20, no. 1 (2014): 6; see also Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society* 1, no. 1 (2012).

[26] Eve Tuck, Marcia McKenzie, and Kate McCoy, "Land Education," 4, 7. See also Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor"; Jason Moore, "The Rise of Cheap Nature," in *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. Jason Moore (Oakland: PM Press, 2016), 78-115.

[27] Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains.*

For educators in faith, *This Land* reminds us that it is through listening to 'the cry of land and its people' that we come to know and live in faith to the Creator-liberator God. The patterns of thought characteristic of the Anthropocene have alienated human persons from these truths. They have done violence to the land, waters, and the human and more-than-human beings for whom these lands and waters are a sacred home. Many people have been displaced from their homes or share the pain of polluted and scarred landscapes as a result of extractive systems and ways of being-in-relationship. Perpetrators, victims, and survivors bear the costs of this alienation differently but all human and more-than-human beings suffer this rupture of our primordial connection to Earth.

With this recognition in mind, in 1995, CCA issued *At Home in the Web of Life.* The document was prepared following the same process of holding listening sessions and adopts the same 'see, judge, act' structure. However, the tone and content of this pastoral is influenced by the emergence of ecotheology and creation spirituality, particularly the 'New Universe Story' of Thomas Berry.[28] Indeed, *Web of Life* begins with the deep evolutionary history of Appalachia as a bioregion and gives emphasis to the revelatory and sacramental character of creation:

> to dwell within these mountains
> is to experience
> - in their height, God's majesty,
> - in their weight, God's strength,
> - in their hollows, God's embrace,
> - in their waters, God's cleansing,

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[28] See *Web of Life*, 110-111, fns. 52, 53, 55 for the influence of "creation spirituality" and the writings of Thomas Berry. In e-mail exchange with me, Joe Holland notes the influence of Berry and other ecotheologians in his writing of the pastorals. See note 22 above. Joe Holland, email messages to author, July 29 and August 25, 2020.

- in their haze, God's mystery.
These mountains are truly a holy place…
To live in these mountains and forests,
and with their trees and plants and animals,
is truly to dwell in Earth's community of life,
as one of God's awesome cathedrals.
In this magnificent work of God's creation,
- misty mountain haze is holy incense,
- tall tree trunks are temple pillars,
- sun-splashed leaves are stained glass,
- and song birds are angelic choirs.[29]

Like the previous pastoral, *Web of Life* emphasizes economic questions and is most concerned with addressing post-industrial developments in the region and offering a forward-thinking vision of post-coal, locally-based economic development. Unfortunately, in the process it softens the language of liberation to focus on discourses of "sustainability" within a "developmentalist" framework.[30]

With more nuance than *This Land,* the document demonstrates an awareness of the displacement of primary peoples who

with tragic injustice,
the federal government drove…
westward,
often at the cost of their lives.[31]

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[29] *Web of Life*, 54-55.

[30] *This Land is Home to Me* offers a strong critique of the developmentalist paradigm (see *This Land* page 20). Although this critique is present in *Web of Life* the language of liberation is absent and replaced by the notion of sustainability. Ecocriticism challenges the paradigm of sustainability for reinforcing the human/nature binary and maintaining the discourse of nature-as-resource. *Web of Life* also fails to offer a sufficient critique of Western economic modes of production, seeking only to give them a more benign mode of practice. Compare with John S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 157-159, 162-163. There is a degree of dissonance, then, in *Web of Life*. While it goes further than *This Land* in viewing the more-than-human as subject and agent, *Web of Life* offers a more conservative economic critique than *This Land* with its focus on liberation. Ironically, email exchanges with principal author, Joe Holland, demonstrate that Holland shares a similar critique Berry's ecotheology. Joe Holland, email exchange with the author, August 25, 2020.

[31] *Web of Life*, 57-88.

At the same time, note that in the quote above it is "the federal government" who drove out Indigenous peoples along the Trail of Tears. This rhetorical move can be read as exonerating 'mountain people' or white settlers. By attributing Indian removal to an 'outsider' federal government the ways in which white mountain settlers actively contributed to and benefitted from the removal of Indigenous peoples is obscured. [32] Additionally, the displacement of primary peoples is treated as a historic event rather than an ongoing reality in the United States.

Likewise, legacies of racism in the region are also significantly downplayed. (White) mountain people are depicted in *Web of Life* as living harmoniously with Indigenous people and freed blacks. *Web of Life* notes,

> Still, the mountain people loved freedom.
> Indeed, the Underground Railroad,
> the secret route for escaping slaves,
> ran through these mountains.
> For everyone knew that in general
> The mountain people were no friends
> of tyranny or slavery.[33]

This language and depiction of mountain life echoes what more recent Appalachian Studies scholars have described as the myth of Appalachian "racial innocence."

In contrast to lowland Southerners, Appalachian whites of the 19th Century have often been depicted in historical and literary accounts as "morally righteous, anti-slavery and anti-secessionist in sentiment and action." [34] Barbara Ellen Smith observes that this depiction persisted into the civil rights era as

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[32] Steven Stoll, *Ramp Hollow: The Ordeal of Appalachia* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2017), 88.
[33] *Web of Life,* 58, see also pages 56-57.
[34] Larry J. Griffin, "Whiteness and Southern Identity in the Mountain and Lowland South," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 10, nos. 1 and 2 (2004): 8. Kathryn Trauth Taylor draws attention to "one of the

the relatively low levels of civils rights activism in the decades after World War II (no doubt a function in part of black out-migration during this and earlier periods) allowed white Appalachians, unlike other white Southerners, to escape confrontation with their own prejudice and the more institutional manifestations of white supremacy.[35]

For these reasons, and despite a handful of early studies, critical analysis of race and 'whiteness' has been late coming to Appalachian Studies.[36]

Historical investigation and modern sociological studies challenge this myth of racial innocence. As Barbara Ellen Smith reflects, "historical works document within Appalachia the extensive slaveholding, slave-trading, racially exclusionary laws, occupational discrimination by race, racist attitudes, and other material practices and ideological trappings of white supremacy more commonly associated with the lowland South."[37] Likewise, it is essential to critically analyze the power relations and socio-economic, political-cultural, and legal structures that served to create and maintain the demographic whiteness of much of the region's small towns and rural areas. Indeed, this demographic whiteness has often been utilized to further assert the racial innocence of

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earliest writings on race relations in Appalachia…published in 1916 by Carter G. Woodson, known today as the father of black history. Tracing Appalachian contributions to the antislavery movement in the pre-Civil War United States, Woodson referred to white Appalachians as 'the friends of freedom in Appalachian America.' He cited the inclusion of African American students at Kentucky's Berea College in the 1890s as a courageous early example of white Appalachian support of black education and freedom." See Kathryn Trauth Taylor, "Diverse Rhetorical Scenes of Urban Appalachian Literacies," in *Re-Reading Appalachia: Literacy, Place, and Cultural Resistance*, eds. Sara Webb-Sunderhaus and Kim Donehower (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2015), 121.

[35] Barbara Ellen Smith, "De-Gradations of Whiteness: Appalachia and the Complexities of Race," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 10, nos. 1 and 2 (2004): 42. See also Mary K. Anglin, "Erasures of the Past: Culture, Power, and Heterogeneity in Appalachia," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 10, nos. 1 and 2 (2004): 76-79.

[36] For a helpful overview of the development of race as a topic within Appalachian Studies see Shaunna Scott, Phillip Obermiller, and Chad Berry, "Making Appalachia: Interdisciplinary Fields and Appalachian Studies," in *Studying Appalachian Studies: Making the Path by Walking* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 26-31.

[37] Barbara Ellen Smith, "De-Gradations of Whiteness," 41-42.

the region as if the absence of black people makes issues of race and racism irrelevant to regional identities and politics.[38]

Along with this historical research, recent sociological studies offer a significant challenge to dominant narratives about race in Appalachia, calling into question the discursive frameworks and rhetorical strategies that have in large part shaped Appalachian Studies. In two highly influential studies, Larry Griffin (with Ashley Thompson in the first study) notes,

> white Appalachians in the southern mountains identify more strongly with the South and are more likely to hold what might be loosely called 'neo-confederate' views on race and region than did whites in the lowland South…white highlanders consistently expressed more affinity for the South and its historically racialized symbols and practices than did others in the region.[39]

Despite these affinities and complexities, the myth of Appalachian racial innocence has made several rhetorical moves possible in Appalachian Studies that are not or would not be possible, and rightly so, in discussions of the South apart from Appalachia.

As noted, since its inception in the 1970s, Appalachian Studies has been associated with progressive politics and activism. It has positioned itself within the framework of liberatory and critical discourses and has sought to articulate a structural critique of regional economic exploitation, particularly through the development of emancipatory identities for (white) Appalachian people. This was accomplished as a counterpoint to "culture of poverty" theories that in effect blamed Appalachian people for their own

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[38] Barbara Ellen Smith, "De-Gradations of Whiteness,' 38, 41-44; Mary K. Anglin, "Erasures of the Past," 77-79; John Hartigan, Jr, "Whiteness and Appalachian Studies: What's the Connection?" *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 10, nos. 1 and 2 (2004): 58-70. See also Wilburn Hayden, Jr., "In Search of Justice: White Privilege in Appalachia," *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 120-131.

[39] Larry Griffin, "Whiteness and Southern Identity in the Mountain and Lowland South," 8, see also pages 28-30; Larry J. Griffin and Ashley Thompson "Appalachia and the South: Collective Memory, Identity, and Representation," *Appalachian Journal* 29, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 296-327.

circumstances through a negatively stereotyped depiction of Appalachian cultural characteristics, attitudes, and behaviors. At the same time, in critiquing "hillbilly" stereotypes, regional scholars, most of whom are white, unintentionally recast the myth of racial innocence through a language of victimization which frequently adopts the tone of racial justice discourse, positioning mountaineers as an oppressed minority in the United States.[40] Griffin and Thompson suggest that these arguments have largely succeeded because they depend implicitly on the myth of racial innocence.[41] By conflating class-based with racial oppression and not adequately engaging the complexities of how race and class intersect, Appalachian Studies has largely failed to take seriously the ways in which structures of white supremacy have persisted within Appalachian communities. It has also led to the invisibility and erasure of black Appalachians, their contributions to and perspectives on Appalachian identity.

The point here is not to abandon Appalachian Studies as a project or Appalachian identity as a way of being 'placed.' Indeed, Appalachian identity can serve equally to

[40] Smith, "De-Gradations," 48. There is a well-documented history of racialized depictions of Appalachia, discussed in more detail in chapter one. This discourse is ambivalent, on the one hand, describing mountaineers as pure Anglo-Saxon stock, and, on the other hand, a degraded version of their Anglo-Saxon forebears. In each case, these pseudo-scientific biological arguments were rooted in and associated with the discourse of eugenics. These arguments, as Elizabeth Catte shows, have been recently resurrected by the neo-conservative commentator on Appalachia, J. D. Vance. Elizabeth Catte, *What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia* (Cleveland: Belt Publishing, 2018), 60-91.

[41] Griffin and Thompson's argument and methodology resonates with Stephen Pearson's later claims about Appalachian "self-indigenization" discussed earlier in this chapter and in chapter one. Griffin and Thompson analyze several key quotations and titles from then recent publications in Appalachian Studies. To demonstrate their point, they replace the phrases "Appalachian" or "Appalachia" with "Southern" or "white Southerners." The results are unsettling. As Griffin and Thompson reflect, aside from a few "neo-Confederate" organizations no participants in reputable academic associations in the South would utilization such expressions as are found in Appalachian Studies discourse. Indeed, "there is no cultural room, no political space, for the white South to 'fight back' or to 'talk back,' to 'resist' and express 'rage'…and all of this as it should be." See Griffin and Thompson, "Appalachia and the South," 304. Similarly, Barbara Ellen Smith reflects that the failure of Appalachian Studies to grapple with race and white supremacy as coordinates of power in the region is another marker of the limitations of the internal colony model discussed previously. See "De-Gradations of Whiteness," 51-52.

empower black as well as white people in the region and even serve as a force for regional solidarity across race through the cultivation of inclusive and multiple Appalachian identities. [42] The need is to critique essentializing, exceptional, and homogenous understandings of place and to develop new paradigms of study and identification that 'speak back' to simplified and silencing narratives. For example, black Appalachians and self-identified 'Affrilachians,' a term coined by the poet Francis X. Walker, destabilize existing conceptions of the region and reclaim space within Appalachia by and for black people, making possible new understandings of regional pasts, presents, and futures. These voices speak back in their own turn about the historical and present terrorism of white supremacy in Appalachia.[43]

Returning to *Web of Life* and education in faith, despite the absence of a decolonial perspective and a commitment to centering Indigenous and black voices, it is significant that the presence of Indigenous and black people is not erased entirely from the story of Appalachia. Educators in faith can contribute to this effort by centering a diversity of theological perspectives within their own teaching. The work of Indigenous, black, LGBTQ, feminist, and 2/3rds world theologians should be integral to educating in faith in *all* places. Students should be challenged to think critically about the multiple and unique facets of their own lives and communities and attend especially to absent, erased, or silenced voices. How do identities based on class, race, gender, sexual orientation, or

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[42] Kathryn Trauth Taylor, "Diverse Rhetorical Scenes of Urban Appalachian Literacies," 122-125, 132.
[43] Theresa L. Burriss, "From Harlem Home to Affrilachia: Teaching the Literary Journey," in *Appalachia in the Classroom: Teaching the Region*, eds. Theresa L. Burriss and Patricia Gantt (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013), 213-214, 217; See also Francis X. Walker, *Affrilachia* (Lexington: Old Cove, 2000); bell hooks, *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Kathryn Trauth Taylor, "Diverse Rhetorical Scenes of Urban Appalachian Literacies."

citizenship status shape the structures of and experiences in a place? How do these structures and identities serve to advantage some and disadvantage others?

I refer to this as attention to spiritual ecotones. In ecology an ecotone is the place where two biosystems meet. It is where a forest and grassland meet or where the mountains touch the sea. These are acknowledged as the most diverse areas in terms of biomass. In ecology, the meeting point of difference is a source of fecundity and richness. It is a source of life. If education in faith is to nourish life in our places, it must attend to renewing and reintegrating our relationships with one another, shedding the borders, boundaries, and imaginary grids that we use to draw lines around our experiences of place, God, and with each other. Identities are multiple and sometimes contradictory and education in faith should engage them in all their rich complexity.

*The Telling Takes Us Home* (2015) advances the tradition of the Appalachian pastorals in important ways, interrogating structures of sin both within the Church and in the Appalachian region. Further, it brings the two earlier pastorals into coherence by offering both a liberationist and empire-critical economic critique and a radically centered view of Earth in which Earth is an animate, speaking agent with wisdom to share.

The pastoral raises provocative questions about ecclesiastical power and authority, asserting the "magisterium of the poor and of earth." CCA notes,

> we believe that the voices of the poor
> are to be in some sense our first teachers.
> In fact, churches from around the world
> have begun to call the authority of these voices
> the *Magisterium of the Poor*…
> Taking a stand with those who are poor

means taking a stand, too, for Earth…
Earth itself is a kind of *magisterium*
with its own authority that must be respected.[44]

This is not to say that *The Telling Takes Us Home* is hostile to traditional forms of ecclesial authority. Indeed, it has found a welcome reception with Bishop John Stowe of the Diocese of Lexington who notes,

> this new pastoral letter highlights the 'magisterium of the poor' and continues the tradition of the previous letters, with more than a thousand listenings across Appalachia with special attention to marginalized persons and the devastated earth. [The Catholic Committee of Appalachia has] listened with their hearts as Pope Francis has called us to do.

Stowe has been instrumental in disseminating the pastoral to Bishops nationally and encouraging their own active engagement with its implications.[45] *The Telling Takes Us Home* responds to a different ecclesiastical moment in the U. S. Church. Catholic Worker and co-coordinator of CCA, Jeannie Kirkhope, reflects on the development of the idea for a third pastoral letter.

> One hot afternoon in August 2009, several of the CCA crew were hashing out these challenges over beers, while they floated on rafts in the middle of a pond at Kirkhope's farm. 'We were laughing and pontificating about how the church should be run and how it was still relevant in Appalachia, even though no one in the institutional church was really paying attention to social justice issues,' Kirkhope said. 'What we need,' another said, 'is a *people's* pastoral.' Not an official document published by the hierarchy, but an expression of—to use the traditional theological term—the *sensus fidelium*.[46]

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[44] *Telling*, 7-8.

[45] Catholic Committee of Appalachia, "Publications," "Endorsements of the People's Pastoral," https://www.ccappal.org/endorsements (accessed October 2nd, 2020). Bishop Stowe currently serves as Bishop liaison to The Catholic Committee of Appalachia. See also Jessica Wrobleski, "At Home in Northern Appalachia: *Laudato Si'* and the Catholic Committee of Appalachia," *Journal of Moral Theology* 6, Special Issue 1, (2017): 169-176.

[46] This story is cited in Barry Hudock, "Appalachian Spring: In Coalfield Communities, a Grassroots 'People's Pastoral' takes Catholic Tradition in a New Direction," *Sojourners Magazine* (July 2016), https://ccappal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Barry-Hudock-Appalachian-Spring.pdf (accessed May 18, 2018). This story has also been recounted through conversation between the present author and Kirkhope.

The cultivation of theological meaning here is more radically from the grassroots and is undomesticated by the primary channels of theological production and exchange, opening to new ways of thinking and organizing theological ideology and structural expression.

The document is also more sensitive to the internal diversity of the region, explaining that

> many new voices have emerged in our region
> since our last pastoral letter in 1995.
> Some of these voices have always been present here,
> but were not heard in our movements…
> Many people in our church communities, for example,
> must admit that we have not heard or taken seriously
> the experiences of people of color in Appalachia…
> the stories many of us tell about this place,
> which take the 'whiteness' of the region for granted,
> often obscure the diversity that is actually present
> and silence the stories of different peoples.[47]

The cultivation of an intersectional approach allows CCA to nurture a more nuanced perspective of internal critique, naming and challenging Appalachia's own homegrown legacies of racism, homophobia, sexism, and settler colonialism. For example, CCA notes a tendency

> particularly here in Appalachia,
> for white Americans to strongly assert
> the superiority of their dominant culture
> over perceived 'outsider' cultures
> that are considered threatening,
> namely Arabs, Latinas and Latinos, Blacks,
> and others.[48]

Additionally, the document draws upon conversations with and the writing of LGBTQ people in the region, including many who identify as Catholic, to critique

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[47] *Telling*, 21.
[48] *Ibid.,* 22-3.

a 'quiet, but steady' rural homophobia,
that 'slow assault on the spirit'
which comes from deeper and darker
experiences of fear, shame, and closetedness

naming Christian teaching, including Catholicism, as complicit.[49]

As *The Telling Takes us Home* suggests, it is too simplistic, too romantic, and in its own way disempowering to suggest Appalachian people are always and uniformly victims. Indeed, the politics of coal have shifted significantly. Unlike in the period when *This Land* was written, in Appalachia today coal miners are regional elites and the industry enjoys wide political influence. Despite abuses, the industry provides one of the few living-wage, working-class jobs in the region. It is difficult to see the coal miner as a "victim."[50] To this extent, *The Telling Takes Us Home* offers an important development of the previous two documents, by inviting white people in the region to engage in a praxis of self-critique. Additionally, with this document CCA encourages a challenge to Appalachian identity politics that shifts focus from the displacement of white settlers by industrial development toward the displacement of primary peoples by settler colonists. There is a need to move toward a more self-reflexive critique of how Appalachian identity politics has, perhaps unintentionally, obscured the deeper and persisting wounds of settler colonialism and racism at the root of the logic of extraction within the Appalachian region and the United States more broadly.

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[49] *Telling*, 24.

[50] Rebecca Scott, *Removing Mountains*, 73-4, 97-99, 104-108. See also Rebecca Scott, "Dependent Masculinity and Political Culture in Pro-Mountaintop Removal Discourse: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Dragline," *Feminist Studies* Vol. 33, no, 3 (Fall, 2007), 484-509; Lou Martin, "Invoking Noble Coal-Miner is a Mainstay of American Politics," *Chicagotribune.com*, April 25th 2018, http://www.chicagotribune.com/sns-invoking-noble-coal-miners-is-a-mainstay-of-american-politics-94281-20180425-story.html (accessed May 18th, 2018). Originally appeared in *The Conversation,* theconversation.com. Original link at *The Conversation* is broken.

Loyal Jones once stated of the movement for Appalachian Studies, "public education has a responsibility to help develop a sense of *identity* in all its students."[51] Appalachian Studies seeks to nurture positive, empowered identity formation for people in the Appalachian region. Likewise, Catholic education in faith seeks the cultivation of positive Catholic identities. Educators in faith working toward a logic of jubilee should be sensitive to the relationship between land, community, and structures of power. Positive identity formation must be sensitive to and cannot occur at the expense or continued displacement of Earth, primary peoples, and others sacrificed by a logic of extraction. Appalachian identity and Catholic identity must center Earth and the primary peoples of a place.

### Living the Pastorals

The pastorals and the many other written statements that have emerged from CCA are only part of the story. Action—the living out of the pastorals—was and remains an important feature, expressed in action plans, new models of mission and ministry, and liturgical expression. In its conclusion, *This Land* called for the development of "a comprehensive plan of action." In particular, *This Land* recommended the development of

> *centers of reflection and prayer*,
> in the service of action,
> throughout the region…
> [and] *centers of popular culture,*
> in every parish,
> or in areas where there are no parishes.

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[51] Loyal Jones, "Appalachia," in *Redemption Denied: An Appalachian Reader*, ed. Edward Guinan (Washington, DC: Appalachian Documentation, 1976), 22 (emphasis added).

Finally, the pastoral letter put "emphasis on the *economic questions*," envisioning a "multinational labor movement" serving

> as a counter-force
> to the unaccountable power
> of these multinational corporations.

It also offers a list of specific issues of regional concern demanding attention. The pastoral expresses the conviction that

> if a new society is to be born,
> it will emerge from the grass roots.[52]

Jesuit priest, Al Fritsch offered an action plan emphasizing the need for structural transformation within the Appalachian region, envisioning CORA and CCA playing key roles through the development of what he described as an Appalachian Lobby.[53] This experimental attitude then and today has brought CCA into institutional conflict and internal debate over how best to live out the pastorals and be Church in this place. The relationship of the Church to extractive industry has often been at the center of these debates.

Following the second draft of *This Land is Home to Me*, a closed meeting took place between several Appalachian Bishops, the executive director of CCA, and a "labor priest" from New York.[54] As Pasternak-Post describes the meeting, "some Catholics, who were owners of coal companies in West Virginia and in the Pittsburgh area, expressed grave concerns about the depiction of the coal companies in the document."[55] Many

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[52] *TL*, 33-34.
[53] Al Fritsch, SJ, "Action Plan for Appalachian Pastoral," in *Redemption Denied: An Appalachian Reader*, ed. Edward Guinan (Washington, DC: Appalachian Documentation, 1976), 150-156.
[54] Alyssa Pasternak-Post, "Dare to Speak," 65.
[55] *Ibid.*, 65.

members of CCA who had organized the listening sessions as well as the writing team took offense to what Peter Henriot, SJ, described as the "special treatment" of industry representatives.[56] Bishop Hodges of West Virginia was particularly insistent on the need for a more balanced depiction of the coal industry. The effect of the meeting was a softening of support for unions in the third draft and a description of "'good willed owners and operators' as well as 'miners obligations'" appearing in the third draft and informing the final document.[57] These debates took a more public and visible form in the years following the promulgation of the pastoral as those in the region discerned how to live out the pastoral as a program for ministry in Appalachia.

Brian O'Donnell, SJ details the founding of pastoral centers by Bishop Hodges in West Virginia; however, as O'Donnell notes, these pastoral centers failed to carry forth the radical vision of *This Land*, noting that "while often serving as locations for those interested in the mountain apostolate to gather, [they] are not specifically geared to dwelling on Appalachian problems."[58] Indeed, in one case, the construction of the John XXIII pastoral center drew protests from Jesuit priests working in nearby Lincoln County, WV. These Jesuits had sought to establish a parish in the spirit of the Appalachian pastoral, *This Land,* with a focus on social action ministries. In 1983,

> two Jesuits still in residence, the pastor, and the local social justice activist, joined in protests against the use of diocesan funds to build John XXIII [Pastoral] Center. The state of West Virginia was in a depression and a retreat house already existed in downtown Charleston. After much soul-searching the bishop expelled the two Jesuits from Lincoln County in May. Thus an experiment in a social-justice-focused parish, and a center for prayer and reflection upon the mountain struggle,

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[56] *Ibid.*, 68.
[57] *Ibid.*, 64, see also pages 63-74 for Pasternak-Post's full account of this meeting; See also Brian O'Donnell, "Recovering the Dream," 13. Compare with *This Land* 16-19.
[58] Brian O'Donnell, "Recovering the Dream," 44.

came to an end.[59]

This type of debate continues today. Theologian and activist, Michael Iafrate has challenged the nature and source of diocesan investment in light of the commitments outlined in the pastorals.

Iafrate criticizes the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston for accepting financial gifts from coal industry executives and continued diocesan investment in the fossil fuel industry. Iafrate notes two large donations made by coal industry executives, Jim Justice (the current West Virginia Governor) and Don Blankenship [60] for the building of Diocesan facilities.[61] Likewise, Iafrate notes the weak response to, and reception of,

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[59] O'Donnell, 45.

[60] In 2015 Blankenship, former CEO of Massey Energy, was found guilty in the death of 29 miners at the Upper Big Branch coal mine explosion. He was found guilty of conspiring to violate federal mine safety standards and served one year in prison. He was found not guilty on charges of securities fraud and making false statements to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Bouree Lam, "A Guilty Verdict in Don Blankenship's Trial," *Theatlantic.com*, December 3rd, 2015, https://www.theatlantic.com/ business/ archive/2015/12/blankenship-trial-verdict/418641/ (accessed August 9th, 2020); Alan Blinder, "Don Blankenship Sentenced to a Year in Prison in Mine Safety Case," *Nytimes.com*, April 6, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/07/us/donald-blankenship-sentenced-to-a-year-in-prison-in-mine-safety-case.html (accessed August 9th, 2020).

[61] Michael Iafrate, "Dirty Money in the Appalachian Church: Six Years After Deadly Coal Mine Disaster, Where Are We Now?" *Religiondispatches.org,* April 14th, 2016, http://religiondispatches.org/dirty-money-in-the-appalachian-church-six-years-after-deadly-coal-mine-disaster-where-are-we-now/ (accessed May 18th, 2018). In September of 2018, the Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, Michael Bransfield, submitted his retirement at the customary age of 75. Bransfield's retirement was accepted by Pope Francis days later on Sept. 13th. On Sept. 17th an investigation into charges of sexual harassment and financial impropriety was launched. The Washington Post published a series of investigative reports into Bransfield's activities, noting that "Bransfield, 75, drew on a source of revenue that many parishioners knew little about, oil-rich land in Texas donated to the diocese more than a century ago. He spoke of church money as if it were his to spend without restriction, according to the report. 'I own this,' he is quoted as saying on many occasions." The Post reported that Bransfield spent $350,000.00 of Diocesan funds on gifts to influential clerics, including $10,500.00 to Archbishop William Lori of Baltimore, who would later lead the investigation into Bransfield's conduct. The Post later published the full investigative report commissioned by the Church, but which the Church itself refused to publish. See Michelle Boorstein, Shawn Boburg, and Robert O'Harrow, Jr, "W.Va. Bishop Gave Powerful Cardinals and Other Priests $350,000 in Cash Gifts Before His Ouster, Church Records Show," *Washingtonpost.com*, June 5, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/a-wva-bishop-spent-millions-on-himself-and-sent-cash-gifts-to-cardinals-and-to-young-priests-he-was-accused-of-mistreating-confidential-vatican-report-says/2019/06/05/98af7ae6-7686-11e9-b3f5-5673edf2d127_story.html (accessed July 11th, 2020). The investigative report, released in full by The Post on December, 23rd, 2019, details a pattern of sexual harassment and unwanted advances by Bransfield toward multiple priests and seminarians and a pattern of

*Laudato Si* in West Virginia, suggesting that financial interest has led to a privileging of "prudence" over "prophecy." Iafrate cites an evasive interview with Diocesan representative Bryan Minor:

> it is important to ask how money might influence attitudes. The investment portfolio for the diocese of Wheeling-Charleston does contain 'energy related investments,' according to diocesan spokesman Bryan Minor. When asked whether divestment from fossil fuels is something the diocese has considered or will consider as a concrete response to Francis' encyclical, Minor said because the finance council and financial advisers have not met since the release of the encyclical, 'we do not have an answer.'[62]

It is worth lingering with these attempts to live out the pastorals and while there is much wisdom to unpack for both the doing of theology and the living of ecclesiology, I want to pursue their pedagogical relevance as it relates to place-based education in faith.

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substance and alcohol abuse. The report notes that although Bransfield's activities were known by Vicars, no action was taken. The report also notes several instances of possible abuse of minors. Finally, it details Bransfield's lavish spending. In addition to the $350,00.00 in gifts, "Bransfield spent $4.6 million on renovations to his church residence, almost $140,000 at restaurants, $62,000.00 on jewelry, and thousands on alcohol." Bransfield's expenditures on personal luxuries and travel between 2005-2018 totaled $2,787,844.09. Shawn Boburg and Robert O'Harrow Jr, "A Penthouse, Limousines and Private Jets: Inside the Globe-trotting Life of Bishop Michael Bransfield," *Washingtonpost.com*, September 12th, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/a-penthouse-limousines-and-private-jets-inside-the-globe-trotting-life-of-bishop-michael-bransfield/2019/09/12/4a69fe48-ce87-11e9-9031-519885a08a86_story.html?arc404=true&itid=lk_inline_manual_5 (accessed July 11th, 2020); Greg L. Bernstein, Caroline Judge Mehta (Zuckerman Spaeder, LLP), Christopher Helmrath (SC&H Group), Dr. Diane Barr (Archdiocese of Baltimore), John Moore, *Report to Archbishop William E. Lori, Archdiocese of Baltimore: Investigation of Bishop Michael Bransfield, Former Bishop of Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston* (Washington DC, New York, Tampa, Baltimore: Zuckerman Spaeder, LLP, Feb. 21, 2019): 2-3, 41. Made public by the *Washington Post* and available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/context/investigative-report-on-former-bishop-michael-j-bransfield/b46b7a87-a74b-4c72-9ca1-9068b02fba7d/?itid=lk_interstitial_manual_10 (accessed July 11th, 2020). Further investigative reports detail efforts by Diocesan officials to conceal Bransfield's lavish lifestyle and expenditures. Robert O'Harrow, Jr. and Shawn Boburg, "From West Virginia to the Vatican: How a Catholic Bishop Secretly Sent Money from a Church Hospital to a Cardinal in Rome," *Washingtonpost.com*, October 26th, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/from-west-virginia-to-the-vatican-how-a-catholic-bishop-secretly-sent-money-from-a-church-hospital-to-a-cardinal-in-rome/2019/10/26/54bad8fe-e9d5-11e9-bafb-da248f8d5734_story.html (accessed August 9th, 2020).

[62] Michael Iafrate, "Pope Francis' environmental encyclical gets waylaid in West Virginia," *Ncronline.org*, July 1st, 2015, https://www.ncronline.org/news/parish/pope-francis-environmental-encyclical-gets-waylaid-west-virginia (accessed May 18th, 2018).

In chapter four, I discuss the ways in which a logic of extraction inevitably influences education. One such tendency is to treat oppressed communities as a resource to serve the educational or spiritual development goals of privileged populations without working toward a recirculation of the unequal power structures that define the relationship between sacrifice zones and the communities that benefit from them. An innovative response to this tendency is modelled by the Church in Appalachia. FOCIS was involved with a program called "University without Walls" in Virginia, influenced by the popular education model of Paulo Freire, *"which gave credit for life experiences."*[63] This program models the possibilities for mutually supportive school-community partnerships that are central to place-based education.

The University without Walls program reimagined the relationship between student volunteers coming to the region and local people who played host and cultural educators. Lewis and Appleby note, "FOCIS members in southwest Virginia became interested in developing a program in which residents who hosted and taught these visitors could also receive college recognition for their skills and competencies. Since the students were getting credit for their activities, it seemed only fair that hosts should, too."[64] The program modelled a cooperative, "egalitarian and academically sound" approach to education, offering enrolled students the chance to earn "a Bachelor of Arts degree in Appalachian Studies in from nine to 48 months." The program lasted 5 years and graduated 19 students. In 1974, Roger Williams College in Bristol, Rhode Island, which

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[63] Helen M. Lewis and Monica Appleby, *Mountain Sisters*, 163.
[64] *Ibid.*, 167.

was sponsoring the program and issuing degrees withdrew due to "internal changes." Ultimately, difficulty finding another sponsor led to the end of the program.[65]

In their study of the town of Ivanhoe, Virginia, Mary Ann Hinsdale, Helen M. Lewis, and S. Maxine Waller note a similar model of working with student volunteers entering the region. They observed what happened when the service program in Ivanhoe for visiting college students shifted focus from 'help,' such as home repair, to "a cultural exchange program…Ivanhoe residents found themselves in a new position, that of being 'educators.' As they discovered they had something to offer others—even those who were technically better educated—they took enormous pride in their new status."[66] These educational and ecclesial ministries exhibit an experimental attitude to institutional structure in which church, community, bioregion, and school are deeply interrelated.

Very often the vast resources that are available in and through schools, particularly universities, remains inaccessible to the majority of people in sacrifice zones like Appalachia. Educators in faith can build inter-generational, inter-species, and inter-/intra-regional networks of resource and idea sharing that are defined not by the institutional walls that too often serve to separate church and school from community but by radical, ecotone-like relationality and exchange. Educators in faith committed to a place-based pedagogy with/in sacrifice zones can learn from these examples. In particular, I would

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[65] Lewis and Appleby, 168-169. The program echoes similar popular education programs informed by progressive education implemented in the Appalachian region. See Myles Horton and Paulo Freire, *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change,* eds. Brenda Bell, John Gaventa, and John Peters (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990); Sam F. Stack, Jr., *The Arthurdale Community School: Education and Reform in Depression-Era Appalachia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016); J. Cynthia McDermott and Hilton Smith, "Eliot Wigginton: Foxfire—No Inert Ideas Allowed Here," in *Sourcebook of Experiential Education: Key Thinkers and Their Contributions,* eds. Thomas Smith and Clifford Knapp (New York: Routledge, 2011), 262-271.
[66] Mary Ann Hinsdale, Helen M. Lewis, and S. Maxine Waller, *It Comes from the People: Community Development and Local Theology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 285.

emphasize opportunities for peer-to-peer co-learning across diverse places. The goal should always be the creation of new cooperative institutional power structures that encourage mutuality in the sharing and creating of knowledge. Such a praxis locates faith and God's revelation uniquely in sacrifice zones.

*Conclusions*

For educators in faith, the Appalachian pastorals, their creation, content, and legacy point to a pedagogy in which education in faith takes place through partnership with all life in a bioregion. Knowledge of and relationship to God comes through kinship with Creation. The logic of extraction with its colonial, capitalist, and consumer mentality has influenced our thinking about faith, seeping into our theological imaginations and ecclesial structures. It influences how we imagine the call to discipleship. Too often, theologies of dominion and manifest destiny have been given privilege over theologies of kinship. However, marginalized voices within the Christian tradition, and from other traditions of knowledge and spiritual wisdom, remind us that a radical critique of the logic and structures of extraction is at the heart of the Biblical narrative. I have called this biblical imagination a logic of jubilee. To nurture jubilee faith, it is important that educators commit to a praxis of apprenticeship to Earth that begins by "going back to the (stolen) land."[67] In response to climate change and environmental destruction, the task of education in faith today must be to form young people as householders in the Kin-dom

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[67] Brenna Cussen Anglada, "Back to the (Stolen) Land," *The Catholic Worker Anti-Racism Review* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 8-9. Cussen Anglada explains, those of us who seek to resist extractive capitalism by going "back to the land," must recognize that here in the United States that land is stolen, Indigenous territory. In other words, our resistance to extractive capitalism must include a commitment to undoing the legacy of colonialism with which capitalism remains entwined. Going back to the *stolen* land requires following the guidance of Indigenous communities, supporting their struggles by centering Indigenous sovereignty, working for restoration, reparation, and repatriation of Indigenous communities and their relationship to lands.

even as they live amidst the hegemony of the Anthropocene. Jubilee faith should unsettle and reimagine discipleship and evangelization as praxes of decolonization. Finally, jubilee faith should prepare young people, especially those who live in the world's sacrifice zones, to respond faithfully to this task of bioregional discipleship and jubilee praxis. In the conclusion below, I will draw together these convictions and lift up the work that remains to be done.

**Chapter Six**

**Conclusions: Educating for Faith Beyond the Anthropocene**

This dissertation is grounded in a conviction that education in faith should seek to nurture in young people positive relationships with God, self, others, and all of Creation. All of this, I believe, begins with treating place, or Creation, as the center of our living and learning. Education for faith in the midst of the Anthropocene must intentionally connect all learners with Earth-wisdom, which goes beyond learning information *about* our bioregion. As learners we must come to view all of Creation as a partner and even leader in educating for faith.

Indeed, Thomas Groome stresses that education in faith should not simply teach *about* religion but provide an encounter with the living God and empower persons to make decisions about their lives as lived in a place. More particularly education in faith enables us to make decisions for life and to promote the formation of Christian Community. Groome speaks of this as *conation*, or wisdom, in which knowing and being are entwined.[1] As the Judeo-Christian tradition and the historical ministry of Jesus show, our being is intimately connected to Earth and more-than-human beings. Critical Creation-centered pedagogy then is grounded in Earth-wisdom. God is a God of life, and life flows

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[1] Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, The Way of Shared Praxis* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1991), 18, 26-32; Thomas Groome, *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 91-93.

from the wellspring of Earth. We cannot know God if we destroy God's mountains and pollute God's streams.

Educators in faith serve an important role as facilitators of encounters between young people and their places. At the outset of this dissertation (see introduction) I proposed a hermeneutic of the land as an interpretive lens for 'reading' or encountering place. This lens can be applied to education in faith through a three-fold process. First, education in faith should enable young people to recognize their place as a revelation of Godself. Place is something more than a backdrop for our lived experiences but an active *partner* and *educator*. Second, these encounters should foster meaningful relationships within and across places. Young people should view their community and their place as a knowledge rich environment and education in faith should connect them to people and more-than-human life with/in their community in meaningful ways. Finally, these encounters should allow critical reflection on systems of power with/in and across places. Students in particular should understand the relationship of their place to systems of settler colonialism, extractive capitalism, and global consumerism. Across these encounters, students should be empowered to become agents of and partners in jubilee healing and justice.

*What can we learn from place for educating in faith?*

I have learned much from listening to Creation as I have written this dissertation, and this process has brought me to several core convictions. From the work of Rebecca Scott I have learned that *the dominant narrative of place today is built around a logic of extraction* (chapter 1). This attitude instrumentalizes social, economic, and human-nature

relationships. It shapes our historical and present relationship to place. Likewise, the logic of extraction influences the solutions we put forward as we seek to respond to the challenges of living more justly as communities and in relationship with human and more-than-human beings. I have learned how these dynamics continue to play out in my own place of Appalachia.

*This narrative and structural relationship to place also impacts personal and collective developmental pathways* (chapter 2). Each person's being and becoming is related intimately and is reciprocal to the health and well-being of our social ecologies (the important built and natural environments in which we have our being). Human well-being and the well-being of Earth go hand in hand. Time spent nurturing positive relationships with/in Creation, with friends and mentors, and with/in empowering community-based institutions contribute to the healthy development of young people. When young people commit to these practices, they, in turn, contribute to the well-being and resilience of their place. Positive youth development, as Jaqueline and Richard Lerner remind, aims at promoting skills that connect young people to a rich network of social, emotional, and material supports that nurture in them an empowered sense of self and support their cognitive growth through the practice of critical analysis. The principal outcome of positive youth development is that young people come to see themselves as stakeholders who contribute to socioeconomic and bioregional health, justice, and liberation with/in their community. I suggest that such opportunities are especially crucial for nurturing a positive sense of place and belonging amidst the dislocations of extractivism. It is essential for young people living in sacrifice zones. I have learned that

a rich spiritual life also contributes to positive youth development. Place-based education should include attention to fostering a spirituality of place that informs and sustains a sense of responsibility to place.

Indeed, I have also learned that *the Judeo-Christian tradition was (and is) deeply attuned to these truths* (chapter 3). Due in large part to the logic of extraction, Christians have, to a great extent, forgotten the centrality of place in Christian faith and discipleship. The Judeo-Christian tradition imagines Earth as an active member of God's covenant with wisdom and gifts to share. The pull of sinful structures and the allure of extractive power's false promises of security have led to failures in the effort of human communities to live this covenant in faith and fidelity. However, the memory of these stories and the vision to which they call us remains. Indeed, this Story/Vision is more necessary today than ever.

*Grounded in this Story/Vision of jubilee logic, educators in faith can serve as significant contributors to the cultivation of pedagogies that are grounded in and attentive to place* (chapter 4). As David Sobel suggests, place-based pedagogies should invite learners to fall in love with their place (emotional dimension). Second, they invite learners to come to know their places (cognitive dimension). Finally, they challenge students to act for justice in those places (social dimension). As educators in faith, we frame each of these place-based encounters with/in the Christian Story/Vision (spiritual dimension). Such a pedagogy should also be critical and involve developmentally appropriate approaches to cultivating a sense of place that unsettles legacies of colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism (liberative dimension). We need to be

especially attentive to how these legacies have influenced our theologies, praxis of discipleship, approaches to faith development, and spirituality.

Finally, I have learned *that Catholics in sacrifice zones are already engaged in this process and educators in faith can draw on this wisdom in their own places* (chapter 5). Educators in faith must seek out and support these grassroots ministries, connecting classroom learning to these movements. Indeed, place-based education in faith happens *through* coalitions and *as a process* of movement-building. Students can learn from the theological wisdom of place- and faith-based movements such as the Catholic Committee of Appalachia and become active partners in their ministries. Activism, community leadership, land conservation and recovery, and opportunities to practice land-based craft skills can be integrated into the curriculum through a project-based approach. Through participation in movements of jubilee justice students encounter the Creator-liberator God of scripture in their own places and communities. They come to find that this God is uniquely present in sacrifices zones and among peoples displaced due to extractivism. They come to see covenantal Christianity as a ministry of jubilee-kinship with/in sacrifice zones and among the displaced.

I carry these learnings forward in hope and with confidence that they will be reflected in the life of our Church through critical-constructive, practical theology; innovative approaches to ministry; and the work of dedicated educators in faith who have come to love specific places and are committed to liberation with/in those places.

*What can we hope for from educating in faith in place?*

In the introduction above, I invited readers to close their eyes and picture their own place or a place that holds significant meaning for them. I now welcome the reader to do the same once again, calling to mind that same place. It is my hope that through engagement with this dissertation you have come to see that place with new eyes. Take a moment to reflect on the following questions.

*How has the way in which you understand your own place changed as you think about its relationship to global systems of colonialism, capitalism, and commodification?* As you reflect on this question, consider your own place within these systems and the ways in which you may give them active or tacit support. Consider also the ways in which you might have experienced trauma, oppression, or social exclusion as a result of your relationship to these powerful systems.

*As you think of the young people with whom you work, what is their greatest need right now?* As best as you are able, consider their relationship to extractive systems and how these relationships might be similar or different from your own. Consider the variety and diversity of relationships your students might have to these systems given the other social ecologies and identities operative in their lives. Imagine the types of material, social, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive supports that they might need to contribute to healing and empowerment in light of the ways extractivism shapes their developmental pathways.

*Who has and who is working for jubilee healing and justice in your community?* Spend some time identifying movements, historically and presently, that can act as guides

and points of entry for your own work as an educator in faith. *How are you called to join or create movements and spaces that nurture jubilee values of kinship, mutual aid and cooperation, and healing of the social body in your place today?* After you have taken time to contemplate your own place in light of these questions, I invite you to read on as I offer some final words of hope and a call to action.

Extractive systems cause harm to the places we love and call home. They negatively impact the students for whom we care. The benefits some enjoy as a result of extractive systems come at great cost to Earth and the many people who struggle to survive their effects. We are all connected. Christian discipleship calls people of faith to a new way of being in placed-relationship. As educators in faith, our role is not to 'save' Earth or people; this is God's work. Our role is to enact jubilee with/in damaged places. Christians, in partnership with all people of good will, are called to be witnesses to the Kin-dom and to create structures that support this effort. Each of us is called to listen deeply, share generously, dream intensely, and teach passionately.

While I speak most directly to the Appalachian region, I offer these hopes to young people in all sacrifice zones and those entrusted to their care and positive faith development. My guiding hope, or core conviction, is that education in faith can serve as a resource for empowering young people in sacrifice zones such as Appalachia. Through an encounter with the Story/Vision of Christianity they might come to see their place with new eyes. A sacrifice zone might become a place of holy and jubilant resistance.

Through middle school and high school, the nurturing community I found in a summer camp program sponsored by my parish, my own encounter with the Appalachian

pastoral letters, and my later involvement with the Catholic Committee of Appalachia have given me cause for this hope. It was in these places, through these encounters, and by the grace of the relationships they made possible that I came to an alternative and liberating sense of place and faith that pushed back against the deficit view of Appalachia and personal frustrations with the Church. It is my hope that through critical Creation-centered pedagogy the logic of extractivism and the traumas and distortions of colonialism, capitalism, and consumerism will not have the last word in Appalachia (or anywhere).

At the most basic level, I hope that young people in sacrifice zones will find networks of empowerment and support in and beyond the Church that make it possible for them to *stay* in the places they call home (including the Church). Where these are lacking, I hope young people will be given opportunities and encouragement to create such spaces in a collaborative and inclusive fashion. By extension, I hope that young people will grow in loving relationship with Appalachia and all sacrifice zones. I hope that young people come to see their own positive development as possible only through nurturing positive relationships with Earth and in mutually supportive communion with others. The fulfillment of these hopes will depend on how we educate and the types of spaces we as educators create in partnership with other adults who play a role directly, or indirectly, in the significant social ecologies of young people.

The Jesus Movement reminds us that belonging and community are central to empowerment. The creation of collective spaces is even more important amidst the dislocation and atomization of neoliberalism, extractive industry, and climate change.

Place-based pedagogies provide educators in faith an approach for restoring jubilee values in their places. Place-based pedagogies give educators the important role of facilitator and connector. Linking young people with persons and information that enable, prayerful encounter, the cultivation of peer-to-peer and intergenerational friendship and mentoring, critical analysis, perspective taking, collective organizing, and prophetic acting. In answer to the question 'where is faith to be found,' it is my hope that young people will be able to say 'here in this place.'

While I have learned that God is not confined to institutional walls, I nonetheless extend my hopes to address the institutional Church as well. Just as I hope a critical Creation-centered pedagogy will give young people a reason to stay in Appalachia, I hope too that young people will stay in the *Church* in Appalachia and work for the jubilee transformation and liberation of the Church itself. Unfortunately, the Church, in Appalachia and elsewhere, has too often operated with an extractive mindset. Spiritual extractivism is operative in the systematic cover-up of sexual abuse, the persistent exclusion of woman and LGBTQ persons from full participation in the life of the Church, the ways in which the Church has historically participated in and benefitted from settler colonialism and extractive industry and continues to do so, and the clericalism that marginalizes and silences lay voices and the movement of the Spirit beyond formal ecclesial channels. The Church has been a source of spiritual, physical, and emotional pain, exclusion, and abuse for too many people for too many centuries. It is important to confess and name these power dynamics not to 'destroy' the Church but so that the Church can re-member itself in fidelity to its own jubilee values.

*What is needed for place-based education in faith to take root?*

Asked another way, what is needed if faith is to be found in our places and through discipleship to the Creator-liberator God? This dissertation suggests so much of it will come down to how we educate in faith. I believe a critical Creation-centered pedagogy offers the best avenue for a logic of jubilee to become a reality in the life of the Church. Such a logic of jubilee can lead us to locating faith in sacrifice zones. However, if these hopes are to be realized we must take several steps as Church, as educators, and as communities.

The hopes and the commitments expressed above and throughout this dissertation can find expression in the development of curricula, catechetical and pastoral programs, spiritual practices, and coalitions that support such critical Creation-centered education in faith. These models should be crafted in grassroots fashion, in collaboration across places, and with attention to power relationships within and across places. The perspectives, concerns, and liberation of Earth and those displaced by extractive systems, particularly Indigenous people, should be placed at the center of these initiatives through active partnership with them and their movements. Without such collaborative practices and centering of Earth and Indigenous peoples we risk reproducing the structures of power and ways of knowing that have led to and maintain extractive relationships. Programs should be developed at the University level and in seminaries that form future Church ministers in theological and pedagogical perspectives that center place and provide opportunities to practice a place- and land-based approach to theology and education.

This would mean a revision of degree requirements, especially at the graduate level, integrating jubilee values into ministerial formation. Opportunities to engage in participatory action research, activism, and apprenticeship in land-based and craft skills through school-community partnerships should be central to ministerial and theological formation. Additionally, Catholic schools at all levels should discern ways in which they can serve communities as a 'learning commons.' Catholic schools, institutes, and parishes should be open spaces of learning, serving as community centers where people can access resources that support learning, engage in skill and resource sharing, and take on rolls as both learner and educator. This can mean offering free spaces for labor unions to meet, providing free library access for popular movements or students from under-resourced institutions, hosting a farmers' market or neighborhood clothing swap, or offering reduced cost health services by licensed practitioners. These are just a few examples. In all cases, the Church should ask how it is contributing to the practice of jubilee through nurturing a 'land-we' way of being placed (see chapter 4).

Perhaps most crucial is the cultivation of alternative ecclesial power structures that reflect jubilee logic and values. If alternative ecclesial expressions are to emerge a few things need to happen. First, it is necessary to lift up the wisdom and contribution of the laity, particularly encouraging and supporting lay movements and leadership as integral to the life of the Church. Dioceses and parishes can serve as important spaces for coordinating these efforts. Offices of bioregional ministry, Indigenous relations, and peace and justice are simply examples. Each diocese can discern the types of ministries

necessary in a given local Church. However, these offices should always seek to center the human and more-than-human victims of extractivism first and primarily.

Second, the U. S. Church should give greater priority to implementing Pope Francis' call for an integral ecology, expressed through *Laudato Si, The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology,* and *Querida Amazonia*. The Church in specific bioregions can draw on the lessons of the Catholic Committee of Appalachia and develop similar pastoral statements as those developed by CCA between 1975 and 2015 to guide their praxis, making sure that any bioregional statements are engaged and supported through preaching, parish groups, and ministerial projects.

Third, dioceses should use financial resources to create programs of mutual aid in their dioceses and work to lead efforts at reparation for the victims of extractivism, especially Indigenous and black people and victims/survivors of clergy sexual abuse. As modelled by the Catholic Committee of Appalachia and FOCIS, efforts to develop a bioregional ecclesial consciousness would be strengthened by collaborative ministries that cross dioceses and faith traditions and work collaboratively with secular partners.

Finally, the U. S. Church should commit to a public process of truth and reconciliation. The Church needs to confess the ways in which it has benefitted from extractive patterns of land ownership and use, the enslavement of and supremacy over people of color, and its continued financial ties to extractive industry. As a second step, the Church can issue formal apologies and commit to reparative processes under the leadership of Indigenous peoples and other communities directly impacted. Reparation should involve land return as well as divestment from fossil fuels and other extractive

industries and include reinvestment in sustainable energy, Indigenous and Black-led and owned companies, and programs supporting the common good. Finally, local Churches can develop theological images and ecclesial structures in collaboration with Indigenous understandings and models of power and authority.

*Invitation for future research and praxis*

As place-based models of educating in faith are developed, it will be important to create frameworks for the study of place-based curricula and their effectiveness in nurturing the hoped-for outcomes expressed throughout this dissertation. While I would resist the urge to develop rigid 'best practices' or standardized, pre-packed curricula for place-based education in faith, it will be important to study given local expressions of efforts to center education in faith on place. Indeed, as resources are developed, open access principles should be prioritized in the sharing and circulating of curriculum resources. What types of learning events are most likely to contribute to an encounter with the Creator-liberator God and nurture a life-long commitment to jubilee values? What types of educational experiences will lead young people living in sacrifice zones to develop positive relationships with God, self, others, and their place? What types of lessons will lead them toward an empowering and sustained praxis of ecojustice with/in their places?

To this extent, it would be helpful to have a consistent set of measurable educational and developmental outcomes to aid in the evaluation of curricula. At minimum, educators engaging in a critical Creation-centered pedagogy should be able to answer the following questions affirmatively: does this curriculum enable young people to

- develop a love for and a sense of belonging with/in their own place, understood through a bioregional lens?

- display a strong sense of ecological literacy, connecting this to their relationship with and knowledge of God?

- engage in critical reflection on how a logic of extraction has influenced relationships within their place?

- understand regional Indigenous history, culture, and perspectives on current issues as taught by Indigenous persons?

- examine the Catholic tradition from a land or place-based perspective, understanding how the ways in which we read scripture, image God, or read Church history encourage certain relationships to Earth, Indigenous peoples, and more-than-human beings?

- develop theological perspectives, scriptural readings, and spiritual practices that center the voices of Creation and Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and ordering the Universe?

- connect with mentors and participate in organizations and movements with/in their place working to cultivate alternatives to extractive systems?

- experience a sense of agency with/in their places by exercising significant leadership and decision-making roles within their community?

- exercise opportunities to create spaces of joy, visibility, and empowerment with/in their local Church and civic community where they are lacking?

- nurture new relationships with/in Church, society, and bioregion through the cultivation of alternative structures of power?

The development of critical Creation-centered pedagogies can only be accomplished in collaboration with scholars from other fields. I suggest two areas in which Positive Youth Development theory can contribute to place-based approaches to educating in faith. First, I have stressed the importance of attending to socio-political power in the lives of adolescents, particularly in sacrifice zones where many young people experience patterns and structures of dislocation, exclusion, and disempowerment. Research has begun to incorporate studies of the important role that 'critical consciousness' and youth-based activism or community organizing play in adolescent development. 'Critical consciousness' can provide a new perspective on the PYD construct of 'contribution,' offering another way of understanding the relationship between resilience and civic engagement for young people in oppressed communities or from oppressed identity groups. This work is valuable for supporting young people in sacrifice zones such as Appalachia and should continue. At the same time, less has been done within PYD theory to understand how engagement with the more-than-human world can contribute to positive youth development, particularly when young people live in sacrifice zones. What does it mean to have a positive relationship with Creation in toxic and damaged landscapes that bear the wounds of extractivism? In the context of climate change incorporating this work into studies of human development will be crucial.

Theologians, particularly ecotheologians, would benefit from continued and deeper engagement with the concept of Creation-kinship, developed throughout this dissertation,

moving away from perspectives that center on concepts of "creation care" or "environmental stewardship." These latter models while an improvement on theologies of dominion or manifest destiny tend to reinforce a human/nature binary. Second, ecotheologies should give greater attention to questions of power. Likewise, contextual theologies should incorporate ecological themes through intersectional analysis. Focusing attention on the category of place could assist both contextual and ecotheologies in understanding the interrelationship of context, ecology, and power and how these inform theological and religious systems. Deconstruction of the concept of 'nature' as it relates to creation theology and theological reconstruction through engagement with Indigenous worldviews is a further avenue for inquiry. Finally, theologians would do well to think critically with the concept of the Anthropocene as a way of reframing 'modernity' and 'postmodernity' in an ecocritical direction. Bioregional spiritualities can also be nurtured with this agenda in mind.

For educators in faith, and here I offer my own future research agenda, further engagement at the intersections of pedagogy, theories of faith development, and decolonial theory is necessary. I imagine actualizing this through approaches to summer camp programming as a site for critical Creation-centered education in faith and the cultivation of jubilee values. As I note in chapter 4, summer camps are receiving renewed attention as significant settings for education in faith. More study needs to be done to understand their contributions. I believe they can be especially fruitful for fostering kinship with Creation and grounding education in faith in bioregional catechesis, land-based and craft skills, and other practices that invite a more intentional relationship to

Earth in our day-to-day lives. The study of intentional communities and back-to-the-land movements can serve as a guide for developing such immersive and experiential learning settings. In particular, I would suggest a deep engagement with the 'land education' model proposed by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang as discussed in chapter 4 above. I also hope to add to emerging theological and religious studies conversations surrounding the Church in Appalachia by conducting primary research on the University without Walls program described in this chapter and the cultural education ministries that were inspired by *This Land is Home to Me* such as Big Laurel Learning Center, Mt. Tabor Ecumenical Monastery, Emmaus Farm, and more. Additional scholarship might also be conducted around the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA) and its relationship to CCA and the development of the second pastoral letter, *At Home in the Web of Life*.

None of these suggested research agendas can or should occur in isolation from communities impacted by extractivism. Place-based pedagogies prioritize collaboration and coalition with the places in which their teaching events occur. Likewise, there is a concomitant need for grounded, participatory, and engaged models of scholarship. Research agendas and methods should take a participatory approach and involve engagement with place both as text to 'read' *and*, perhaps more importantly, as a generative source of wisdom and knowledge from which to learn. Community members should actively help to set and inform the direction of research agendas, data collection, and interpretation.

This dissertation project has allowed me to testify to the work of the Spirit *already happening* in sacrifice zones. Indeed, it has been inspired by the work of popular

movements in and beyond the Church. It is a witness to the efforts of educators, lay ministers, and others to nurture young people in positive relationships with God, self, and others (human and more-than-human) in their places. My own faith is the fruit of such passionate workers in the vineyard, and I pray that this dissertation serves first as an effort to systematize their wisdom into a program for education in faith. Finally, I offer it as a prayer of thanksgiving for their commitment to the Church in Appalachia, the "nearest thing to heaven that I know."[2]

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[2] Utah Phillips, "The Green Rolling Hills of West Virginia," *Starlight on the Rails: A Songbook* (PM Press, 2014), Audio CD.

<div align="center">**Bibliography**</div>

**Select Appalachian Youth Movements**

Appalachian Media Institute. https://www.amiappalshop.org/ (1988-present)

> Our Mission
>
> AMI strives to:
>
> Build the confidence levels and creative capacity of Central Appalachian youth, and position them as initiators of dialogue and social action around crucial community issues.
>
> Provide pioneering community-based media arts training opportunities that are college accredited, nationally recognized, and fundamentally transformative.
>
> Provide youth with an avenue to explore the traditions, history, and issues of their communities and develop positive attachments to their communities, cultures, and the region.
>
> Develop the skills and behaviors that prepare young people to be successful in school, higher-education, and the workforce, and overcome the barriers to educational attainment that exist in many struggling communities.
>
> Highlight rural voices to inform national audiences of the unique challenges facing Appalachian communities and youth.
>
> Enable our participants to become informed, tolerant, and engaged citizens and to recognize the interconnections between Central Appalachia and the rest of the world.

Girls' Resiliency Program. (1996-2007)

> As described in *Thinking Outside the Girl Box*, the GRP was "a community non-profit aimed at helping girls identify strengths become active decision makers, and advocate for social change…[through] monthly after-school discussions about everything from day-today happenings with friends to the roles and rights of girls and women. It means regular out-of-school activities, such as volunteer projects,

art workshops, and social outings…[The GRP is a] grassroots, 'girl-driven' program focused on developing leadership in Appalachian youth."

As founder Shelley Gaines explains, "when we started the Girls' Resiliency Program, most people didn't even know what resiliency meant. At the times many youth programs targeted 'high-risk' youth, and they were based on the premise that youth needed particular skills and particular experience in order to succeed. Our work in Lincoln County was based on a very different model. Resilience is the concept that people—youth, in this case—hold innate strengths and natural abilities that can be used to help them not only overcome challenges but become stronger and succeed. This was a model that fit with my values about not wanting to fix youth or teach youth but to support them and challenge them—to be their best, to try new approaches, and to think more systematically about social issues that were impacting them personally. So we created a program that offered opportunities—for girls and then later, boys—to give voice to their experience, to learn new skills or practice old ones, and to develop leadership. Our core belief was that these youth were capable."[1]

HighRocks. https://highrocks.org/ (1996-present)

Our mission is to EDUCATE, EMPOWER and INSPIRE young people in West Virginia. High Rocks is a LEADER in TRANSFORMING lives of young people and the impact they have on their communities.

OUR VISION

The mission of the High Rocks is to educate, empower and inspire young people in West Virginia. We believe that all people are gifted and that by investing in young people, we are creating a strong, vibrant, participatory community for us all. We want to provide pathways out of poverty for our youth, giving them viable options for success in their home communities and abroad. We envision sustainable local economies that take advantage of our rich human and natural resources. We seek to inspire a culture of learning in our area that prepares rural Appalachian youth with the skills and ideas to drive change locally and on the national stage.

Stay Together Appalachian Youth. https://www.thestayproject.net/ (2008-present)

Our Vision

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[1] Linda Spatig and Layne Amerikaner, *Thinking Outside the Girl Box: Teaming Up with Resilient Youth in Appalachia* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 1-2, 34.

We envision an economically and environmentally sustainable Central Appalachia where young people have the power to build and participate in diverse, inclusive, and healthy communities.

Our Mission

As young people from Central Appalachia, we are connecting across our region to make our home communities places we can and want to STAY.

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